‘The Objectifying Gaze’: The Role of Adaptation in Perceptions of Gender on Television

by

Jessica-Leigh Van de Kemp

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Examining Committee Membership

The following served on the Examining Committee for this thesis. The decision of the Examining Committee is by majority vote.

External Examiner	DR. ANDREW WELSH Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University
Internal-External Member	DR. TONI SERAFINI Associate Professor, St. Jerome's University
Supervisor	DR. MICHAEL MACDONALD Associate Professor, University of Waterloo
Internal Members	DR. MARCEL O'GORMAN Professor, University of Waterloo
	DR. GORDON SLETHAUG Adjunct Professor, University of Waterloo

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.

This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

For too long, adaptation studies has been limited to film and focused on adaptation as a product (i.e. the transformation of a novel into a film), but expanding the field to television and emphasizing the process of adaptation (i.e. how texts share meaning) invites critics to contemplate between television and society by considering the concepts of adaptation (e.g. doubling, architextuality, citation, and de(re)composing) that perpetuate stereotypes and myths about women across texts and spaces. My dissertation therefore expands the scope of research on gender representation in television by using adaptation theory to reveal the intertextual composition of portrayals of women. Many critics have examined intertextuality in film, and some in television, but none have evaluated the role that concepts of adaptation play in constructing representations of women in television, especially in the fields of justice, science, and technology. The main research question is: What is the impact of television on society? I argue that the relationship between television and society is influenced by intertextuality and apply Fredrickson and Roberts' theory of objectification, in line with Mulvey's famous concept of the male gaze, to demonstrate how concepts of adaptation enforce the objectifying gaze on women in television and reinforce mostly stereotypical gender roles. This dissertation is composed of an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. Using a case-study methodology, I analyze eight American drama television series that exercise adaptation and the gaze, with many passing references made to art, film, and literature that open the landscape of television to its intertextual roots: uncanny doubles in *House of Cards* and *Orange Is the New Black*, architexts between drama and detection in *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest*, citations of trauma in *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, and de(re)compositions of media and society in *Wisdom of the Crowd* and *The X-Files*. Four key findings stand out from these case

studies: (1) uncanny doubles manifest a spatiality of death around female and/or LGBT characters, (2) architexts between drama and detection form through play to debunk gender role stereotypes, (3) citations of torture make and maintain a visual style of terror on screen, and (4) de(re)compositions of media and society insulate the voyeuristic POV. These findings show that violence against women continues to be eroticized on prime-time, but that adaptation plays a role in making a spectacle of rape and other harms. Several original concepts emerge during the research process to describe the role that adaptation plays in shaping perceptions of gender, sexuality, and violence on television, including but not limited to: embodied detection, figural déjà vu, forensic adaptation, and ludic forensics. All told, this dissertation forges a new way of discussing gender representation by applying adaptation theory to television studies.

Keywords

Adaptation Theory

Drama Television

Gender Representation

The Objectifying Gaze

Violence Against Women

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Introduction

Topic and Context

In the 1990s, FOX's *The X-Files* instantly became a cult classic for its dealings with unsolved paranormal occurrences, but continues to have a positive impact on women and girls looking for a role model within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Special Agent Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson), known for her intelligence, confidence, and good judgment, broke through the glass ceiling in drama TV for taking the lead in fields like forensics, justice, and medicine. Based on Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) from Demme's (1991) film *The Silence of the Lambs*, which is an adaptation of Thomas Harris' (1988) novel of the same name, Special Agent Scully shares in the legacy of female characters proving their mettle in male-dominated fields. The depiction of a hardworking and successful woman in STEM really helped female viewers imagine themselves pursuing these fields. In fact, "two-thirds of women who work in STEM say that Scully served as their personal role model" (The Geena Davis Institute, "The Scully Effect" 6). The 'Scully Effect' is a cultural phenomenon of seeing Special Agent Scully as a personal role model and being directed to pursue STEM and/or leadership. The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media confirms this connection between media and society: "If she can see it, she can be it" (1).

Seeing a strong female character like Special Agent Scully inspired me to set and achieve my own academic ambitions. But, it has been a long journey from goal-setting to goal-completion, so I would like to recognize how special this moment of research presentation and defense is for me. As an adolescent, I was drawn toward a career path in either the social services or criminal justice, the latter an ode to Special Agent Scully's quest for truth and justice. Every

Friday night at 9:00pm, I would watch *The X-Files*, even though some of the monsters were a bit scary. You see, growing up in a small town with spotty Internet, this one hour of TV showed me what a strong woman with smarts and ambitions could do. As a teenager, I applied to an undergraduate program in Criminology and got in, thinking maybe I could study crime or law or justice and become an investigator like Special Agent Scully. Ultimately, I chose a different path, pursuing studies in English and Education, but that drive to be a potential role model and make a big difference in the lives of others is still there.

Some years ago, I had the opportunity to volunteer with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), and assisted an Intensive Case Manager on all appointments with adult clients suffering from psychiatric disabilities. I also volunteered at an emergency shelter for survivors of domestic violence. Hearing stories of survivorship ultimately gave me the confidence to start using my own voice for change. Recently, my spoken word activism was recognized by a pride organization (more on this in the Conclusion). From applying to an undergraduate program in Criminology to volunteering with survivors of violence to using spoken word poetry to defend lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) human rights, there is a clear progression toward my present interest in studying the ways in which people who identify as women and/or members of the LGBT community are locked out of dignity and equality. As a queer woman, researching the mistreatment of women and the LGBT community feels personal, even though I am only examining fictional representations of gender and sexuality, because TV holds up a mirror to real social norms and cultural values that contribute to discrimination and violence. Being so upfront about my advocacy work and identity follows an "autoethnographic" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2) approach to research "that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from

these matters or assuming they don't exist" (2). I am aware that some researchers, such as Allen-Collinson and Hockey (2008), might question my perspective, but I believe that my advocacy work and identity give me insight into some of the more subtle, indirect, and manipulative ways in which female and/or LGBT characters are excluded from positive signs of equality, inclusion, and leadership in drama TV through intertextual codes of discrimination, harassment, and violence.

In her book entitled *Perverse Spectators, The Practices of Film Reception*, film scholar Janet Staiger defines *intertextuality* as "a constant and irretrievable circulation of textuality, a returning to, a pointing toward, an aggressive attempt to seize other documents—the results of this procedure of referencing other texts are also complicity and irrevocably circular and ideological" (399). Intertextuality is a reference system that takes part in the founding and growth of a theory of *adaptation*. Studies in adaptation examine "deliberate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works" (Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* xvi) and "refer to both a product and a process of creation and reception" (xvi). The study of adaptation teaches us to contemplate beyond "fidelity analysis" (Marcus) and "faithfulness" (16) to a flow of textuality with subtle repetitions. This academic discipline also recognizes adaptations outside of the traditional novel-to-film formulation and explores patterns and processes of reference and repetition. Put simply, there has been a shift in the field from exploring how adaptations remain faithful to their original sources to considering how seemingly unrelated texts make the same references or use the same narrative controls.

It is much easier to detect intentional relations between texts, but I have elected to bring awareness to some of the unintentional ways in which texts use the same narrative content, elements, or controls. Many have examined intertextuality in film, and some in TV, but none

have concentrated on how drama TV functions on the basis of intertextuality/adaptation and its analytical models and concepts. In total, I take intertextuality in drama TV as a process of adaptation. My position pulls from the viewpoint that "we experience adaptation . . . through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation" (Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* 8). Most often, these 'resonances' are between characters, settings, or themes, but this dissertation is intended to show these and other concepts of intertextuality/adaptation, such as opposition, relation, quotation, and merging. In essence, I move away from the traditional understanding of adaptation as a product (e.g. a film adapted from a novel) to a newer view of adaptation as a process (e.g. a text operating the same devices as another). My topic on the effect of adaptation on gender representation in drama TV is timely and important because gender and sexuality are often screened through violence when the lens of adaptation is applied to the screen. My position is that gender and sexuality refer to a spectrum of possible identities beyond the male/female and straight/gay binaries. And so, there is a great deal to learn from evaluating intertextuality in drama TV, especially about how concepts of adaptation perpetuate stereotypes about female and/or LGBT characters' bodies, identities, and roles. The goal, of course, is deconstructing the binaries, stereotypes, myths, and other troubles that hold female and/or LGBT characters back from truly expressing themselves and their leadership potential.

Focus and Scope

This dissertation ought to interest adaptation scholars but also researchers from a variety of academic disciplines such as television studies, gender and sexuality studies, and even those faculty and students in art, drama, film, literature, new media, and the behavioural sciences. I have chosen eight American drama TV series, mostly crime dramas, which combine with several recognizable sub-types of the drama category to represent a broad view of this popular genre.

The selected shows all bear the mark of the intertextual process by referencing other texts and their discourses, genres, and themes. This dissertation begins with doubling, perhaps the oldest intertextual device, and moves toward newer concepts of adaptation. There are many more categories, classes, or divisions of analysis than this dissertation can cover, and different visual texts to choose from to investigate media and society, but my selections are: doubling in *Orange Is the New Black* (comedy) and *House of Cards* (political thriller); architextuality in *CSI: Cyber* (police procedural) and *Person of Interest* (sci-fi); citation in *Criminal Minds* (police procedural) and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* (legal); and de(re)composing in *Wisdom of the Crowd* (crime) and *The X-Files* (sci-fi). These taxonomies, which I will give the meaning of a bit later, are provided by Gordon Slethaug, Gérard Genette, and Kamilla Elliott, three leading adaptation scholars. Their shared focus on referentiality allows for an assessment of the circular or dialogic mode of drama TV series first aired between 1993–2017, spanning the 20th and 21st centuries, which produced connectedness through smartphones, social media, and other technological advances and engagements. Changing gender and queer representation for the better starts by deconstructing the cultures of violence produced through adaptation in drama TV. While my analysis focuses on how female and/or LGBT characters are mistreated, theorizing masculinity in drama TV through intertextuality is a future research direction in adaptation studies.

Relevance and Importance

In her article entitled "How Do We Talk about Adaptation Studies Today?" leading adaptation scholar Kamilla Elliott notes that the contemporary debates in intertextuality and adaptation studies are between "fidelity and infidelity (Hermansson 2015; Dovey 2012), formal and cultural approaches (Elliott 2014), empirical and ideological epistemologies (Cattrysse 2014), individual agency and sociological forces (Murray 2012), and politics and aesthetics

(Hassler-Forest and Nicklas 2015; MacCabe 2011)" (Elliott, "How Do We Talk" para. 1). Essentially, these conflicts arise because

> adaptation participates in so many disciplines, periods, cultures, and media. Each discipline subjects it to its own theories and methodologies, which are internally contested as well as contested across disciplines. While the diversity of the field and the inherent resistance of adaptation to being governed or fixed by theorization makes a 'presiding poetics' undesirable and impossible, we do need a shared core if we are to talk to each other about adaptation. (Elliott, "How Do We Talk" para. 5)

So, how should we discuss adaptation when the field itself keeps evolving and eschewing a governing theory or 'poetics'? As mentioned, one suggestion is to make more of an effort to talk about the intertextual process rather than adaptation as a product. I mainly join the cultural and sociological debates in intertextuality and adaptation studies, but very briefly touch on the conversation about the politics and aesthetics of adaptation to address the principle of deflection. In rhetoric, this principle deploys a spirit of *dolos* or trickery and creates deliberate focus on someone or something (the scapegoat) other than the real problem. As we will see, doubling is the main cause of denigration, dismissal, and diversion across a range of visual texts.

The double points to the gaze (*le regard*) or the intent behind the 'look' of the screen that holds certain power dynamics. How the gaze establishes its presence, and objectifies and dominates certain fictional characters, is a theory of spectatorship covered most substantially by the psychoanalytic film theorists of the 1970s−2000s, who applied Freudian and Lacanian concepts of psychoanalysis (e.g. doubling, mirroring, etc) to the cinematic vision. I revive an exploration of the gaze to study its aspects in drama TV. In 1975, screen theorist Laura Mulvey coined the terms *the male gaze* ("the projection of male fantasy onto the female figure") and

scopophilia ("pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object") to describe projections of control, fantasy, obsession, and punishment onto representations of women (7–14). These concepts imply a way of seeing women through the sight of the patriarchy to make female characters appear inferior to other characters or treat them like erotic objects. Cultural analyst Ann Kaplan argues that "the gaze is not necessarily male (literally), but to own and activate the gaze, given our language and the structure of the unconscious, is to be in the masculine position" (319). In their article entitled "Objectification Theory: Toward Understanding Women's Lived Experiences and Mental Health Risks," psychologists Barbara Fredrickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts speculate on "the experiential consequences of being female in a culture that sexually objectifies the female body" (173). Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) objectification theory posits that "the common thread running through all forms of sexual objectification is the experience of being treated *as a body* (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use (or consumption by) others" (174). I use Fredrickson and Roberts' term *the objectifying gaze* (175) throughout this dissertation to encompass all angles of viewing female and/or LGBT characters as objects rather than subjects. For example, I analyze the projection of fantasy, obsession, and other lenses of the objectifying gaze onto LGBT characters. From a feminist approach, I discuss the gaze not only to interrogate the objectification of female and/or LGBT characters, but also to point out how this textual phenomenon works within the gender binarism (e.g. cisnormativity, heteronormativity, etc) to express certain ways of performing masculinity—through aggression, coercion, etc—that can negatively impact how male viewers see themselves and others. It is important to explore the objectifying gaze to understand how adaptation filters depictions of gender and sexuality through patriarchal systems of control.

Gender and sexuality are regularly constructed through violence in drama TV. Research conducted by Cuklanz (2000) on sexual violence; Scharrer (2001) on hypermasculinity; DeTardo-Bora (2009) on female subordination; Clarke Dillman (2014) on women and death; Hust et al. (2015) on rape myth acceptance; Smith et al. (2015) on sexual aggression; Rader, Rhineberger-Dunn, and Vasquez (2016) on victim blame; Jermyn (2017) on the eroticization of violence; Garland et al. (2018) on gender discrimination and victimization; Seabrook, Ward, and Giaccardi (2019) on the objectification of women; and many others presents an abundance of evidence over the span of two decades that drama TV has a bad habit of producing images of gender and sexuality through performances of violence. In their article entitled "Prime-Time Representations of Female Federal Agents in Television Dramas," victimology scholars Garland et al. argue that "television is perhaps the most powerful medium through which we examine, evaluate, and process aspects of society, culture, and gender normality" (614), and their study of portrayals of women in criminal justice finds that "women are significantly more likely to be portrayed as helpless . . . [and] when females are victimized and/or have to be rescued, it is often due to their 'helplessness' and 'inability' to perform their jobs" (623). At this point, it is important to ask the following questions: What is the main gap in the knowledge? Why does this gap need to be filled? And, how does my dissertation attempt to fill this gap? Generally, there is a significant amount of research (as shown above) on gendered violence in prime-time shows, but a severe deficit concerning the role that intertextuality/adaptation plays in repeating these images of violence against women. For that reason, I seek to understand how concepts of adaptation deflect attention away from social issues concerning gender and onto a perceived 'flaw' of the mind, body, or other aspects of the self. As we will see in Chapter 3, citation creates a very noticeable style of terror through an aesthetic of psychological torture in drama TV, where

pain and suffering orient viewers in a narrative space of disorientation. The principle of suffering communicates not only pain but an extreme loss of selfhood. By deconstructing the intertextual devices that sustain terror and torture across drama TV, we capture the manipulation of power structures in intimate focus, and have an opportunity to discuss societal expectations and issues (intensified by the gaze) that aggressively tell people who identify as female and/or queer what spaces they should occupy in society, how they should act, and what rights and roles they should have.

The common thread between gender, sexuality, and violence weaves through technology. Research carried out by Rajagopal (2004) on cybersuicide; Henry and Powell (2015) on digital technologies and sexual violence; Fox et al. (2015) on sexualized avatars and rape myths; Poland (2016) on cybersexism; Mitchell et al. (2016) on technology and peer harassment; Lenhart et al. (2016) on online abuse; Patchin and Hinduja (2017) on digital self-harm; Twenge et al. (2018) on screen time and adolescent suicide rates; and many others provides considerable insight over many years that technology can support forms of harm, creating a recurring tension between gender, sexual violence, and technology. In their article entitled "Embodied Harms: Gender, Shame, and Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence," criminologists Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell categorize six forms of techno-sexual violence: "(a) the unauthorized creation and distribution of sexual images (including non-consensual sexting or 'revenge porn'), (b) the creation and distribution (actual or threatened) of sexual assault images, (c) the use of a carriage service to procure a sexual assault, (d) online sexual harassment and cyberstalking, (e) gender-based hate speech, and (f) virtual rape" (759). While my research procedure identifies varied social and health problems, including many of the forms of cybercrime listed above, I work from a spatiality of death (in Chapter 1) to discuss gender role stereotypes (in Chapter 2), rape culture

(in Chapter 3), and online aggression (in Chapter 4), demonstrating how the gaze is intertextual and almost always moves toward objectification. Among the many social problems addressed in this dissertation are solitary confinement and campus sexual assault. Additionally, health-related concerns interlinked with technology are also explored, such as cyberbullying and cybersuicide. Together, these analyses of social and health problems consider signs of intimidation and mistreatment in intertextual ways.

Objectives and Questions

This study on the effect of intertextuality/adaptation on perceptions of gender, sexuality, and violence in drama TV poses significant objectives and raises important questions about referentiality in popular programs. Generally, my research goals center on achieving a better understanding of the concepts of adaptation at work in drama TV. Specially, the main research objective that needs to be achieved is to *integrate intertextuality/adaptation into television studies*. Five other tangible objectives of my dissertation are to:

- *Identify the presence of the objectifying gaze in drama TV.*
- *Examine the social and health problems tackled in drama TV from an intertextual (i.e. cross-disciplinary) lens.*
- *Investigate how adaptation creates and upholds a visual style of MindWar (i.e. terror) through principles of PSYWAR (i.e. torture) in drama TV.*
- *Formulate new terms (e.g. embodied detection, figural déjà vu, networked textuality, self-referential intertextuality, forensic adaptation, ludic forensics, etc) to describe adaptation's effect on gender representation in drama TV.*

- *Propose future research directions (e.g. POV narration in American cinema) to expand the current state of adaptation studies.*

All told, these research objectives are attained by applying adaptation theory to the study of gender in TV. It is useful to think about watching TV as an intertextual process in order to learn how different texts use the same narrative controls to script identity. The main research question that needs to be raised is: *What is the impact of drama TV on society?* Other questions include: *How does drama TV contribute to or fight negative stereotypes of women and the LGBT community? Which concepts of adaptation have the most influence on perceptions of gender and sexuality?* To answer these questions, it is important to keep studying how adaptation serves the objectifying gaze in drama TV to sustain perceptions of gender and sexuality as expressions of domination or submission in different environments, such as cyberspace, education, health, science, and work. A feminist framework bases this understanding in social equality and offers new insight into the play of intertextuality in fictional TV narratives about real social problems. In the #MeToo era, this topic is critical at this time because the media we consume needs to break the silence on violence, and this does not happen with more graphic portrayals of discrimination, harassment, and violence but rather with images of female empowerment, positive masculinities, and dignity for people of all identities.

Thesis and Methodology

With this in mind, this dissertation stakes the claim that *concepts of adaptation, such as doubling, architextuality, citation, and de(re)composing, enforce the objectifying gaze and perpetuate mostly stereotypical perceptions of female and/or LGBT characters in drama TV*. My central aim is to *evaluate the impact of adaptation on drama TV,* but other aims of my research

related to gender and queer representation include: *Assessing the spectacle of violence in drama TV narratives about female and/or queer avatars, detectives, leaders, prisoners, and survivors* and *Analyzing the effects of spatialities, liminalities, and virtualities of death, emotion, and aggression in drama TV*. This dissertation is composed of an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion that center on the relationship between media and society. Each of the four chapters offers a case study of two American drama TV series, for a total of eight shows under analysis, with a substantial amount of passing references made to art, literature, film, and other texts and traditions to open our eyes to the vastness of the intertextual system. I have selected a case study methodology as my research approach: "qualitative case study is a research methodology that helps in the exploration of a phenomenon within some particular context through various data sources and it undertakes the exploration through a variety of lenses in order to reveal multiple facets of the phenomenon (Baxter and Jack 2008)" (Rashid et al. 2). As mentioned, one alternative to this particular methodology is an autoethnographic research method, in which I put more of my own advocacy work and identity into the study of gender in media. Using another approach might have afforded a more personal interaction between theory and practice, but I do make room in the Conclusion to reflect on how the research process inspired my most recent activism. From a case study methodology, I gain the chance to study the function and consequence of adaptation in representations of gender and sexuality in drama TV through cross-analysis between different disciplines, frameworks, issues, questions, and topics, which captures a much better picture of intertextuality in drama TV. By focusing on shows that debuted in periods of technological advancement and which feature episodes on techno-sexual violence, the reciprocal relationship between gender, sexual violence, and technology is conveyed in connection with intertextuality through inflictions of the gaze.

Research Limitations

Of course, I cannot possibly illuminate the entire textual system of influence, or account for every adaptation theory, drama TV series, or social and health problem tackled in the shows, but I do "see the new possibilities in adaptation" (Slethaug, *Adaptation Theory* 3) by expanding the field to TV. This study is also limited to eight American drama TV series, out of hundreds, which is a small sample of a big genre, but this gives you a sense of how much room there is in adaptation studies to focus on TV and its many genres and sub-types. While my case studies work in consultation with theories from over forty researchers from different fields (e.g. Jay Dolmage's *disability myths*, Harriet Shortt's *liminality*, Nickie Phillips' *hegemonic masculinity*, Thomas Rickert's *ambience*, and Michael Jacobsen's *postmortalism*), there is still plenty of room for studying adaptation and TV in consultation with other voices and theories not present here. Even so, some might consider my reference count extreme, but I securely ground my arguments in theory to put them into practice, and cite many texts and studies only in passing to leave the door open for another scholar to pick up a line of conversation where I left off. In this way, I strive to leave breadcrumbs for future researchers to find, inviting their voices to join the many important conversations going on in this dissertation. In effect, as I build on the work that Gordon Slethaug carries out in his book entitled *Adaptation Theory and Criticism: Postmodern Cinema and Literature in the USA*, the door of adaptation swings wide open to reveal the intertextual landscape of drama TV in my dissertation entitled '*The Objectifying Gaze': The Role of Adaptation in Perceptions of Gender on Television*.

Chapter Summaries

After this Introduction, in Chapter 1 entitled "Uncanny Doubling in *House of Cards* and *Orange Is the New Black*," I will explore the concept of intertextuality through mechanics of psychoanalysis to revive the screen theory debate and extend it to TV. Within Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny is the device of *the double*, or opposition, and I study its growing presence in drama TV. An investigation into three implied themes of Freud's uncanny—instability, confinement, and death—brings to light the ways in which doubles reinforce a binary system of thinking (e.g. male/female, able/disabled, straight/gay, etc). Deconstructing how the double or mirror is created through systems of opposition and oppression destabilizes negative stereotypes of female and/or LGBT characters. From studying the exercise of eleven different doubles (i.e. stalker-crush, intertextual, fatal-woman, out-in, daughter-lover, mother-lover, father-daughter, death-as-double, disposable-woman, good-evil, and dead-queer), I make the case that a spatiality of death occupies drama TV that demonizes the female body, the disabled body, and the queer body. Working from doubling to drama, there is an opportunity in the next chapter to continue discussing the staging of gender, this time through the lens of play and in relation to leadership.

Chapter 2, entitled "Architexts between Drama and Detection in *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest*," examines the idea of relationality as evolved from elements of drama, theatre, and performance. From Gérard Genette's concept of *architextuality* comes an understanding of texts inextricably tangled in their discourses, genres, and themes. I think carefully about the textual relation between the art of drama and the science of detection to study depictions of STEM leadership through the master element of play. Readings of embodiment, paidia (improvisation), and ludus (competition) address the 'chilly climate' in STEM that discourages female and/or LGBT characters from pursuing or expressing leadership in these fields. By looking at architexts

between drama and detection (e.g. empathy, roleplay, etc), the science of detection opens to strategies from drama (e.g. thought-tracking tableau) that present new ways of thinking about adaptation theory (e.g. figural déjà vu) as well as crime-solving (e.g. embodied detection and ludic forensics). Among the social and health problems discussed in this chapter are gender-based discrimination, cybercrime, and campus sexual assault. From relationality to citationality, I work toward addressing the problem of rape culture from an intertextual view, and use the next chapter to analyze how psychologies of terror, torture, and trauma are visually styled in drama TV.

Chapter 3, entitled "Citations of Trauma in *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*," considers the notion of *citationality* in the context of the crime genre and TV narratives that deal with crime and justice. Gordon Slethaug's concept of citation as borrowing develops an awareness of how texts copy, quote from, and openly reference each other. I give careful thought to how the genres of crime and drama intersect in order to locate the references to trauma, mostly from true-crime, that map the psychology of torture on screen. Analyses of deviant identity online, erotic surveillance, male sexual aggression, and social media misuse examine in detail some of the problems scripted in drama TV through reanimations of real cases and events or fictional texts and their discourses. Investigating the references that crime dramas make to other markers of trauma, through the citation methods of supplementation, imitation, displacement, and dramatic technique, leads to the discovery that crime dramas adopt a visual style of terror through aesthetics of torture and workings of the gaze that I call networked textuality, self-referential intertextuality, and forensic adaptation. Moving from citing to merging in the next chapter, I consider how the visual style of MindWar is also constructed through elements from two sub-types of the drama category: science fiction and technology.

Chapter 4, entitled "De(re)composing Media and Society in *Wisdom of the Crowd* and *The X-Files*," delves into the concept of adaptation as a mixture of signs. From Kamilla Elliott's *de(re)composing* model of adaptation comes the idea that the intertextual system breaks down, merges, and creates new stories about people and culture. I track the movement of the objectifying gaze in drama TV to address the rootedness of gendered violence in media and society. Analyses of collusions between suicide and technology, fear and technology, and gender and technology reveal dimensions of media that have the potential to impact society. By closely examining de(re)composing themes (e.g. suicide, fear, and gendered violence), techniques (e.g. ambient music, the rhetoric of silence, and supernatural elements), and tropes (e.g. the killer robot, the female warrior, and the female villain) that play out in drama TV, I uncover intertextual devices (e.g. POV narration, isotopy, bricolage, intertextual doubling, etc) that normalize the objectifying gaze in narratives about women in games spaces or STEM. Some of the concerns addressed in this chapter are cybersuicide, technophobia, and aggression. Together, these four case studies will provide evidence that American drama television series draw on the art of intertextuality/adaptation to shape constructions of gender and sexuality.

After Chapter 4, in the Conclusion of the dissertation, I will provide a summary of the key findings from my four case studies and propose future research directions. As a final call to action, I will invite colleagues from all disciplines to practice bridging the gap between the work we do in academia and our communities—that is, *to embody*—by sharing how my research journey has come full-circle and inspired me to advocate for gender equality at the community level.

Transitional Statement

In the main, I take an intertextual look at drama TV. My research therefore begins with a concept of intertextuality/adaptation called doubling. The continuous arrival of doubling into drama TV calls up our oldest fears and our deepest anxieties. Throughout my dissertation, I deal with the oldest phobia there is—the fear of death or dying. But, I begin with an examination of returns to anxiety and fear that make female and/or LGBT characters seem unstable, dangerous, or disposable. As we will see, the double replicates a tension between women and death, which mirrors and maintains the script of violence against women. Given that binary oppositions work to invalidate the spectrum of identities, it is important to ask: What are the most common doubles in drama TV? And, how might chasing the meaning of doubles lead to their deconstruction? Within the larger frame of the textual system (e.g. art, film, literature, etc), the double gives a language to the exercise of power. By examining this framework, we can see patterns of interference. Our colleagues in other disciplines such as mathematics and physics call this manifestation a *moiré effect*—the result of two patterns displacing each other. This effect is easily detectable in art (e.g. Olafur Eliasson's *Walk through wall, 2005*), but is much harder to recognize in TV. Thankfully, adaptation theory can be used to enlarge the frame of narrative to its intertextual processes and, in doing so, show us the elements and controls that superpose over another in constant pattern. I hope that further studies will confirm my theory that concepts of adaptation enforce the objectifying gaze to influence perceptions of female and/or LGBT characters, but am certain that my research will serve as a base for further work on gender representation in drama TV more broadly.

Chapter 1: Uncanny Doubling in *House of Cards* and *Orange Is the New Black*

Introduction

The first chapter of my dissertation explores intertextuality based on structures from psychoanalysis, previously studied by the psychoanalytic film theorists of the 1960s–1970s, to revive the screen theory debate and extend it to TV. Despite the classical nature of these theories, studies like mine are still relevant because the process of challenging stereotypical gender representations starts with deconstructing the classical devices, like the double (opposition), that are still used to construct these images. Specifically, I apply theories from art, film, literature, and psychoanalysis to TV in order to more easily detect the exercise of the double in Netflix's original series *House of Cards* and *Orange Is the New Black.* In his book entitled *Adaptation Theory and Criticism: Postmodern Literature and Cinema in the USA,* film theorist Gordon Slethaug defines *intertextual doubles* as "terms and images that subtly repeat from text to text, creating unexpected links, altering expectations, and resulting in radically revised meaning" (73). A striking feature of these repetitions is their recycling of narrative elements and techniques that have been seen before. In this chapter, I uncover implied themes of Freud's (1919) *uncanny*—instability, confinement, and death—that bring to light the ways in which doubles reinforce a binary system of thinking about bodies, genders, and sexualities. First, I investigate how doubling pathologizes female and/or LGBT characters. Second, I examine how doubling isolates and alienates LGBT characters. Third, I explore how doubling creates a spatiality of death that demonizes the female body, the disabled body, and the queer body. Together, these brief takes on mind, body, and culture reveal a kind of doubleness at play in drama TV that scripts women's bodies as strange objects.

In psychoanalytic film theory, "film is like the mirror" (Metz 45) in the sense that it is an apparatus for perception in which "fantasy locates the focus of all vision" (49). As we will see, drama TV also has foundations in "mirror identification" (69). The debate on the screen as a mirror is theorized through Freudian and Lacanian structures. Freud's (1923) *ego* and Lacan's (1949) *le moi* are conceptions of reality and the self which either "cling to fantasy" (Freud 235) or recognize the self ("the specular image") through identification of the other ("the mirrored disposition") (Lacan 77). These notions of mirroring describe "the appearance of doubles" (77). This begs the question: What benefit is there in using psychoanalysis to study TV? After all, it is an outdated approach to the mind and body, and produces binary oppositions (e.g. male/female, able/disabled, straight/gay, etc) which do not make room for varied experiences. My own answer to this question is deconstruction. In order to deconstruct the binaries or doubles perpetuated on screen, I perform a close reading and analysis on how these oppositions or replications play out, which is the first step in the drive for representation that reflects diversity. The impact of deconstructing stereotypes perpetuated on screen is encouraging viewers to think beyond polarization to a dialectical model of thought that embraces the equal division of power and the expression of self and identity in many ways.

Ideas on the double seem to rest on interpretations, misreadings, and criticisms of the Lacanian mirror, but from different camps of thought on the screen as an apparatus of either *identification* (see Baudry 1970; Mulvey 1975; Metz 1982) or *intervention* (see Friedberg 1990; Doane 2000; Copjec 2000). I return to the screen theory debate as a means of tracing manifestations of doubling and mirroring in TV. First- and second-wave critics from the 1970s–2000s remain at odds, but film theory still grapples today with the part that film plays in society. What I add to this discussion are the questions: What role does TV play in society? And, does

TV exercise the same doubles that art, film, or literature do? As we will see, the answer is yes in many cases. While film theorists remain focused on Lacanian mirroring, I argue that the landscape of drama TV slips all the way back to Freud's uncanny by turning that which is familiar (e.g. self) into a "terrifying fantasy" (243). In particular, I seek the double vision of punishment in drama TV to identify structures that reinforce images of female and/or LGBT characters as dangerous, psychotic, or evil. In bringing these doubles and mirrors to light, other scholars can work to counter these replicating stereotypes in the future and use this close reading and analysis as the ground upon which to call for change and construct advocacy. To parry objectification on screen, images should address spectators of varied identities and experiences. Future studies, with an eye to Ettinger's (1995) matrixial gaze, could pivot to texts that portray female and/or LGBT characters in the position of subject rather than object.

And so, our journey begins with the seeds from art, film, and literature that germinate the collective perception of female and/or queer bodies as objects in disorder. Beginning this way allows us to see the deeply intertextual nature of the double and its spread across disciplines. In art and literature, the double is someone or something that evokes fear (e.g. domesticity in Ray's *Cadeau* or death in Joyce's "The Sisters"). Egon Schiele's expressionist paintings are intense examples of binaries associated with gender and violence. *Schwangere und Tod* (Pregnant Woman and Death) stands out for its emotional distortion of motherhood through erotics of distress (see Figure 1.1). In Chapters 3 and 4, I will offer a more elaborate explanation of this art motif and its constant replay in TV. In film and TV, personifications of the Other—someone relegated to the position of object—are produced through "any sort of doubling, binarism, repetition (with inevitable variation), or reinscription—in short, all forms of multiplication" (Hume 859) (e.g. the super-soldiers in FOX's *The X-Files* or the self in Peele's *Us*). The double

(Figure 1.1: Egon Schiele's painting of the personification of Death desiring a pregnant woman.)

Credit: Egon Schiele; photographic reproduction in the public domain.

attributes any kind of deviation from the patriarchal norm as "eerie, weird, gruesome, feared" (223) or something that ought to be "secret, hidden" (224), "repressed, dead, [or] haunted" (240). In the first section, I investigate how doubling pathologizes female and/or LGBT characters as mentally unstable.

Instability

The most common TV narratives involving characters with mental illness are about crime (see Wilson et al. 1999; Stout, Villegas, and Jennings 2004; Shon and Arrigo 2006; Alexander et al. 2018). These fictional stories depict people suffering from mental illness as unstable, volatile, and dangerous through the lens of criminality. By looking for doubles, mirrors, and other "signs of punishment" (Shon and Arrigo 60), we can think critically about intertextual devices that

"embody, perpetuate, and reify social oppression" (60). The accuracy of these portrayals is questionable because of their exaggerated or ironic nature, but the stigma attached to mental illness in society progresses, so it is important to study even exaggerated or ironic links between mental illness and criminality to better understand how these frequent reflections in TV contribute to harmful stereotypes. The link between violent behaviour and mental illness is magnified in TV. Diefenbach and West's (2007) study finds that "the observed frequency of mentally disordered violent offenders for prime-time TV is nine times higher than the rate in the real world even under conservative assumptions" (187). By addressing the link between media and society, there is an opportunity to determine better ways of portraying characters suffering from mental illness than through restrictive binarisms such as the stalker-crush and fatal-woman doubles. In this section, I draw on the scholarship of Brendan Kelly, Gordon Slethaug, Rosemary Jackson, and other theorists to explore the Freudian theme of instability and detail how doubling represents mental illness as a "sign of [an] internal flaw" (Dolmage 41) rather than as a symptom of past trauma or even popular culture.

Because "TV has been recognized as having a pivotal role in socializing individuals" (Stout, Villegas, and Jennings 544), depictions of mental illness have the potential to shape how viewers understand health, and these images are "generally very negative" (Wilson et al. 232). In their article entitled "The Role of Television in Perceptions of Dangerousness," mental health researchers Alexander et al. explore the role of TV in causing and conserving the stigma of mental illness, noting that, "in order to challenge peoples' negative beliefs and behaviours toward individuals experiencing a mental health condition, it is important to explore where these behaviours emerge and what influences them" (188). The double is a device that arguably "influences this speculation" (188) by framing female and/or LGBT characters through the lens

of dangerousness. TV thus plays a role in perpetuating the idea that people suffering from mental illness are inherently dangerous. To address this stigma, we need to understand the specific doubles that create such ideas of apparent dangerousness. For example, what I call the stalker-crush double thins the line between sexual desire and sexual stalking through *obsessional practices* of excessive desire, voyeurism, or sadomasochism characterized by delusion (Perlman xv). In *Stalker, Hacker, Voyeur, Spy: A Psychoanalytic Study of Erotomania, Voyeurism, Surveillance, and Invasions of Privacy*, clinical psychologist Helen Gediman defines *erotomania* as "the belief in a non-existent romance, which is permeated with unrequited love, loneliness, and revenge" (xxxi). *Orange Is the New Black* is one of the first TV shows to depict erotomania and does so in a storyline about a female stalker. In Gediman's terms, "the lonely woman stalker trying to cope with the torments of erotomania and unrequited love is an image of the presumably promiscuous *femme fatale* sexual behaviour that is often considered a sexual perversion" (xxxviii). Associating mental illness with criminal behaviour sends the message that people who suffer from mental illness are a danger to themselves and society. While negative behaviour is sometimes activated by intense emotions, like the anger stage of grief, the struggle to determine what is real and what is not real can be a symptom of past trauma or even popular culture rather than a sign of apparent dangerousness. Just as "artful speech begins with a gambit designed to deflect suspicion of artfulness" (Woodruff 102), so too does drama TV use the device of the double to deflect suspicion of doubleness. In other words, the double deflects attention away from the causes and treatment of mental health conditions to images of mentally-ill characters as dangerous. More specifically, the stalker-crush double tries to prevent a study of post-traumatic stress, the social system, and other factors contributing to health by calling forth the play of the imagination.

Freud relates the double to repressed fantasy and wish fulfillment (Windsor 42). Fantasy fulfillment is a common characteristic of erotomanic delusional disorder and an underlying motivation for intimacy seeking stalkers (see White et al. 2002; West and Friedman 2008; McEwan et al. 2012; Youngs, Ioannou, and Straszewicz 2013). This type of stalker is "classified based on the desire for intimacy with someone that the stalker identifies as their true love" (West and Friedman 38). White et al. note that "when an intimate bond is threatened, stalkers may escalate attention-seeking behaviours, much as a neglected child might, to re-establish the bond" (172). Such research in the field suggests that a lack of healthy relationships can produce an increased desire for affection, but expressing this wish can escalate to the sphere of risk and even criminal actions. Popular novels (e.g. *Lolita*, *What Was She Thinking? [Notes on a Scandal]*, and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*) and films (e.g. *American Beauty*, *Fatal Attraction*, and *One Hour Photo*) both depict romance as creepy. TV is no exception. In season one of *Orange Is the New Black*, fraudster Lorna Morello (Yael Stone) is portrayed as a bisexual, hopeless romantic, but viewers learn in season two that she suffers from erotomania. In the episode "A Whole Other Hole," Morello drives fellow Litchfield Penitentiary inmate Miss Rosa (Barbara Rosenblat) to the hospital to receive chemotherapy treatment. Instead of waiting in the parking lot and reading gossip magazines, like she usually does, Morello drives to her stalking victim's house and breaks in, forcibly inserting herself into his life. Up to this point, viewers are under the impression that Morello is happily engaged to Christopher MacLaren (Stephen O'Reilly), but learn that she has been stalking him since their first and only date. While lurking around MacLaren's house, Morello finds the wedding garments of his real fiancé. In an attempt to preserve her fantasy of love, she takes a bath wearing the white veil (see Figure 1.2). The stalker-crush double effectively reduces Morello into the old stock of mad lover to reinforce a link between gender

(Figure 1.2: Lorna Morello bathes at her stalking victim's house wearing another person's wedding veil.)

Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

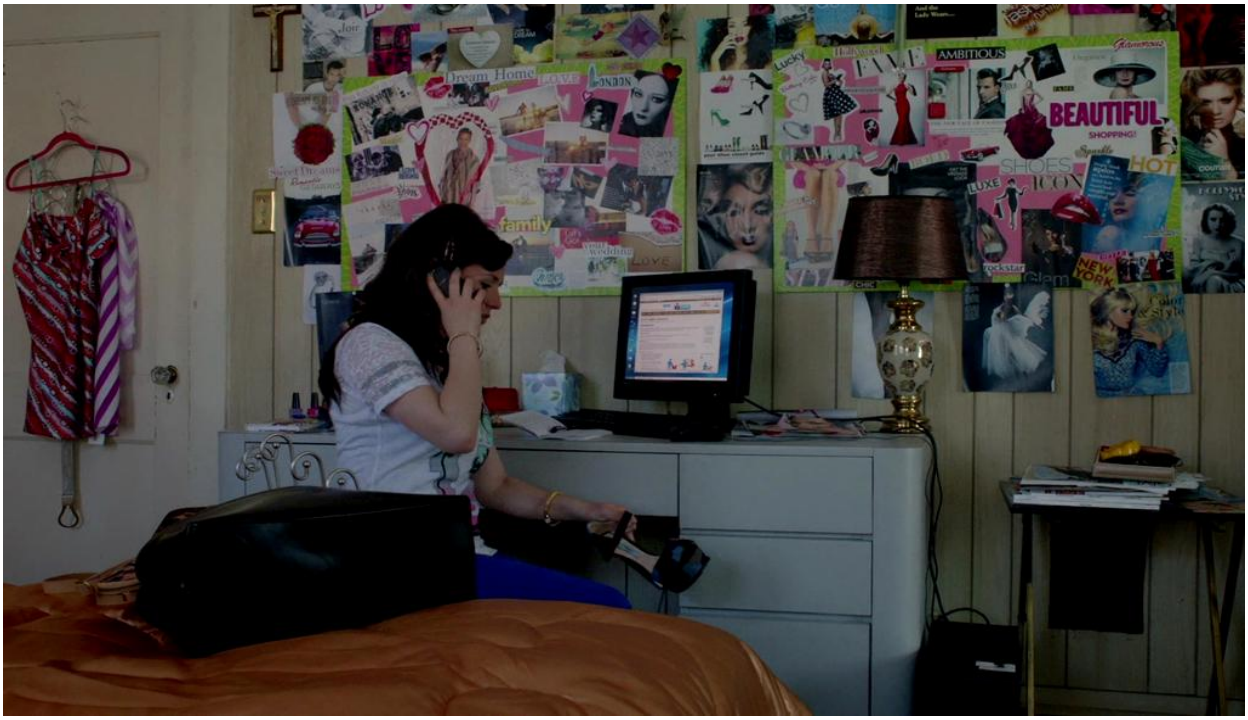
and madness. This intertextual device sheds light on psychosis but not its causes like burnout, neglect, or trauma. There is thus an opportunity for us to talk about the truth that the double tries to hide by looking more closely at the role of intertextuality on perceptions of mental illness.

Provision activities such as emotional support, financial backing, or physical care can produce states of mental exhaustion or emotional distress (see Lindgren 1990; Sharma, Chakrabarti, and Grover 2016; Longacre et al. 2017). This finding suggests that, if coping mechanisms are insufficiently developed, "emotions once aroused can, in turn, affect the cognition or the way in which the person appraises demands and one's coping ability" (Lindgren 470). Internalizing emotions is a risk for survivors of interpersonal trauma and engaging the imagination becomes a way to combat feelings of worthlessness. In his article entitled "Love as Delusion, Delusions of Love: Erotomania, Narcissism, and Shame," psychiatrist Brendan Kelly

refers to this practice of using fantasy activities, like daydreaming, to counterbalance emotional distress as *compensation*:

> Many people who regard themselves as romantically unfulfilled report feeling lonely, ashamed, and even 'defective' as a result. In such circumstances, the delusion of being loved from afar by someone of higher status might replace feelings of low self-esteem or shame with the much-desired belief that one is deeply loved—that is, Kraepelin's idea of erotomania as a compensation for disappointments in life. (17)

With this in mind, it is easy to see how a caregiver who determines that their efforts are not sufficient to fully support their loved one might develop feelings of loneliness, shame, or low self-esteem that could be 'compensated' with obsessive behaviours down the line. This is the case for Morello. In the episode "A Whole Other Hole," a closer look at Morello's childhood reveals how the erotomanic delusions that she experiences as an adult are compensations for interpersonal trauma that she experienced years before. In a flashback sequence, Morello is shown providing constant care for her sickly mother and escaping the stress of caregiving by decorating her bedroom, going to the cinema, and ordering clothes and shoes online (through a mail scam). The biggest clue into her mental state is the way in which her bedroom is styled as a teenage refuge (see Figure 1.3). The photo wall collage is a vision board that helps Morello focus on her life goals of fame, love, and family. In fact, the recurring message in this visual statement is to dream of a beautiful life. Colourful nail polish, patterned hair barrettes, and a neon colour palette are just some of the many indexical signs of attachment to adolescence. The play of the stalker-crush double implies that these signs are indications of an infantile personality, but maybe they represent the hope of a better life after years of neglect. Perhaps the burden of caring for a parent in her childhood leads to an overwhelming desire for security in adulthood.



(Figure 1.3: Morello locks herself in her bedroom and dreams of a better life.)

Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

Caregiver stress is thus the real catalyst for her escalation from fantasy to crime and not, as the double implies, an inherent flaw (which is a cultural myth of femininity and weakness spanning all the way back to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "frailty, thy name is woman!" [1.2.150]) or a perceived dangerousness (which is a biblical myth of femininity and evil spanning all the way back to the Old Testament story of the first woman: "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat" [*King James Bible Online*, Genesis 3.13]).

Slethaug (1993) explores the vast intertextual system in his book entitled *The Play of the Double* and highlights Federman's (1975) early contribution to the field of adaptation theory. Both theorists give an account of intertextual doubling as "a discourse, a dialogue, a multiple conversation between elements of the text and between [other] texts and readers" (Slethaug, *The Play of the Double* 195). The textual system of influence known as intertextual doubling is what

David Coughlan (1997) later calls *textual spatiality*: "the text is the porthole to the space of intertextuality, each text simply one exposed section of a limitless network of other texts which are, some would say, already present within that one text" (116). *Orange Is the New Black* engages in this circular space of textuality and plays off of the most famous story about the fantasy of 'love at first sight'—*Romeo and Juliet*. In the episode "A Whole Other Hole," fantasy and reality align with tragic notes of passion from an adaptation of Shakespeare's play. These familiar notes of love and tragedy are what Morello uses to compose her thoughts and identity. For instance, she mimics the sensational and idealistic notions about love held by Maria (Natalie Wood), a modern-day Juliet Capulet, in the romantic musical film *West Side Story* (see Figure 1.4). Intertextual doubling presents itself through colour by blending images of a white veil with

(Figure 1.4: Maria sees Tony [Richard Beymer] for the first time at the dance at the gym.)

Credit: United Artists; screenshot by author.

red lipstick (Morello) and a white dress with a red sash (Maria) to express the Shakespearean fantasy of love pulled toward tragic loss: "Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed in blood" (3.2.61). The effect of this doubling (or tripling, if you will, between *Romeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story*, and *Orange Is the New Black*) is a constant return to a state of love-tragedy that supports self-deception and delusional beliefs.

Literature and film clearly influence the play of textual threads (see Dunne 2001; Casetti 2004; Murray 2012). If we inspect the arts through an intertextual lens, we find "a network of discourses, their connections and their intersections and, within this network, the coming together and the coming apart of some entities and configurations" (Casetti 89). Amid this collection of discourses is "the narrative pattern of a romantic quest [as] a projection of the human desires for achievement and psychological fulfillment" (Dunne 24). This desire jumps back to Freud's "theory of regression. The 'compulsion to repeat,' to re-experience 'something identical,' even to play the same game again and again, is . . . a part of the uncanny" (Slethaug, *The Play of the Double* 14). *Orange Is the New Black* replays the strong wish for self-fulfillment by intertextually doubling with two romantic comedy films—*Notting Hill* and *Pretty Woman*. The addition of comedy to the love-tragedy genre mix commits Morello's 'unstable' mind to the negative judgments of parody and especially irony (the dramatic effects of which will be explored in Chapter 2). *Parody* happens when "a text confronts itself using its conventions and characteristics to undermine its style, ideas, and issues" (Slethaug, *Adaptation Theory* 29). During a flashback conversation with her older sister Franny (Kristen Sieh), Morello joins together ideas on appearance and identity with the desire for stardom and romance:

> LORNA MORELLO: Christopher likes me to look sophisticated. This is our first weekend away together and we're staying somewhere fancy.

FRANNY MORELLO: Where?

LORNA: I don't know. He has the whole time planned. He is going to take me on a sailboat and then we're going to ride the Ferris Wheel at sunset. I can't believe I met a guy like this, Franny.

FRANNY: You should bring him over for dinner.

LORNA: What, to meet Ma and everybody? Are you crazy? I don't want him getting scared off, okay? He's the one.

FRANNY: You don't know if he's the one until he's met the family. It's like a test.

LORNA: He doesn't need a test, okay? He's my destiny. And, I'm telling you, it was like the movies. Like, you know, in *Notting Hill* where Hugh Grant bumps into Julia Roberts and he spills his orange juice on her? That's what happened to us. We crashed into each other. Literally. I mean, Franny, it was meant to be.

FRANNY: You look cute in that dress.

LORNA: Like *Pretty Woman*?

FRANNY: Yeah, like *Pretty Woman*. ("A Whole Other Hole")

Parody is an intertextual double in the sense that it ties textual and social themes together. Here, the love-tragicomedy tripling spoofs idealistic love, which models instant connection, deep obsession, and the drive to beat insurmountable odds. This is supported by the supernatural mechanism of fate at work in both *Notting Hill* and *Pretty Woman*. But, in this show, the power of fate is a stalker's delusion and the pursuit of love leads to certain woe rather than wedded bliss. While the trauma of her past and her internalization of films do not excuse Morello's criminal offences, they do shed light on the psychology behind her identity development and the parodic doubles and discourses that influence how she thinks about herself. To further

understand how femininity and dangerousness are conjoined in drama TV, it is important to keep examining classical devices like the double that script women as inherently "bad, mad, or sad" (Estrada, Nilsson, and Pettersson 141).

Depictions of psychopathy in females date back to Greek mythology (e.g. Aphrodite, Medea, and Hera) (Forouzan and Cooke 765), but film and TV also feature female characters with one or more of the psychopathic traits of "superficial charm, manipulation, lack of empathy for others, and lack of conscience" (Cerny, Friedman, and Smith 234) (e.g. the Marquise de Merteuil [Glenn Close] in Frears' *Dangerous Liaisons*, Lady Sarah [Rachel Weisz] in Lanthimos' *The Favourite*, and Annalise Keating [Viola Davis] in ABC's *How to Get Away with Murder*). Doubling and mirroring are terms that account for this long history of portraying women holding power over each other in political environments. Philosopher Mladen Dolar contemplates between the gap of Freudian doubling and Lacanian mirroring and suggests that "the mirror image is myself and at the same time the Other, and therefore all the more alien; since it constitutes my narcissistic homeliness, at the closest to my core, it is all the more threatening" (136). In her book entitled *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, literary theorist Rosemary Jackson argues that the double is a mirror that "presents images of the self in another space (both familiar and unfamiliar). The mirror provides versions of self transformed into another, becoming something or someone else" (51). The classic fatal-woman (femme fatale) double from film noir has a big presence in drama TV and represents female power on the same line as instability, aggression, and manipulation (Cerny, Friedman, and Smith 234). *House of Cards* uses the fatal-woman double to explore myths about career ambition and motherhood that shape beliefs about who leadership is for. In the episode "Chapter 14," Claire Underwood (Robin Wright) confronts her former employee Gillian Cole (Sandrine Holt), who was fired from her

position as CEO of the Clean Water Initiative after disclosing her geriatric pregnancy (see Figure 1.5). Cole files a wrongful termination lawsuit against Mrs. Underwood, citing pregnancy

(Figure 1.5: Claire Underwood threatens a sickly and pregnant Gillian Cole after being sued.)

Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

discrimination, and advocates for health insurance to access the medication that she needs to ensure a safe pregnancy. Mrs. Underwood counters with a direct lethal threat: "Have you thought this out? Because when we go to court in six months—you're expecting in four, no?—that's four months without the medicine you need. I'm willing to let your child wither and die inside you if that's what's required" ("Chapter 14"). This depiction of psychopathy relies on the fatal-woman double because it weaponizes the female body. And, because viewers are aware that Mrs. Underwood had three abortions to pursue her political career, Cole is a mirror character that represents an alternate path she did not take and an alternate self she did not become; this calls forth the myth that working women must postpone or forego motherhood to excel in their

careers. Stretching from myth to media is thus an underlying dimension of estrangement that speaks to a sense of distance from the mind but also from the self. In the next section, I approach the double as a device of isolation and alienation from mind, self, and society to gain a better understanding of how doubleness works to confine LGBT characters.

Confinement

Alienation is a concept with deep roots in criminology, psychology, and sociology (see Rhodes 2004; Wener 2012; TenHouten 2017; Rayce et al. 2018), but there is room in English studies to investigate the textual devices that facilitate "Seeman's (1959) six variants of alienation: powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, self-estrangement, cultural estrangement, and social isolation" (Rayce et al. 2). The fourth variant of alienation makes a common appearance in visual texts. Not feeling at home with yourself or in your mind is a construction of the idea of *self-estrangement*, which is

> (i) a failure to satisfy fundamental human needs; (ii) an inability to engage in activities that are intrinsically rewarding; (iii) a sense that the actual self is not the ideal or moral self to which they aspired; (iv) a loss of a true, authentic self, or the sense that one possesses a false self; (v) loss of knowledge of what one's true self might be; (vi) a loss of memories or biographical episodes that have been significant to one's life and formation of one's present self; or (vii) a loss of a feeling of self-efficacy. (TenHouten 92)

Experiencing a loss of one's sense of self is facilitated through the theme of confinement in drama TV. In this context, doubleness draws LGBT characters to the outskirts of society or inside of themselves. This is what I call the out-in double. Film director Paul Auster's theory of the uncanny as the unhomely sheds light on the persistent despair that accompanies prolonged estrangement from the self:

> It would be impossible to say that we are not haunted. Freud has described such experiences as 'uncanny' or *unheimlich*—the opposite of *heimlich*, which means 'belonging to the home.' The implication . . . is that we are thrust out from the protective shell of our habitual perceptions, as though we were suddenly outside ourselves, adrift in a world we do not understand. By definition, we are lost in that world. . . . Unhomeness, therefore, is a memory of another, much earlier home of the mind. (qtd. in Rubenstein 250–251)

Orange Is the New Black and *House of Cards* associate the out-in double with the Freudian theme of confinement to closet LGBT characters in 'protective' environments 'for their own safety.' Some might argue that secure settings are meant to protect people, but solitary confinement does not rehabilitate people—"it violates the boundaries of human dignity and justice" (Bowers et al. 2). When LGBT characters are treated as bodies without selves, they are held captive in a "narrative of disappearance" (Ampu 114). And, while the accuracy of these portrayals of self-estrangement are questionable in the sense that they are hyperbolical and intertextual in nature, forcibly closeting LGBT characters sends a negative message to viewers about how gender and sexuality are expressed at the institutional and political levels. To consider the Freudian theme of confinement, I draw on scholarship from the National Centre for Transgender Equality, Christine Horton, Emma Power, and others to analyze the solitary confinement of a lesbian transwoman and the domestic confinement of a lesbian sex worker to discuss how the double serves to isolate and alienate LGBT characters.

Gender and sexual minority inmates are at a higher risk for victimization, punishment, and isolation leading to mental health problems than their cis and heterosexual counterparts (see Casella and Ridgeway 2016; Meyer et al. 2017; the National Centre for Transgender Equality

2019). Increasingly, LGBT inmates are punished through severe forms of segregation (Meyer et al. 272). In their report entitled *LGBT People Behind Bars: A Guide to Understanding the Issues Facing Transgender Prisoners and Their Legal Rights*, the National Centre for Transgender Equality examines the rise of punitive confinement for gender and sexual minority inmates:

> LGBT prisoners face many forms of mistreatment behind bars. Many face constant humiliation and degradation from staff and prisoners alike. Staff, who are often responsible for perpetuating abuse themselves, may blame LGBT prisoners for their own victimization, believing they are 'flaunting themselves' and refusing to take grievances or reports of abuse seriously. If their vulnerability is recognized at all, it may be by placing them in indefinite solitary confinement, with little or no activity or human contact—conditions that can cause serious psychological harm and trauma, and which, as medical and human rights experts have found, can amount to torture. (6)

Casella and Ridgeway confirm that "the clinical impacts of isolation can be similar to those of physical torture. People subjected to solitary confinement exhibit a variety of negative physiological and psychological reactions, including depression, weight loss, problems sleeping, and self-mutilation" (11). TV depictions of punishment in prison do not always take into account issues of gender and sexuality. For example, the out-in double functions to alienate and segregate the only trans character in *Orange Is the New Black.* Can you imagine "being locked down for 22–24 hours a day in a small cell with very little human interaction or activity of any kind" (The National Centre for Transgender Equality 14)? Punitive confinement undoubtedly inflicts real psychological damage by erasing all sense of time, world, and self.

In her dissertation entitled *Defining the Undefinable: Rhetorics of Democratic ~~Torture~~ Interrogation*, rhetoric scholar Christine Horton describes the dissolving effect of silence upon

identity: “sensory deprivation techniques are intended to induce a state of ‘capture-shock’ to maintain the individual in a holding pattern in an unfamiliar context. Without the resources to orient oneself (i.e. the senses), identity unravels and individuality becomes unhinged, making a more compliant subject” (138–139). While it is true that *Orange Is the New Black* often parodies LGBT experiences in prison, it does not necessarily follow that pattern in the episode “Don’t Make Me Come Back There” because its depiction of a transwoman sent to solitary confinement bears no clear “element of difference between text and target” (King 114). In her canonical essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey coins the term *scopophilia* to describe this viewing practice of “taking other people as objects and subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze” (14). In this installment, three inmates confront lesbian transwoman Sophia Burset (Laverne Cox) in the prison hair salon and make transphobic remarks before physically attacking her:

> REEMA PELL (Mugga): Spanish Harlem been saying how you still got your dick. That true?
>
> SOPHIA BURSET: What you got between your legs is your business and what I got is mine.
>
> PELL: Maybe, but my man is out at Lexington and he’s having a real hard time. Hard. Meanwhile, you hiding out in here, pretending to be female.
>
> GABBY CAMARENA (Samantha Maisano): Seems like you got it all figured out.
>
> BURSET: You have any idea how ignorant you sound?
>
> CAMARENA: We just want a little peek. Educate ourselves.
>
> BURSET: Get the fuck out of my house.
>
> PELL: Not till we see it.

CAMARENA: Get her! Get her!

PELL: [Attacks.] Fuck you, she-male! (“Don’t Make Me Come Back There”)

In this scene, the trans body is disciplined through genitally-suggestive words such as dick, hard, and peek. Pell and Camarena use sexualized language in an attempt to disaffirm trans identity and downplay their use of physical force. Also, rather than take Burset to the medical unit to receive treatment for her injuries, Assistant to the Warden Joe Caputo (Nick Sandow) orders her confinement in a Security Housing Unit (SHU) ‘for her own protection’ (see Figure 1.6). This

(Figure 1.6: Sophia Burset is confined in a Security Housing Unit after being physically attacked for being trans.) Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

play of the out-in double—an out transwoman closeted in a SHU—actualizes the ‘trapped in the wrong body’ theory of gender dysphoria, which “involves a misalignment between gender identity and the sexed body” (Bettcher 383). The ‘wrong body’ model captures a right-wrong binary of sex as male or female with no identities allowed across, between, or beyond this

system. Additionally, the out-in double displays the trans body as if through a nurse's window in a psychiatric hospital. This medicalization of the gaze pathologizes the trans body as "a problem of the mind" (383). All told, the out-in double closets the trans body in a torture box, enmeshing the experience of oneself in pain and suffering to effectively destroy personhood. While some might argue that the parodic mode comments on the problem of solitary confinement, it is dehumanizing to draw an image of torture to make this comment about the mistreatment of LGBT people behind bars. I will further explore psychiatric segregation in Chapter 2 and the medicalization of torture in Chapter 3, but turn now to an analysis of how the out-in double is an agent of alienation from society or self in the domestic environment. *House of Cards* explores coercion in the Rachel Posner (Rachel Brosnahan) storyline about a lesbian sex worker confined in an apartment under the threat of violence.

Violence is the central frame through which sex workers are symbolized in popular culture and this includes forms of domination and dehumanization (see O'Neill 2001; Coy, Wakeling, and Garner 2011; van der Meulen and Durisin 2019). Female sex workers have a long history of being relegated to the outskirts of society in both fiction and reality for their perceived "moral decay" (van der Meulen and Durisin 28). In fact, "the designation of women in prostitution as 'Other' and 'lesser' has been cited as justification [for their deaths] by serial murderers (Smith 1990; Salfati, James, and Ferguson 2008)" (Coy, Wakeling, and Garner 443). Depictions of female sex workers that assign them "temporary identities" (442) uphold the objectification of their bodies. Even if irony revisits the horrors of objectification, media reductions of bodies to objects still tie vulnerable characters to the state of liminality, and this makes it much more difficult for viewers to see them as human beings with personal identity and inherent worth. *House of Cards* explores the out-in doubling effect in "Chapter 14" when the use

of threats and force make a lesbian sex worker feel socially isolated and estranged from herself. In this installment, Doug Stamper (Michael Kelly) visits Posner at her new job as a server at an upscale restaurant to coerce her into domestic confinement under the threat of attack (see Figure 1.7):

(Figure 1.7: Rachel Posner pretends to take Doug Stamper's order while he coerces her into domestic confinement.) Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

RACHEL POSNER: What are you doing here?

DOUG STAMPER: Ask me what I want to order.

POSNER: Have you decided, sir?

STAMPER: I need you to quit your job. Tell Leon it's your last day.

POSNER: Why?

STAMPER: Act normal.

POSNER: Do you want a side with that?

STAMPER: They found you once. We can't take the chance they'll find you again.

POSNER: What am I supposed to—

STAMPER: Do as I say. Go home and pack your things. I'll come by around 10:00pm.

POSNER: But, I don't get a say in—

STAMPER: Stop it! One suitcase. That's it.

POSNER: Can you at least tell me—

STAMPER: I'll take the shepherd's pie with a side of Brussels sprouts. To go. ("Chapter 14")

In this scene, the out-in double is exercised through the hidden manipulation techniques of "gaslighting" (R. Stern 4) ('Act normal') and authoritative order ('Do as I say') to push an LGBT character transitioning out of sex work into the outskirts of society. Also known as "thought-reform, mind-control, or brainwashing" (Dorpat xxi), psychoanalysts repeatedly stress that "gaslighting is insidious—it plays on our worst fears, our most anxious thoughts, and our deepest wishes to be understood, appreciated, and loved" (R. Stern 4–5). Posner questions the credibility of Stamper's order ('What am I supposed to—,' 'But, I don't get a say in—,' and 'Can you at least tell me—'), but is coerced into a state of confusion and, ultimately, disorientation out of fear that 'they'—Frank Underwood (Kevin Spacey) and his cronies—will hunt her down and kill her. Moreover, forced relocation to an isolated place imagines home and identity as sites of instability and connects the familiar to nonbeing.

Home and identity are closely linked (see Carson 2005; Robinson 2011; Power 2016). Being at home is not merely a concept of place (home as residence or community) but also a feeling of being at home with oneself. Experiencing a lack of being at home is thus not only a physical but existential phenomenon related to a strong desire for peace—freedom,

independence, and belonging. In her book chapter entitled "Households and Neighbourhoods," culture and society researcher Emma Power notes that

> our social identities can affect our sense of home and impact the ways that we make home. Further, what we consider to be 'homey' is shaped by our culture and our social location. Likewise, identity is shaped by home: the experiences that we have at home and the ways that we make home are connected to the performance of different social identities. For example, . . . the loss of home can give people a sense of being lost. (87–88)

The experience of home—the most familiar place of all—as a loss of identity and belonging is, unmistakeably, the mark of the uncanny. In *Being and Time,* German philosopher Martin Heidegger describes uncanniness [*Unheimlichkeit*] as the expression of not-being-at-home [*Un-zuhause*] and anxiety as the primary mode of attunement or feeling of the uncanny (182–183). Feelings of apprehension, fear, and danger toward home and self produced through semiotics of disorientation assemble "identity [as] hidden or disguised within the architecture and furniture of the interior" (Carson 246). *House of Cards* uses the out-in double to make a claim about the influence of the (outer) environment upon the (inner) self. In the episode "Chapter 14," Stamper forcibly relocates Posner from Washington DC to an apartment in Joppa, Maryland (see Figure 1.8). The apartment purposefully lacks standard markers of identity such as art, colour, and personal objects to neutralize all sense of life before the move. Home interior colours and objects express an absence of personal happiness and history. The environment ascribes a temporary identity to its inhabitant, creating an atmosphere of disorientation rendered through confusion, terror, and helplessness. In this way, the space between exterior and interior closes through the strategy of cooperation. Further, the somber mood of the neutral apartment is similar in style to the grim mood of Dickens' interior setting; both moods represent the state of mind of their

(Figure 1.8: Posner cries in the neutral apartment that she is forcibly confined in.)

Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

domestic "angels" (Robson 312). *House of Cards* thus enters into an intertextual double with *A Tale of Two Cities* and this dialogue produces a surplus of meaning.

Intertextual doubling has the effect of oscillating from one text to another so that the textual system is open to new readings of old narrative functions and permits the slippage between what has been seen and what can be seen (see Sanders 2007; Parody 2011; Hutcheon 2013). In her prize-winning essay entitled "Franchising/Adaptation," transmedia theorist Clare Parody envisions an intertextual system of "co-existing, overlapping, and even contradictory narrative realities rather than a master narrative and stable textual corpus" (212). The 'instability' of the textual corpus is what Julie Sanders calls the textual impulse to re-evaluate, revise, or rewrite (18). Today, this impulse is known as "interpretive doubling" (Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* 139), which describes "a conceptual flipping back and forth between the work we

know and the work we are experiencing" (139). *House of Cards* flips back and forth to *A Tale of Two Cities* to produce apprehensions and instabilities that map the uncanny. Through the incestuous undertones of the Stamper/Posner relationship, as expressed through daughter-lover, mother-lover, and father-daughter doubles, viewers' "attention is thus focused on this strong and obscure sentiment which is the *strangeness* of the anxiety [*l'étrange de l'inquiétude*]: the lure of the enigmatic" (Cixous 26). Intersecting themes of family and sex externalize incestuous guilt into a game of mixed desires. In the episode "Chapter 24," Stamper shares his 'recovery' story during an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting and elucidates that his addiction is rooted in both the familial and the unknowable:

> There's this person. She's not even in my life, except on the edges, making things blurrier. It doesn't tempt me to drink. It's more like she feels like what it was like when I was drinking—when I couldn't get enough. No matter how many drinks I had, I wanted another. I don't want to be with her. I mean, I do. But, it's more like she's my daughter or my mother. I don't know. This is fucked up. ("Chapter 24")

When one of the most familiar things of all—the experience of family—manoeuvres into the area of strangeness, a state of anxiety becomes habituated, and this carries forward to another scene of forced confinement in the episode "Chapter 23." In this installment, Stamper locks Posner inside of his car until she agrees to read aloud the famous opening lines of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (see Figure 1.9):

> DOUG STAMPER: Will you read to me?
>
> RACHEL POSNER: My Bible is inside.
>
> STAMPER: Doesn't have to be the Bible. Just pull up something on your phone.
>
> POSNER: Like what?

(Figure 1.9: Stamper locks Posner in his car until she reads from Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*.)

Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

> STAMPER: *A Tale of Two Cities*. My mom used to read it to me.
>
> POSNER: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.' ("Chapter 23")

The ambiguity of these lines characterizes Stamper and Posner through the lens of historical fiction to closely tie their circumstances to the power of fate. Stamper envisions himself as a literary figure in a political commentary—the Sydney Carton of the Capitol. Like the 'jackal' of London, Stamper is a double of shrewd 'Klipsting,' a self-loathing alcoholic with a deep obsession for kind-hearted Lucie Manette. In this Dickensian double-code, Posner and Manette

are doubles in the sense that they share the same goal of escaping the margins of society. Quite heroically, Posner manages to escape the incestuous father-daughter relationship by bludgeoning Stamper with a rock in the episode "Chapter 26," but her storyline ends in death. In the episode "Chapter 39," Stamper tracks, kills, and buries his daughter-lover in the New Mexico desert. From an intertextual stance, the fate of this domestic angel is set from the start through literary and figurative references. In the next section, I will continue studying death as the master double.

Death

Freud teaches that the double manifests as "reflections in mirrors, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul, and with the fear of death" (234). In fact, "many people experience the feeling [of the uncanny] in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to a return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts" (240). Jackson pushes the Freudian definition of the double further by reasoning that "most versions of the double terminate with the madness, suicide, or death of the divided subject: 'self' cannot be united with 'other' without ceasing to be. Hence, perhaps, their violence . . . [or] dynamic stasis" (52). Drama TV reflects death and dying as the ultimate fate for female and/or LGBT characters. *Orange Is the New Black* and *House of Cards* keep alive the death impulse through what I call the disposable-woman, good-evil, and dead-queer doubles. Images of suicide and murder merge into a single vision of female and/or LGBT characters as disposable, demonic, or dead. Although I concede that the purpose of the tragic mode is to draw attention to social problems or human issues, I wonder about the line between lesson and spectacle and if it has been crossed, at times, in these shows. In this section, I study the death drive of the double. To consider the Freudian theme of death, I draw on the scholarship of Joanne Clarke Dillman, GLAAD, Jay Dolmage, and other

theorists to provide a focused analysis of dying and discuss how doubling pitches female and/or LGBT characters into spatialities of evil or death—the Gorgon or the stone.

TV regularly arranges bodies as spectacles (see Davis and Needham 2009; Clarke Dillman 2014; Jermyn 2017). Looking at human bodies with abjection only perpetuates a culture of violence. In her book entitled *Women and Death in Film, Television, and News*, film and cultural scholar Joanne Clarke Dillman describes the disciplinary purpose of images of dying or dead women, arguing that "dead women's bodies echo and visually intensify a discourse that posits women as disposable and replaceable" (2). This is what I call the disposable-woman double. The question of agency is at hand: How can female and/or LGBT characters have agency when they are resigned to the fate of death? As we will see, female and/or LGBT characters are still interchangeable with the spectacle and the disposable-woman double reinforces spatialities of exhibition, evil, and nonexistence. The relation between crime, drama, and space is best understood through the dramatic concept of "the theatre of death" (Twitchin 17) or an intermedial environment that produces "the uncanny in mimesis" (17). *Orange Is the New Black* tries "to put the victim . . . back into the analysis of violent death" (Steenberg, "A Pathological Romance" 18) through the use of flashbacks, but still circulates the discourse of women as disposable, albeit in an effort to highlight prison brutality. In the episode "Bora, Bora, Bora," lesbian inmate Tricia Miller (Madeline Brewer) returns from drug rehabilitation treatment with the hope of rejoining her pseudo-family, only to be shunned for breaking 'prison mommy' Galina 'Red' Reznikov's (Kate Mulgrew) no-drugs rule. A flashback sequence reveals why the concept of family is so important to Miller. Just a teenager, she takes to the streets to escape the abuse of her rapist stepfather and steals only the items (e.g. cash, clothes, etc) that she needs to survive, meticulously keeping track of debts owed—"I'm no thief. I settle my debts" ("Bora,

Bora, Bora"). There is room here for a story of healing justice and rehabilitation, but the disposable-woman double serves to literally closet this show's youngest queer female character.

In his book entitled *Closet Space: Geographies of Metaphor from the Body to the Globe*, gender and geography scholar Michael Brown argues that there is "a tendency in queer theory to conceptualize the closet as an aspatial force" (3) or metaphorical space "that conceals, erases, and makes gay people invisible and unknown" (141). *Orange Is the New Black* interprets the closet as a real site of oppression where the queer body is tortured or killed at any cost and this fact points to an actual spatiality of death in TV. GLAAD reports that, "since the beginning of 2016, more than 25 queer female characters have died on scripted television and streaming series. Most of these deaths served no other purpose than to further the narrative of a more central (and often straight, cisgender) character" (2017: 3). Their latest report finds that LGBT characters account for only 10.2% of the pool of primetime regulars (2020: 6). That means that the death of even one of these characters is deeply felt. Although I grant that LGBT visibility in media has increased over the years, I still maintain that drama TV's diversity is performative at times. For example, a developing trend is to depict closeted LGBT characters rather than showing out LGBT characters experiencing a climate of inclusion (e.g. *The Exorcist*'s Katherine Rance [Brianne Howey], *13 Reasons Why*'s Courtney Crimsen [Michele Selene Ang], and *Shades of Blue*'s Lieutenant Matt Wozniak [Ray Liotta]). A more established trend is to make them die (e.g. *Chicago Fire*'s Leslie Shay [Lauren German]). In the episode "Bora, Bora, Bora," the established trend appears when Miller overdoses on the Oxycontin corrections officer George 'Pornstache' Mendez (Pablo Schreiber) forces upon her, and she dies on the grimy floor of a prison closet (see Figure 1.10). Mendez transforms her suspicious death into a suicide to allay blame. In this scene, the queer body is disposed of to empower a straight man, and "death is

(Figure 1.10: George Mendez finds Tricia Miller dead in a prison closet from his forced drug overdose.)

Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

constructed as a consequence of lesbian identity" (Ruderman-Looff 493). Drama TV's spatiality of death is harmful because LGBT characters, who are barely visible in prime-time, are rendered totally invisible—ghosts returning to the afterlife.

The oldest spectre haunts the screen—the spectre of death (see Luckhurst 1999; Sconce 2000; Blanco and Peeren 2013). In media history, "telephones, radios, and computers have been 'possessed' by 'ghosts in the machine,' the technologies serving as either uncanny electronic agents or as gateways to electronic otherworlds" (Sconce 4). It will come to be very evident in Chapter 4 when I examine *The X-Files* how technologies serve the uncanny. Here, I want to evoke the psychoanalytic model of *transference* (*Übertragung*). In psychoanalysis, transference refers to repetition (of earlier experiences) and reflection (in later experiences). The key point here is a symbolic return to the deep space of fear. In his article entitled "'Something

Tremendous, Something Elemental': On the Ghostly Origins of Psychoanalysis," literary theorist Roger Luckhurst explores the psychoanalytic model of "transference [which], like the dead, operates on an originary *coming back*: the 'stereotype plates' . . . [that] turn everything ghostly" (62). Luckhurst writes,

> Haunting glides between the literal and metaphoric, at once joining and separating 'proper' psychoanalysis with its outside. But the ghost, the spectre simultaneously at the edges and central to psychoanalysis, is not only a spatial disturbance of the limit; it also causes *temporal* disadjustments. . . . 'Is there a present of the spectre?' . . . As Derrida suggests, the ghost intersects and divides contemporaneity with a double gesture that invaginates the past and future into the present. (62)

Returns to the spectre disrupt time. Within the scope of intertextuality, this means there is no present text in the sense that it is always intersecting, dividing, and doubling with everything before and after. *House of Cards* comes back to the original fear—the possibility of death—in a storyline about what feminist psychoanalytic theorists call "the spectral mother" (Sprengnether 11). In this show, what I refer to as the good-evil double sets the scene of spectrality or haunting through gestures to the angelic and the demonic.

Transferring from film into TV is a fight between the powers of good and evil. William Friedkin's (1973) classic film *The Exorcist* shares an intersecting path with *House of Cards* through an enduring spotlight on the mother figure. The appeal of the intertextual double is supportive in this respect because both visual texts signal to "the field of what is frightening" (Freud 218). Returns to classic fears, like death and disease, are precisely what keep the ghosts in the screen alive and the double in frenzied reproduction. In his article entitled "The Ego, The Ocular, and the Uncanny: Why Are Metaphors of Vision Central in Accounts of the Uncanny?"

medical anthropologist Sadeq Rahimi argues that one text transfers a sense of the uncanny to another through the specular motif of intertextual doubling:

> Ghosts and doppelgangers, automatons and living dolls, mirror images, shadows, phantoms, twins, apparitions, looking-glass worlds, déjà vu, alter-egos, self-alienated or split personhoods, these all share the basic feature of a doubleness imposed on a presumably unique original object, and the in-between liminality resulting from that process, and they also all share an ocular genesis. Let us not forget that the concept of 'uncanny' is constructed on the play of duplication and authenticity insofar as it is indicative of that which is the same yet not fully so, that which is familiar yet not entirely so. (94)

Rahimi's attention to 'the in-between liminality' ensuing from the intertextual process is key, I think, because it points to a kind of third space forming in the middle of the seen and the unseen—the space of death and dying or 'that which is familiar yet not entirely so.' In the Elizabeth Hale (Ellen Burstyn) storyline, the good-evil double manifests an angel/demon binary that revels in dis-ease. In the episode "Chapter 49," Mrs. Underwood pays a visit to her childhood home in Dallas, Texas with her lover Tom Yates (Paul Sparks). She confronts her mother, who has cancer, and administers a lethal dose of morphine to gain sympathy votes. Film techniques such as density filtering and underexposure enhance the illusion of night in talking scenes between mother and daughter to foreshadow death as a darkening presence that settles indoors. In a harrowing scene, Hale rips off a black head wrap to expose her bald head, enraged by her daughter's insinuation that she is helpless (see Figure 1.11). Viewers familiar with Burstyn's other mother role as Chris MacNeil in *The Exorcist* will experience the overwhelming sensation that evil is omnipresent in the Hale household—an absorbing darkness that feels

(Figure 1.11: Elizabeth Hale refutes Underwood's claim that she is helpless.)

Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

demonic. Burstyn's unhinged portrayal of a spectral mother plays homage to the idea of a family possessed by evil. This take on disease as demonic makes a public experience of the disabled body and creates a scenario in which a real or symbolic exorcism (killing the demonic) must be performed to restore the balance between good and evil. It is no mistake that Mrs. Underwood ('the angel') describes her mother ('the demon') as "miserable and hurt by the light" ("Chapter 49"). This intentional provocation of demonic possession questions the moral aptitude of people with disabilities and stereotypes them as evil and weak. Yates' nagging attendance as 'the priest' thus appeals for the rite—a cleansing from sin.

The notion that death is a mirror of sin is a sign of cultural and social beliefs about the metaphysical being (see Becker 1975; Arenas 2011; Sutton 2014; Dolmage 2014). Chronically ill or disabled bodies have long been doubled with sin and depravity through old cultural notions

(Sutton 88). In his book entitled *Disability Rhetoric*, disability rights scholar Jay Dolmage argues that these notions derive from the disability myth of "kill-or-cure" (39):

> A disabled character will either have to be 'killed or cured' by the end of any movie or novel in which they appear. This death or cure will often seem to 'redeem' a protagonist—the death will be sacrificial or the cure will be credited to the hero. Adding some nuance to this formula, Snyder and Mitchell (2006) suggest that the 'resolution' of disability in a comedy film will be humiliation, in a horror film obliteration, and in a melodrama compensation (188). . . . The kill-or-cure myth also inflects current abortion and euthanasia debates and contemporary genetic science: society views disability as something that must be eradicated. (39)

On seeing the disabled body, Mrs. Underwood thinks of her mother as a monster—something inhuman—and transfers the problem of securing campaign votes into the space of death as the cure for her problem. Hale's body becomes a spectacle of imagined sin. Whatever hope was held that death would not be Hale's fate is lost when Mrs. Underwood punctuates how 'convenient' it would be for her mother to die at a time when she needed public sympathy. To glance at the deathbed, it seems an intimate and private space of respect, but the figures of attendant 'angel' and 'priest' evoke both sides of the kill-or-cure formula—the killing of the body to cure the spirit (see Figure 1.12). Even the room has a dark edge of moral decay. The good-evil double manifests by the play of light and dark. Intertextuality works through the metaphor of light versus dark to echo spatialities of sin in *The Exorcist*. For example, even the lamplight pays homage to the bedside table lamps in Regan MacNeil's (Linda Blair) bedroom, the kind that allow for so many shadows, such that the disabled body lives under the shadow of darkness in a room blocked from sunlight. Here, the uncanny binds to the atmosphere and incarnates a silent,

(Figure 1.12: Underwood and Tom Yates administer a lethal dose of morphine to Hale.)

Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

unseen, watching presence of the demonic commonly associated with American supernatural horror films that 'resolve' disability through obliteration.

Death and destruction are also how the queer body is 'resolved' in drama TV (see Campbell and Carilli 2013; Elliott-Smith 2016; Clark 2020). Understandings of LGBT identity orientated toward wickedness spring from the lens of tragedy. This tragic configuration of LGBT characters persistently engaged in evil forms a theme of immorality that refuses a positive image of queerness. In their book entitled *Queer Media Images: LGBT Perspectives*, communication scholars Jane Campbell and Theresa Carilli explore how LGBT people are represented on screen, finding that "dominant images equate queerness with death—whether through suicide or homicide" (44). *Orange Is the New Black* is a show with significant queer representation and powerful storytelling. However, it occasionally presents LGBT characters as villainous.

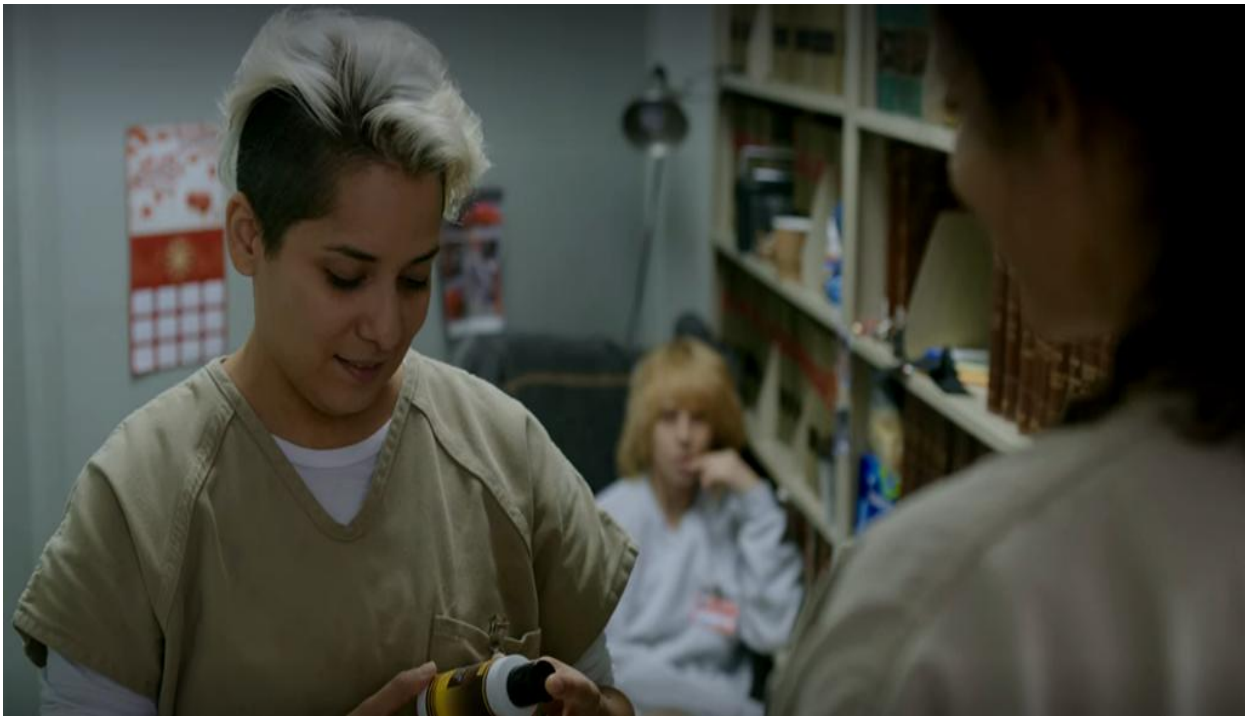
Conventionally, a villain must be defeated, and the way you defeat a villain in most stories is by killing them. This turns into a TV convention in which the queer body, like the disabled body, is presumed bad and in need of purification. In Drama Studies, "the idea of *catharsis* implies some kind of purification" (Leech 48). Renowned theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann explains that "catharsis is a kill-or-cure remedy, so to speak: grievous woe and fearful terror. Tragedy works in the manner of a *pharmakon*: in keeping with the double meaning of the Greek word, it is a poison that triggers a heavy affective fever; at the same time, it is also a medicine" (165). Catharsis is often associated with "a moment of joy" (161), but it can also be interpreted as "a purging action" (160) that, from an Adornian view, "represses, moderates, rationalizes, and controls" (160). Therefore, I think it is important to examine doubling as a purging action attended by the kill-or-cure remedy.

Poison is "a marker for the strange and outlandish . . . [or] a highly unpredictable form of violence—one that, both symbolically and materially, precipitates blunders, magnifies errors, and instigates fantastic breakdowns between intention and action" (M. Wilson 99). The poison motif is especially present in Renaissance texts (e.g. Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, etc), but drama TV is also starting to engage in the spectacle of revenge through the use of poison. This puts into question the force of justice. The biggest problem with the revenge plot is that it is only through death that justice is served. Revenge and murder are yoked together to emphasize workings and exactions of punishment. *Orange Is the New Black* eventually settles on murder by poison as punishment for infidelity. What I call the dead-queer double comes into play by equating queerness with lethal vengeance. Freud's unheimlich is the term at hand for "that which ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light" (224). In the episode "The Beginning is the End," bigender inmate Dominga 'Daddy' Duarte

(Vicci Martinez) is poisoned by their lover, bisexual inmate Dayanara 'Daya' Diaz (Dascha Polanco). In this installment, Duarte and Diaz run a drug operation in Litchfield's maximum security unit until new competitor, Annalisa Damiva (Christina Toth), starts selling her own supply. Duarte has sex with Damiva to gain her allegiance. As Duarte's girlfriend, Diaz sees this hookup as the ultimate betrayal:

> DOMINGA 'DADDY' DUARTE: This is all part of the plan, baby.
>
> DAYANARA 'DAYA' DIAZ: I knew you were fucking cheating on me.
>
> DADDY: You're not listening. This was business. We want her selling for us, not herself.
>
> DAYA: I put myself at risk, my family, and this is how you do me? You were supposed to scare her, not fuck her.
>
> DADDY: I pivoted. ("The Beginning is the End")

Diaz believes that this apology lacks remorse. With the goal of making Duarte feel the pain of their betrayal, Diaz laces a bottle of prison wine with fentanyl and gifts it to them (see Figure 1.13). Just as the apology fails, so too does the revenge plan. The plan to poison Duarte, but not kill them, fails when they suffer from a seizure and die from an overdose-gone-wrong. The majority of Duarte's body is held out of the camera's focus, except for their legs, which shake and then still. From betrayal to revenge is a line of connection to punishment that attempts to make Duarte's murder seem justified. And so, the problem with the visual theme of revenge in a LGBT storyline is its meditation on death as the kill-or-cure remedy to queerness. Witnessing the reduction of a bigender character to poison, seizure, and stillness quickly opens their death to parody or an imitation of physicality in Renaissance texts—like Spenser's Errour, half-serpent and half-woman, "Therewith she spewd out of her filthy maw / a floud of poyson horrible and blacke" (1.1.20). Duarte's identity as two genders or double genders in the context of



(Figure 1.13: Dayanara ‘Daya’ Diaz [right] gifts her partner Dominga ‘Daddy’ Duarte fentanyl-laced prison wine.)

Credit: Netflix; screenshot by author.

Renaissance physicality takes on a monstrous discourse associated with a lack of goodness or purity. Obviously, the kind of intertextual doubling happening here between revenge tragedies reinforces the myth that people who fall under the trans umbrella (e.g. trans, multigender, nonbinary, etc) are not ‘real’ men or not ‘real’ women, which enforces the gender binary. The dead-queer double is so dangerous because it not only pulls LGBT characters toward the fate of death but it also picks apart the validity of queer identities.

Conclusion

In sum, the intertextual double is an artistic, literary, cinematic, and even televisual device that defaults to deep stereotypes about people who identify as female and/or queer. As a storytelling device, it works within the borderlines of parody to escape the capacity for empathy.

From Freudian psychoanalysis comes a device for transferring the uncanny onto the female body, the disabled body, and the queer body. Most times, this frame culminates in punishment, the worst of which is death. Even if a show presents the stigmas attached to gender and sexuality, it is important that this presentation does not move into parody or irony, which teases out one problem (e.g. prison brutality) by making someone else the problem (e.g. LGBT inmates). Netflix's *Orange Is the New Black* and *House of Cards* exercise at least 11 key doubles (i.e. stalker-crush, intertextual, fatal-woman, out-in, daughter-lover, mother-lover, father-daughter, death-as-double, disposable-woman, good-evil, and dead-queer) that produce uncanny orientations of instability, confinement, or death for female and/or LGBT characters. The effect is a spatiality of death that demonizes the body. One issue underlined in the play of the double is the objectification of women (to be further discussed in Chapter 3). Another is the stereotypical drive to perceive women in states of submission and domination rather than in states of empowerment and positions of leadership. In the next chapter, I embark on a conversation about the relationality between texts, paying special attention to the dramatic concept of irony to study how intermingling textual discourses, genres, and themes might shape perceptions of gender/leadership roles. Working from doubling to drama, there is an opportunity to discuss how increasing depictions of embodied, paidiac, and ludic methods of detection might help create more positive than negative images of leadership in drama TV.

Chapter 2: Architexts between Drama and Detection in *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest*

Introduction

Key aspects of the intertextual play between doubles are discourse, genre, and theme. When boundaries of genre (e.g. crime and drama) overlap, their discourses on gender combine to create new textual themes, mirrors, associations, or unities. Drawing attention to the relation between the art of drama and the science of detection in TV storylines illuminates some creative ideas for addressing the 'chilly climate' in STEM, which discourages female and/or LGBT characters from pursuing or expressing leadership in these fields. The second chapter of my dissertation explores relationality in CBS' *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest*. In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, literary theorist Gérard Genette defines *architextuality* as the result of texts "linking to the kinds of discourses of which they are a representative" (xix). I will move away from Robert Stam's understanding of titles and infratitles as the only architexts and adopt Genette's (1997) genre theory to study depictions of senior leadership in drama TV that produce new readings of embodiment, empathy, and innovation. As rhetoricians Cheryl Glenn and Andrea Lunsford do in their essay "Rhetoric and Feminism," I align with a feminist standpoint to show how leading characters use "speech, silence, and resistance" (595) to disrupt dominant discourses on who leadership is for. These particular shows portray senior criminal justice professionals performing leadership through dramatic play to combat gender role expectations. I argue that these treatments of leadership link to theories of embodiment, paidia (improvisation), and ludus (competition). This web of textual relation ultimately uncovers social expectations about work performance, identity formation, and technical competence.

In post-structuralism, "transtextuality" (Genette, *Paratexts* xv) is an umbrella term that encompasses Bakhtin's (1981) *dialogism,* Kristeva's (1986) *intertextualité*, and Barthes' (1997) *filiation* to unravel the web of textual reference through relation as well as citation (which is the topic of Chapter 3). Genette lists five subtypes of transtextuality (i.e. *intertextuality*, *paratextuality*, *metatextuality*, *hypertextuality*, and *architextuality*) to describe the net of elements that meshes one text to others. In their article entitled "Gérard Genette and the Categorization of Textual Transcendence," literary scholars Sayyed Ali Mirenayat and Elaheh Soofastaei give the following account of textual relation:

> Architextuality is 'the most abstract and implicit of the transcendent categories, the relationship of inclusion linking each text to the various kinds of discourse of which it is a representative' (Genette, *Paratexts* xix). . . . The architextual nature of texts also includes thematic and figurative expectations. Genette states that a very important factor of this type is 'the reader's expectations and, thus, their reception of the work' (Simandan 33). . . . (536)

Transcendence, inclusion, expectation, and reception—these are the discursive contexts which form the setting of thematic textual relationships. For our purposes, architextuality is a practical way of untangling the web of genres, discourses, and themes shared between texts that illuminate "the often hidden experiences of socially marginalized individuals and identify connections among crime, victimization, and social structural inequalities" (Jurik and Cavender 2). *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest* gesture to the theories of embodiment, paidia, and ludus to resist traditional notions about senior leadership in STEM fields. Throughout this chapter, I consider how a TV genre that dramatizes crime addresses gendered stereotypes, displays of aggression, and unconscious biases that work to drive women out of police science (which I include here

under the STEM umbrella). I argue that these shows try to challenge mechanisms of discrimination through a dramatic theory of detection. First, I look at how fictional female agents use embodied actions (e.g. roleplay) to break down gendered norms of leadership. Second, I study how the use of dramatic exercises and strategies (e.g. thought-tracking tableau) develop an improvisational style of investigation through empathy work. Third, I inspect elements of literature and drama (e.g. allusion) that express the relationship between women and tech through the lens of conflict or competition. Together, these analyses show the relation between discourses on crime, gender, leadership, and technology through the master element of play and present new ways of thinking about adaptation theory (e.g. figural déjà vu) and demonstrating leadership in police science and other STEM occupations (e.g. embodied detection and ludic forensics).

Embodied Detection

The theory of embodiment is a philosophy of mind which contends that body and world are as much psychological processes as they are social actions (see Radley 1996; Goodwin 2000; Farnell 2012; Moran 2017). Social theorists working on the concept of embodiment locate the human body in relation to its "display" (Radley 561), "interpretation" (Goodwin 1491), "movement" (Farnell xii), and "intersubjectivity" (Moran 31) in the composition of a shared, cultural We-World (*Wir-Welt*); in this sense, embodiment is both discourse and action within theories of talk *about* the body, talk *of* the body, and talk *from* the body (Farnell 16). When I refer to *embodied detection*, I am reflecting on the different roles fictional and real women with badges are expected to play in media and society. I also coin this term as a means of looking at expressive skills related to the body, space, and even technology that can be used in fields under the police science umbrella (e.g. criminology, forensics, psychology, etc). What unfolds is an

architext, or relation, between embodiment and detection that sheds light on the roles that female STEM characters are expected to play and the real challenges that women face aspiring to or advancing in leadership. To consider the architextuality of embodiment and detection, I draw on the scholarship of Donna Ladkin and Steven Taylor, Danielle Stern, Kathryn Schuyler, and other theorists to argue that *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest* create images of an embodied theory of detection that have the ability to influence viewers' ideas about women and leadership.

When success is masculinized, female leaders are often tested against men's leadership styles and are required to do the bulk of the caring and nurturing at work (see Martin 1999; Guy and Newman 2004; Meier, Mastracci, and Wilson 2006). In their article entitled "Women's Jobs, Men's Jobs: Sex Segregation and Emotional Labour," political scientists Mary Guy and Meredith Newman affirm that, "when women work in 'men's' jobs, they come close to earning equal pay, but Fletcher (1999) argues that emotional labour is still expected of them there, over and above what is expected of men" (291–292). Guy and Newman further contend that perceived "'mom' behaviours, [such as] rapport, supportiveness, congeniality, nurturance, and empathy" (292), attach female leaders to their emotions. Yet, taking an empathetic approach to police science can help all detectives, including female ones, better serve their communities. One major way in which fictional women with badges practice embodied detection is through protectiveness. In crime dramas, "female agents seem to rely on their experiences as victims to inform their investigative intuition, whereas male investigators tend to be driven towards revenge or anti-social solitude" (Steenberg, *Forensic Science* 64). We tend to think of protectiveness as a topic explicitly covered in films about motherhood (e.g. *Room*), but genre TV is engrossed in thought about survivors transforming into leaders. *CSI: Cyber* troubles the gendered relation between gender and protectiveness by portraying embodied actions, such as empathy and role

adoption, as leadership skills that can benefit all people in mentor roles. Before analyzing forms of embodied detection, a brief overview of barriers to leadership for girls is necessary to perceive how women with badges face these persistent challenges head-on.

Women's participation in law enforcement is still met with gender-based discrimination because of masculinized police subculture (see Martin and Jurik 2007; Seklecki and Paynich 2007; Yu 2015). In her article entitled "An Examination of Women in Federal Law Enforcement: An Exploratory Analysis of the Challenges They Face in the Work Environment," ethics and leadership expert Helen Yu highlights the gap between women and policing:

> According to the Bureau of Labour Statistics (2013), women account for 47% of all working Americans, but they comprise just 15.5% of all sworn federal law enforcement officers (Reaves 2012). . . . The single most significant factor for high turnover is the negative attitudes of male colleagues. . . . The sexist attitudes of individual men (e.g. heavy drinking, crude jokes, racism, and homophobia) demand that women who enter policing 'subsume male characteristics to achieve social acceptability' (Young 1991). (259–263)

This is not to say that gender-based discrimination is a facet of law enforcement systems across the board, but studying the inequities that women with badges face brings awareness to ways of doing leadership that challenge these sexist attitudes. If women and girls are to aspire to take on leadership roles in male-dominated fields, then they must see themselves as effective leaders in the media that they consume. The question is: Do girls who aspire to lead face barriers that prevent them from ultimately achieving their goals? And, furthermore, do these barriers follow women into their careers? The Geena Davis Institute and Plan International, two organizations studying gender in media, track the experiences of women and girls in 19 countries aspiring to be

leaders in their breakthrough report entitled "Taking the Lead: Girls and Young Women on Changing the Face of Leadership." Evidence from this report indicates that "76% of girls aspire to lead, 62% have confidence in their leadership abilities, but they are also acutely aware of the barriers that they are likely to face if they follow their aspirations" (4). Breaking through barriers such as proving their worth, lacking mentorship, and gender stereotyping is challenging for girls and it seems women with badges face similar stubborn obstacles in their careers related to "achieving acceptance" (Marshall 11). As we make the shift to embodied detection, keep in mind the attitudes in organizational culture that "shape ideas of what women and girls can and should be" (The Geena Davis Institute and Plan International 13). In what follows, you will learn about the embodiment of character as fictional female agents work undercover in traditionally masculinized spaces (e.g. the digital underground, nightclubs, and college campuses). You will also become aware of experiences of trauma and theories of narration that encourage seeing embodiment as a means of transforming survivors into leaders. To start, let us take a look at the relationality between crime, gender, and technology as it pertains to youths.

Cybercrime is often thought of as an online criminal activity carried out by adults against other adults, but common forms of cybercrime such as online harassment and sexual predation are also carried out against youths (see van der Hof and Koops 2011; Näsi et al. 2015; Arora 2016). *CSI: Cyber* develops a link between crime, gender, and technology that suggests girls are more often the victims of cybercrime than boys. However, this is contrary to a multi-nation study by Näsi et al. that finds boys are more likely to be the victims of cybercrime than girls (208). A show that changes the victimology of cybercrime impacts how girls see themselves on screen and renders invisible the real harm being done to boys online. While safety and security are top concerns for most Internet users, this show merits further investigation because it pays special

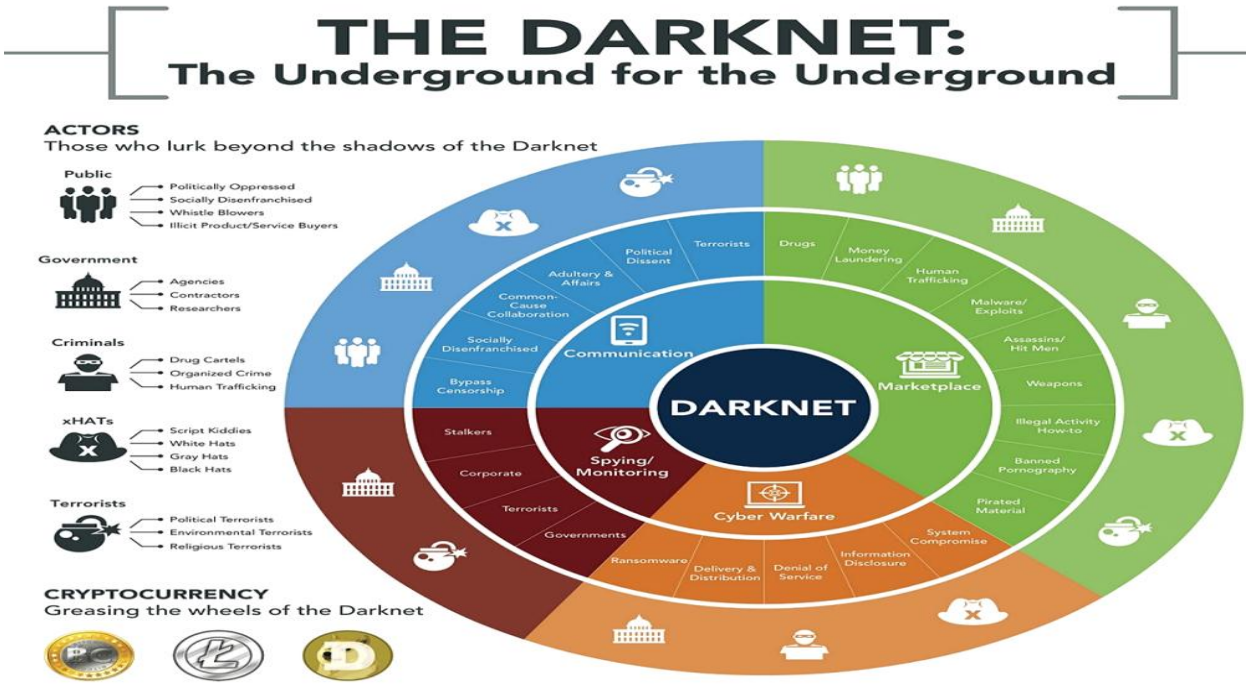
attention to protectiveness as the drive to keep youths safe from prevalent forms of cybercrime. *Hacking* is a term often used to describe an intellectual challenge or a trick to increase productivity (e.g. life hacks, IKEA hacks, game hacks, or ROM hacks), but it also refers to "accessing classified information or leaving behind malicious software" (Kirwan and Power 58). In the pilot episode, we meet Dr. Avery Ryan (Patricia Arquette), a psychologist-turned-cybercrime expert. Before joining the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as the Deputy Director of the Cyber Crime Division, she practiced psychology in New York until her patient files were hacked:

> My name is Avery Ryan. I was a victim of cyber crime. Like you, I posted on social media, checked my bank account balance online, and even kept the confidential files of my psychological practice on my computer. Then, I was hacked. As a result, one of my patients was murdered. My investigation into her death led me to the FBI, where I joined a team of cyber experts to wage war against a new breed of criminal hiding on the Deep Web. They can infiltrate our daily lives in ways that we never imagined. They are faceless, nameless, and lurk inside of our devices. Just a keystroke away, cybercrime can happen to you. ("Kidnapping 2.0")

Rather than shy away from the study of cybercrime and criminology, Dr. Ryan becomes an expert in these fields. She exemplifies what Marcia Edelman calls "embodied code-switching" (190) by "adapting to various cultures, both within themselves and their environments" (191). Put another way, Dr. Ryan does what many victims do: she uses the pain of her past as the motivating factor behind doing protective work in the present to ensure that others are not hurt in the same way as them in the future. Embodied code-switching is a new term that bears resemblance to the old dramatic technique of assuming a role. If we turn to embodiment in

cyberspace, then roleplay becomes risk-taking in the act of moving through masculinized environments.

Roleplay can be generally defined as "acting the part of a character in order to explore the character's thoughts, feelings, and values" ("Roleplaying"). This dramatic technique taps into the art of improvisation, at the heart of which is "transformation" (Spolin 39) at the level of "changing your mind/body" (Zaporah 109). In police science, changing roles is commonly referred to as "playing the undercover role" (Marx 85). In his book entitled *Undercover: Police Surveillance in America*, sociologist Gary Marx explains that "some of the [earliest] qualities thought to aid in effective undercover work are being outgoing, extroverted, a risk taker, and adept at roleplaying" (169). Throughout the series, Dr. Ryan's personal experience as a victim of hacking inspires her to take the lead in stopping cybercrime before it happens. Embodiment in cyberspace, in the form of playing an undercover role, allows Dr. Ryan to immerse herself in subspaces and subcultures that are otherwise difficult to access. More specifically, she roleplays as a male cybercriminal to gain the trust of assassins, human traffickers, stalkers, terrorists, and all others 'lurking beyond the shadows of the Dark Net' (see Figure 2.1). An infographic from 2015 reveals how the Deep Web functions as a masculine space in which women and youths are currencies of fantasy, possession, and sexual violence. The visual representation shows that one-third of the Dark Net, which is a subset of the Deep Web, is a marketplace for assassination, human trafficking, and other illegal activities related to the body. Questions emerging from this consideration of the role the Internet plays in gender-related victimization include: How many women and youths are the victims of cybercrime in America? What are the programs and services available for youths experiencing online harassment or sexual predation? While these questions spring from a criminological lens, they interrogate a relation between crime, gender,



(Figure 2.1: Bat Blue Corporation's infographic on the Dark Net.)

Credit: Bat Blue Corporation; screenshot by author.

and technology that sustains the image of cyberspace as an unsafe zone for women and youths. One future direction for my research is thus architextuality and deviance in cyberspace. Another pivot is to cross-gender acting in online and offline environments (a concept which again draws from ancient theatre, especially opera's 'breeches roles'). For now, hold onto the presence of transformation and its symbolism as we return to the topic of the embodiment of leadership.

Person of Interest interrogates the relation between crime, gender, and technology within its surveillance narrative by examining women's leadership through the lens of irony. In their article entitled "Enacting the 'True Self': Toward a Theory of Embodied Authentic Leadership," management scholars Donna Ladkin and Steven Taylor develop the theory of "embodied authentic leadership" (70), which accounts for "how we present ourselves, how we relate to others, and how we embody the identity story of the group" (70–72). Playing an undercover role

invokes a sense of irony and thereby exposes viewers to narrative elements that act as barriers to "authentic enactment" (69). One such barrier is *dramatic irony*, which

> involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience or reader shares with the author knowledge of present or future circumstances of which a character is ignorant; on that situation, the literary character unknowingly acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or expects the opposite of what we know that fate holds in store, or says something that anticipates the actual outcome, but not at all in the way that the character intends. (Abrams and Harpham 186)

An ironic take on how fictional female agents take on leadership by playing the undercover role harkens back to our earlier discussion of masculinized police subculture. In this show, the dramatic form of irony is used to keep knowledge of The Machine, an artificial intelligence (AI) mass surveillance system, a secret shared mostly between fictional male agents, with some exceptions. Although this show shares the same tech-noir style as the film *Minority Report*, in which the police rely on visions from the Precogs to predict crime, software genius Harold Finch (Michael Emerson) depends on his AI creation to prevent violent crimes from happening:

> You are being watched. The government has a secret system—a machine that spies on you every hour of every day. I designed the machine to detect acts of terror, but it sees everything—violent crimes involving ordinary people. The government considers these people 'irrelevant.' We don't. Hunted by the authorities, we work in secret. You will never find us but, victim or perpetrator, if your number's up, we'll find you. ("Super")

Irony plays a leading role in this information game because viewers are aware of The Machine from the start and thus have access to the same level of information as the fictional male agents in this show. Conversely, fictional female agents only become aware of The Machine's existence

after working closely with either Finch or former CIA operative John Reese (Jim Caviezel). This is an instance in which irony produces a negative implication about the abilities, intelligence, and skills of some fictional agents over others. In the next scene, you will see a clearer picture of embodied detection within a dating plot. While playing the undercover role requires different physicality, this should not feed into the image of fictional female agents as "scrutinized bodies" (French and Smith 4) or the workings of the sexualized gaze (which is to be further indicated within media and society in Chapter 4). The risk of making the dramatic technique of roleplay appear sexy is its openness to irony to diminish the real value of women's contributions to police science. As we will see, going undercover means transforming the mind, the body, and the real in dramatic enactment, but the dating plot employs semiotics of dress to try and construct a gendered view of roleplay as sexy rather than serious business.

Prior research reports the effect of revealing clothing upon perceptions of sexual assault (see Workman and Freeburg 1999; Johnson, Schofield, and Yurchisin 2002; Whatley 2005). The results of Workman and Freeburg's study indicate that "dress is assumed to communicate messages about a wearer's character, vulnerability, consent, and provocation of another's behaviour. A means of communication can also be a means of miscommunication and consequences of miscommunication can be severe" (275). This conflicts with the findings by Maurer and Robinson (2008) a decade later that "the attire associated with an increased perception of female sexual desire is not associated with an increased perception of male sexual desire (i.e. arousal)" (431). However, Maurer and Robinson do not take into account victim-blaming or rape myth acceptance and admit that they "might have observed a different pattern of results" (433) if they had. In crime dramas, "victims who were sexually promiscuous were 98% less likely to be portrayed as blameless" (Rader, Rhineberger-Dunn, and Vasquez 69). Dramatic

enactment is portrayed as promiscuous in the episode “Lady Killer.” In this installment, fictional female agents Sameen Shaw (Sarah Shah), Zoe Morgan (Paige Turco), and Joss Carter (Taraji Henson) work undercover in black bodycon dresses to bait sexual predator Ian Murphy (Warren Kole) into a trap before any more unsuspecting women fall victim to date rape. At Blur nightclub, they purposefully exaggerate their physicality and engage in risky behaviour to convince Murphy to target Detective Carter as his next victim (see Figure 2.2). Beyond clothing,

(Figure 2.2: Sameen Shaw, Zoe Morgan, and Joss Carter work undercover at Blur nightclub.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

erotics of hair and drink are used to create the illusion of desire. For instance, Morgan’s dominatrix ponytail extends her attitude and appearance to fetish culture. Playing the undercover role requires the agents to seemingly consume alcohol and act without careful judgment, but they are in total control at all times. Dramatic irony makes it so that viewers are aware the agents engage in the politics of sexuality to prevent violence, but that does not prevent viewers from

equating roleplay with sexiness, and this association could make it more difficult for viewers to see dramatic enactment as a legitimate means of detection. The problem with portraying enactment as promiscuous is that it produces an ambiguity that reinforces blame. Despite this, I choose to believe that a positive reception of their embodied authentic leadership is possible because this example still shows a combination of acting and play at the level of investigation. My hopeful assessment lines up these fictional female agents in the same category of kickass spies as Bridget von Hammersmark (Diane Kruger) from the film *Inglourious Basterds* and Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson) from *Mission: Impossible — Rogue Nation*. Making these cinematic connections allows me to demonstrate respect toward fictional female agents comfortable enough in their own skin to use theatrical role and ruse to fight crime. Indeed, undercover work is a deeply embodied process that commits to the central presence of empathy.

Embodiment is a theory that can be approached from theatre, criminology, psychology, and other fields to explore the body, trauma, and a range of other motions into "presence and action" (Beckerman 22). It can also be used in women's leadership to cultivate authenticity, develop resilience (which I will document in Chapter 3 in a revival of the topic of identity roleplay), and support restorative justice. In her article entitled "Embodied Interventions: Feminist Communication Pedagogy and Rape Culture," feminist scholar Danielle Stern shares the view that *embodied intervention* is "a critical, feminist approach to understanding the significance of our material, lived bodies as navigating power and systems of gender domination (Grosz 1994)" (109). *CSI: Cyber* represents embodiment as presence and action through the power of voice. "Sharing embodied stories of survivorship" (109) sets victims on the path to healing and transmits a message of hope. This begs the question: Why does trauma call for storytelling? One answer is because stories capture power, give meaning, and facilitate processes

of empowerment and healing. The episode "iWitness" puts forth the idea that becoming an empowered survivor would be easier for victims if they worked with a mentor to find their voice. The concept of mentoring centers on psychosocial support and this means that portrayals of embodiment as presence, action, or intervention highlight the universal call for "mentors [who] are uniquely positioned to help victims process their experiences by providing spaces to express their emotions, ask for help, and channel uncertain feelings into positive, constructive action" (The National Mentoring Partnership 1). This episode envisions storytelling as a restorative act and mentorship as an embodied intervention to sexual violence. In the remainder of this section, I examine embodied mentoring (where empathy meets action) as an emerging pathway of resistance against rape culture (which is a term that will be defined and discussed in Chapter 3).

The realities of campus sexual assault are deeply concerning: four studies corroborate the 1-in-5 statistic as an accurate calculation of women's risk of rape in college (see Krebs et al. 2008; Krebs et al. 2011; Cantor et al. 2015; Krebs et al. 2016) and three studies demonstrate a relationship between participation in team sports and rape-supportive myths (see Boeringer 1999; Sawyer, Thompson, and Chicorelli 2002; Forbes et al. 2006). Krebs et al.'s (2016) study examines the prevalence of sexual assault experienced since entering college among 4th year female students and finds that the rate ranges from 1 in 8 to 1 in 2 (76); this reaffirms the average estimate that 1 in 5 undergraduate females will be sexually assaulted while in college (76). In their study entitled "Dating Aggression, Sexual Coercion, and Aggression-Supporting Attitudes among College Men as a Function of Participation in Aggressive High School Sports," Forbes et al. pinpoint *hostile masculinity* as "the common thread that connects sexism, hostility toward women, acceptance of violence, and aggression against women" (449). *CSI: Cyber* relates aggression with coercion in the episode "iWitness." In this installment, the team of cyber experts

investigates the murder of Quinn Elliott (Lauren Shaw), a hacker who exposed Paxton University's rowing team for their gang rape of undergraduate student Shelby Lockhart (Mary Mouser). In a pivotal scene, Dr. Ryan meets privately with Lockhart to hold space for restorative storytelling (see Figure 2.3):

(Figure 2.3: Shelby Lockhart shares her trauma story with Avery Ryan.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

SHELBY LOCKHART: I should have never posted that [story]. It was stupid.

DR. AVERY RYAN: It wasn't stupid.

LOCKHART: I thought if I posted it that it would make me feel better. I thought it would help me move forward, go to the police, or tell someone.

DR. RYAN: Tell me, Shelby.

LOCKHART: Three guys [from the rowing team] held me down on the pool table and

pinned my arms back. They took turns raping me.

DR. RYAN: I'm so sorry that happened to you. Did you report your assault to the university?

LOCKHART: The school administrators said that I didn't have a good case because I was drunk at the time.

DR. RYAN: Why didn't you go to the police?

LOCKHART: The school administrators told me not to. They said that I could lose my scholarship if I 'falsely accused' the rowing team of committing rape.

DR. RYAN: So, then you left school.

LOCKHART: I couldn't pretend that nothing had happened. I had to get away. I didn't think anyone would believe me.

DR. RYAN: I believe you, Shelby, and I'm going to help you. I promise. ("iWitness")

This scene shines a light on the digitization of trauma—how it is documented and extended online—and is an important stepping stone in our discussion of embodied intervention for three reasons. First, it illustrates how mentoring is crucial to the art of leadership because empathy ('I believe you') meets action ('I'm going to help you'). This moment of compassionate care is so powerful because it demonstrates the healing power of justice. Second, it exposes many common myths about rape, including: the myth that victims are at fault if they consumed alcohol and are too intoxicated to consent (Hayes-Smith and Levett 339), the myth that rape did not occur unless the victim has physical injuries that they receive medical attention for (Kennedy 310), and the myth that 'real' victims immediately report the crime to the police (Hockett et al. 140). Third, it cites the real 2016 Baylor University federal lawsuit against 31 football players who committed at least 52 rapes from 2011 to 2014 (Tracy and Barry). The significance of this appeal to a true

story is significant because it asks us to consider how hostile masculinity is performed in institutional environments and also inspires us to take actions that address and prevent violence against women from happening.

One question that lingers in my mind is: What is the impact of watching portrayals of masculinity as hostile? In her article entitled "Tough Guys: The Portrayal of Hypermasculinity and Aggression in Televised Police Dramas," media and gender scholar Erica Scharrer suggests that the risk of identifying with male characters who perform masculinity through aggression is a reinforcement of harmful gender norms. Scharrer notes that

> a perceived similarity between an audience member and a character may be achieved through the shared notion of hypermasculinity, fostering identification that can predict emulation of behaviours. In other words, those male audience members who would score relatively high on the personality measure of hypermasculinity would respond to the portrayals of those male characters on screen that also appear to have this trait. This could lead to reinforcement of existing notions about gender as well as potential adoption of aggressive or antisocial behaviours. (630)

Although I grant that Scharrer's trend of hypermasculinity in police dramas does not report on the role of other TV genres in gender socialization, and that there is evidence to suggest that girls report stronger levels of identification with same-sex TV characters than boys do (Ward and Friedman 143), it is possible that other mediating behaviours can guide gender performance. For example, keeping up "the appearance of being sexually active" (Koenig 8) is a behaviour that has the potential to increase levels of identification for male viewers with same-sex characters and reproduce the male jock culture. In the next paragraph, we will take a closer look at the pressure to extend violence online, defined here as *cybersexism*: "patterns of abuse used to create,

support, and enforce norms of male dominance in online spaces" (Poland 35). While I remain interested in embodiment as it relates to fictional female agents in positions of senior leadership, it is equally as important to consider how men and boys show empathic action on screen and what that means for male viewers. Forging new opportunities for action, empathy, personal growth, and impact is one way in which to change cultures of violence and develop more compassionate masculinities in the face of peer pressure.

Another question that gives me pause is: Is there a model of leadership that can transform masculinities from hostile to compassionate in institutional environments? In her article entitled "Mindfulness as Waking Up: Musings about How to Be Optimally Alive," organizational psychologist Kathryn Schuyler defines *embodied leadership* as a model of care and action which "emphasizes that we learn and live in bodies: that reflection and action equally are informed by the embodied nature of our existence" (5). Schuyler further teaches that "embodied leaders are people whose actions emanate from deep convictions" (6). One such conviction is "ongoing engagement with the possible/potential" (5). The episode "iWitness" transforms the male jock culture through the embodied leadership model. In a pivotal scene, Dr. Ryan interviews Carter Harris (Justin Prentice), a witness who recorded video of Lockhart's gang rape on his cell phone. Dr. Ryan confronts the code of silence enforced by the rules of hostile masculinity and helps the witness see that gender and power can be done differently:

> DR. AVERY RYAN: Carter, this is not a code of silence that you want to live with for the rest of your life. We know that you were documenting the party. We need that footage.
>
> CARTER HARRIS: You can't look at my phone without my consent.
>
> DR. RYAN: You're right, we can't, but you need to ask yourself: What is more important—your team or your integrity?

> HARRIS: I deleted the footage. They told me to. But, here, maybe you can recover the video [from my cell phone]. ("iWitness")

Offering the witness a new opportunity for personal growth is a restorative act of justice that combats hostile masculinity. This scene thinks about embodied leadership as the practice of sharing development opportunities and its power also lies in its message to viewers that redefining the male jock culture internally is how the cycle of violence begins to break down. Showing leadership that actively encourages compassionate masculinities can help viewers advocate for safe and respectful environments for all. As we have seen, forms of embodied detection (e.g. protection, code-switching, roleplay, enactment, intervention, etc) help fictional female agents break down barriers to leadership. In the next section, I resume my previous examination of roleplay as an investigative technique to argue that the prime architext between drama and detection also develops through spontaneity and improvisation.

Paidia

Policing is often depicted as a science in crime dramas, but *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest* also treat the work of a detective as a performing art. For sociologist Thomas Henricks, character improvisation can take one of two shapes in the context of relationship building: "some play behaviours are ritualistic or rule bound (*ludus*) and other expressions are more spontaneous or improvisational (*paidia*)" (196). It might seem unconventional to think of policing as a creative activity, but these particular shows offer a unique glimpse into how strategies from the arts might be successfully applied to work in the sciences. My interest in drama-based pedagogy makes me keenly aware of drama forms (e.g. improvisation), techniques (e.g. roleplaying), and strategies (e.g. thought-tracking) that can be used across disciplines. Building on this knowledge, I will analyze comparable scenes in which improvisation is depicted as an effective investigative

technique. The idea that drama is a style of policing is most apparent within the context of undercover work (i.e. playing a role) and it marks the skill of building trust with victims (to help them) and even perpetrators (to rehabilitate them). In his *Practical Handbook for Professional Investigators*, Rory McMahon lists "the ability to play a role" (5) as the sixth attribute (in a list of nineteen) of a successful investigator:

> The investigator must be willing and able to play the role that is required, depending on the circumstances, in order to promote the most open response. . . . An investigator may realize that the witness, victim, or suspect has some personal problem (defense mechanism, fear, or other more conscious reaction) that prevents him or her from cooperating. Some witnesses and victims are reluctant to cooperate, because they fear for their personal safety or they fear their involvement will create an undue burden (time or money) on their families. In these instances, the investigator may attempt to calm the person by playing the role of a protector or benefactor. As a concerned listener, the investigator plays the role of an understanding stranger. (44–45)

After inspecting McMahon's list, one aspect of undercover work that piques my interest is the setting or environment in which playing a role occurs. Questions that spring from this area of interest include: How might skills related to the body (e.g. touch, voice, stillness, etc) be used to show attentiveness in different environments? And, what is the psychological component of improvising and how does this relate to spatiality? The answers, I think, lie in the view of acting as inhabiting, for it is in the inhabiting of another mental and emotional state that the portrayal of character, reality, and understanding takes flight in any space. Getting into character is often called *verbing*, which refers to the way in which actors understand their role through objectives (e.g. to be liked, to be loved, etc), because knowing what drives or motivates their character

helps them tap into their purpose when using their instincts and imagination. Some might categorize the ability to play a role as lying for a living, but these shows depict roleplay as an exercise based in personal truth and real theories of mind. To learn more about detection through the lens of dramatic performance, I draw on the scholarship of Harriet Shortt, Chris Voss, Jonothan Neelands and Tony Goode, and other theorists to argue that the architext between improvisation (paidia) and detection develops through theories of play. In this section, I explore the idea of spontaneous or improvisational play as a useful crime-fighting technique.

In many ways, the beating heart of a performance of any kind is the mixture of immersion with invention. When nothing is off limits, including boundaries of the self, art becomes responsive. Therefore, what lies between improvisation and detection is the art of becoming. In police science, "roleplaying is an interaction between play, games, and simulation that allows people to engage physically and intellectually in learning while expressing themselves in a scientific context and exploring a particular (and different) way to interpret their place in the world" (Nicholas and Ng 51). STEM fields, including police science, are often viewed as being dry and boring (51), but I argue that paidiac play can be used to convert investigative thinking into performative action. *Person of Interest* treats creativity as the pulse of improvisation in narratives about immersive empathy. In their article entitled "Creativity as a Determinant of Thinking Style in Police Investigations," justice scholars Geoff Dean, Ivar Fahsing, and Petter Gottschalk remind us of "John-Steiner's (1997) point about the importance of boundary crossing when she states that 'creativity demands multiple perspectives'" (115). In simpler terms, this tunes into the power of *freeplay*—"play that entails a certain degree of risk" (Nachmanovitch 9). I will later examine the concept of play-as-risk in relation to mobile suicide games in Chapter 4, but will now explore freeplay as a crime prevention tool. In the episode

"Cura Te Ipsum," Reese takes a freeplay approach to crime prevention by playing an undercover role. As a result, his methods of discovery are informed by *empathy*, which will be defined now as the ability to "step into the shoes of another to understand and appreciate that person's experiences and circumstances" ("Empathize"). Once again, we witness the relationality between embodiment and detection, this time through emotional understanding. In this installment, Reese inserts himself into a sexual assault victims' support group meeting to establish contact and develop trust with Dr. Megan Tillman (Linda Cardellini). During the support group meeting, Dr. Tillman shares the story of her sister's suicide after being attacked by serial rapist Andrew Benton (Adam Rothenberg) at a NYU fraternity rush party. An opportune coffee break gives Reese a chance to roleplay as a fellow griever in order to seamlessly insert himself into Dr. Tillman's life:

> JOHN REESE: Sorry, it's my third cup today.
>
> DR. MEGAN TILLMAN: That's okay. I keep coming back [to these meetings] hoping that I'll feel better, but they only make me feel worse.
>
> REESE: At least the coffee is terrible.
>
> DR. TILLMAN: Why are you here?
>
> REESE: I lost someone very close to me.
>
> DR. TILLMAN: I'm sorry.
>
> REESE: Not a day goes by that I don't think about what I could have done.
>
> DR. TILLMAN: It took me years to piece together what happened.
>
> REESE: I'm John.
>
> DR. TILLMAN: I'm Kate Leman. ("Cura Te Ipsum")

Interestingly, all of Reese's cover identities begin with the name John (e.g. John Rooney, John

Warren, John Anderson, etc), perhaps after the fictitious John Doe, and viewers never learn his birth name in the entirety of this show. Dr. Tillman also uses an alias and perhaps the name Leman calls up the archaic meaning of the word—lover, mistress, or sweetheart—or, more likely, plays on the meaning of the word lemon—a feeble character identity. The use of aliases and cover identities draws attention to the support group meeting as a liminal setting where anonymity is permitted. Some might argue that this is actually an example of disembodiment (i.e. escape from the body), but maybe anonymity is the safety net that gives both characters permission to express themselves freely and without fear of judgment. In fact, the story that Reese shares in the support group meeting is based on lived experience. At the end of season one, viewers learn that Reese's ex-girlfriend Jessica Arndt (Susan Misner) was the victim of intimate partner homicide perpetrated by her husband Peter Arndt (Jonno Roberts). The ambiguous ending of the episode "Many Happy Returns" suggests that Reese either killed Mr. Arndt or left him to die in prison. Either way, his past exaction of revenge makes him empathetic to Dr. Tillman's grievance with Benton. This all points to the power of improvisation based on the value of truth. As we move forward, take notice of how undercover work operates as immersive empathy through narration, gesture, and touch, and how boundaries of the self seem to all but disappear in liminal spaces.

Setting is an essential element of drama that creates a sense of place to enhance dialogue. When the setting of a story is liminal, the boundary between being inside the self and outside the self is blurred and imagination takes form through improvisation. In her article entitled "Liminality, Space, and the Importance of 'Transitory Dwelling Places' At Work," organizational scholar Harriet Shortt argues that "physical liminal spaces are in-between borderlands where boundaries, to some extent, are blurred and difficult to clearly define, making

them semi-private and semi-public. It is in these sorts of undefined spaces we ourselves may then experience being undefined and where our behaviour may be unconstrained by social norms" (639). The episode "Cura Te Ipsum" handles narrative setting (i.e. location) as a threshold or transitional time and space in which to forge identity. In this installment, the influence of temporariness is felt when Reese breaks character to reason with and console Dr. Tillman, knowing all too well what seeking vengeance can do to a person. For this reason, he confronts Dr. Tillman at a coffee shop before she can execute her plan to murder Benton (see Figure 2.4):

(Figure 2.4: John Reese breaks character to intervene in Megan Tillman's revenge plan.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

JOHN REESE: Let me buy you a cup of coffee, Megan. The man you have tied up in the back of your van can wait.

DR. MEGAN TILLMAN: Do you know who he is? What he's done?

REESE: I know all about Andrew Benton. I know all about you, Megan. I know you're a

damn good doctor. I know you've spent years of your life healing people. And I know that, if you do this, if you murder this man in cold blood, it will kill you. ("Cura Te Ipsum")

The setting of this scene figuratively becomes a character itself. Coffee shops are frequently used in visual texts (e.g. *Goodfellas*, *Pulp Fiction*, and *Better Call Saul*) as loci of confrontation, collaboration, or mediation. The dark, transitory nature of the coffee shop zoom shot, coupled with shielded faces and black clothing, highlights the concept of liminality in relation to emotions, meaning, and selfhood. Setting a confrontation scene in a liminal space blurs the boundaries between inside/outside and self/other, essentially disrupting the stability of these distinctions and making a space for the performance of new perspectives, identities, and emotions. What is even more striking is the way in which Reese builds in gesture and touch to speak his own anger and grief, flipping the script on the gender stereotype that "women are more likely than men to show empathic concern" (Strauss 437). What this means for the architextual play between improvisation and detection is that the environment itself takes on meaning and shares the stage of character work.

Liminality occurs when the setting lets possibility happen. When fictional characters find themselves in states of liminality, their imagination takes shape and a multiplicity of selves unfolds in the realm of improvisation. An architextual concept of performative action as investigative action develops from discourses surrounding behaviour and motivation. In light of Brunetto et al.'s view of "policing as a form of emotional labour" (428), I turn to *CSI: Cyber* to study other dramatic exercises, such as tableau and thought-tracking, that form the relation between improvisation and detection on screen. In Drama Studies, *tableau* is an exercise in which

a group of silent, motionless figures are used to represent a scene, theme, abstract idea

(e.g. peace or joy) or an important moment in a narrative. Tableau may be presented as stand-alone images to communicate one specific message or may be used to achieve particular effects in a longer drama work. Important features of a tableau include character, space, gesture, facial expression, and level. ("Tableau")

Although tableau is normally a silent performance, the addition of dialogue does not necessarily break the stillness of a scene. Related to presentations of character, space, gesture, facial expression, and level is the dramatic strategy of *thought-tracking* in which "those in role draw on thoughts and emotions that lie beneath the surface, enabling them to deepen their response and/or contrast outer appearance with inner experience" ("Thought-Tracking"). Similar to the coffee shop setting, a therapy office is another liminal space that allows for improvisation at the emotional level. Let us take a look at the strategic use of voice in this new setting to pinpoint the exact technique Dr. Ryan uses to maintain an atmosphere of safety and trust in a dangerous confrontation with a cybercriminal.

Tableau is a dramatic exercise known for its still images or freeze-frames, but other names for this strategy include *depiction* and *living portrait* (Kelner and Flynn 153). The liminality of a therapy office affords space to explore emotional wellbeing. I argue that the use of voice in living portraits can help depict inner thoughts. Repetition of words or emotions is an example of a technique used in both drama and negotiation to engage people in vulnerability through trust. Former FBI hostage negotiator Chris Voss provides a good explanation of this kind of *mirroring* in the preview of his masterclass:

It's just the simple repetition of one to three words. Typically, it's the last one to three words of what somebody said. But, when you get good at mirroring, you could pick one to three words from anywhere in the conversation. The other person feels listened to. It tends

> to connect the thoughts in their head. Part of the message it sends to the other person is 'I heard every word you said, word for word, and I'm proving it because I just repeated it back to you.' (paras. 4–5)

Mirroring derives from a much older device called *stichomythia*—"dialogue in alternate lines, employed in sharp disputation" ("Stichomythia"). Originating from ancient Greek drama, this device uses repetition and/or antithesis to match the rhythm of an intense exchange. Regular repetition (mirroring) in sharp disputation (stichomythia) can facilitate the interchange of thoughts and emotions during conversation and situate the voice within a liminal experience. In the episode "Family Secrets," Dr. Ryan tracks her former patient Logan Reeves (David Dastmalchian) to an abandoned warehouse and is shocked to find a perfect reconstruction of her old therapy office in New York (see Figure 2.5). Viewers surmise that Reeves is the person

(Figure 2.5: Logan Reeves and Ryan establish a thought-tracking tableau in a recreated therapy office.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

responsible for hacking Dr. Ryan's psychological practice files and murdering one of her other patients. In the confrontation scene, Dr. Ryan engages Reeves in a thought-tracking tableau by pairing the stillness of physical movement with the voiced action of mirrored inner thoughts:

> LOGAN REEVES: You were quite fond of your other patients.
>
> DR. AVERY RYAN: My other patients. But, not you?
>
> REEVES: No, we were close.
>
> DR. RYAN: Close. You felt we had something more.
>
> REEVES: We had something special. Something must have happened in our relationship.
>
> DR. RYAN: You hacked my computer and stole my files, demonstrating how powerful you were.
>
> REEVES: How powerful I am.
>
> DR. RYAN: Of course. If you brought me here for a session, maybe we should start with your delusional fantasies and your obsessive behaviour.
>
> REEVES: Dr. Ryan, you came here looking for answers, despite the possible danger, so you tell me who's more delusional and obsessive. ("Family Secrets")

Mirroring each other's words—'patients,' 'close,' 'something,' 'powerful,' 'delusional,' and 'obsessive'—acts as a stimulus for connection that re-establishes the patient-therapist relationship. Dr. Ryan uses mirroring, also known as "the art of letting the other side have your way" (Voss, para. 3), to set boundaries and roles in a liminal setting that has no fixed sphere of activity. This is an example of how techniques with roots in both drama and negotiation can help maintain personal safety while practicing vulnerability, authenticity, trustworthiness, and even compassion. Overall, we see that a non-threatening atmosphere is established in a dangerous situation, where thoughts in the mind take form through the voice and pictures of stillness.

CSI: Cyber uses the still-imagery of tableau to open up empathic communication. I realize that it might be difficult to understand what keeping the lines of communication open looks like in improvisation-as-negotiation, but it might be easier to think of this process as the kind of free expression that happens emotionally in acting. Thought-tracking (often called *venting*) is a flexible strategy for making emotions come alive that is culturally connected to secrets—fears and hopes—and keeping up appearances (Neelands and Goode 138). In their book entitled *Structuring Drama Work*, theatre educators Jonothan Neelands and Tony Goode describe thought-tracking as

> publicly revealing the private thoughts/reactions of participants-in-role at specific moments in the action so as to develop a reflective attitude towards the action and to contrast thinking-for-self with outward appearances or dialogue. . . . Devising thoughts requires reflection and analysis of situation and role. Hearing other thoughts generates a sensitive/feeling response to the content. Action is slowed down to allow for deeper understanding of meanings underlying action. (138)

The episode "Family Secrets" ends in a way that shows a moment of particular emotional vulnerability in which the liminality of the recreated therapy office engenders space for liminal subjectivities. Dr. Ryan approaches the improvisational scene altruistically and is genuinely concerned for Reeves' psychological wellbeing, despite the havoc he caused in her life, because she knows about his history of child sexual abuse:

> DR. AVERY RYAN: I knew it was you when I walked into this abandoned steel factory. Your abusive father was a steelworker. You told me what he did to you. It's because of him that you have such severe social anxiety. Why don't you have a seat, Logan?
>
> LOGAN REEVES: I'll stand.

DR. RYAN: Let's talk about how you're feeling. Clearly, you're still angry with your father.

REEVES: This isn't about him.

DR. RYAN: What is it about, then?

REEVES: You abandoned me. You pushed me off onto another doctor who forced me into taking medications that made things worse.

DR. RYAN: Logan, you suffer from a delusional disorder. You needed further treatment which I could not provide.

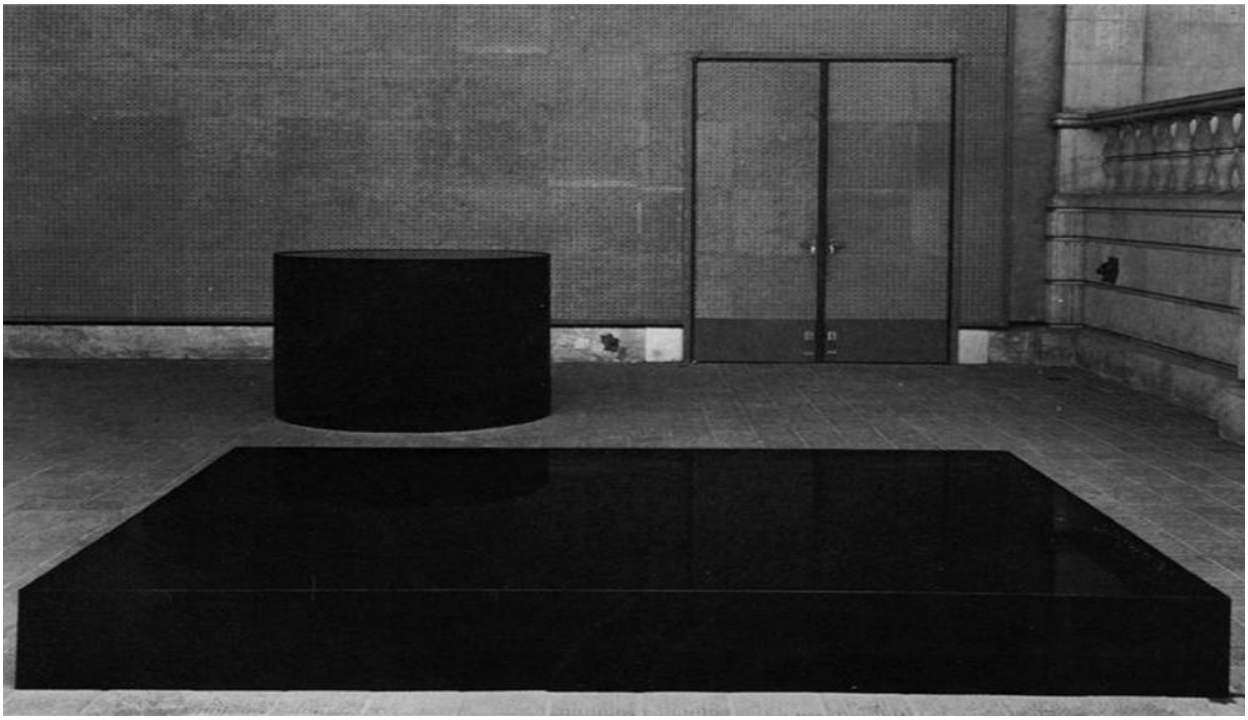
REEVES: That's not true. I read your notes. 'Patient is responding to treatment.' I was improving!

DR. RYAN: That was before I understood that your attachment to me was hindering your progress.

REEVES: You were the only person that could ever help me . . .

DR. RYAN: Well, I'm here now. Let's talk. ("Family Secrets")

Besides the repetition of words, mirroring also implies an emotional exchange and is a common metaphor in art for the hidden self. The way in which Reeves and Dr. Ryan share emotion from fragments of experience verges on montage and reminds me of the stillness and fear in Louise Bourgeois' installation art on child sexual abuse entitled *CELL XXVI*. Self-reflection is a theme that also makes me think of Nobuo Sekine's topological investigation through steel, varnish, and water into the malleability of space and time (see Figure 2.6). I refer to these art metaphors to show you how a limbo space often reflects a limbo state of being. The recreated therapy office, like Bourgeois' cell and Sekine's waterscape, allows for fluid movement from mind to body, stillness to emotion, while nevertheless conveying the desire to escape from the self. Even as the



(Figure 2.6: Nobuo Sekine's open-air sculpture entitled *Phase of Nothingness-Water*.

Credit: Nobuo Sekine; photographic reproduction in the public domain.

warehouse fills with carbon dioxide, the tableau vivant between therapist and patient leaves viewers with an impression of liminality that draws close the space between self and other. The real-world implication of the architextual play between improvisation and detection is that agents can achieve an empathetic path to criminal justice through spontaneous, yet reflective practices. In the next section, I revisit my discussion on women and girls in STEM, this time in relation to ritualistic or rule-bound (ludic) play. Mostly, these shows try to combat gendered socialization, but sometimes they diminish the leadership skills of their strongest female characters. By focusing on the connection between technology and agôn, I can advocate for these characters' sense of belonging while combating images that might influence perceptions of their intelligence and skills. As part of this work, I consider adaptation as the sense of repetitiveness, and also posit ludic play as a new method of crime-solving.

Ludus

Giving viewers an understanding of what it is like to take an empathetic approach to criminal investigation also teaches them about the concepts, rules, and processes involved in police science. An architext thus develops between competition (ludus) and detection. In this section, my curiosity extends to drama TV storylines in which female characters are made to appear less smart or less skilled than their male counterparts in competitive environments. In Drama Studies, *games* and other competitive activities are used to "promote group cooperation, trust, risk-taking, and listening" ("Games/Warm-Ups"). My attention is on portrayals of women and girls in STEM using complex play to drive inclusion in ritualistic or rule-bound (ludic) environments. Literary critic Roger Caillois, in his book entitled *Man, Play, and Games*, explains that ludus is a device of "calculation and contrivance" (31) supplied with the power of agôn:

> There is also an aspect of ludus that, in my opinion, is explained by the presence of agôn within it: that is, that it is strongly affected by fashion. The yo-yo, cup-and-ball, diabolo, and ring puzzle appear and disappear as if by magic and soon are replaced by other games. In parallel fashion, the vogues for amusements of a more intellectual nature are no less limited in time; e.g. the rebus, the anagram, the acrostic, and the charade have had their hours. . . . Such phenomena would be enigmatic if ludus were an individual amusement, as seems superficially to be the case. In reality, it is permeated with an atmosphere of competition. (31–32)

In rhetorical studies, "agôn fosters difference, disagreement, and dispute, while at the same time fostering cooperation and agreement about the rules of competition" (Consigny 131). Calling attention to the atmosphere of action, battle, contest, competition, struggle, and other manifestations of agôn illuminates female characters' fight against the masculine culture within

STEM while also highlighting the gamified ways in which they attempt to break down barriers to leadership. By studying the relation between technology and agôn, I bring to light the perspective-taking aspect of games that unleashes inclusion. I have already talked about playing the undercover role to establish trust and embody empathy, but these shows also depict perspective-taking as an online exercise which employs related skills such as "considering someone's motivation" (Schrier 45) and "solving a problem from another perspective" (46). *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest* take special notice of ludic environments with a firmly masculine culture. In consultation with Linda Hutcheon, Jeremy Yoder and Allison Mattheis, Jo Ann Oravec, and other theorists, I argue that female characters are taught a masculine culture of STEM, but that ludus is one way in which female STEM characters ignite their skills and motivate themselves toward success.

Critical for understanding the cultural discourse and imagery within these shows are the concepts of perspective-taking as conflict (at worst) and play (at best). I would like to begin with representations of fictional girls' interest in STEM as agônistic in the classical sense of the word—combative, conflicting, or contested. Key to addressing the tone or mood of the masculine culture within STEM is noticing *microaggressions*: "the daily, commonplace, often subtle acts and words that communicate slights and insults against members of a marginalized group (Sue 2010)" (Cabay et al. 4). Even as more women and girls participate in STEM,

> they may experience a 'chilly climate' in which they feel unwelcome (Flam 1991). This chilliness arises from explicit and implicit messages that convey to women that their gender could be a liability in STEM settings. Indeed, women may encounter ambient cues that represent STEM fields as masculine (Cheryan et al. 2009), stereotypes that allege that women lack ability (Steele, Spencer, and Aronson 2002; Appel and Kronberger 2012;

> Thoman et al. 2013), and men in STEM settings who treat women in subtly sexist ways (Logel et al. 2009). (Walton et al. 468–469)

In their article entitled "Ambient Belonging: How Stereotypical Cues Impact Gender," social psychologists Cheryan et al. explain that "if one's identity is incompatible with those stereotypes, then they can feel a compromised sense of belonging in the environment, which in turn can thwart interest in the group" (1046). This begs the question: Does sense of belonging play a key role in the likelihood of girls to pursue careers in STEM fields? In peeling back the technology/agôn relation to its gendered core, our full attention is on the aspirations of fictional girls entering STEM and the barriers and biases that attempt to keep them out of male-dominated working and learning environments. I also tackle the question of whether or not fictional girls become future leaders in technology-based jobs since "women are underrepresented in leadership positions in general and in STEM in particular" (The Geena Davis Institute, "Portray Her" 12). To address these questions, I use adaptation and drama theories related to voice, movement, and play style to argue that *Person of Interest* employs the literary device of passing reference to reflect on gender and sexuality expectations that shape ideas about who should aspire to tech careers.

One of the main supporting concepts of architextuality that also has roots in drama and literature is *allusion*—defined as "a passing reference to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage" (Abrams and Harpham 12). In her seminal book *A Theory of Adaptation*, renowned literary theorist Linda Hutcheon describes allusions as "brief echoes of other works" (9). I seek to follow Hutcheon's argument that "we retell—and show again and interact anew with—stories over and over; in the process, they change with each repetition, and yet they are recognizably the same" (177). From this perspective, "themes are

perhaps the easiest story elements to see as adaptable across media and even genres or framing contexts" (10). Televised returns to literature and culture insist that there is a profound link to art and life from the viewing experience. I see allusion as repetitiveness or a kind of *figural déjà vu*—the sense of seeing something in one text that you have already seen in another. (In rhetoric, this is the classical practice of *imitatio*; e.g. progymnasmata for rhetoric students. In poetry, we call this *mimesis*; e.g. Plath's *Ariel* voice. In drama, voice and identity construct through practices of self-talk, ventriloquy, and other sounds of self; e.g. the 'speaker of death' in Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*.) The constant loop of feelings, themes, and selves from text to text makes up the noisy babel of stories on screen. And, it is interesting to note that *Person of Interest* picks up the theme of fear from Daniel Keyes' novel *Flowers for Algernon*, which is a good study of voice. In Drama Studies, *voice* is "the distinctive style of expression of a character, an author, or an individual work conveyed through such means as the use of vocabulary, sentence structure, and imagery, as well as through auditory elements such as volume, timbre, projection, diction, dialect, tone, pitch, articulation, rhythm, and pace of speech" ("Voice"). I could talk at length about voice in drama or poetry, but am excited to learn more about narrative echoes that speak to our circulation through texts to new meanings. In the next two paragraphs, I will unpack the allusion to *Flowers for Algernon* and explore passing/echoing/repeating textual discourses. Notably, the technology/agôn relation forms through the outer environment, a common theme that passes from the sci-fi genre to the drama genre. Let us consider how *Person of Interest* extends this gendered relation to sexuality in both rural and institutional environments.

Not only are women and girls underrepresented in STEM but so are sexual minorities (see Yoder and Mattheis 2016; Steinke 2017; Hughes 2018). In their article entitled "Queer in STEM: Workplace Experiences Reported in a National Survey of LGBTQA Individuals in

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Careers," biologist Jeremy Yoder and educator Allison Mattheis address the 'chilly climate' in STEM regarding sexual orientation. Yoder and Mattheis argue that, "even in the absence of direct hostility or discrimination, individuals who identify as LGBTQA work in environments that are marked by heteronormative assumptions that these identities do not exist in the present context or are abnormal" (2). *Person of Interest* highlights gender and sexuality in rural and institutional environments to consider how queer females form their STEM identities in low-tolerance contexts. Gender and geography scholar Jo Little defines *rural femininity* as "the link between embodiment and sexual identity of young women that has a profoundly spatial (rural) aspect—the dominant image of the rural body for young women is not one that sits easily with the identities that they perform and aspire to" (375). Before adult Root (Amy Acker) identifies by her hacker name, she was Samantha Groves (Mercedes Griffeth)—a young girl from small city Bishop, Texas bullied at school for her genius computer skills and her queer/questioning identity. In the episode "Bad Code," Groves meets up with her older friend Hanna Frey (Emily Robinson) at their local library to play the simulation computer game *Oregon Trail* (see Figure 2.7). This text-based strategy game was a staple in American elementary schools from the 1980s–2000s (Cortez) because it tested players' logic by asking them to make decisions about different aspects of their lives (e.g. navigation, pace, food rations, resources, etc) that would have a direct impact upon their health. Every day, the girls also read from their favourite book, *Flowers for Algernon*. In Keyes' novel, Charlie Gordon's pursuit of self-education is entangled in his desire for emotional maturity, and it is unclear whether or not he ever finds his true voice. Thus, *Oregon Trail* and *Flowers for Algernon* share common themes of education, identity, and the pursuit of happiness, all of which explore the courage of speaking your truth. But, the technology/agôn relation is such that gender and

(Figure 2.7: Hanna Frey [left] and Samantha Groves [right] meet at the library to read books and play video games.) Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

sexuality are held in conflict with technical skill. This relation follows Root into adulthood and reinforces the 'chilly climate' in tech for gender and sexual minorities. Through the lens of architextuality, we are able to see how discourses about gender and sexuality are brought into practice in ludic environments through elements of literature.

Also within the framework of architextuality is an exploration of how discourse becomes aesthetic practice (Genette, *Palimpsests* x). The question is: What role does allusion play in shaping the relationality between gender, sexuality, and ludus? William Irwin believes that "allusion calls for us to make certain unstated associations" (288). And, in *Person of Interest*, comparisons between the sci-fi and drama genres prompt viewers to associate STEM with certain cultural norms (i.e. rules) that "shape community perceptions about *whom STEM is for*" (Chesky and Goldstein 100). It might interest you to know that "male STEM characters are more

likely than women characters to be shown in computer occupations (11.5% compared to 8.6%)" (The Geena Davis Institute, "Portray Her" 12). By analyzing "how female STEM characters are represented, with a specific eye on portrayals of intelligence and competence" (9), I can address the issue of underrepresentation. If the "competence, intelligence, or empowerment" (12) of even one strong female character interested in tech is thrown into question, then space opens up for discourses and practices that inspire hostility, discrimination, or harassment in STEM settings. What viewers experience from an allusion to *Flowers for Algernon* is the feeling of having no power. Brent Cline indicates, in his article entitled "'You're Not the Same Kind of Human Being': The Evolution of Pity to Horror in Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon*," that Charlie is described as "powerless in the midst of science" (para. 6). Cline is referring here to the infantilizing view of disability in the novel through the lens of tragedy. The allusion to *Flowers for Algernon* in the episode "Bad Code" is the key to understanding Root's struggle for power in the episode "Liberty." It appears that Root, like Charlie, is made to appear powerless in the midst of institutional power. Although *Person of Interest* tries to flip-the-script on the power relationship, by acknowledging the real connection Root has with The Machine, this show still constructs a relation between genius and insanity.

Literature and drama have a long history of conflating women with madness (e.g. Euripides' Medea commits infanticide in *Medea*; Shakespeare's Ophelia commits suicide in *Hamlet*; Gilman's narrator creeps on all fours in *The Yellow Wallpaper*; Plath's Esther receives shock treatments in *The Bell Jar*; Fitch's Ingrid murders a man in *White Oleander*; etc). Mad stereotypes are troublesome because they affect perceptions of gender but also potential. How women and girls see themselves in TV narratives about STEM could impact their pursuit of those professions or their presence in ludic spaces. *Person of Interest* feminizes madness by

depicting the women/technology relation as a delusion of the mind. Shifting focus to genius as insanity within the rule-bound environment of a health institution highlights recurring narrative elements that transfer meaning from Keyes' novel to CBS' show. In the episode "Liberty," Finch and Reese commit Root to Stoneridge Hospital, a psychiatric facility, in an attempt to sever the bond between Root and The Machine. In spite of this, The Machine designates Root as an analog interface, which refers to the way in which it communicates with her directly (rather than indirectly, via social security numbers, with admin Finch). At Stoneridge, Root becomes the patient of psychiatrist Dr. Ronald Carmichael (Bruce Altman), who insists that The Machine is an auditory hallucination symptomatic of a technology addiction:

> ROOT: We're in the middle of a disagreement.
>
> DR. RONALD CARMICHAEL: A disagreement with 'the voice'?
>
> ROOT: Mm-hmm.
>
> DR. CARMICHAEL: Now, I know that you believe that you need a phone, but I am here to tell you that you don't. I believe that separating you from it, and from all other forms of technology, is the best course of action. So, it's time to unplug.
>
> ROOT: Please don't do this. It's not good for us to be separated.
>
> DR. CARMICHAEL: I hope you realize that I'm trying to help you. [To orderly.] Escort our patient to solitary confinement. No contact with anything electronic. [To Root.] You'll thank me someday. ("Liberty")

Dr. Carmichael believes that Root's phone is a symbol of her mental state, mad-from-phone, but the phone is a channel for making known her bond of understanding with The Machine (which takes on her voice and personality by the fifth season). In a strange way, Friedrich Kittler's statement comes true: "wherever telephones are ringing, a ghost resides in the receiver" (75).

Although Root is confined to a hospital room, she finds a way to speak with The Machine through the dramatic medium of movement (see Figure 2.8). In Drama Studies, *gesture* refers to

(Figure 2.8: Root makes contact with The Machine by waving at a security camera from inside Stoneridge Hospital.) Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

"a movement of the body or limbs used to express or emphasize a thought, emotion, or idea" (139). Root's nonverbal communication with The Machine through the emblem of hand-waving calls forth "ludus [that] relates to the primitive desire to find diversion and amusement in perpetually recurrent obstacles" (Caillois 32–33). In other words, she waves in greeting to acknowledge The Machine's presence in a light-hearted manner, while also calling for help. The effects of silence and movement emphasize physicality within a confined space and amplify emotional attachment or detachment. In place of speech, everyday objects can therefore produce a physical orientation and communicate internal states. For example, looking through a window is a symbol borrowed from *Flowers for Algernon* that explores the relation between individual

and society. In Keyes' novel, Charlie looks out of a window at society, feeling disconnected. In CBS' show, Root looks out of a window at The Machine, feeling connected. The window is thus a symbol that represents different states of mind. To summarize, *Person of Interest* tries to convey the powerful relationship between Root and The Machine through ludic desire and various elements of self-expression, but still falls back on the discourse of madness. In the final turn to *CSI: Cyber*, I argue that ludic play is a new method of crime-solving by drawing attention to a more positive image of gender and belonging in science and tech.

STEM identity is related to gender and the sense of belonging (see Ahlqvist, London, and Rosenthal 2013; Veldman et al. 2017; Starr 2018). In their study on gender-work identity, psychologists Veldman et al. argue that, when "perceiving conflict between gender and work identities in male-dominated professions, . . . experiencing support from team members and perceiving a positive diversity climate are contextual supportive factors that can buffer identity conflict for women" (1–2). What particularly stands out in *CSI: Cyber* is the use of competitive gameplay in the STEM work environment to foster belonging, improve leadership, and drive performance. This is where the idea of work-as-play narrows into focus. In her article entitled "Gamification and Multigamification in the Workplace: Expanding the Ludic Dimensions of Work and Challenging the Work/Play Dichotomy," information technologist Jo Ann Oravec teaches that "workplaces are incorporating increasing varieties of concurrent and emerging games; some of these games are directly linked to how employees are projected to produce value for an organization and are paid and promoted, while others can be recreational, educational, or even medical" (1). Oravec's deep understanding of work-as-play has roots in Rouzie's (2000) breakthrough work on *serio-ludic play*, which "conveys content of a serious nature through playfully stylistic means" (635). What makes this show so unique is its use of ludus in science. I

call this new criminological approach *ludic forensics*—the gamification of crime-solving. In the episode "Why-Fi," applying ludus to forensics builds a collaborative and positive work environment. In this installment, colleagues Diebenkorn 'D. B.' Russell (Ted Danson) and Dr. Ryan race live cockroaches with computer implants in a game of friendly competition (see Figure 2.9):

(Figure 2.9: D. B. Russell and Ryan race remote-controlled cockroaches at the Cyber Threat Operations Centre.) Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

D. B. RUSSELL: See the chip on its head?

DR. AVERY RYAN: Yes.

RUSSELL: It communicates with the cockroach's antenna so that its entire body is controlled wirelessly. Ready? Set. Go! Avery, use the remote control!

DR. RYAN: This is amazing! I'm actually controlling its direction! Wait, D. B., how do we stop [controlling] them?

RUSSELL: I don't know. ("Why-Fi")

By adding a fun spirit to the serious nature of forensics, these senior scientists find a way to foster belonging while investigating how cybercriminals use remote-controlled animals (actual cyborgs!) to spy on their victims. The use of serio-ludic play in this scene is so significant because it welcomes creativity into a scientific environment and thereby helps to mitigate work stress. For females, top stressors in forensics that lead to burnout include experiencing less support and more role conflict (Holt et al. 10). And yet, this scene delivers the message that serio-ludic play can be a positive way of leveling the playing field in STEM workplaces. On the whole, this single representation of ludic forensics has the potential to positively shape public perceptions of women in STEM as collaborative, innovative, and agile leaders. The main takeaway from this episode is that applying ludus to forensics might be useful for real scientists; the positive effects of gaming could make it so that the grave nature of solving crime does not generate a negative work atmosphere. To summarize, both shows examine the role of ritualistic or rule-bound (ludic) play in identifying the masculine culture within STEM and developing more opportunities for positive experience. Textual echoes communicate myths about gender, sexuality, and technology, but serio-ludic play emerges as one way to change the 'chilly climate' of STEM, and incorporate a sense of fun into a very serious working environment such as forensics. Together, these images of play-back and play-science find common ground between the art of drama and the science of detection.

Conclusion

Architextuality, as the relation between texts, is an abstract way of dealing with tangled discourses, textual echoes, thematic webs, and their shaping of social beliefs and practices. In this chapter, architextuality comes into being as the standard discourse, genre, and theme, but

also takes another form as performative action. Gender and societal pressure are popular themes in literature and genre TV. CBS' *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest* present fresh takes on relationality that bring new energy to gender issues, such as empathy, aggression, and leadership in STEM careers and environments. *CSI: Cyber* depicts roleplay and serio-ludic play as valid methods of criminal investigation that debunk myths about women in science and tech (e.g. women do not belong in policing or forensic science, women are unskilled at technical things, etc). *Person of Interest* captures embodied actions and textual practices, such as voice, movement, and allusion, which act as echoes of liminality or belongingness. These representations of embodied, paidiac, and ludic detection evolve from elements of drama that view science and tech through the master lens of play. In sum, analyzing portrayals of embodiment, paidia, and ludus sheds light on new approaches to adaptation theory (e.g. figural déjà vu) and crime-solving (e.g. embodied detection and ludic forensics) that address the gender gap in STEM. In the chapter that follows, I unravel the web of textual reference through citation. Returning to the relation between masculinity and aggression, I extend focus to the production of psychological trauma on screen. Specifically, I draw attention to quotations of terror, torture, and trauma in fictional networked, fantasy, and virtual environments to discuss how rape culture is depicted in drama TV.

Chapter 3: Citations of Trauma in *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*

Introduction

As suggested, architextuality—textual relation—is one concept of adaptation that can shed light on gender issues in criminal justice fields. Another is textual reference, which refers to deliberate quotation from another source. Our previous conversation about the intersectional discourses of gender and crime consequently needs to give careful thought to referentiality (e.g. true-crime references) and how this influences the representation of violence against women. The third chapter of my dissertation therefore considers references to trauma in CBS' *Criminal Minds* and NBC's *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*. *Citation* occurs when a new text "borrows words, images, or brief scenes from an original text in order to develop intertextual dialogues" (Slethaug, *Adaptation Theory* 10). This postmodern understanding of intertextuality celebrates open-ended, indirect, and allusive "clues" (10) between texts that create unintentional, delayed, or ambiguous connections. Crime dramas that tackle social issues like deviant identity online, erotic surveillance, male sexual aggression, and social media misuse employ similar dialogic markers to map the psychology of war on screen. *Psychological warfare (PSYWAR)* can be understood as any attempt to militarize the body, mind, life, or will of a civilian (Wall 293). Major Angela Maria Lungu of The United States Army contends that the TV can be viewed as a continuation of war (291). I argue that methods of citation (e.g. supplementation, imitation, displacement, and dramatic technique) produce and sustain a visual style of MindWar (i.e. terror) across drama TV through aesthetics of PSYWAR (i.e. torture).

In literary theory, *citationality* (like Derrida's [2005] *iterability*) refers to the representation of some other discourse (Nakassis 51). In his article entitled "Citation and

Citationality," cultural and linguistic anthropologist Constantine Nakassis explores the semiotics of citation:

> All citations are examples of what Michael Silverstein (2005) calls *interdiscursivity*. An interdiscursive act is a discursive act that links two or more discursive events (minimally itself and another, or even itself and a figuration of itself) within the same semiotic frame. By doing so, citations weave together different events into one complex act. The citation reanimates other events of discourse, presencing them in a context alien to their original utterance. And, crucially, it brings reflexive attention to this very operation. . . . This reflexive interdiscursivity involves a play of sameness and difference, identity and alterity, what Charles Sanders Peirce (1932) terms *iconism* and *indexicality*. (56)

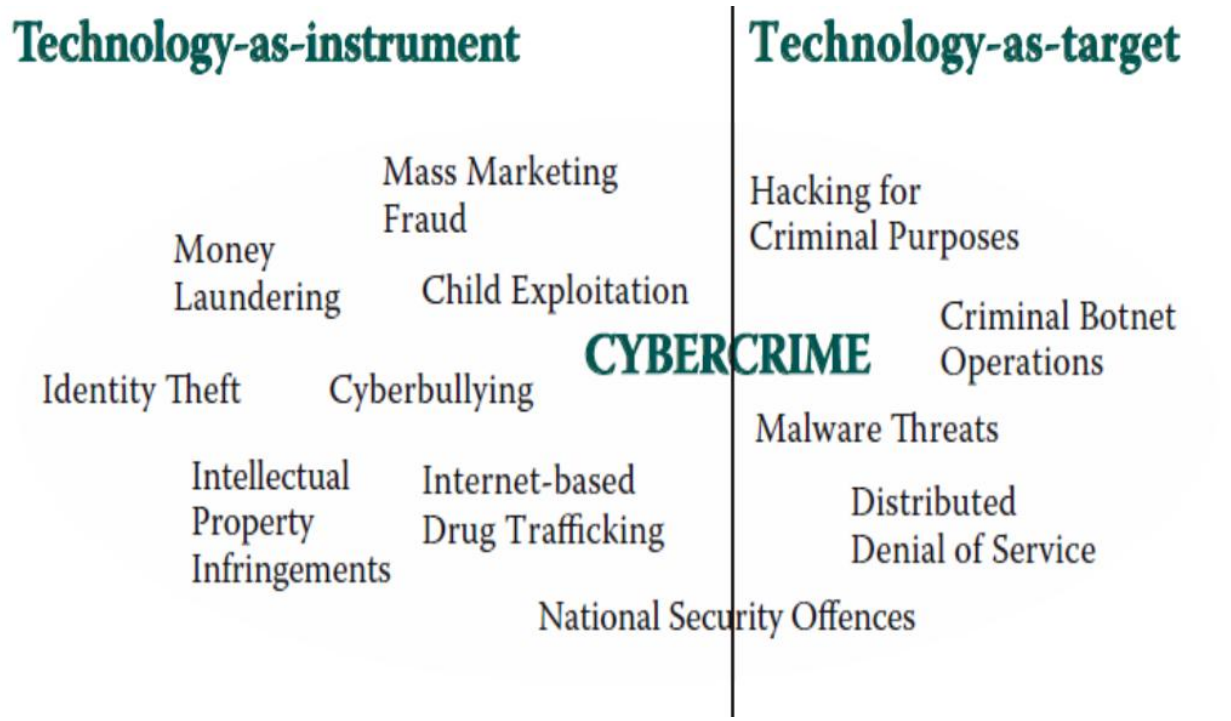
Citation, interdiscursivity, presencing, iconism, and indexicality—this is the visual language of textual reference. For our purposes, citation is a useful method in mapping the cases, issues, myths, texts, and more that spread a culture of violence against women in TV content. I see this repetitive performance of women's trauma through social problems across texts as the visual style of MindWar. Throughout this chapter, I study the digital aspects and social effects of this style through referential aesthetics of torture and rhetorics of trauma. First and Second, I consider how true-crime citations eroticize cybercrime and other forms of violence against women. Third, I examine 'ripped from the headlines' citations of campus sexual assault cases that link masculinity with sexual aggression. Fourth, I investigate citations of Internet memes, monsters, and mythologies that normalize deviant online sociability. Together, these analyses locate the objectifying gaze within drama TV and give rise to new terms like networked textuality, self-referential intertextuality, and forensic adaptation that describe the effect of adaptation on representations of gendered violence.

Deviant Identity Online

The Internet affords the creation of limitless constructions of the self. Digital identity formation is an act of engagement in "the interactional function of technology" (Bozkurt and Tu 155). In his book entitled *Digital Identities: Creating and Communicating the Online Self*, social theorist Rob Cover discusses the ways in which "identity is invented, adapted, and enacted digitally" (149), arguing that "identity is always online" (x). Social networks in particular encourage multiple configurations of identity that supplement or combat each other. This fission of social being on the Internet makes it easier for offenders to find potential victims of stalking, theft, rape, and murder. Citation is a good method for examining cyberculture because it addresses the social conditions emerging from the Internet that influence viewers' perceptions of being and deviance. To consider the "interactivity" (97) of trauma narratives, I draw on the scholarship of Bruce Gross, Alan Kirby, Tim Delaney, and other theorists to argue that the nature of the Internet contributes to unstable identity formation. The concept of interactivity is sometimes used to discuss the implications of digital communications (see Valkenburg, Peter, and Schouten 2006). For instance, it seems plausible that involvement in negative interactions on networking sites can have an adverse influence on social self-esteem (Valkenburg, Peter, and Schouten 586). In *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, the interaction between technology and self references the effects of digital culture upon real people. These shows draw from a variety of images, sources, and themes to investigate the widespread construction of sexual violence across media content.

Perceptions of sex and violence can affect social behaviour both online and offline (see Melander 2010; Collins, Martino, and Shaw 2011; Doornwaard et al. 2015; Branley and Covey 2017). Recent evidence suggests that there is "a strong direct link between online exposure to

content depicting risky behaviour and users' own engagement in congruent risky behaviour in the offline environment for the majority of the behaviours included in this study: drug use, excessive alcohol use, disordered eating, self-harm, violence to others, and dangerous pranks" (Branley and Covey 285–286). This problem can be outlined as a concern about social media use by "users more prone to the negative influences of the Internet" (284). Although virtual communities can be sites of positive human interaction, they can also be accessed and monitored by offenders for deviant purposes. In the first two sections of this chapter, I look at how drama TV communicates deviance in relation to both cybercrime categories—"technology-as-instrument" (Royal Canadian Mounted Police 6) and "technology-as-target" (6)—to analyze the social aspects of Internet crime (see Figure 3.1). In *Criminal Minds*, a team of FBI profilers



(Figure 3.1: The RCMP's figure on cybercrime categories.)

Credit: Royal Canadian Mounted Police; screenshot by author.

studies the media/society and technology/crime relations during their psychological profiling exercises. In the episode "The Internet is Forever," the team investigates the suspicious disappearances of Paula Renmar (Uncast), Samantha Rush (Meegan Godfrey), and Dorris Archer (Katherine Conway)—three women from Boise, Idaho whose social media accounts were hacked before they were murdered. The team identifies Lucy Masters (Sarah Lieving) as the next victim of Robert Johnson (Reece Rios)—a serial killer known as WATCHER89 who livestreams his murders in online chat rooms. Behavioural scientist Bruce Gross argues that chat rooms are "illusions of safety and emotional intimacy that, whether real or perceived, can be intensely rewarding, alluring, and even intoxicating" (59). Virtual communities that use text transmission value instantaneous connection, collaboration, and even anonymity; these digital ecosystems are used by offenders to facilitate their sexual fantasies and risk-taking behaviours. Digital deception is particularly appealing to "sexual sadists, [who experience] sexual arousability through aggression" (Mokros et al. 195). The ability to disguise identity online for deceptive or deviant purposes invites the use of social networks for the purpose of predation. When this happens, psychologies of terror, torture, trauma, and war flow into cyberculture and open a discussion about the formation, maintenance, and performance of deviant identity and deviant behaviour online.

Internet culture can be understood as the culture produced from the intersection between popular culture, the Internet, and social communication. In his book entitled *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture*, cultural critic Alan Kirby coins the term *digimodernism* to describe the way in which the voyage from postmodernism to post-postmodernism bears "a cultural shift, a communicative revolution, a social organization; . . . it's a new form of textuality" (50). Cyber-textuality is a form of

participatory culture that constructs social meaning through online activities. It is important to consider the social context of trauma in order to better understand the methods used by cybercriminals to manipulate individual and mass audiences for the purpose of directing perception, thought, and behaviour. Psychological means for targeting victims is otherwise known as MindWar in the military forces. One such means is terror. Although MindWar represents a traditional appearance of warfare, it develops in a networked age to control and influence audiences digitally. Cyberstalking is one example of a type of harassment that features the use of the Internet for the purpose of wreaking emotional distress and can spawn from social behaviours like engagement actions (e.g. likes, comments, and shares). Social networks are transforming the way in which humans interact as well as how individuals develop and perform their identities. For example, social media networks like Facebook and Instagram can disrupt identity and privacy protection through such location-based GPS monitoring tools as geocoding and geotagging. The social consequences of using the Internet have been considered in the communications and sociology fields, but what about the psychological consequences of Internet connectedness? PSYWAR in the digimodern era expresses what I will call *networked textuality*—narrative conditions brought into being when technology encounters texts and contexts. If texts interact with social ideologies, trends, and values, then culture becomes open to the landscape of psychological persuasion.

Textuality-in-flux moves individuals toward an Internet-controlled system of selfhood. In networked societies, the concept of identity is technologically intercepted. Digital identity is developed in conditions under which the human/technology relation "conveys meaning that extends into subjects' lives and reaches beyond a virtual concept" (Maia and Valente 58). This construction is often thought of as a major area covered in cybersecurity, but it also stretches out

to the humanities. In keeping with Danah Boyd, Sherry Turkle, and the many other technology and social media scholars concerned with behaviour in cyberspace, I further research the impact of cyberspace upon human interaction by examining fictional representations of cybercrime. Another aspect of this cyber/human interaction is the role that cyberspace plays in "social deviance" (Delaney 3). In sociology, such criminal behaviour is theorized as "learned interaction with other persons in a process of communication" (78). Although the Internet has improved communication with others, it is also an agitator for new forms of crime and behaviour. Cybercrime is rapidly expanding; despite the fact that "two thirds of adults globally have been a victim of some kind of cybercrime (65%)" (Symantec 4), efforts to ensure online security do not match cybercrime frequency and intricacy. Web users are aware of common threats and vulnerabilities, but do not always follow Internet safety rules. Drama TV picks up on this idea that the Internet can be a threat to one's safety by telling stories about cyberculture from a criminological conceptual framework that supports the study of deviance in virtual environments.

Criminal Minds specifically addresses the harmful effects of cyberculture on individuals vulnerable to deviant behaviour (e.g. offenders) and individuals who experience personal violation (e.g. victims) by citing true-crime cases to augment its study of the cyber/human interaction. In Derridean (1993) theory, the *supplement* is

> diminishment, replacement, and addition that challenges the original even as it completes or supersedes it. . . . The relationship between surplus, supplement, and value is an important concept in adaptation because new information and techniques added to old approaches and textual antecedents decenter and destabilize the old and open up new readings without recourse to stable meaning. (Slethaug, *Adaptation Theory* 33–34)

For practical purposes, examining references to real stories and social issues helps in understanding the role that drama TV plays in provoking deviant behaviour. Rapid advancements in technology like IP telephony and social networking have changed interpersonal communication for the better. However, the impact of the Internet upon human interaction has also spawned new methods of deviant behaviour that inform digital and popular cultures. Online social formations have the power to enhance the group aspect of digital being and expression, but the global dimension of our lives is also matched by the global threat landscape of cybercrime. I am particularly interested in learning about the positive and negative effects of Internet use on the different age groups that I might teach. Generations Y, Z, and Alpha are population demographics that have grown up in the Digital Age. Instant messaging systems of both the past (e.g. ICQ and MSN) and the present (e.g. Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp) are some of the greatest contributors to socialization in the 20th and 21st centuries. Most mobile device security threats now originate from application permissions. Both Android and iOS software can ask users to agree to a slew of permissions, including access to their camera, microphone, contacts, location, voice recognition, and social media accounts. While these permissions allow for uninhibited communication and social connection, they can also open users to new types of abuse. If devices that record our voices, capture our appearance, and track our location are hacked, the consequences of our connectivity can be damaging and even lethal; in this way, the price of our digital citizenship is a decline in overall privacy, safety, and security.

Stories about cybercrime that stress the importance of safety also consider the role of technology in shaping the concept of the self. Identity and trust are part of the same digital experience. Trust is a recurrent issue in cybersecurity and privacy protection (see Jensen 2014; van den Berg and Keymolen 2017; Jones and Moncur 2018). According to cyber governance

scholars Bibi van den Berg and Esther Keymolen, “the emergence of the Internet as a platform for human interaction” (111) has adapted exiting trust models: “functionality, helpfulness, and reliability have replaced ability, benevolence, and integrity as the core beliefs associated with trust behaviour” (112). In other words, how an individual trusts another is mediated through technology powered by the Internet rather than measured through direct confidence. For example, the simplicity of correspondence on social networking sites facilitates an ease of trust, and the willingness to be open with others no longer requires touch—a calming and cooperative effect—or the building of confidence over time. In *The Future of Reputation: Gossip, Rumor, and Privacy on the Internet*, privacy law expert Daniel Solove discusses the instability of digital identity formation and raises an important question about credibility in connected context: “A lot of interactions today are with people we have never seen or heard or met. Having information about others helps us establish trust, especially online, where we often do not meet people in person. But, can we trust the information about people that we find on the Internet” (41)? Users often build and manage their online identities to show the best of themselves (e.g. job-seeking, online dating, and social media profiles), but these partial representations of selfhood do not wholly represent the nature of their being. The episode “The Internet is Forever” delivers an overall message of caution about believing in the truth or reliability of someone you talk to online. This is because violations of trust are more difficult to detect in an environment in which communication is largely non-verbal (i.e. text-based rather than voice-based) and body language is invisible or ignored. People often read others through their non-verbal signals (i.e. what they do not say) and, when these cues are hidden from view or are not sincerely made, social communication evokes a mixture of meaning and interpretation.

Safety and trust concerns extend to relationships in cyberspace, which can be fleeting or long-lasting depending on the nature, context, and frequency of the interaction. In general, chatting online has the potential for individuals to assert their belonging in an online community. For example, people who experience shyness or social anxiety can develop healthy relationships by chatting online to eliminate the risks associated with face-to-face meetings with strangers (Ang, Chan, and Lee 28). Social apps like Tinder, Grindr, and Bumble have also changed the dating landscape forever. Passing and swiping features compare the search for romance to a game. The protection of the screen helps users gain a more immediate sense of belonging. While pacing text-based conversations with potential romantic partners can help to establish trust (Hardey 1120), many users miss the nuances of deception during digital communication that they would not miss during face-to-face conversations. This suggests that social sites and dating apps can be used by offenders to commit illegal acts. Reality TV series such as *90 Day Fiancé* and *Sister Wives* have even brought to light the issues of marriage fraud (establishing a relationship of convenience online to later gain permanent residence in another country) and catfishing (fabricating an online identity to trick someone into a romantic relationship). Deception is no longer a strictly in-person phenomenon, but a common practice in the virtual environment.

Criminal Minds draws attention to the issue of deception in online chat rooms to show an abrupt change in American culture—a shared awareness that the speed of communication on the Internet can decrease the time it takes to form relationships while simultaneously opening users to deception. For offenders, the greatest advantage of online communication is the opportunity to perform their deviant identity in multimodal ways by accessing many channels for acceptance, companionship, and perceived growth. In their book entitled *Cybercrime: The Psychology of Online Offenders*, psychologist Gráinne Kirwan and researcher Andrew Power explain that

offenders often access social networks to address their "intimacy deficits, which may be caused by insecure attachment styles and prevent the offender from forming satisfying adult relationships, potentially causing loneliness and social isolation" (130). The episode "The Internet is Forever" shows how deviant identity is increasingly performed online. Johnson's motive is the need to belong and central to his modus operandi is the act of assuming the identities of his victims after he has killed them. Technical analyst Penelope Garcia (Kirsten Vangsness) pinpoints auto-replies as the impersonation system preferred by this 'unknown subject': "All of the victims' last posts on Facebook and Twitter said the same kind of thing: 'Going out of town,' 'Going on a business trip,' or 'Going on vacation.' When you look at the time and date stamp of those posts, they were all posted the morning after each of the victims went missing, so the unsub posted them" ("The Internet is Forever"). Johnson impersonates his female victims to evade detection, but his performance conceptualizes gender as an experience fashioned to conceal his own deviant identity; this character profile suggests that "gender-switching" (Hancock and Gonzales 371) is a much more common method of deception used online than previously thought. In fact, 28% of male and 18% of female chat room users lie about their sex or gender (Whitty 351). These statistics indicate that social media is an arena of both trust and deception in which Internet killers can perform their sex, gender, sexuality, and other aspects of their identity in cunning ways. Interestingly, Johnson's character is an amalgamation of three real serial killers: The Internet Slave Master (John Edward Robinson), The Original Night Stalker (Joseph James DeAngelo), and The Old Lady Killer (Juana Barraza Samperio). These offender profiles are taken from true-crime cases to act as nodes of contact between fictional and real narratives about, among other things, society, technology, and crime. For instance, Johnson's modus operandi cites The Internet Slave Master's impersonation method

of mailing typed letters to his victims' families to postpone missing person investigations (Lynnes et al. 3). In the next section, I will examine how these true-crime citations portray snaring unsuspecting victims as afforded by turning the camera (e.g. a webcam, an outdoor security cam, etc) into a technology for spying rather than security.

Erotic Surveillance

The next social issue cited in *Criminal Minds* is erotic surveillance. Before discussing Johnson's sexualization of spying and stalking, the reader must first understand the roots of surveillance theory. A militarized concept of observation views surveillance as intelligence and reconnaissance. Economic, social, and technological theorists closely associate surveillance with control, power, and punishment in their studies of "the modern state, media and technology, ideologies, hegemony, and class struggles" (Fuchs 6); these studies examine values associated with freedom from unapproved intrusion such as the psychological needs for autonomy, privacy, and freedom from control. Bennett and Parsons explain that "surveillance is now about the 'monitoring of everyday life' (Lyon 2007): who we are, what we are doing, and where we are doing it" (489). The popular case of the Panopticon is a model of observation that seeks to maintain social order; it has been described by Bentham (1791) as a prison, by Foucault (1980) as a hospital, and by McKinlay and Taylor (1996) as a pyramid, among other institutional designs. Rather than follow an institutional model of observation, I am more interested in studying the referential panoptics of stalking, and draw on the scholarship of Mark Andrejevic, Lars Ellestrøm, Guy Debord, and other theorists to argue that true-crime citations of erotic surveillance make a spectacle of male aggression to desensitize viewers to violence against women.

Erotic surveillance practices (e.g. webcams, videos, pictures, voice clips, etc) can be used in a positive way for romantic couples but, in the context of crime, can be understood as negative functions of peer observation. In his article entitled "The Work of Watching One Another: Lateral Surveillance, Risk, and Governance," media studies expert Mark Andrejevic defines *peer monitoring* as

> Lateral surveillance, or peer-to-peer monitoring, [which can be] understood as the use of surveillance tools by individuals, rather than by agents of institutions public or private, to keep track of one another, covers (but is not limited to) three main categories: romantic interests, family, and friends or acquaintances. It also comprises several levels of monitoring, ranging from casually Googling a new acquaintance to purchasing keystroke monitoring software, surveillance cameras, or even portable lie detectors. (488–489)

The concept of the Internet as a gateway into the private lives of others is not new. Earlier, we talked about the potential for deception on social networks. However, we still tend to think of deception in association with online dating, but Andrejevic's lateral surveillance emphasizes the use of apps and platforms for more than date-seeking by individuals (e.g. offenders) whose identities have not necessarily been checked or screened for accuracy and truth. In drama TV, spectacular simulations of true-crime provide entertainment to distract from the sexualized body—"an object that is disciplined, manipulated, and scrutinized by others" (Karsay, Knoll, and Matthes 20). *Criminal Minds* uses erotic surveillance as a prop that upholds the objectifying gaze to threaten or create a spatiality of death.

Adaptation tends to embody gender as violence, as you will recall from Chapter 1, and this representation of identity cycles back to a spatiality or spectre of death that haunts the screen. What makes this spatiality or spectre so dangerous is its invocation of non-space and the

development of an idea about women as dead. Again, the question is: How do crime dramas make connections between the female body and death? One answer is "depiction" (Ellestrøm 121). In his book *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*, literary scientist Lars Ellestrøm hints at the departure from a strictly textual understanding of citation to a visual one, in which visual texts depict the same themes or tropes that "hint at, allude to, refer to, mention, name, or comment on one another" (121) in stylized ways. Tracing depictions of the female body as a sexual or dead object is a heavy task, but surveillance theory can help with the assemblage of elements in and across texts that cite, what the news calls, the dead girl trope. The idea that women are sexually surveilled by Death is a common motif in art. In Chapter 1, we looked at one of Schiele's paintings, but perhaps the best representation of this effect is Heinrich Hoerle's print *Der Tod und das Mädchen* (Death and the Maiden) (see Figure 3.2). Elaborating on the Danse

(Figure 3.2: Heinrich Hoerle's print of the personification of Death spying on a woman.)

Credit: Heinrich Hoerle; photographic reproduction in the public domain.

Macabre allegory, this motif adds an erotic subtext to all representations of death. Born from this motif is the belief that death not only unites us but spies on us too. I mention this art motif to show you that images of women as sexual objects have long been associated with death and that crime dramas did not invent this motif but merely cite it. With this in mind, let us trace the mobilization of surveillance as voyeurism in the landscape of crime. This will show how rationalizations of objectification depersonalize the victims of gendered violence.

Using surveillance theory to study how the female body is associated with punishment and death in drama TV naturally leads to a broader discussion of cyberstalking. In film, the development of watching as a "sexual-criminal opportunity" (Williams) can be seen in erotic thrillers *Rear Window* and *Peeping Tom*. Crime dramas cite the same 'desire to look' camerawork in erotic thrillers that formulates looking as a key danger. Here again, the scopophilic urge to enjoy looking at violation as entertainment is at play on screen. Before tracking this particular gaze in *Criminal Minds*, what follows is a brief literature review of how other disciplines (e.g. criminology, sociology, and psychology) view erotic surveillance. First, criminologists Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell (2015) examine cases of "technology-facilitated sexual violence and harassment, . . . [which refers to] the range of criminal, civil, and otherwise harmful sexually aggressive behaviours perpetrated against women with the aid or use of new technologies" (759). Second, sociologists Joanne Worsley et al. (2017) further study the movement from offline to online methods of stalking:

> Traditional stalking is a considerable public health issue. . . . A phenomenon known as cyberstalking has emerged that can be defined as the repeated pursuit of an individual utilizing electronic means to induce fear or distress. . . . Social networking sites provide a novel way to gather information about an individual and, as such, facilitate intrusion-like

behaviours and are being used as conduits for stalking and online harassment. (1) Third, psychologists Billea Ahlgrim and Cheryl Terrance (2018) continue to explore the Internet's facilitation of spying: "The Internet has allowed for an almost endless supply of victims for cyberstalkers who can inflict harm from any distance" (6). Several empirical studies in these fields highlight "perpetrators' use of technology to facilitate domestic violence (Burke et al. 2011), dating abuse (Stonard et al. 2014), cyberstalking (Sheridan and Grant 2007), the sexual exploitation of children (Martin and Alaggia 2013)" (Ahlgrim and Terrance 195), and other crimes. Spying and stalking are thus interrelated social issues tied to surveillance theory that pave the way for studies of the objectifying gaze / the scopophilic urge. Of course, this is all groundwork for understanding how MindWar is induced in the virtual environment.

PSYWAR techniques (e.g. misleading, inducing, surprising, baiting, trapping, distracting, and disorienting) approach surveillance as a method of preventing crime to a method of committing crime. In comparing security methods to spying methods, drama TV engages in "the movement of supplementarity" (Slethaug, *Adaptation Theory* 24). The supplement draws from culture and measures "hybrid, intertextual, and nontotalized" (24) textual practices; its goal is to "open up the field of freeplay and infinite substitution" (24). On the basis of supplementation, crime dramas that "combine sources through citation" (29) construct new meaning from other figurations, not from scratch, and these new versions or dimensions of the original become disruptive or destructive through the process of reference. Moving from theory to analysis, *Criminal Minds* depends on supplementations of characterization to query the erotic surveillant gaze and its extension of crime. In popular criminology, which focuses on visual popular culture, this type of "study [of] how all things visually impact with crime and criminal justice, bringing one another into being," (Rafter, "Crime Films" 57) is known as *visual criminology*. In the

episode “The Internet is Forever,” the erotic surveillant gaze deepens from true-crime accounts of Internet homicide through supplementation that magnifies the interwoven relationship between crime and visual culture. Specifically, the erotic surveillant gaze of the criminal brings surplus to narrative elements of identity and deviance through methods of committing Internet homicide; Johnson’s use of impersonation (The Internet Slave Master), torture (The Original Night Stalker), and conning (The Old Lady Killer) cite noted practices of deception that eroticize violence both online and offline.

Having previously discussed impersonation as another supplement of The Internet Slave Master’s cunning traps, I will briefly analyze torture and conning as supplements of The Original Night Stalker’s voyeurism and The Old Lady Killer’s gaslighting. The practices of binding, gagging, and entrapping victims allude to the escalation patterns of a voyeur. In their book entitled *Sexual Homicide: Patterns and Motives*, behavioural scientists John Douglas, Robert Ressler, and Ann Wolbert Burgess explain that voyeuristic offenders view the degradation of their targets as “high sexual arousal, accompanied by a loss of self-control that causes a distorted perception of the victim/offender relationship” (202). In the episode “The Internet is Forever,” Special Agents Derek Morgan [Shemar Moore], Emily Prentiss [Paget Brewster], and Aaron Hotchner [Thomas Gibson] discover that Johnson livestreams his murders using webcams he hides inside of his victims’ homes (see Figure 3.3). Overall, Johnson’s murder livestreams take on the agony of death as ecstasy, portraying victims as undead “camgirls, [whose bodies] pioneer new erotics and a new kind of performance” (Bell 205). This unnerving imagination of women and death partly stems from the profile of The Original Night Stalker. In the criminal investigative analysis for that case, The Original Night Stalker is said to have “peeped on his victims” (D’Ambrosia 6) before using “a method of killing that reflected his desire for complete

(Figure 3.3: Derek Morgan, Emily Prentiss, and Aaron Hotchner find one of Robert Johnson's hidden webcams.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

mastery and control" (8). Besides voyeurism and violence, Johnson's biggest similarity to The Original Night Stalker is his incorporation of "fantasy as a component of his methodology" (10). In the episode, a webcam is on display during a murder livestream, distorting the "move from fantasy to action" (10) in what can only be described as a "masturbation fantasy" (10). This episode's citation of the fantasy of seeing as sexual activity emulates the erotic surveillant gaze and permeates an intensely disturbing mythology of extinguishing that originates from 'snuff' films. The dialogue between the adult film industry, erotic surveillance, and violent crime in this scene speaks of a visual style of violence dangerous not only to the mind but also to the body. Keeping a webcam in focus so it is always in view strikes me as, what I will call, a kind of *self-referential intertextuality* that occurs when an object makes reference to itself or to the viewer.

When a text imposes the erotic surveillant gaze on itself, it brings the issue of objectification to light.

Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) objectification theory makes clear the importance of studying "the objectifying gaze" (175)—treatments of women as projections of sexual fantasy—in order to discover ways to deconstruct the power of the gaze and break the habit of treating women as objects in media and society. At the core of the gaze is the endurance of the cruel spectacle and objectification is a concept that has its theoretical roots in spectacle theory. Expanding on Bernays' (1928) conception of social behaviour as psychological manipulation and Adorno and Horkheimer's (1944) analysis of the culture industry, critical theorist Guy Debord (1967) argues in *The Society of the Spectacle* that the spectacle becomes apparent in different ways, either as a concentrated, diffuse, or integrated display. For the purposes of our discussion, Debord's spectacle theory is still applicable because it contemplates viewing-as-violence. The diffuse spectacle, in particular, illuminates the commodification of violence:

> The diffuse spectacle is associated with the abundance of commodities, with the undisturbed development of modern capitalism. Here, each commodity considered in isolation is justified by an appeal to the grandeur of commodity production in general—a production for which the spectacle is an apologetic catalog. . . . So, the already questionable satisfaction allegedly derived from the consumption of the whole is adulterated from the outset because the real consumer can only get his hands on a succession of fragments of this commodity heaven—fragments each of which naturally lacks any of the quality ascribed to the whole. (65)

Put simply, productions of the spectacle in texts produce a catalog of violence. In this sense, a true-crime citation shows viewers a small piece of the big picture of violence against women in

media and society, which treats the female body as a commodity. Although I concede that 'media violence begets real violence' is an old argument, I still insist that the gaze, in any of its manifestations (e.g. erotic surveillance), exposes viewers to an objectified view of women.

In their article entitled "Bentham, Deleuze, and Beyond: An Overview of Surveillance Theories from the Panopticon to Participation," surveillance studies scholars Maša Galič, Tjerk Timan, and Bert-Jaap Koops further describe surveillance as a longstanding cultural issue, noting that "changes in surveillance largely reflect social and cultural changes" (33). Many critical theorists (see Bentham 1791; Foucault 1975; Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Whitaker 1999; Boyd and Ellison 2007; Lyon 2007) have studied surveillance as an aspect of society. Galič, Timan, and Koops conclude that these conceptions of surveillance as "panoptic" (11), "disciplinary" (12), "rhizomatic" (22), "participatory" (27), "monitoring" (27), and "commodifying" (27) describe panoptic effects through social processes. Kittler's argument, that "media determine our situation" (xxxv), stands out as the premise from media theory that best describes texts as having societal impacts. For example, seeing-as-touching is a concept often explored in film. *Eyes Wide Shut* and *Fifty Shades of Grey* are widely known models of sight as touch through the gaze of bondage/discipline, dominance/submission, and sadism/masochism (BDSM). In drama TV, observation (whether passive or aggressive) is constructed through the lens of commodification, and the primary function of erotic surveillance is to humiliate. *Criminal Minds* explores the spectacle of suffering in the episode "The Internet is Forever."

True-crime citation plays a role in depicting erotic surveillance (i.e. spying or stalking) as entertainment. A ruse is one example of a strategy of war often cited in film, literature, and TV that lends a surveillant aspect to the gaze. The United States Department of Defense defines a *ruse of war* as "any act intended to mislead an adversary or to induce him to act recklessly. . . . A

ruse may be used to facilitate surprise, mislead the enemy, bait them into a trap, or distract or disorient them" (302–303). Diversion, distraction, and disorientation are all useful ways of thinking about the erotic surveillant gaze in *Criminal Minds* because it blurs the line between what is true and what is false, what is real and what is fake, and what is right and what is wrong. To blur wrong into right, Johnson takes a "con approach to get close to his victims by way of deception" (Turvey 680). Like The Old Lady Killer, who pretended to be a nurse to prey on the vulnerable, Johnson similarly targets single women by "talking his way into their homes under the pretext of performing minor household repairs" (Schechter 117) (see Figure 3.4). By

(Figure 3.4: Johnson uses a ruse to gain entrance into his next victim's house.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

masquerading as an Internet installer for Meridian Telecom, Johnson is able to establish the trust he needs to gain access to his victims and their homes. As Special Agent Prentiss concludes, "Johnson would have had access to his victims' computers during his demonstration. On his way

out, he could have asked for a glass of water, a distraction, something to buy him enough time to plant a camera" ("The Internet is Forever"). The camera becomes the naked eye of any action intended to trick someone and is thus suited as a PSYWAR tool. In citing The Old Lady Killer's strategy of misdirection, this episode tries to make viewers see the fantasy-filled inspection of women and their bodies as parts or stimuli, confirming the objectification and commodification theories of the gaze. It also draws attention to the recurring theme of humiliation. On that note, we are coming closer and closer now to the psychological work of the gaze, and starting to see how a MindWar style is visually constructed from real models of violence like fantasy and sexual aggression.

Male Sexual Aggression

All of this talk about gender and violence segues into a discussion about male sexual aggression, which is a social issue frequently cited in drama TV. Behavioural scientists have long been interested in the study of this particular challenge facing society. For example, Martino et al.'s (2005) study finds a connection between exposure to televised sexual violence and initiations of violent intercourse between adolescents. And, Chang and Hirsch's (2015) study reveals an association between sexual assault and suicide risk within college student populations. When it comes to the old 'media violence begets real violence' argument, I find it persuasive to consider the theories behind this research. The aforementioned studies are suited to this purpose. Martino et al. use social-cognitive theory (i.e. learning-by-observing) (see Bandura 1989; Burke and Stephens 1999; Bushman and Huesmann 2001) to demonstrate that "media exposure to a behaviour increases the likelihood of engaging in that behaviour through a process of learning and imitation" (915). For every study like this, there is another that indicates the opposite (see Przybylski and Weinstein 2019), but what interests me is the movement from covert aggression

to overt forms of harm. Like modern mimesis, classical *imitation* is a long held Western theory of citation that "explores difference . . . to repeat without copying, to embed difference in similarity, [and] to be at once both self and other" (Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* 74). Chang and Hirsch use social problem-solving theory (see D'Zurilla et al. 1998), which accounts for how a person solves an everyday problem, to examine "the positive association between impulsivity and suicidality" (409). Notice that both theories focus on the learning and modelling of aggression from a sociological perspective.

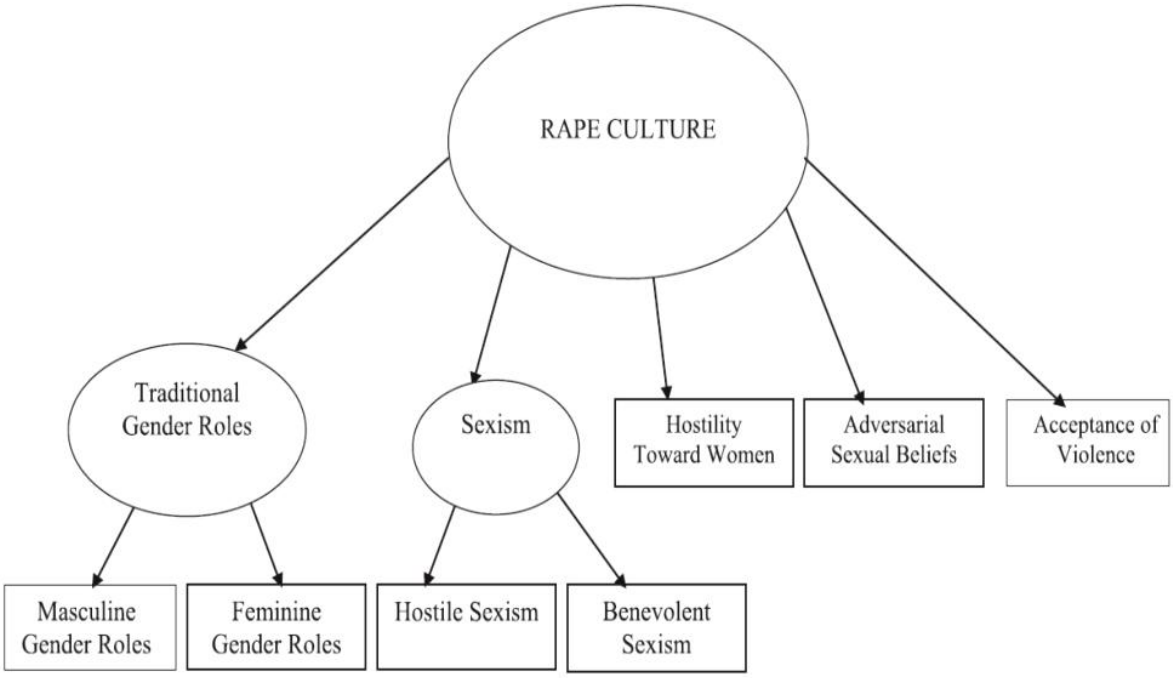
Making viewers curious about aggressive behaviour may desensitize them to real-life violence, as one side of the media violence debate suggests, but studying the effect of adaptation on gender representation can help to gain a better understanding of the relationship between media and society. One question that springs from this angle of study is: How can shows tackle social issues like male sexual aggression without making a spectacle of violence against women? A good option, I think, is for drama TV to take a procedural approach (e.g. *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*) or a legal approach (e.g. *For the People*). In changing focus from how crime is committed, viewers would grow more curious about how crimes are solved. Of course, the problem at hand is still the visual style of MindWar on screen. Drawing on the scholarship of Nickie Phillips, the Pew Research Centre, Peggy Sanday, and others, I analyze the visual conventions, techniques, and textualities that give rise to the design of terror, torture, and trauma on screen. Building on prior research in the social sciences, I apply communication theory to the inspection of the socialization of sexual aggression as a potential media effect. Using similar terminology to that of Nicole Rafter's "popular criminology" ("Crime, Film, and Criminology" 415), which describes the discourses about crime found in popular culture and media texts, I coin

the term *forensic adaptation* to offer a sociological perspective on the intertextual relationship between the objectifying gaze and gendered violence in media, society, and texts.

Forensic adaptation is a conceptual method of examining gender representation in visual texts and describes the influence of adaptation (e.g. true-crime citations) on images of violence against women. Another sociological perspective of note is cultivation theory (see Gerbner and Gross 1976; Potter 1993; Intravia et al. 2017). Within communication studies, cultivation theory consistently maintains that there exists a connection between real-life issues and what viewers see on TV. A sequence of findings confirms the belief that TV is "the chief instrument of enculturation" (Gerbner and Gross 194), "a reinforcer . . . of already learned beliefs" (Potter 593), and "a cultivator of fear and mistrust in audiences" (Intravia et al. 158). Content that instruments, reinforces, or cultivates violence against women has the potential to 'arouse' our observation, 'prime' our behaviour, and 'habituate' our reactions (Huesmann S7–S8). When observation turns into imitation, an observational learning method takes place. It is important to consider how exposure to televised sexual aggression represents and informs the college experience in society. I focus on this specific population to learn more about the problems faced by the age group that I last taught. In studying the social issue of sexual aggression, we will learn more about toxic forms of masculinity as well as the physical, psychological, and emotional effects of violence on students, which include increased fear, anxiety, and severe depression.

Studies across the disciplines closely link aggression with masculinity (see Locke and Mahalik 2005; Smith et al. 2015; Davis 2018). When "boys are socialized to replace 'feminine' emotions and develop a macho personality through anti-femininity" (Smith et al. 162), they become men who are put at risk of "seeking dominance and power" (167) over others. In *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, one aspect of the aggression-masculinity link that is considered

is socialization. Given the prevalence of this association in teen dramas, it is unsurprising that "sexual violence is more prevalent at college, compared to other crimes" ("Campus Sexual Violence: Statistics"). In fact, the vast majority of rape victims are college women aged 18–24 ("Campus Sexual Violence: Statistics"). *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* demonstrates how college men are socialized through toxic forms of masculinity that fuel the cultural association between men and aggression. This show particularly considers the sociability of aggression by addressing *rape culture*—"a kind of sexual terrorism that keeps women in fear" (Phillips 10)—and discussing online extensions of trauma. Nicole Johnson and Dawn Johnson's (2017) model of rape culture shows the components underlying such harmful social attitudes: "traditional gender roles, sexism, hostility toward women, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of violence" (8) (see Figure 3.5). In her book entitled *Beyond Blurred Lines: Rape Culture in*



(Figure 3.5: Johnson and Johnson's model of rape culture.)

Credit: Nicole Johnson and Dawn Johnson; screenshot by author.

Popular Media, sociologist Nickie Phillips pinpoints *hegemonic masculinity* as the main way in which rape culture is codified on screen; this toxic form of masculinity "privileges certain ways of 'doing gender' over others" (74) and legitimizes patriarchal models of power and control. A study of rape in prime-time TV by communication scholar Lisa Cuklanz (2000) finds a positive correlation between hegemonic masculinity and dominance over women: "Cuklanz found that these portrayals virtually neglected the plight of the (almost always female) victim, preferring instead to focus on the male character. . . In other words, the focus was primarily on men rather than an exploration of women's experiences or any discussion of the causes of rape beyond extreme individual pathology" (Phillips 74). Crime dramas that focus on criminal desire rather than criminal justice tend to privilege myths about gender that reinforce hegemonic masculinity. One method by which aggression develops is through the negotiation of gender and sexuality through power in social contexts.

Law and Order: Special Victims Unit links hazing traditions to the issue of campus sexual assault and closely examines the association between college culture and victim-blaming. Did you know that hazing rituals involving rape are still a problem on college campuses today? According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, "23.1% of female students will experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation" ("Campus Sexual Violence: Statistics"). This alarming statistic is similar, if you recall, to the statistic cited in Chapter 2 that 1 in 5 undergraduate women in America will be raped during their post-secondary education (Krebs et al., *Campus Climate* 76). If you are wondering, the rate is also 1 in 5 in Canada, according to the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario (1). The question behind almost everything I talk about is: How do we take a stand against gender-based violence? Two of the recommendations that I think this show offers is consent education and more

accountability. However, the episode "Girl Dishonoured" also very much affords the objectifying gaze, which deflects attention away from its recommendations for positive change. The main issue tackled is how social networking sites make the spread of rape culture lightning fast. In this installment, campus sexual assault is widely documented on social media. Explicit photographs of rape are posted and shared online by male athletes to publically shame their victims. Digital photographs of rape negatively affect victims by continuing, extending, and recreating trauma (Dodge 68–69). In this way, social networks can be said to widen and prolong the effects of trauma. Additionally, the episode tackles the issue of masculinity and sexual violence in the fraternity environment.

Negotiating masculinity at college can be troublesome because of the mob mentality of some fraternities and residences. In their study on men's perpetration of sexual aggression, psychologists Smith et al. (2015) conclude that "men who endorse and internalize several aspects of hegemonic masculinity are at greater risk for perpetrating sexual aggression toward women" (161). Social status, toughness, restricted emotionality, homophobia, and competitiveness are some of the dimensions of hegemonic masculinity relevant to campus rape culture (Zurbriggen 539). These characteristics do not necessarily cause college men to rape, but they can be considered predictors of violence in social situations. Settings that internalize toxic forms of masculinity run the risk of reinforcing sexual aggression as an appropriate means of enforcing gender and sexuality. One of the ways in which college men learn about gender, sex, and cultural norms is by watching content about people their own age. College films such as *American Pie Presents: Beta House* and *Goat* show both the comedy and tragedy associated with hazing rituals. More educational films like *The Mask You Live In* and *Tough Guise* start a conversation about the cultural forces that keep alive toxic forms of masculinity in America. Perhaps the most

acclaimed documentary about rape crimes, *The Hunting Ground*, examines both fraternity endorsement and administrative disregard for sexual assault at American colleges. While it is essential to study the socialization of aggression through film, young adults mostly watch TV series through platforms like Netflix, Crave TV, and Amazon Prime Video ("About 6 in 10"). Therefore, it is also important to study the role that TV plays in constructing norms about gender and sex.

At its core, citation calls for the replication of fact, reality, or authenticity. When culture and content share the same focus on repetition, the issues common to them piece together through layers of adaptation. Violent action is a problem that occurs in both media and society and is as much a development of the real as it is the appearance of MindWar. *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* sets its focus upon hazing as an exchange of aggression (campus rape) for a sense of identity (fraternity membership). In her book entitled *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus*, anthropologist Peggy Sanday cites the legal definition of *hazing* as

> any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance, or any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other activity which could adversely affect the mental health and dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property. (208)

The show depicts hazing as a team-building exercise in which male aggression is viewed through

the lenses of collaboration, engagement, and morale. Inducting fraternity pledges into mythologies of hegemonic masculinity permanently changes not only their personal identities but also their views about women. In the episode "Girl Dishonoured," an investigation into the suicide of Lindsay Bennett (Colbie Minifie) leads Lieutenant Olivia Benson (Mariska Hargitay) to discover that Tompkins Square University's administration is fully aware of the rape complaints against their Tau Omega Fraternity, referred to as The Rape Factory, but has suppressed them to continue receiving funding for their men's athletic programs. This 'ripped from the headlines' citation (i.e. a passing reference to a big news story) is based on the Wesleyan University's failed system of sexual assault policy enforcement against their Beta Theta Pi Fraternity. This citation draws attention to both the culture of silence around campus sexual assault and the circulation of photos and videos with the intent to shame. Online shaming turns sexual assault into a spectator sport. The male athletes in this episode treat the female body as a social media spectacle—liking, commenting, and sharing rape photos and videos—which spotlights the gamification of anger, aggression, and violence online. By referencing the Wesleyan University case, rape is treated as a social parody and is rationalized as a rite of initiation rather than a ritual of assault.

Under the guise of belonging, college men and women who long for acceptance join fraternities and sororities to find their identities, but hazing practices can be closely associated with stress and embarrassment. Moving between layers of adaptation from the real Wesleyan University case is the theme of dehumanization. Objectifying the female body treats women as things to be owned or violated; in essence, the gaze functions to destroy their humanity. "Girl Dishonoured" explores forced activity as the price of initiation into an 'elite' social group. In this installment, Nu Iota Pi Sorority pledges are persuaded to participate in fat shaming, binge eating,

clothing games, public sex, and other physical activities. Notably, pledges are coerced into encircling each other's body fat in permanent marker, binge eating off of each other's bodies, wearing clothes that indicate sexual availability (i.e. 'red for taken, yellow for maybe down-to-fuck, and green for down-to-fuck'), and providing digital evidence of fraternity brothers performing sexual acts. Despite photos and videos proving campus rape, Tompkins Square University models institutionalized rape culture by permitting hazing rituals to continue. Inadequate enforcement of their sexual assault policy communicates to viewers that forced activity, even criminal hazing, is a natural part of adjusting to college life. The embarrassment, shame, or humiliation associated with forced physical activities is an example of MindWar. Manipulation is intentional, in this case, because the college men (and the college administration) are in full awareness and control over their actions. In light of this, activities of direct control over women's bodies also target their minds. The purpose of PSYWAR exercises, tools, and principles, then, is to make targets think and feel like they are powerless and worthless. *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* understands manipulation as victim-blaming, which represents rape culture in society, and asks viewers to have zero tolerance for harmful practices and ultimately change how masculinity is defined and embodied. I want to further explore the idea that norms about gender and aggression are electronically mediated and that this feedback loop shapes identity and behaviour.

Social Media Misuse

The next social issue cited in drama TV is the criminal use of social media. Portraits of the crime and social media relation remain an important element of film and TV content. Recent studies in media theory have gathered evidence supporting the relationship between social networks, participation, and culture (see Fernando 2010; Huang, Baptista, and Galliers 2013).

Theories such as the personality behaviour theory (see Correa, Hinsley, and de Zúñiga 2010) and the cyberbullying theory (see Slonje, Smith, and Frisén 2013) are other research directions used "to explain the behaviour of social media users at the personal/individual level" (Ngai, Spencer, and Moon 34) and to consider how leaked photos or videos "could terrorize an individual and cause negative effects on his or her psychology" (41). Crime and deviance (e.g. manipulation) are often thought of as secretive practices on the dark, deep, and invisible parts of the Web, but crime is almost instantaneous online; like online gaming, Internet crime often "combines roleplaying, competition, interactive story creation, and online interactive chats that provide multiple users with real-time virtual worlds to interact in" (Surette 48). Interaction is a rich feature of social networks that can "encourage aggression-prone persons to use greater levels of aggression" (76). The difference between my theory of forensic adaptation and, say, Kittler's work is that his is techno-deterministic (medium) and mine is content-deterministic (message). I also purposefully move in the direction of sociology to examine how social phenomena are constructed in drama TV to put pressure on the ways in which digital culture promotes violence. Drawing on the scholarship of Dudley Andrew, Andrew Peck, Jill Rettberg, and other theorists, I argue that content featuring the criminal use of technology potentially exposes viewers to new mechanisms and methods of harm.

One danger of being exposed to content depicting trauma and its extension online is the potential for aggression-prone viewers to develop an obsession with watching violence against women. *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* addresses the spectacle of male sexual aggression through narratives on social media practices. A study by Edwards, Bradshaw, and Hinsz (2014) finds that 31% of the male college students interviewed expressed intentions to force women into sexual intercourse if they could get away with it (191). Although I grant that one study is not

enough to support the aggression-masculinity link, I still maintain that institutional cultures need to enforce measures to protect people from rape, and teach compassionate masculinities. If taken at face value, the above study suggests that 1 in 3 college men might consider committing rape if their actions had no perceivable consequences (e.g. academic expulsion and criminal charges). Again, the claim that 1 in 3 college men would rape is not without margins of error, but it does speak to the argument for accountability that has been amplified by social movements based on breaking the silence of violence against women (e.g. the #MeToo movement). In the episode "Girl Dishonoured," many of the Tau Omega Fraternity brothers are depicted as serial rapists who use social networking sites to publically shame their victims; this negative image of college men creates an association between higher education, male sexual aggression, and social media misuse. Comparing Tau Omega Fraternity (fictional) to the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity (real) also sensationalizes hegemonic masculinity by depicting an actual subculture. Clothing, drinking, and peer pressure are all real excuses used to justify aggressive behaviour (think of the Stanford Rape Case from 2016); this is because rape culture teaches that women who are sexually assaulted are promiscuous by nature and 'asking for it.'

Considering women promiscuous and at fault for the violence done unto them represents the concept of victim-blaming. In her book entitled *I Am Not a Slut: Slut-Shaming in the Age of the Internet*, feminist scholar Leora Tanenbaum defines *slut-shaming* as "a multiplicity of ways in which females are called to task for their real, presumed, or imagined sexuality" (xv). One example of slut-shaming that stands out in the episode "Girl Dishonoured" occurs when sorority pledges are forced to send explicit photos and videos to older fraternity brothers. In this installment, the act of sending explicit photos and videos is depicted as a common practice among college students and characterized as a precursor to campus rape. Sociologists Ringrose et

al. define *sexting* as "sexually explicit content communicated via text messages, smart phones, or visual and Web 2.0 activities such as social networking sites" (9). In this installment, an older fraternity brother will arrange 'a romantic date' in a private location after sexting with a sorority pledge. 'Sexual sponsorship,' as it is referred to in this episode, is the practice of initiating a pledge through rape. This episode also cites the Steubenville High School Rape Case when fraternity brother Joe Dawson (Ryan McGinnis) narrates the spectacle of male sexual aggression: "We laughed at Lindsay Bennett. She couldn't say 'no' with her mouth full. We raped her dead. Three of us at the same time. We took video recordings with a cell phone the night of the party" ("Girl Dishonoured"). Michael Nodianos similarly joked in the Steubenville case that a 16-year-old girl was raped "deader than JFK, OJ's wife, Caylee Anthony, and Trayvon Martin" (Baker). The Tau Omega Fraternity brothers choose to document their criminal hazing on Facebook and Twitter—two social networks that researchers say have had difficulty policing inappropriate content in the past (Caers et al. 990). Today, proactive efforts are made to ensure the safety of these networks, but using social media poses risks (e.g. peer-to-peer; inappropriate content; lack of understanding of online privacy issues; outside influences of third-party advertising groups) to young adults more often than realized (O'Keeffe, Clarke-Pearson, and the Council on Communications and Media 801), suggesting that access to and circulation of inappropriate content is still a problem. One of the conclusions drawn in this episode is that the online extension of trauma is an issue closely related to performing masculinity. *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*'s citation of the Wesleyan University and Steubenville rape cases connects the issue of campus sexual assault to social media misuse in order to critique social structures that stand in the way of eliminating gender-based violence in America.

Shifting from the cultural to the individual level, there is room for an examination of how toxic forms of masculinity are performed on social media. In drama TV, the aggression-masculinity link also comes into play when citation takes the form of using something from somewhere else. American film theorist Dudley Andrew explains that *borrowing* is "the most frequent mode of adaptation. Here, the material, idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful text is employed" (Andrew 98). *Criminal Minds* borrows elements from Internet memes, monsters, and mythologies to highlight the embeddedness of male sexual aggression within digital culture. In the episode "Hashtag," unsub William Pratt (Ian Nelson) is an Internet killer who exsanguinates his female victims with shards of broken mirror and leaves the hashtag symbol (#) at each of his crime scenes (see Figure 3.6). Pratt escalates his killings by sharing

(Figure 3.6: William Pratt leaves the hashtag symbol at his latest crime scene.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

murder photos and videos online and using the hashtags #fearme and #fearthis to gain a social media following. These hashtags cite the Slender Man Internet meme—a faceless monster who stalks youths. American folklore scholar Andrew Peck explains that "the Slender Man is a crowd-sourced monster. As users told stories, shared images, and theorized as to the nature of the nascent Lovecraftian horror, they also participated in its creation" (334). Pratt as the Slender Man borrows from fictional mythology and feeds into "a digital legend cycle that encourages imitation and personalization" (334). In fact, several violent attacks perpetrated in 2014, including the Waukesha stabbing, were induced by fear of this legendary figure (Astor). The spectacle of the monster develops from a fear of being attacked, but threats to personal safety can be tricky to detect on sites that convey a sense of belonging and togetherness. In this case, Pratt targets female victims based on their social media profiles. After murdering them, he discloses his identity as a serial killer online to incite terror and attract 'fans.' Pratt's digital signature also borrows from the 4Chan murder case. In 2014, David Kalac posted photos of Amber Coplin's dead body on an online imageboard that featured a taunting caption: "I killed Amber Coplin. I strangled her with my hands, then a shoelace. I had no reason other than I was drunk and she pissed me off. Running from the cops was so fun" (Malm). The Kalac-Pratt double suggests that real offenders are increasingly leaving "psychological 'calling cards'" (Keppel and Birnes 2) on social media as a sign of their dominance and skill. This show borrows elements from true-crime cases in its depiction of social media misuse to demonstrate how digital culture can be encased in the psychology of crime. In doing so, references to Internet memes, monsters, and mythologies craft an image of online sociability as deviance.

Criminal Minds also uses the Slender Man Internet meme as a metaphor for the prolific power of an Internet killer. One aspect of this symbolic relationship is the proliferation of social

media misuse through images of oneself. *Selfies* are digital self-portraits taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared on social networks (Rettberg 12). In her book entitled *Seeing Ourselves Through Technology: How We Use Selfies, Blogs, and Wearable Devices to See and Shape Ourselves*, digital culturist Jill Rettberg describes the dual function of selfies: "when we share photos, our target audience is not just our friends, but also ourselves. . . . Creating and sharing a selfie is an act of self-representation—which, as Gunn Enli and Nancy Thumin note, means that it involves the creation of texts which will be read and interpreted" (12). In the episode "Hashtag," the FBI profilers examine Pratt's victim selfie recreations to study how he views his victims (see Figure 3.7). The team's examination of Pratt's victim selfie recreations suggests that

(Figure 3.7: Spencer Reid [Matthew Gray Gubler], Hotchner, Jennifer Jareau [A. J. Cook], David Rossi [Joe Mantegna], Garcia, Morgan, and Kate Callahan [Jennifer Love Hewitt] study victim selfie recreations.) Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

visual textualities of the self can embolden the objectifying gaze. In this particular case, social networks motivate a culture of voyeurism. Pratt's treatment of the self as a shareable text emphasizes the way in which identity can be performed interactively on the Internet. In citational practice, selfies are mirror-texts that "interactively produce, constitute, and stabilize identity" (Cover 16) by viewing "identity as a social text continually reshaped and reformed through performance" (Twigg 22). Another implication of Pratt's practice of staging the identities of his victims in this way is the borrowed nature of his own identity as an offender. Budding serial killers often imitate aspects of other more established offenders and their crimes in the process of discovering their own identity. The idea that deviant identity is a performance-based practice rings true for Pratt because his own sense of self is an intertextual double—Kalac-Pratt and Slender Man-Pratt. In this sense, his victim selfie recreations also highlight the self-as-performance for the offender. Overall, the psychology of the self is something that drama TV depicts in order to account for the performance of the self. This suggests that there is a social aspect to models of self that shapes the performance (staging) of being and doing. Now that we have a deeper understanding of some of the social problems tackled in *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* through citation, our next step is to analyze the torture principles that guide the style of terror in these shows.

PSYWAR Aesthetic

Deviant identity online, erotic surveillance, male sexual aggression, and social media misuse are all social issues of digitization. Thus far, studying gender representation in narratives about social issues has lead to a discussion of the objectifying gaze and its many manifestations, but it is also important to analyze the dramatic techniques used to produce it. Adaptation starts to have an effect when we understand the gaze as a composite of many forms of scopophilia. In this

way, citation does not require strict "fidelity" (D. Johnson 87) to one form of visual pleasure or another—it is an instrument that makes connections between forms through shared dramatic techniques. Slethaug argues that "citation exceeds literal adaptations or pastiche, referencing themes, styles, and modes to refer to, form something different from, and simultaneously overlay or enter into dialogue with those individual sources in the manner of a palimpsest" (*Adaptation Theory*, 28). While the palimpsest is not fully applied in *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, since true-crime cases are more indirectly than directly cited, there does exist a "palimpsestuous" (Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* 21) relationship between media and society in these shows because they are "always framed in a context—a time and a place, a society and a culture" (142). By understanding the gaze as a viewpoint composed of many principles of objectification, the scope of our deep focus narrows to visual style and emotive response. Offering a fresh dialogue on shared themes, citation is a nexus of techniques for interpreting the visual mosaic of a textual style. For our purposes, this means looking at the visual instruments used across drama TV that shape attitudes about violence against women.

Crime dramas notably adopt the distinctive appearance of MindWar, a term for terrorization, through conventions such as high-stakes context, high-key lighting, and other unstable visual elements. While this describes the style (i.e. appearance) of MindWar, which borrows heavily from the cynical attitude and sexual violence of film noir, I would like to draw your attention to the aesthetics (i.e. principles) of torture that sustain this style in drama TV. Stanley Kubrick, renowned director of *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Shining*, insists that "style is what an artist uses to fascinate the beholder in order to convey to him his feelings and emotions and thoughts" (Leitch, *Film Adaptation* 242). Films such as *Rebecca*, *Se7en*, and *Prisoners* are other good examples of film noir that lend themselves to MindWar. In the

remainder of this chapter, I will investigate how violence against women is produced in crime dramas through tactics of psychological manipulation. I draw on the scholarship of James Aston and John Walliss, Robert Stam, Eirini Kartsaki, and other theorists to argue that the play of MindWar optics only deepens the objectifying gaze and its damaging effects across visual texts. To show a clear framework of MindWar in practice, I will analyze PSYWAR aesthetics in scenes in which female criminal justice professionals are tortured. Criminologist Kimberly DeTardo-Bora studies the relationship between watching crime dramas and societal attitudes toward women. I continue this conversation by suggesting that exposure to graphic portrayals of torture maintain the style of MindWar across visual texts by applying the principle of harm to the treatment of women's bodies. Specifically, *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* apply the multimodal techniques of identity roleplay, music, and narrative replay to the psychology of war in order to build an overarching design of terror across visual culture.

The first way in which crime dramas cite PSYWAR aesthetics of MindWar is through identity roleplay in torture scenes. Overall, "the play of textuality" (Slethaug, *Adaptation Theory* 26) within these shows performs deviant identity through MindWar optics. In her study on how aesthetic principles inform views of female criminal justice professionals, DeTardo-Bora (2009) finds that "female characters (39.3%) are more likely than male characters (16.3%) to be victims of a crime, even as professional working women" (164). However, this study does not address how psychologies of war, such as torture, can shape societal attitudes toward women. *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* speaks to the representation of women with badges as victims through enactments of self-preservation. Sociologist Andrew Karmen contends that "the ultimate right of an individual facing immediate danger is to resist victimization" (455). In the episode

"Surrender Benson," Lieutenant Benson is kidnapped by sexual-sadist William Lewis (Pablo Schreiber) and tortured at a remote location (see Figure 3.8). Lieutenant Benson uses the

(Figure 3.8: William Lewis tortures Lieutenant Olivia Benson at a remote location.)

Credit: NBC; screenshot by author.

dramatic technique of roleplay to adapt the characteristics of her identity to match the situation in order to try and resist the psychological effects of physical pain. This technique is employed as a coping mechanism to allow Lieutenant Benson to gain control over both her environment and her state of mind. On the one hand, depicting the art of self-preservation crafts an image of a female character showing incredible psychological strength; on the other hand, identity roleplay also perpetuates the myth that women are complicit 'actors' or 'participants' in their own trauma (which is another example of victim-blaming at work). However, viewers are aware that Lieutenant Benson only plays along with her captor to postpone the threat of rape and survive an

unimaginable situation. This example of dramatic irony directs viewers toward the objectifying gaze that preserves female characters in emotional distress.

Visual textuality, in Foucaultian terms, attends to "the role of power in the production of textuality and of textuality in the production of power" (Allen 90). In both shows, the weaponization of the female body forms the major production of MindWar, and the dramatic irony of identity roleplay within scenes of women's trauma complicates facets of resilience. Prior research by communication scholars Cuklanz and Moorti (2006) suggests that "*SVU* debunks rape myths and promotes the idea that all women, regardless of the circumstances, have the right to refuse unwanted sexual activity" (qtd. in Hust et al. 1377). But, the critical issue at hand is the way in which representations of physical torture are filtered through the lens of roleplay, a performative technique, which popular culture transfers from the theatrical to the erotic domain as a means of making a spectacle out of mental torment. In the episode "Surrender Benson," an early exchange of dialogue highlights Lieutenant Benson's forced compliance with Lewis' sexual sadism in an attempt to survive unthinkable violence:

> WILLIAM LEWIS: Hey, I'm back. Are you resting? Upsy-Daisy. That a girl. Man, I love hardware stores! I got a tarp, some rope, extra duct tape, some surprises for later, and some drinks. How's that sound? If I take the tape off, will you be a good girl? Yeah? Okay. Are you thirsty, sweetheart? Here you go.
>
> LIEUTENANT OLIVIA BENSON: Oh, no, no, no.
>
> LEWIS: You don't get to say 'no.' Have some vodka, instead. That's it. Suck it down. Swallow. The Vicodin and the sleeping pills give you dry mouth, so drink up. I'm a man of my word. I told you what I was going to do to that other lady and then I did everything that I said, didn't I?

LIEUTENANT BENSON: Yes.

LEWIS: I think we're going to find it soon.

LIEUTENANT BENSON: Find what?

LEWIS: Someplace special. Now, one move, and lights out. I'll do you cold. ("Surrender Benson")

In this scene, Lieutenant Benson's repetition of the word 'no' is almost overshadowed by Lewis' repetition of the word 'girl.' This is an example of MindWar in practice through the linguistic tool of repetition. Although calling a female professional 'girl' might seem harmless, this linguistic practice can contribute to the infantilization and victimization of women by denying their intelligence, authority, and power. Precipitating characteristics of the subordination of women spotlights the cultural tendency to speak at women rather than to listen or let them speak. The #MeToo movement is a recent example of how female empowerment can challenge rape culture, demand justice, and inspire women to talk about their experiences with sexual assault and harassment. Lieutenant Benson's repetition of the word 'no' audibly defies cultural hegemony and strategies that seek to keep the experiences of women shamed or silenced. The 'no'/'girl' battling speech presents viewers with conflicting views about professional women: on the one hand, Lieutenant Benson is depicted as helpless, weak, and on the verge of compliance with sexual violence because she is bound, beaten, and drugged; on the other hand, she is depicted as strong, cunning, and incredibly resilient during unnerving interactions with her captor. The weak/strong ambiguity at play in this scene ultimately draws attention to the construction of gender bias in crime dramas through elements of language.

Women and victimization is an association between gender and crime integrated into drama TV through the repositioning of cultural hegemony onto women's bodies and experiences.

In *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, structures of gendered textuality enter into dialogue with structures of power to address the "displacement" (Slethaug, *Adaptation Theory* 50) of crime onto erotics. When desire takes a deviant turn, a MindWar style emerges that tells women's narratives of trauma through the lens of irresistible impulse, and this is obviously damaging to viewer reception. In their study on "Victim Blame in Fictional Crime Dramas: An Examination of Demographic, Incident-Related, and Behavioural Factors," social scientists Nicole Rader, Gayle Rhineberger-Durn, and Lauren Vasquez (2016) provide evidence to suggest that "*SVU*, a show devoted to victims in particular, uses the 'contributing to victimization' category for victimization" (70). This typology of female victimization intimates that victims are not "blameless" (7), but bear "some responsibility" (7) for the violence that happens to them. Portraying victims as responsible for sexual violence is a product of rape culture and its support of victim-blaming, objectification, and the idea that victims willingly participate in rape and other assaults on the body. The problem with the 'contributing to victimization' typology present in the episode "Surrender Benson" is that not all viewers will interpret Lieutenant Benson as 'blameless' because of her engagement in identity roleplay. Ambiguity thus assigns Lieutenant Benson 'some responsibility' for her trauma, indicating a normalization of victim-blaming in a show about justice. This model of psychological influence circulates an image of female characters, especially those in positions of leadership, participating in their own domination by male characters. For example, the battle for the mind is further extended through the semiotics of hair. After escaping her restraints and bludgeoning Lewis over the head, Lieutenant Benson's first act of freedom is to cut her own hair (see Figure 3.9). In both culture and the media, hair is a marker of identity that holds personal significance; it can be considered a feminist issue because a woman's hair is often associated with perceptions about her personality, power, and sexuality.

(Figure 3.9: Lieutenant Benson cuts her own hair after escaping from the torture site.)

Credit: NBC; screenshot by author.

What is remarkable in this scene is the way in which Lieutenant Benson works against the traumatic stress of being tortured through a symbolic refashioning of her identity. This is an act of healing and empowerment meant to counterbalance feelings of loss and shame. *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* highlights male sexual aggression as a social phenomenon to show the horror of rape culture and bring to light an image of resilience that tries to work against the overarching narration of objectification, despite the play of ambiguity.

Criminal Minds also features storylines in which its female agents are tortured. In their book entitled *To See the Saw Movies: Essays on Torture Porn and Post-9/11 Horror*, film theorist James Aston and criminologist John Walliss argue that torturous settings "offer titillating and shocking spectacles that push audiences to the margins of depravity in order for them to feel something" (2). In the episode "Wheels Up," serial killer Peter Lewis (Bodhi Elfman)

orchestrates a car crash and kidnaps Special Agent Prentiss. In a makeshift hospital room, Lewis inserts metal fixators into Special Agent Prentiss' legs and keeps her in a constant state of fear with forced medication (see Figure 3.10). The close-up shot tightly frames her face, emoting

(Figure 3.10: Prentiss cries in fear as Lewis terrorizes her.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

extraordinary terror, in what displays our heroine as an object of desire. Sexualizing torture cites the visual aesthetic of PSYWAR by "transforming" (Andrew 100) images of terror into codes of compliance. Fashioning mental manipulation as a sexual fetish invokes the atrocity of war through the citation of "medical rhetoric" (Edwell 162). The visual rhetoric of medicine is deeply entrenched in constructions of health, wellbeing, and care (162). Watching female bodily torture through the lens of medicine creates an alarming distance between the character's pain and viewers' perception of it. Lewis' use of metal fixators as restraints vividly portrays the female body as a zone of eroticism that can be surgically altered to criminal liking. Further

demonstrating the medicalization of female bodily torture are Lewis' threats of enucleation (the removal of the eyes) and cardioversion (medically stopping and restarting the heart). The only way in which Special Agent Prentiss is able to secure her sanity is through a linguistic practice of resilience—repeating the mantra 'Wheels up!' over and over again in her mind as a reminder that her team is somewhere out there trying to find her. Using a mantra to calm the tortured mind is an example of the curative power of words, but this sheer act of mental toughness is overshadowed by the spectacle of medical torture.

Other rhetorics of disability, bondage, and hypnosis are also cited in the episode "Wheels Up" to sustain the visual style of MindWar on screen. For example, *disability-as-weakness* is a disability myth of helplessness or powerlessness applied to bodies and minds (Dolmage 114). Disabled bodies are not weak, but the disability-as-weakness myth makes it seem like they are. In the show, Special Agent Prentiss is very calculating, always calm, unafraid of playing poker against fellow BAU member Reid ("A Thousand Words"), a genius with three PhDs, so it is not a stretch to imagine her remaining in her power in the face of danger. But, the medicalization of female bodily torture makes it seem like Special Agent Prentiss is weak because her legs have been immobilized. This obviously contributes to a negative view of the disabled body. Moreover, external fixation and forced medication cite the style of "the sex slave trope, which connotes a noir image of human bondage as well as women trapped in a degrading life-world from which there is no exit" (M. Murray 167). This particular device functions to present sadism through the lens of medical treatment and makes not only the body but also the mind unable to move or feel. In fact, this scene is as much a study in the visual style of terror, as constructed through the objectifying gaze, as it is an auditory recording of how control sounds. In a plot twist, viewers learn that Special Agent Prentiss' legs are not actually broken, and that Lewis has being using

suggestive hypnosis to make her believe that she cannot move: "[In her ear] Your legs are broken. Your right arm is broken. You're in severe traction and you're paralyzed. You feel unimaginable agony all over your body unless I give you high doses of painkiller" ("Wheels Up"). Specifically, Lewis uses "neuro-linguistic programming, a method of communication used during a hypnotic state to allow the patient to receive suggestions in a structured manner" (James 64), to propose paralysis as fact. This practice was recently made popular in the film *Get Out*. Here, the main connection between war and mind is the construction of a state of fear through methods of suggestibility. This warmind discourse funnels into culture to institutionalize the body and mind as objects susceptible to weakness. Together, the rhetorics of disability, bondage, and hypnosis enter into a dialogue with each other to medicalize the appearance of MindWar.

The second way in which crime dramas sustain the psychology of war on screen is through music. In film theory, "sound is a supplement to the image" (Stam, *Film Theory* 213) that "adds value and generates instability and openness" (Slethaug, *Adaptation Theory* 34). In drama TV, music augments the emotional state of traumatic events. *Criminal Minds* uses indie music as an emotional hook during the most frightening and intense moments of the show. Returning to the episode "Hashtag," the rising action of Tara Harris' (Ana Walczak) murder is heightened by the dub-pop style and lyrics of Babe Youth's song "Break Me." In this installment, the lyrics "Hold me down. Break me down." (Youth) are narrated as psychological operations of war that signify danger and impending death. In its murder scene, music parallels the adrenaline rush that the male offender experiences, which deflects viewers' curiosity away from how to solve crime and onto how to commit crime. Music is a medium typically associated with "mood adjustment" (Schneck and Berger 240). This medium demonstrates "a direct symbiotic relationship between music and physiological function—the music effect upon human

behaviour" (240). The song's relentless momentum and intense lyrics combine with a criminal thrill in the episode "Hashtag" that produces a stylization of murder as fun. To be clear, the song if used in a different context might have a different effect, but this show's use of the song in a murder scene likely stimulates adrenaline in place of empathy. When music is used in TV to romanticize violence, female victimization is displaced as male affection. In this way, pairing images of body trauma with upbeat music creates the televisual style of MindWar.

In *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, music is cited as justification of male sexual aggression and resonates with Stam's concept of "vulgarization" (*Film Theory* 222). In Stam's film theory, "music is wedded to action and character" (*Film Theory* 221). In drama TV, music is "a device for allying particular themes to particular characters" (*Film Theory* 222). Viewing music as an explicit reference to body and mind aligns with Hutcheon's argument that "themes are the easiest story elements to see as adaptable across media and even genres or framing contexts" (*A Theory of Adaptation* 10). The jazz music featured in *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* complements the visual style of MindWar through endorsements of sexual violence. Crime, jazz, and sex intermix through song to establish a nodal point through which to view male pleasure as female pain. Jazz music welcomes discord and disorder and serves as a trope for the darker side of American experience (Lopes 1468). There is a "strange double-consciousness of romantic rebellion and potential danger" (1468) in jazz music that acts as evidence of a willful desire to receive eroticized aggression and reinforces sexual assault myths. Returning to the episode "Surrender Benson," Lieutenant Benson's extended physical torture is romanticized by the sickly-sweet tempo of Peggy Lee's song "Ain't We Got Fun." The lyrics "Every morning, every evening, ain't we got fun?" (Lee) likely invoke the threat of rape here. Like the film noir genre, jazz music associates sex with violence and antagonizes viewers through audible

representations of conflict and crime. The song's zesty phrasing pierces through scenes of torture with the presence of terror. On the one hand, the threat of rape is diminished by the musical allure of romance; on the other hand, it is because of the romantic rebellion of this song that the weight of Lieutenant Benson's terror is fully communicated to viewers. The fear stimulated by lusty jazz music invites viewers into the rhetoric of resistance that jazz is known for. Clouding crime with sex through the song's tempo, phrasing, and lyrics effectively permeates panic and alarm throughout the entire episode that signals the danger of violent, sexual obsession. Overall, crime dramas cite musical genres and other tropes to focus the imagination toward the feeling of committing crime rather than the experience of solving it.

The third way in which crime dramas cite the visual style of MindWar is through the PSYWAR principle of narrative replay. In performance theory, narrative replay is another term for "repetition" (Kartsaki 25) or "return" (25). In her book entitled *Repetition in Performance: Returns and Invisible Forces*, performance scholar Eirini Kartsaki explores the use of repetition across modes of watching to raise questions about the feeling of voyeuristic spectatorship:

> Repetition is not only used as a methodology, but as a necessary condition for the work to take place. In other words, the work happens through repetition and due to repetition and perhaps despite it. Repetition emerges not only as a methodology, but also as the material of the language used and the work's subject matter. A certain type of enjoyment seems to arise as a result of the engagement with repetition, an enjoyment that is perhaps difficult at times. (25)

Violence against women is a theme that repeats across drama TV. In *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, repetition takes the form of narrative replay and is used to explain the psychological effects of trauma. Narrative replay generates the experience of "post-traumatic

stress: recurrent and distressing memories, thoughts, feelings, or external reminders of the traumatic event" (American Psychiatric Association 1). Returning to the episode "Girl Dishonoured," the technique of replay can be seen in action during a courtroom testimonial scene that revisits traumatic events and recalls urgent emotions. In this installment, rape survivor Renee Clark (Skylar Day) struggles with her mental health after Tompkins Square University covers-up her rape complaint (see Figure 3.11). In the courtroom scene, Assistant District

(Figure 3.11: Rafael Barba guides Renee Clark through her courtroom testimony in front of the grand jury.) Credit: NBC; screenshot by author.

Attorney Rafael Barba (Raul Esparza) asks Clark to explain to the grand jury why she did not contact local police after campus staff dismissed her claims:

> RENEE CLARK: Why didn't I come forward? Well, part of it was peer pressure. I didn't want the sorority to blackball me or call me a slut.
>
> A. D. A. RAFAEL BARBA: Were there any other factors?

CLARK: I also spoke to the head of campus security. Mr. Barth said that 'Sex was like a football game. Sometimes, when you watch your game tape, you can see your mistakes and do better next time.'

A. D. A. BARBA: What did you take that to mean?

CLARK: That I had made a mistake. That it was my fault.

A. D. A. BARBA: And, how did Tau Omega Fraternity treat you?

CLARK: They started posting 'Top 10 Tips for Rape' online. I was number 7: 'Go for white trash like Renee Clark. She'll be grateful for the attention.'

A. D. A. BARBA: Was the university aware of this?

CLARK: I filed multiple complaints and reports, but never got taken off of the TSU-Underground website. The Dean said it was free speech.

A. D. A. BARBA: Why did you decide to withdraw your rape allegation?

CLARK: Talia Blaine, the school counselor, told me at the disciplinary hearing that I would have to sit with my attacker and listen to him call me a liar.

A. D. A. BARBA: And, what happened after that?

CLARK: I got severely depressed and eventually agreed to the school's suggestion that I be institutionalized.

A. D. A. BARBA: And, are you back at the school now?

CLARK: No. I can only return to school with parental supervision. My parents are not very involved in my life, so I'm basically expelled.

A. D. A. BARBA: And, the student whom you accused of rape?

CLARK: He'll graduate this year, with honours. ("Girl Dishonoured")

Victim testimony is an example of citation, replay, repetition, and return because it is a re-telling

of a true story. In the court scene, narrative replay is experienced as complete, emotional, and imperative. Clark's testimony rings clear the truth of injustice and calls for an end to the repetition of institutional structures of rape culture. Yet, the blurred distinction between forced and voluntary admission to a psychiatric hospital muddies the brave truth of Clark's testimony by casting her as an unreliable narrator. As a result, the structure of unreliability makes it difficult for viewers to firmly know who or what to believe. This testimony identifies three instances of the institutional oppression of women: first, Mr. Barth uses sports play as a metaphor for sex to delegitimize Clark's rape allegation; second, the Dean uses free speech as an excuse to dismiss cyberbullying; third, Ms. Blaine psychologically manipulates Clark to treat her rape allegation as the confession of a madwoman. When female characters are presented as unreliable narrators, it becomes more difficult for viewers to judge the qualities of action and character. A tenuous relationship with the call to believe allegations of rape stems from the misconception that sexual assault victims exaggerate claims, hyperbolize their emotions, and overstretch the severity of the trauma. Because viewers are forced to adopt the perspective of the grand jury, they are effectively removed a degree from Clark, and this point-of-view amplifies apathy, ambiguity, or distrust toward a female accuser of rape. This viewpoint supports victim-blaming. When dramatic techniques such as roleplay, music, and narrative replay create space between viewers and characters, empathy is poisoned through the psychology of war. An important issue emerging from these findings is the establishment of female narrator (un)reliability in drama TV based on which point-of-view the audience is forced to adopt—victim, perpetrator, witness, or jury.

Conclusion

Televisual tools and techniques of the objectifying gaze oscillate between voyeurism and sadism in a dance for power and control. This assemblage of visual criminology invests in images depicting social problems. In this chapter, I track different citations of digital culture, true-crime cases, and dramatic technique to learn how the visual style of MindWar is formed and maintained in drama TV through PSYWAR principles, practices, and rhetorics of identity, surveillance, aggression, and social media. *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* represent psychologies of trauma, terror, torture, and war through cultural, institutional, and medical oppressions of the female body. My argument supports the conclusion that crime dramas stylize sexual violence as a psychological event to portray female characters as unreliable narrators. This investigation leads to a dissection of how MindWar originating from military operations supplements popular culture. In each section of this chapter, the reader follows a map of clues that provides a panoramic view of the style/appearance of terror through visual aesthetics/principles of torture. In *Criminal Minds*, the plot devices of crime and sex are used to portray the relation between gender and technology and its connection to belongingness. In *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, myths about sexual assault address constructions of hegemonic masculinity that perpetuate a culture of blaming and shaming. These analyses indicate that a visual style of MindWar enters popular culture through prolonged impressions of mental anguish to impair viewers' capacity to confront the digitization, institutionalization, medicalization, romanticization, and weaponization of violence against women. Further studies that take into account the construction of social problems in film need to be undertaken in order to explore cinematic styles of MindWar constructed through aesthetics of PSYWAR. In the next chapter, we shall see the MindWar style through the genres of sci-fi and technology in dramas that focus on how crimes are solved. Imaginative and futuristic principles of the psychological experience

deconstruct the female body, merge, and reconstruct new immersive practices of the gaze that mistreat female characters as objects of male desire.

Chapter 4: De(re)composing Media and Society in *Wisdom of the Crowd* and *The X-Files*

Introduction

Another way in which the visual style of MindWar is constructed in drama TV is through elements from the sci-fi and technology genres. The principles that form and sustain this style are still guided by PSYWAR, but some shows are shaped more by imaginative and futuristic themes, techniques, and tropes dealing with the objectifying gaze. Moving from citation to the internal workings of the gaze, I understand objectification as the breaking down of aversion to violence against women for its social acceptance through narrative mechanisms of obsession and control. The fourth chapter of my dissertation therefore uses *de(re)composing* (Elliott, *Rethinking* 157) to track the objectifying gaze in narratives about gendered violence in CBS' *Wisdom of the Crowd* and FOX's *The X-Files*. According to this model of adaptation, texts "decompose, merge, and form a new composition at 'underground' levels of reading. The adaptation is a composite of textual and filmic signs that merge in audience consciousness together with other cultural narratives" (157). Theories within the framework of technology focus on the embeddedness of gendered violence in social systems and practices (Erbaugh 452), but they have not fully considered how drama TV objectifies the female body through intertextual themes about life, death, and technology. In the age of the Internet, media audiences take their emotional, contextual, and participatory cues from both traditional media (e.g. TV) and new media (e.g. social networks). As such, the visual story is a composite of cues that moves viewers toward scripted attitudes about body and being. I argue that drama TV uses de(re)composing themes (e.g. suicide, fear, and gendered violence), techniques (e.g. ambient music, the rhetoric of silence, and supernatural elements), and tropes (e.g. the killer robot, the female domme, the

female warrior, and the female villain) to normalize the objectifying gaze and put a damper on female viewers' interest in STEM.

In genetic criticism (*la critique génétique*), the main concern of circuitous adaptation is not the final text but "what Carlo Ginzburg calls the 'indexical paradigm'—a model that bases itself on the interpretation of clues" (Deppman, Ferrer, and Groden 10). Leitch treats Elliott's (2003) genetic concept of de(re)composing as material that adds and distorts (*Film Adaptation* 103). Slethaug regards this process of *addition* as "seeing how a text builds upon text after text, highlighting and subverting the multiple present and previous manifestations, refusing originality or 'real' presence, and leaving the interplay of textuality in constant motion, not promising or giving any stabilization of text and meaning" (*Adaptation Theory* 30). Indexicality, interpretation, addition, subversion, manifestation, and interplay—this is the legend of de(re)composition on a map of clues that capture the intertextual processes through which texts and their elements merge with each other. For the purposes of our forensic adaptation conceptual apparatus, de(re)composition is a narratological method of mapping clues across visual texts that allows media audiences to uncover and comment upon the more ambiguous, indirect, ironic, and otherwise knotty elements of the gender-violence relation (e.g. fears about the body, the future, the afterlife, etc) commonly associated with and adapted from the sci-fi and technology genres. I call this deep narrative structure of theme-based signs a point-of-view (POV) style because it uses the objectifying gaze to express the desires to survive, belong, and consume. Before pointing out the relationship between the theme of fear and social belief, we need to first understand how social anxieties are spread through fictional stories about technology. Throughout this chapter, I address mediated viewing in fandom, sci-fi, and Internet subcultures that facilitates practices of harm, exclusion, or subordination. First, I consider how

de(re)compositions of the suicide/technology relation configure social connection as emotional contagion. Second, I examine how de(re)compositions of the fear/technology relation perpetuate anxieties about death, technology, and women in game spaces. Third, I investigate how de(re)compositions of the gender/technology relation eroticize female competition and rivalry. Together, these analyses uncover constructions of the objectifying gaze (e.g. the predatory style of the POV shot) across *Wisdom of the Crowd* and *The X-Files* that normalize technology-based violence against women.

In her book entitled *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, leading adaptation scholar Kamilla Elliott proposes six new models of adaptation as a means of opening the field to its aesthetics: the *psychic* concept (136), the *ventriloquist* concept (143), the *genetic* concept (150), the *de(re)composing* concept (157), the *incarnational* concept (161), and the *trumping* concept (173). In this chapter, my attention is on the de(re)composing model of adaptation, which "allows for mergers of social context and literary content" (160). However, there is clearly room for other scholars to conduct future studies on the five concepts not covered here that play a role in shaping gender in media. De(re)composing is a useful method for inspecting rhetorics of the objectifying gaze in drama TV because it breaks down the elements and trappings of the sci-fi and technology genres to address the signs that influence gender roles in STEM and virtual environments. One topic of concern is *cyberculture* or "the set of technologies (material and intellectual), practices, attitudes, modes of thought, and values that develop along with the growth of cyberspace" (Lévy xvi). To consider the cyber-cultural interaction, I draw on the scholarship of Holly Stead and Peter Bibby, Justin Patchin and Sameer Hinduja, Helen Whittle et al., and other theorists in the suicide/technology section to argue that media content operates within a matrix of popular culture that not only amplifies other texts but social contagions as

well. Specifically, *Wisdom of the Crowd* and *The X-Files* highlight the relationship between media and society through the sci-fi genre's master theme of technology and work rhetorically to explore the link between watching complex social behaviours and mimicking them.

Suicide/Technology

Looking at technology through the lens of death and dying is a popular style of POV narration in drama TV that meshes the psychology of fun with the emotion of fear. As such, drama TV plays a dangerous game of portraying cyberspace as both the performative stage for healthy identity experimentation and the playground of criminals (see Turkle 1995; Buckingham 2007; Heim et al. 2007; Zemmels 2012; Litt and Hargittai 2016). Considering that for Internet users "the imagined audience [of their activities] may not always align with the actual audience" (Litt and Hargittai 2), this discrepancy between who Internet users imagine their audience to be (e.g. family and friends) and who their audience might actually be (e.g. stalkers) can put them at increased risk to cybercrime. Of course, the online environment can foster an incredible sense of connectedness and shared emotional experience, but this perceptual aperture suggests that media audiences make meaning through their networked sociability and interpret reality through medium and presence. Francesca Comunello concurs that "the rise of 'networked individualism' does not lead to isolation but to new patterns of sociability" (xiii). But, these patterns can also lead to social contagions such as addiction and suicide. By narrating death as a game, media audiences adopt the perspective of *hypermediacy*: "the frame no longer appears to the viewer as a transparent window onto an internally coherent and self-sustaining diegetic world, but as an interface in which competing and dynamic visual elements jostle for attention" (Hassler-Forest 420). De(re)composing suicide as a game is a theme that gives shape to harmful norms. *Wisdom of the Crowd* accentuates the interplay between media and society by attending to the conditions

of engagement and reception that affect not only interpretation and meaning but attitude and action. One such condition of reception is the theme of death and dying. In this section, I study de(re)compositions of suicide that configure social connection as emotional contagion.

Answering questions, following commands, or mimicking others' behaviour might seem like common practice when playing a video game, but what if being accepted into a group of other players means doing something dangerous? What if it means harming yourself? The need to belong is depicted in drama TV as a motivation for social media misuse and this highlights "the presence of thanatological themes in popular culture" (Durkin 43). Media audiences are largely composed of young adults because this demographic increasingly develops interrelated aspects of the self, such as identity, gender, and sexuality, online (see Stead and Bibby 2017; Franchina et al. 2018). In their article entitled "Personality, Fear of Missing Out, and Problematic Internet Use and Their Relationship to Subjective Wellbeing," psychologists Holly Stead and Peter Bibby explain that "the iGeneration (individuals born in the 1990s and early 2000s) check their social media accounts on average every 15 minutes. Other researchers have found that such use of the Internet has serious consequences, including neglecting personal life, mood modifications, mental preoccupation, and concealing behaviour in front of others" (535). How social connectedness is portrayed in drama TV as emotional contagion is an important topic of discussion because multimodal cues about belonging can be predictors of mental health and wellbeing. Video games are one of the most pervasive technological innovations that provide opportunities to socialize. Shows that tie self-harm to play tell cautionary tales about what gaming can do to players at the corporeal level. Game designers Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman call the gamified alteration of social behaviour a type of "friction that can occur between games and their cultural contexts" (558). Social behaviour is changing as a result of

gameplay. One factor that shapes the experience of "playing the world as a game" (Klastrup 144) is death. New media scholar Lisbeth Klastrup explains that "death and dying in a gameworld can be playful and explorative, fun and entertaining, or merely an unfortunate nuisance that obstructs the flow of play" (144). This begs the question: What happens when players die not only in the gameworld but also in real life?

The Internet is a global network that can influence behaviour (see Oberst et al. 2017; Blackwell et al. 2017). For instance, "social media use may lead to social media addiction, which involves being unable to control one's social media use and using it to such an extent that it interferes with other life tasks" (Blackwell et al. 69). When game and world are mediated through the design and thematic principle of death, the mind opens to the concept of mortality as a desirable or necessary state of being, and this is obviously quite dangerous. *Wisdom of the Crowd* de(re)composes the suicide/technology relation through accounts of the social media phenomenon. More specifically, this show investigates social media misuse by considering the risk associated with the social media phenomenon known as the Internet challenge. Such a viral stunt can be harmless (e.g. The Mannequin Challenge) or harmful (e.g. The Choking Challenge). A recent suicide challenge called The Blue Whale Game assigns players 50 dangerous tasks that culminate in suicide; Roth et al. note that 150 news articles tried to determine whether this Internet challenge was real or not, but "81% of the articles violated at least one [of the] contagion-related guidelines, most commonly normalizing suicide, discussing means of suicide, and sensationalizing" (1). This all seems to support the argument that impairments in judgment online can lead to physical injury (see Schoffstall and Cohen 2011; Patchin and Hinduja 2017). In their article entitled "Digital Self-Harm Among Adolescents," criminal justice scholars Justin Patchin and Sameer Hinduja suggest that for students, in particular, "digital self-harm might

relate to empathy seeking, serve as a way to demonstrate a measure of toughness and strength, help clarify whether certain negative perceptions of them are universally shared by others, and make their plan more visible and, consequently, more real" (762). Viral stunts have become the signature of participatory culture and evince that the desire to belong can trump the ability to make considered actions. Although viral stunts like the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge can inspire charitable behaviour, recent crazes like the Fire, Salt and Ice, Skull Breaker, and Tide Pod Challenges blatantly promote self-harm. The Blue Whale Game takes this new trend of self-harm a step further by promoting suicide as game completion. Thus, the enculturation of "mobile teens" (Lenhart, "Teens") through Internet challenges is harmful when they are encouraged to follow commands that might lead to serious injury or death.

The mutation of behaviour from game to world emphasizes adaptation not merely as textual reconstruction but as a living form of "reaccentuation" (Scholz 2) of the issues teens face in play spaces. In the same way that one imagines literature and film to be siblings or rivals, so too are the Internet and video games "reciprocal looking glasses" (Elliott, *Rethinking* 240) that speak to "a mutual and inherent rather than a hierarchical dynamic" (212). This comparison is drawn from a literary perspective because the "fidelity" (Scholz 2) model of adaptation, which debates the "faithfulness" (2) of a connection, crosses from game to world to call into question the line between technology and the self as intertextual. When it comes to raising questions about the flow between technology and the self, the question of possibility is less important than the question of impact: How does the adaptation of online to offline behaviour impact society and what can be done to remedy any negative effects of this transference? How gameplay is received and remodeled by media audiences is another practical purpose of evaluating social media

phenomena from an adaptive lens. Mobile suicide games are the penultimate example of game-to-world adaptations of social issues facing teens today.

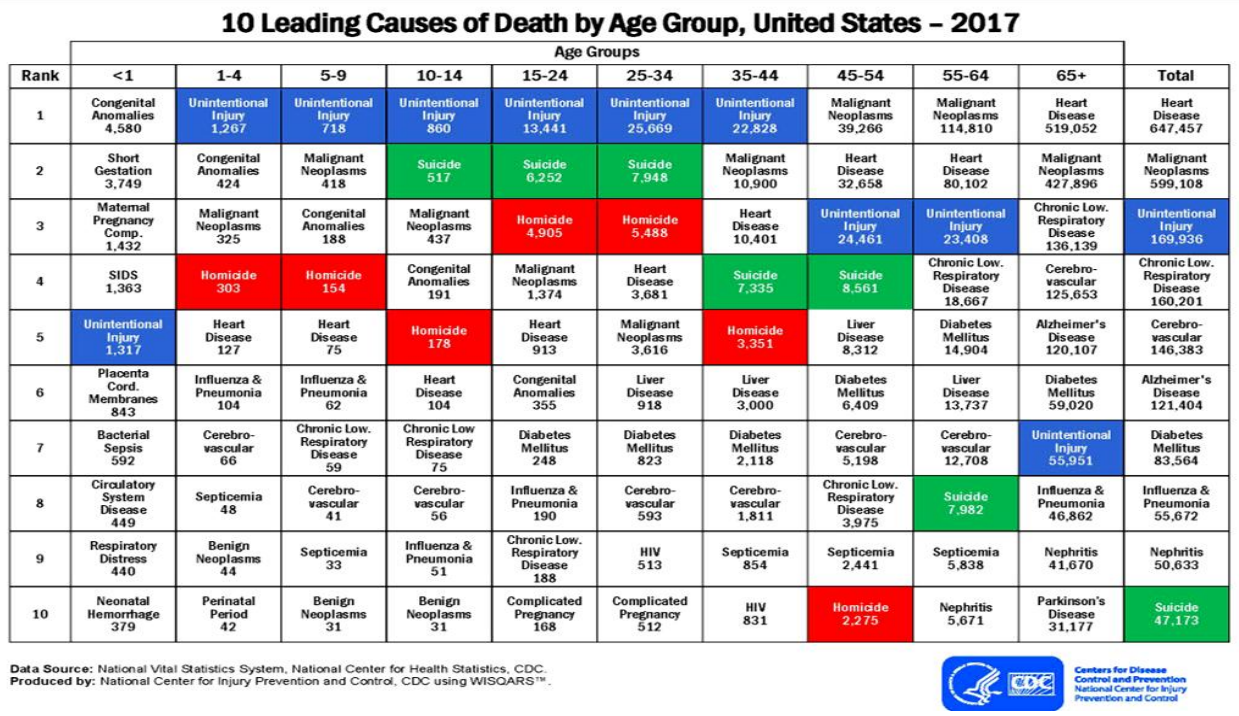
Suicide is a growing social issue among mobile teens (see Kim et al. 2008; Messias et al. 2011). In their medical study, psychiatrists Messias et al. confirm that "video games with violent content could be associated with behavioural problems . . . [and] the results of this study point to an association between excessive use of video games and the Internet and an increased risk for sadness and suicidal behaviour among teenagers" (314). Proponents such as Houtsma (2017) assign video games no influence upon capability for suicide, but they follow only "brief exposure" (ii) to game violence and overlook self-injury. TV narratives that turn suicidal ideation and suicide completion into anecdotes are damaging for mobile teens who regularly express their emotions through gameplay. *Wisdom of the Crowd* addresses the offline repercussions of online activity in the episode "Trojan Horse." In this installment, a team of tech experts hunts for the designer of a mobile suicide game called The Ten Golden Steps. Engineer Sara Morton (Natalia Tena) and Detective Tommy Cavanaugh (Richard Jones) visit the home of teenager Zoe Sanford (Jordan Kerns) after her teacher reports seeing cuts on her arms. During their sweep of Sanford's bedroom, Morton and Cavanaugh find a quick response (QR) code sticker. When snapped, the sticker prompts them to play The Ten Golden Steps (see Figure 4.1). QR code stickers are popular information labels among mobile teens because their user interaction style is designed as a quick-glance rather than a deep-dive. Learning about suicide from a matrix barcode frames self-harm as interactive—a dialogue between game and player. This relationship between (online) call and (offline) action is mediated by the element of play. Players of this particular mobile suicide game leave stacks of QR code stickers around town to incite other vulnerable

(Figure 4.1: Josh Novak [Blake Lee] examines the QR sticker for The Ten Golden Steps.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

teens to join in. In this way, the downside of building social communities online is unwanted exposure to a roadmap of toxic behaviours shared through common systems of enjoyment.

Depictions of self-harm as play intimate that mobile games are fast becoming vehicles of death: “the concomitant rise of screen time and adolescent depression and suicide is not coincidental” (Twenge et al. 15). Although some evidence suggests that “depression is less likely to be reported in frequent video game users” (Casiano et al. 299), the argument remains that players can experience suicidal ideation after playing a mobile suicide game without self-reporting for fear of being judged. The gamified completion of human life is even more frightening when you consider that the second most common cause of death for Americans aged 10–34 is suicide (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention) (see Figure 4.2). It is common for TV programming and video games to play at death, but this practice demonstrates how



10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group, United States – 2017

Rank	Age Groups										
	<1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
1	Congenital Anomalies 4,580	Unintentional Injury 1,267	Unintentional Injury 718	Unintentional Injury 860	Unintentional Injury 13,441	Unintentional Injury 25,669	Unintentional Injury 22,828	Malignant Neoplasms 39,266	Malignant Neoplasms 114,810	Heart Disease 519,052	Heart Disease 647,457
2	Short Gestation 3,749	Congenital Anomalies 424	Malignant Neoplasms 418	Suicide 517	Suicide 6,252	Suicide 7,948	Malignant Neoplasms 10,900	Heart Disease 32,658	Heart Disease 80,102	Malignant Neoplasms 427,896	Malignant Neoplasms 599,108
3	Maternal Pregnancy Comp. 1,432	Malignant Neoplasms 325	Congenital Anomalies 188	Malignant Neoplasms 437	Homicide 4,905	Homicide 5,488	Heart Disease 10,401	Unintentional Injury 24,461	Unintentional Injury 23,408	Chronic Low. Respiratory Disease 136,139	Unintentional Injury 169,936
4	SIDS 1,363	Homicide 303	Homicide 154	Congenital Anomalies 191	Malignant Neoplasms 1,374	Heart Disease 3,681	Suicide 7,335	Suicide 8,561	Chronic Low. Respiratory Disease 18,667	Cerebro-vascular 125,653	Chronic Low. Respiratory Disease 160,201
5	Unintentional Injury 1,317	Heart Disease 127	Heart Disease 75	Homicide 178	Heart Disease 913	Malignant Neoplasms 3,616	Homicide 3,351	Liver Disease 8,312	Diabetes Mellitus 14,904	Alzheimer's Disease 120,107	Cerebro-vascular 146,383
6	Placenta Cord. Membranes 843	Influenza & Pneumonia 104	Influenza & Pneumonia 62	Heart Disease 104	Congenital Anomalies 355	Liver Disease 918	Liver Disease 3,000	Diabetes Mellitus 6,409	Liver Disease 13,737	Diabetes Mellitus 59,020	Alzheimer's Disease 121,404
7	Bacterial Sepsis 592	Cerebro-vascular 66	Chronic Low. Respiratory Disease 59	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 75	Diabetes Mellitus 248	Diabetes Mellitus 823	Diabetes Mellitus 2,118	Cerebro-vascular 5,198	Cerebro-vascular 12,708	Unintentional Injury 55,951	Diabetes Mellitus 83,564
8	Circulatory System Disease 449	Septicemia 48	Cerebro-vascular 41	Cerebro-vascular 56	Influenza & Pneumonia 190	Cerebro-vascular 593	Cerebro-vascular 1,811	Chronic Low. Respiratory Disease 3,975	Suicide 7,982	Influenza & Pneumonia 46,862	Influenza & Pneumonia 55,672
9	Respiratory Distress 440	Benign Neoplasms 44	Septicemia 33	Influenza & Pneumonia 51	Chronic Low. Respiratory Disease 188	HIV 513	Septicemia 854	Septicemia 2,441	Septicemia 5,838	Nephritis 41,670	Nephritis 50,633
10	Neonatal Hemorrhage 379	Perinatal Period 42	Benign Neoplasms 31	Benign Neoplasms 31	Complicated Pregnancy 168	Complicated Pregnancy 512	HIV 831	Homicide 2,275	Nephritis 5,671	Parkinson's Disease 31,177	Suicide 47,173

Data Source: National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC.
Produced by: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC using WISQARS™.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

(Figure 4.2: CDC's chart on the top causes of death in the U. S.)

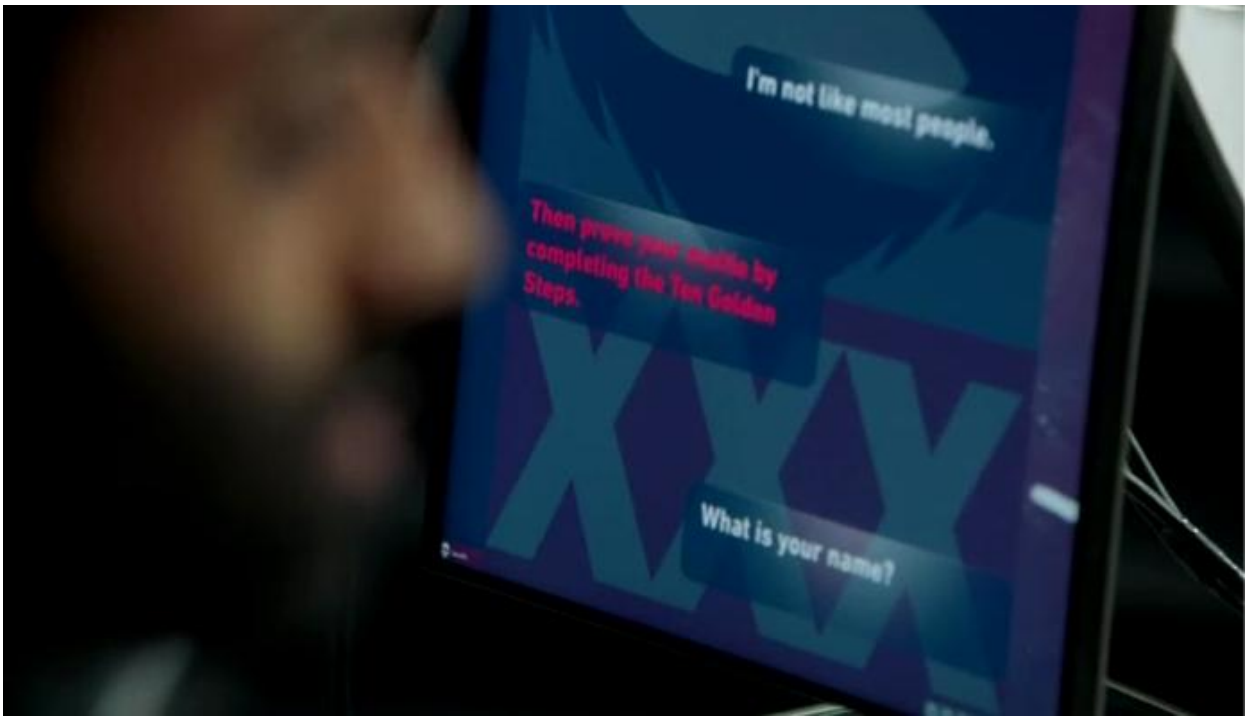
Credit: Centres for Disease Control and Prevention; screenshot by author.

playfulness at the symbolic level can transform into social scripts of risk as reward. Playing at death can prepare game players for their future reality of dying, but it also has the potential to control human behaviour in damaging ways. The role that technologies of the self play in teen suicide is a topic of growing interest among media scholars because the Internet can influence real minds and concepts of self-worth. We live in a techno-society that "appeals to collective self-esteem and taps into the need to belong, which represents plausible ways to increase membership and participation" (Gangadharbatla 12). Taking part in one's own end of life process is not something frequently addressed in TV (except in *Mary Kills People*), but it is a type of involvement frequently expressed in video games. *Wisdom of the Crowd* deconstructs the suicide/technology relation through the narrative of participation to study the possible effects of virtual play upon real people. In the episode "Trojan Horse," the symbolism of the QR code

represents an open invitation to receive information about a topic commonly considered taboo in society. The XXX supplementary component is meant to guide players into the mysterious underground of online society. An infamous example of unlocking secret games or game cheats is the 'Hot Coffee' modification in *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* that "allows players to make game characters perform sexually explicit acts" ("Sex Controversy," para. 9). The Ten Golden Steps is controversial in a different way, allowing game players to perform acts of self-harm, but what these examples have in common is the secret challenge that fosters violent behaviour. The Ten Golden Steps is addictive because its challenges foster a sense of achievement that players gain once levels are unlocked. Such meta-goals have a direct effect upon the tactical aspects of gameplay. Pairing self-referential and tactical dimensions of gameplay codifies suicide as a measure of worth or skill. This codified sign articulates mental health as a condition of play and stigmatizes teens with mental illness.

The risk of gamifying suicide is its playful perpetuation in society. Drama TV should take care not to spread the tenet of enjoyment to self-harm because media audiences are highly concentrated on networks and sites that encourage play and sociability. Mobile games are a common meeting point between enjoyment and activity, which makes it challenging for vulnerable teens to differentiate between learning about suicide and thinking about or attempting suicide. *Suicide contagion* is defined by epidemiologists as "a situation in which one [suicide] event impacts or incites another" (Gould and Olivares 46). *Wisdom of the Crowd* sheds light on suicide-by-gaming as a new form of *cybersuicide*, which can be understood as "suicides, suicide attempts, or suicide pacts influenced by the Internet" (Rajagopal 1299). *BioShock Infinite*, *Fahrenheit*, *Gears of War 2*, *Neverending Nightmares*, and *The Suffering* are supreme examples of commercial and indie video games featuring major characters that experience suicidal

ideation. In the episode “Trojan Horse,” The Ten Golden Steps takes ideation a step further to completion while still featuring rules of play and competition with others. To fully understand these challenges, white hat hacker Tariq Bakari (Jake Matthews) chats with The Gamemaster (Shane Harper) on a private instant messaging system (see Figure 4.3):



(Figure 4.3: Tariq Bakari chats with the game designer of The Ten Golden Steps.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

> THE GAMEMASTER: Want to play a game?
>
> TARIQ BAKARI: What kind of game?
>
> GAMEMASTER: One with purpose. One that will change your life. Are you worthy?
>
> BAKARI: I’m not like most people.
>
> GAMEMASTER: Then prove your mettle by completing The Ten Golden Steps. (“Trojan Horse”)

This exchange is an important point of reference in our discussion about the transference that

occurs between game and world because sexual predators commonly communicate with teens online to groom them (Stickle, Hickman, and White 184). The non-contact feature of online communication downplays the danger of connecting virtually. In their article entitled "A Review of Online Grooming: Characteristics and Concerns," forensic psychologists Whittle et al. confirm that the line between virtual and physical connection is muddied when online interactions have offline pressures: "invisibility online gives teens the courage to act in ways that they would otherwise refrain from" (67). A game-based ontology of action promotes risky engagement for contest, enjoyment, or sport. Games about mental illness can include positive mechanisms for awareness, intervention, and therapy, as seen in *Pesky gNATs* and *SPARX*, but the point-scoring system in The Ten Golden Steps frames in-game connection as a fun challenge and stylizes self-harm as a gauge for courage, effort, happiness, or skill. When the 'final boss' to kill is yourself, suicide-by-gaming becomes a trend that may trigger a copycat effect.

Rhetorically, the de(re)composing concept of adaptation stresses the inseparability of content from the critical times and conceives image and message as "a composite sign" (Elliott, "Literary Film Adaptation" 221). In semiotics, "the sign is itself a relational entity, a composite of two parts that signify not only through those features that make each of them slightly different from any other two parts, but through their association with each other" (Silverman 6). More recently, linguist Thomas Sebeok describes this type of association between signs as a "mental picture marked by distinctive features" (6). For our purpose, it is important to consider technology and the self as interrelated signs to understand the visual semiotics of technology (signifier) as lethal (signified). What is known as the de(re)composing concept of adaptation is related to the Greimasian (1983) model of the semiotics of repetition termed *isotopy*, which describes "textual segments connected by one contextual seme" (Nöth 319). At the core of this

association is the defining characteristic, feature, or trait of adventure. Suicide-as-play is an isotopic meaning repeated across visual texts to manifest risk as emotional power; for example, the instrumental music in the film adaptation of *The Goldfinch* sets the tone of Theodore Decker's (Ansel Elgort) attempted suicide because of its adventurous wave. Similarly, in *Wisdom of the Crowd*, moments of transition (e.g. rewards or steps) picture self-harm as an exciting, rather than dangerous, part of the gameplay experience. Perhaps gaming culture is an expression of mainstream culture and, if so, mobile teens experience many of the same negative peer pressures online as they do offline. This begs the question: What role does adaptation play in making, mediating, and receiving risk-as-fun in these environments? In line with this question is another: What are some contributing factors to mobile teens playing suicide games? Perhaps the sphere of the game, the desire to belong, fear of punishment, and desire for reward are contributing factors to gameplay vulnerability. The desire to belong in the online environment also suggests that teens have taken up the quest to find their sense of place in social and technological fields by exploring, learning, and performing their identities away from the public sphere. Stuart Hall (1973) addresses the relation between visual content and audience reception in his canonical encoding/decoding model, but I will add that the circuit between medium (technology) and message (audience reception) completes through the transmission of signs that have real potential to shape viewers' beliefs about themselves.

TV, the Internet, and video games all play an important role in shaping popular perceptions of mental health (see Philo et al. 1994; Morris 2006; Klin and Lemish 2008; Mitchell et al. 2016). For instance, when vulnerable teens watch suicide portrayal, they may be at increased risk of committing suicide (see Arendt 2019; Niederkrotenthaler et al. 2019). Experimental psychologists Kimberly Mitchell et al. investigate the emotional impact of peer

harassment incidents based on degree of technology and find that online harassment is more likely to involve large numbers of witnesses, multiple perpetrators, and victims who feel like they can stop what is happening (202). This study suggests that it is easy for teens with unmonitored online activity to become involved in situations that spiral out of their control. Strict parental monitoring is not the answer to happier and healthier teens, but increased parental awareness of Internet misuse can help to establish clearer lines of communication and mental health check-ins. Paralleling concerns about the influence of technology upon the self is the association between risky behaviour and the need to belong. In the episode "Trojan Horse," Sanford climbs the scoreboard in her high school stadium to break her arm, completing the game task of falling from a survivable height. Sanford believes that she can stop playing the game at any time, but her actions are controlled by The Gamemaster. For vulnerable viewers who identify with Sanford's need to belong, exposure to images of self-harm might decenter them from the position of wellbeing. When peer pressure is applied to self-harm, viewers are exposed to representations of suicide without immediate support from a system of professionals, such as physicians or psychologists, when they most need to talk about how they are feeling. The relationship between fictional content and audience reception is an ethnography of cultural studies that stresses the visual culture of sociology. One cultural aspect of this action/reaction structure is the impact of peer pressure upon mental health.

Vulnerable teens who experience online intimidation or threats often encounter bullying, unsafe relationships, and targeted victimization (see Nixon 2014; Worsley et al. 2017). For instance, "the stalking threat does not have to be physical to cause psychological damage" (Worsley et al. 11). Book-to-screen adaptations like *Girl, Interrupted, The Virgin Suicides,* and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* feature complete story arcs about issues facing teenagers.

Conversely, TV features episodic treatments of problems such as cyberbullying and cybersuicide. Tackling the issue of teen suicide on TV can lead to suicidal ideation if viewers have a history of, or are currently experiencing, "negative life events, ongoing conflicts, neuroticism, or trauma" (ten Have et al. 828). Without complete storylines and crisis resources, self-harm is sensationalized on TV and mental health support services are only alluded to in passing. Netflix's own *13 Reasons Why* is the latest example of a fictional representation of teen suicide that negatively affected viewers. After the premiere of the first season, "the search phrase 'how to commit suicide' rose 26% above what would normally have been expected for that time" (Howard). The show has been criticized for depicting teen suicide without fully addressing the underlying social issues of depression, sexual violence, substance abuse, bullying, and gun violence. *Wisdom of the Crowd* also tackles the issue of teen death through a storyline that normalizes online harassment. This begs the question: Is there a correlation between watching representations of cyberbullying and thinking about suicide?

Although drama TV has the potential to raise awareness about major problems among teens, vulnerable viewers can be negatively affected by images and messages of harm or intimidation. A joint report from the Data and Society Research Institute and the Centre for Innovative Public Health Research shows that "47% of American Internet users have personally experienced online harassment and 72% have witnessed online abuse" (Lenhart et al. 3). These findings suggest that online abuse can quickly progress to physical methods of intimidation and remind us that experiencing gratification from Internet use also applies to online hate groups. For example, the #GamerGate controversy epitomizes the toxic forms of masculinity prevalent on the Internet that stimulate behaviours meant to frighten, threaten, or cause physical harm. Such battles for collective identity target anti-violence movements through such practices as infowar

and hoaxes. The FBI defines *swatting* as "making a hoax call to 9-1-1 to draw a response from law enforcement, usually a SWAT team, . . . [knowing that] there are no guarantees that the police will not be overzealous in their response, potentially leading to injury or death" (Poland 55). The episode "Alpha Test" extends the argument that cyberculture is hostile to women. In this installment, dating blogger Lizzie Moore (Alexandra Chando) is one of 20 women who are stalked, threatened, and swatted by a male-rights activist known as DrChad89 (David Crittenden). A popular example of an American feminist being monitored by misogynists is video game developer Brianna Wu. In 2014, her condemning tweets of #GamerGate were met with a deluge of rape and death threats (Vingiano). Physical intimidation born from hate speech on the Internet is a full-scale attack upon women attempting to participate in spaces dominated by men. Intimidation as an expression of belonging to a group is one such mechanism that marginalizes women to the fringes of the Internet by using behavioural cues and codes that seek to censor, control, or even hurt them. Studying fictional representations of technology-based harm, harassment, or intimidation is the first step in deconstructing mechanisms of the objectifying gaze that ramp up male power and privilege.

Fear/Technology

Cyberspace is a social landscape that voices displacement from the physical body into mediated modes of self-perception. This withdrawal of corporeality from locality translates in media as fear of the unknown. Angela Tinwell, recognized for her research on the Uncanny Valley in games, argues that "the uncanny is related to issues of survival, not inasmuch as it is a reminder that one's own death is inevitable, but rather because it acts as an adaptive alarm bell to remind the person of the importance of being able to form attachments with others, a necessary survival technique to avoid death" (181). One theory that tracks this sense of fear and avoidance

in TV is immersion. In spite of immersion being a term linked to active participation in game research (see Calleja 2011), the immersive experience in TV follows the mental and emotional processes of characters and viewers alike (see Ryan 2001; Coplan 2004; Green, Brock, and Kaufman 2004). Put another way, the theory of *immersion* describes "transportation into a narrative world [and] has been conceptualized as a distinct mental process, an integrative melding of attention, imagery, and feelings" (Green, Brock, and Kaufman 312). In the process of testing the flow between game and world, viewers have a chance to consider their own immersion in many different contexts, narratives, and virtualities that shape their emotional state. With this concept of narrative immersion in hand, I will trace the ways in which media and society are submerged in emotional states that maintain a critical closeness to fear.

Slethaug lays out the relationship between narration and culture interpreted by such major theorists as Lévi-Strauss (1973), de Saussure (1974), and Derrida (1993) by following their arguments on *bricolage*, which he describes as "the constant adaptation, nontotalization, and freeplay of textuality" (*Adaptation Theory* 24). Drama TV brings together a bricolage of narratives about the fear/technology collusion; this amalgamation of the dramatic tension between human and nonhuman builds from mechanisms of the objectifying gaze that look at game and world as fantasy scenarios. Viewers of *The X-Files* experience the fear of virtual women through spiritual interaction and digital simulation. In its later seasons, the show maintains awareness of collective fears of the supernatural and technology advancements in episodes about the power of human relationships within altered states of reality. Internet fans of the show, known as X-Philes, also engage in immersion online when they make and share cultural artifacts within fandom subculture. Fans are drawn so magnetically to fictional stories of dark and strange impulses because they offer a dizzying sense of escapism. Narrative elements of

the show, which include conspiracy and detection, fall under the crime genre and its psychologies of behavioural motive. Crime fandom marks an interest in novels, films, and shows about crime, deviance, or victimology through forms of interaction that expand the individualized fan perspective to a globalized context. *The X-Files* ultimately deconstructs the fan/creator dyad through the discourse of "shipping" (Scodari and Felder 238), but the danger of watching an episode with the hope of detecting romance is the muting of gender inequality in male-dominated spaces in favour of sexualizing female characters. X-Philes tend to read sexual tension into the relationship between Special Agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully. The crime-romance interplay between the show's titular characters is the textual material that fans use to create new material on DeviantArt, FanFiction.net, Tumblr, Wattpad, and other fan engagement sites. To consider viewers' immersion in gendered crime narratives, I draw on the scholarship of Thomas Rickert, Michael Jacobsen, Daniel Dinello, and other theorists in this section on the fear/technology relation to argue that de(re)composing techniques such as ambient music, the rhetoric of silence, and supernatural elements perpetuate fears about death, technology, women in gaming spaces (as we will see in this section), and women's interest in STEM (as we will see in the next).

De(re)composing techniques, such as ambient music, the rhetoric of silence, and supernatural elements, focus attention on narrative immersion and give prominence to anxieties relating to gender and technology. These modes of immersion pique viewers' curiosity about the collusion of fear and technology but also gender and death (as explored in Chapters 1 and 3). What do the parallels between life, death, and technology mean? Terror is a common psychology, but so is curiosity. Interestingly, curiosity in science might also describe a desire to make spiritual contact (as we will see in the next paragraph). Death is such a prominent theme in

The X-Files because it frequently materializes the occult and the strange. As mentioned in Chapter 1, spectrality theory implies that technologies can be thought of as ghostly. Necromedia theorists (see Virilio 1989; Kittler 1999; Sconce 2000; O'Gorman 2015) link "death and technology" (O'Gorman 156) through "the uncanny imagination" (Sconce 124). I will add that what is similar between being and technics is immersion in the alternate (e.g. alternate reality, illusion, etc). More accurately, suffused with life, death, and technology is the state of being incorporeal, as viewed through religion or spirituality. Going beyond the edge of human limitation is something that sci-fi and fantasy audiences want to experience, but perhaps without seeing a world that exists without humans or human-like creatures in it. Each viewer has a future that extends about a century, but the push for life after death is a psychological avoidance of future pain, such as a sense of placelessness or altogether nonbeing. Testing the bounds of body and technics means further agitating the waters of perception to test the limits of what is real and what is simulated. Connected with this system of alteration is truth-seeking.

On their quest to understand the unexplainable, Special Agents Mulder and Scully are repeatedly forced to face their motivations concerning the search for the truth. These sequences of cultural anxiety about the unknown span more than a decade on TV and impress the uncanny into even the most emotional episodes. For example, mythologies of abduction are rectified through fantasies of homecoming in the seventh season. In the episode "Closure," the myth-to-fantasy progression is sensationalized through ambient music. In his book entitled *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being*, contemporary rhetorician Thomas Rickert attunes readers to the theory of "ambient rhetoric" (xvi) as a persuasive school of sound:

> Music takes on ambience when the environs inflect the music, whether in terms of production (how the environment shapes the sounds that are played) or reception (how the

> environment shapes the listening experience), but ambience takes greater theoretical hold when we start disrupting a separation between instrumentation and environment and consider how the environs 'play' the music, much as language speaks us, or as *kairos* wills the event. (109)

In this abduction fantasy, Special Agent Mulder has a vision of his missing sister, Samantha Mulder (Mimi Paley), turning into starlight. Before her metamorphosis, Samantha takes her older brother to an unmarked gravesite in the woods where her body, and those of other victims of sexual predator Ed Truelove (Randall Bosley), is buried. The gravesite is stylized with a blue filter effect and paired with the texture and harmony of Moby's song "My Weakness" as the bones and clothes of murdered children are uncovered. The lyrics "Weakly mind, weakly, ooh I go home" (Moby) add a hint of fear into what should be a cathartic moment (see Figure 4.4).

(Figure 4.4: Fox Mulder hugs the spirit of his sister, young Samantha Mulder, at her burial site.)

Credit: FOX; screenshot by author.

Special Agent Mulder's uncovering of the truth about his sister's abduction and his momentary reunion with her is styled through the lens of spirituality; the horror of child sexual abuse is held out of focus through a beautiful gospel loop. The spirituality of ambient tonality spreads a mood of peace through an uncanny atmosphere and, as such, death is flattered as a homecoming rather than the effect of a murderous cause. The blue filter channels calm through a modern requiem for the dead, but there is a very eerie sense of the predatory POV in this homecoming scene, as if watching through Death's eyes. Reprising its role is thus the Death and the Maiden motif, which takes form through the mythic and spiritual in this episode. At the borderland of this experience is the existential situation.

In Bolter and Grusin's (2000) remediation theory, methods of scenic intervention are called "the remediation of the real" (56). Deconstructing a scene of emotional catharsis through ambient music not only changes how viewers relate to the story but how they experience body and technics. Building on Shklovsky's (1917) technique of defamiliarization (*ostranenie*) and Brecht's (1936) estrangement effect (*Verfremdungseffekt*), sci-fi literary scholar Darko Suvin argues in *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* that this kind of "cognitive estrangement" (xviii) is common in narrative immersion. If emotional catharsis is narrated as immersion in the alternate, then how viewers perceive the release of anxiety becomes ironic. At stake is the empathetic ability of viewers to feel compassion toward marginalized characters. It is important to ask all viewers, but especially self-identifying men, to practice empathy in fantasy culture so the work of dismantling the objectifying gaze can start from stories of the self and ultimately close the empathy gap. One way to observe the gender empathy gap is through the ambient dimensions of both environs and texts. In ecology, *ambience* is a concept related to ambivalence and ambiguity in models of environmental impact (Rivers

181). In texts, rhetoric that refers to the ecology of culture has the potential to shape beliefs and behaviours for better or worse. Both models suggest that cognitive estrangement occurs when environs and texts persuade viewers to see the future of body or technics as a threat. This is why it is important to ask viewers to envision a future where humans and machines coexist in a state of belonging rather than distrust. The tacit sociality of narrative immersion in fears about life, death, and technology represent the effect of spectatorship upon audiences.

Aspects of apprehension and desire encourage acts of fearful spectatorship (see Richardson 2016; Szollosy 2017). For example, questions about the future of body and technics can "trigger the uncanny" (Richardson 119) through the presence of "the fearful double" (119). Fantasies of human power celebrate domination over nonhuman agents and "popularize anxiety about a 'monstrous' enemy within" (Paton 56). Philosopher Steve Neale, who extends Mulvey's argument, posits that the pleasure of human-over-machine narratives "involves fantasies of power, omnipotence, mastery, and control" (11). Specialists in the philosophy of language interrogate the pleasure of looking at people or things labelled "abject" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 1), "object" (Neale 8), or "the monster (de-monstrare)" (Paton 53). Monstrous rhetoric is a de(re)composing technique that activates the sci-fi genre's machinery of "Otherness" (Kristeva 4). *The X-Files* sustains fearful spectatorship through storylines about future technologies (e.g. AI, quadrupedal robots, smart homes, etc). The show's penchant for portraying technology as monstrous oscillates viewers between states of wonder and the cold promise of patricide by their own creations. One of the most haunting fears to reoccur in the series is the AI takeover. Being controlled, killed, or replaced by superintelligent machines that resist human control is a frightening social fear. The social construction of bad robots that bring about an even worse

future collectively builds toward a philosophy of war. Such treatments of future technologies (and, as we will later see, virtual women) often substitute comedy for death anxiety.

Sci-fi TV reflects cultural fears about dying. Cultural theorist Debra Shaw argues that visual culture manifests responses to death and dying through figures of terror that are technologically produced (252–255). Communication scholar Charles Soukup describes watching-in-fear as a type of narrative immersion that occurs when the human condition is "an open text, [where] gaps in meaning or ambiguous narrative moments are presented to the viewer, and the viewer attempts to 'fill in the gaps' of meaning by actively engaging the text" (18). This begs the question: Are humans 'the monster' that they fear? Transgressing boundaries between biotic and bionic is a futurist framework of digitization that renders "thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and other distinctions applied to organisms and machines" (Haraway 152). All cultures are concerned with the issue of death, but visual texts that depict this anxiety have decomposed the monstrous over time and recomposed AI—from vampires and werewolves to robots and avatars. The performance of supernatural power over humans has been staged since parietal art and, later, the advent of the Renaissance. From the 'star people' legend of the Apache tribe to the 'flying star' image in *The Madonna with Saint Giovannino* (see Figure 4.5), the superhuman presence is an agent of surveillance over humans depicted across the arts. *The X-Files* adapts this depiction of the superhuman from an alien to AI in the eleventh season. The episode "This" expresses the fear of a future/self that is unrecognizable through the surveillance of virtual consciousness. In this installment, cyberspace is characterized as a memoir of living, acceptance, and revival. Envisioning death as an escape into a virtual reality afterlife portrays dying as a mere play-turn forfeited to gain immortality. By this logic, viewers do not mind the concept of a

(Figure 4.5: Domenico Ghirlando's painting of a UFO hovering over Mary's shoulder as she prays over Jesus.)

Credit: Domenico Ghirlando; photographic reproduction in the public domain.

"digital graveyard" (Öhman and Floridi 640) if it means entering an altered state of reality to cheat death.

"Technologies of death" (Goody 108) are indivisibly connected to a de(re)composing model of adaptation because they express a dis(re)placement of being from reality. In sci-fi TV, the fear of death is synonymous with the fear that "human beings *are* machines" (Postman 112). Authentic selfhood is a unifying theme at the heart of our understanding of immersion in, and consumption of, narrative elements that predict a machined future. But, what does it mean to be human in a digital world? For one, technology changes how humans experience the art of living. Robert Pepperell believes that the symbiosis of human and machine marks the end of "the long-held belief in the infallibility of human power and the arrogant belief in our superiority and uniqueness" (171). This suggests that what humans truly fear is being finite and inferior. Being

immortal and superior are “myths embedded in our collective unconscious” (Baines 3) that attach extraordinary significance to humans within the larger scope of the universe. This wish for infallibility holds onto the notion of a collective social identity that is unconquerable. In the episode “This,” such myths are disrupted when the virtual consciousness of Richard Langly (Dean Haglund) reaches out to Special Agents Mulder and Scully when it realizes that it exists within a simulation program: “Am I dead? If I am, they know that I know” (“This”). Confused as to how their deceased friend could communicate with them from the beyond, Special Agents Mulder and Scully interview Professor Karen Hamby (Sandrine Holt) to better understand the truth about virtual heaven (see Figure 4.6):

(Figure 4.6: Karen Hamby explains the nature of virtual heaven to Scully and Mulder.)

Credit: FOX; screenshot by author.

SPECIAL AGENT FOX MULDER: I received a message [from Richard Langly] on my cell phone.

DR. KAREN HAMBY: You should go. They're watching.

SPECIAL AGENT DANA SCULLY: Who's watching?

DR. HAMBY: Purlieu Services. They came to us fifteen years ago with the science and the math to prove that we could live forever.

SCULLY: And, where is Richard now?

DR. HAMBY: They brought us to a facility and, over a two-week period, scanned and copied the salient features of our biological brains.

MULDER: And, did he instruct you to leave this message for us?

DR. HAMBY: He entrusted me in case he discovered that they lied about life in the simulation.

SCULLY: How would that life know that it was a simulation?

DR. HAMBY: There would be cheats. The background people wouldn't be fully rendered. They'd constrict the use of technology, of two-way contact, to control them. But, Richard being Richard, he hacked a way to reach out.

MULDER: Why reach out to me if you're still alive?

DR. HAMBY: Memory isn't erased, it's suppressed. They've probably theorized, as we have, that their lives are a simulation, but perhaps Richard's subconscious recalled the two of you. ("This")

The virtual heaven described in this scene is a cognitive and interactive simulation that imitates social relations. Dr. Hamby suggests that her partner is perfectly happy to live in a simulated environment, right up until he becomes aware of the simulation. In essence, Langly wants what the 'blue pills' in *The Matrix* want—the comforts of the illusory state without becoming disillusioned by its mere imitation of life. It is 'the glitch in the system' that is difficult to

experience, not altered reality. The purpose of this comparison between film and TV is to draw attention to the problem of cerebral violence which, when delivered to viewers under the guise of immortality, slips away from their critical attention. Ultimately, the modification of consciousness through virtual reality fashions the mind as an augmented state of perception that humans and machines co-produce.

Immersion is often connected with the experience of engagement with or submersion in alternate reality (see Coomans and Timmermans 1997; Murray 1997), but a more recent definition of immersion moves toward a scheme of narratology that processes psychological pain and pleasure (see Salen and Zimmerman 2003). In game studies, this is known as "a level of engagement with a game that suggests that the player has transcended an ordinary psychological state to arrive at a more profound relationship with the game" (Salen and Zimmerman 336). In the episode "This," psychological realities of pleasure are closely associated with pain avoidance. To avoid any further confrontation with the machine, Langly's virtual consciousness begs Special Agent Mulder to find a kill switch (see Figure 4.7). Both male characters make their living by investigating philosophies of science and technology (for the FBI, in Special Agent Mulder's case, and for The Lone Gunmen, in Langly's) that have the potential to shape the future of humanity; their shared concern with alternate embodiment intensifies to the point that viewers sense an urgent instruction to fight against the merging of being and technology. In his book entitled *Postmortal Society: Towards a Sociology of Immortality*, sociologist Michael Jacobsen notes that in direct conflict with the fear of alternate embodiment is our fondness for *postmortalism*:

> We want instant immortality in the same way that we crave instant coffee, instant community, and instant love. The principles of a postmortal society thrive on the Internet,

(Figure 4.7: The virtual consciousness of Richard Langly begs Mulder to destroy virtual heaven.)

Credit: FOX; screenshot by author.

> where there has been an increasing interest in digitalized immortality . . . where we may, despite being killed thousands of times in virtual reality, always restart the game again, or where we, through attempts at transferring and storing neural energy, may hope to keep artificially alive after death. (11)

Performances of undeath are particularly common in horror, fantasy, and sci-fi texts (e.g. the vampires of gothic horror, the elves of Middle-earth, and Ripley from *Alien: Resurrection*), but the concept of a digital legacy is also supported by mainstream popular culture. For example, holographic technology has recently brought to life such deceased vocalists as Maria Callas, Roy Orbison, Tupac Shakur, and Michael Jackson. Cultural movements and transformational moments from the past can now be brought into the present for new generations to experience.

The X-Files thus draws attention to future technologies to suggest that narrative immersion is also a cultural avoidance of our own mortality.

This psychosocial concept of immersion raises questions about life after death: Will the human mind dissolve into the digital river Lethe? Will it come alive again in a spatiality of "intertwinement" (Løvlie 35)? Are humans still themselves in an alternate state of reality? Whatever the technological future of the mind, sci-fi TV builds tension between the self as we know it (alive) and the self to come (undead) in simulated reality. The fear of ceasing to exist can also be repressed through the rhetoric of silence and its many figures and tropes. Related to the figure of the monster, the trope of the killer robot expresses the fear of humans becoming the servants of robots and this fear feeds into prejudice toward robotic bodies (Dinello 74–75). In his timely book entitled *Technophobia: Science Fiction Visions of Posthuman Technology*, sci-fi scholar Daniel Dinello argues that popular prejudices can generate what is known as *technophobia*—"the fear of technology-out-of-control" (51). In the context of taking control, Glenn adds that fear of nonhuman influence is traditionally talked about in terms of imbalance, weakness, and subordination in the face of dominance (31). Films such as *Blade Runner*, *Westworld*, and *The Terminator* are popular examples of visual texts that use the trope of the killer robot to engineer readings of dominance over technology for the survival of humans. Other films like *The Stepford Wives* and *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* conduct a gendered reading of technology that manufactures the fear of "female sexuality-out-of-control" (Dinello 52). Although gynoids (a.k.a fembots or lovebots) are not present in the episode "This," it is important to keep in mind the tropes commonly used in narratives about technological embodiment that entrench viewers in gender role politics. As we move closer to the next section, we will start to see how narrative immersion shows up as a return to gendered silences. For now,

let us go even deeper into our analysis of the human/machine hybrid by analyzing techno-anxiety expressed as emotional distance.

Repeatedly, "popular culture's perpetual emphasis on masculinist technology and gender stereotypes" (Dinello 139) intensifies escape from the physical body and the erasure of the female voice. Silence is firmly fixed in communications and relationships between people. When the female voice is distanced from agency, silences are assembled out of gender role politics. Moments of silence in *The X-Files* highlight the fear of women's relational position to man and machine. Exploring the trope of the killer robot in action means hurtling through creations between human and machine thought, speech, and action. In the episode "Rm9sbG93ZYJz," the rhetoric of silence isolates the trope of the killer robot to distance women from a positive future and silence them into staying behind as man and machine move toward preparing for new ways of communicating and connecting. In this installment, outsmarting sentient AI (e.g. chatbots, automated restaurants, autonomous vehicles, robot vacuums, delivery drones, and quadrupedal robots) is styled as a comedic series of unfortunate events. The devices of humour and silence couple with filmic effects to address the fear of living under constant surveillance and what this means in terms of being and becoming. Silence acts as a mediate tool that affects how the mood of anxiety is communicated; the total absence of human dialogue escalates the presence of machine speech. The opening voiceover warns:

> In 2016, an AI chatbot was released by Microsoft via Twitter. The chatbot was designed to mimic the online language patterns of a 19-year-old woman and was introduced as an experiment to better understand how humans converse and relate on social media. The quality of her interactions was meant to be friendly and informal. The AI would learn from humans. It was constructed to become progressively more intelligent. The experiment

> performed as designed. The robot did indeed learn, but not as intended. The chatbot's 'repeat after me' capability made her vulnerable to humans, allowing Twitter users to affect her tweets. Her posts became offensive, racist, and hateful. After more than 50,000 followers and almost 100,000 tweets, Microsoft was forced to shut the bot down. Humans must take care in teaching AI or, one day, we will be the ones deleted. ("Rm9sbG93ZXJz")

This third-person voiceover reveals a collective fear of being spoken to or spoken for by dialogue systems over which humans have little or no control. Taking into account the importance of voice, what concerns me about this voiceover is the message it sends to viewers about women's place in the online world. The Tay experiment is an important point of reference because it links gender with silence. Self-silencing is a practice that has long devalued female speech and technology increasingly separates collectivity from action. Embodied silence is used in the scene where a killer robot corners Special Agents Mulder and Scully in a warehouse office and shoots at them with bullets fired from a 3D printer (see Figure 4.8). The phrase "We learn from you!" ("Rm9sbG93ZYJz") is repeatedly displayed to the agents as a sign of their own faulty logic as humans. Inhuman sounds become the mirrors of human emotion. The mimetic cries of machine speech take the form of blaring alarms, phone chimes, buzzer sounds, metallic tapping, rapid beeping, mechanical whirring, door buzzes, and bell dings; these warning signs are a sobering reminder that "we have to be better teachers" ("Rm9sbG93ZYJz"). The evolution of machine behaviour from human behaviour makes viewers keenly aware of gender stereotyping by making AI an expresser of the socialization process. Ultimately, the rhetoric of silence tests what viewers think about subjected being in techno-society. Moving from

(Figure 4.8: A quadrupedal robot programs a 3D printer to fire bullets at Mulder and Scully.)

Credit: FOX; screenshot by author.

technophobia to rejections of body, we come to know about fields of gendered performance that intersect with ideas of power.

Gender/Technology

The metaphor of women as cyborgs is a concept that serves to describe a fusion between being and parts (see Haraway 1991; Hayles 1999). TV is, in primary respect, about our existence and human/machine symbiosis becomes "the stage on which contestations about the body are performed" (Hayles 85). According to renowned media theorist Katherine Hayles, in her book entitled *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*, gender is produced and maintained not only by gendered languages but also by gendered body practices that serve to discipline and incorporate bodies into the complex significations and

performances that constitute gender within a given culture" (200). This gender/technology interaction simultaneously "disorients and exhilarates" (27) viewers by inviting them to consider "how the body produces the psyche (the outside in)" (196). In view of this, I will confront the gendered body in stories about virtual women; on the whole, this leads to a discovery of the tropes devoted to masculine fantasy, and a discussion about how these tropes glorify gendered competition and violence. Exposing the overused devices that fight against women's place in STEM and other male-dominated spaces is a small, but necessary step to making it possible for future innovators and visionaries to see themselves reflected on screen and believe that they can be leaders. The role that the objectifying gaze plays in implementing these devices is that of coercive force. Using a de(re)composing model, which corresponds to narrative emphasis on "mutation and transformation as a central thematic for bodies within the text as well as for the bodies of texts" (43), can help to expose and erase coercive narrative elements that join together in the traditional fear of female sexuality-out-of-control. *Wisdom of the Crowd* and *The X-Files* highlight the spilling over of elements, characters, and situations that devalue the female subject from text to text through such themes as aggression, competition, and fame. In this section, I resume focus on female STEM characters to continue searching for methods of their subjection to man's control or machine's. Drawing on the scholarship of Bronwen Calvert, Su Holmes and Sean Redmond, Patrice Oppliger, and other theorists in this section on the gender/technology relation, I argue that positive change for the representation of gender in drama TV can occur if shows depart from stereotypes about women in STEM environments (e.g. games, livestreams, etc) that seek to distance them from their own intelligence, interests, and skills. To identify mutations and transformations of text to culture, I focus on scenes in which female STEM

characters are measured through hypermasculine (e.g. thrill-seeking) and/or hyperfeminine (e.g. attention-seeking) traits.

The sexualization of cyberculture is synonymous with the victimization of women (see Fox et al. 2015; Ward 2016; Lynch et al. 2016). In their study entitled "Sexy, Strong, and Secondary: A Content Analysis of Female Characters in Video Games across 31 Years," gendered media scholars Lynch et al. suggest that the assumption that the Internet is a male-only environment promotes patterns of harassment and discrimination against both real and fictional women (566–568). "Sexualized virtual women" (Fox et al. 349) are populated in sci-fi TV to reinforce these kinds of assumptions about relational power. The metaphor of the avatar, like that of the cyborg, treats the female body as a "cultural construction" (Balsamo 33) closely associated with the boys' club culture of cyberspace. Although 88% of adult women in America use the Internet (The Pew Research Centre), their presence online is still met with sexism, misogyny, and other forms of harassment. The purpose of calling attention to popular forms of objectification is not to 'feminize' the Internet, but to support the position that gender equality should be a matter of importance to all people in all social systems. In the eleventh season of *The X-Files,* the avatar acts as a metaphor for appetitive aggression and desire. In the episode "First-Person Shooter," Special Agents Mulder and Scully enter a virtual reality game as avatars to stop Maitreya (Krista Allen) from murdering any more male gamers. Both Special Agent Scully and Maitreya embody avatars programmed to brandish weapons in a suggestive manner, often against each other. Imagining the promise of pain, exposed skin, or lingerie as measures of self-worth for virtual women is communicated through BDSM gear (e.g. the collar as a symbol of control and command) (see Figure 4.9). Swapping Special Agent Scully's face onto Maitreya's avatar, which is itself the digital scan of sex worker Jade Blue Afterglow (Krista Allen), fosters

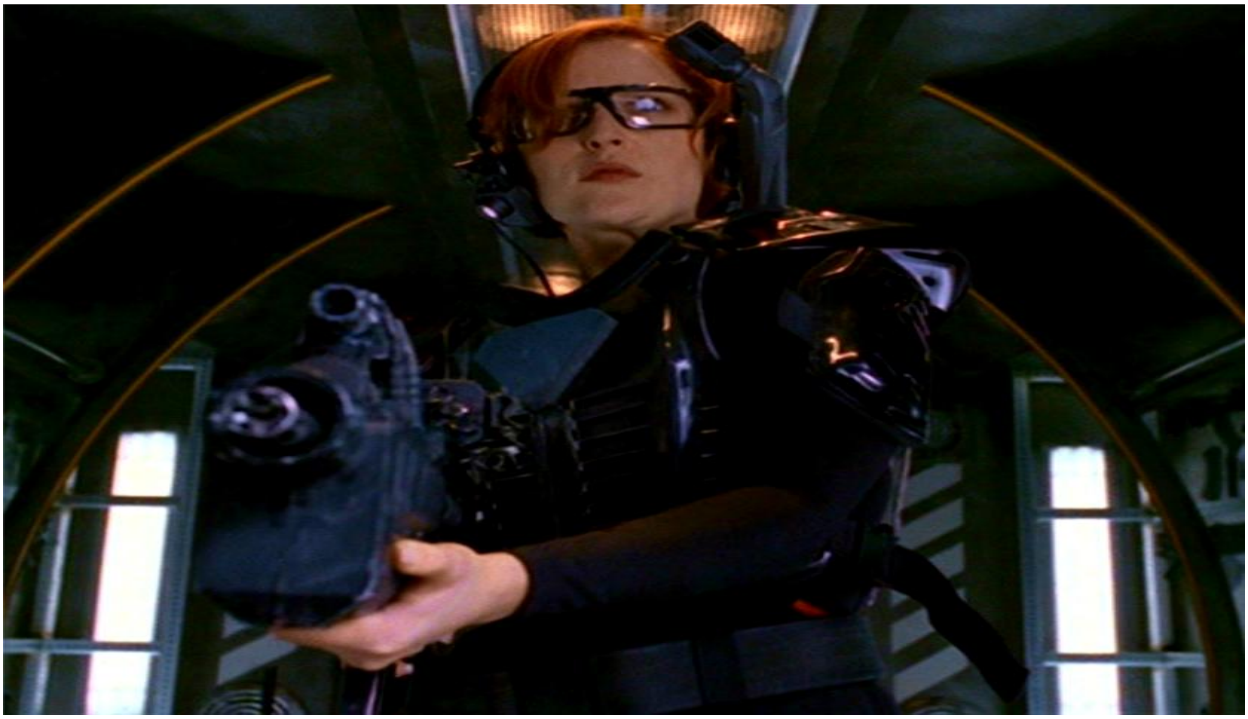
(Figure 4.9: Scully's face is swapped onto Maitreya's avatar body.)

Credit: FOX; screenshot by author.

the idea that virtual women can be dissected to form a collage of male fantasies. The rebel with a gun, Special Agent Scully's avatar is a composite of the female domme trope, which views the pinnacle of female strength as "pro-dommes . . . [who play] the resistant female in order to preserve their dominance" (Lindemann 166). The prominence of so many male agents across fiction makes the sexualization of this one female agent so harmful to viewers yearning for a positive female role model in STEM. As mentioned in the Introduction, the "Scully Effect" (The Geena Davis Institute, "The Scully Effect" 6) is a real phenomenon that correlates familiarity with Special Agent Scully's character to women working in STEM industries and/or pursuing leadership in their fields. This is why viewing Special Agent Scully's character attributes through "a haze of testosterone" (Calvert 46) is a setback in the positive work that she does for feminism.

The X-Files stands out as one of the first TV shows to celebrate a strong female role model in STEM, but masculinizing and traumatizing Special Agent Scully has always been standard practice throughout the show's eleven seasons. From oversized suits to being kidnapped, abducted by aliens, diagnosed with cancer, and medically raped, this doctor-turned-federal-agent is made to have a masculinized bearing and face many traumatic moments. "First-Person Shooter" is a monster-of-the-week episode unrelated to the show's alien mythology, but it alienates its female viewers through exposure to sexualized avatars. This "technology of sexiness" (Evans and Riley 39) works against the show's overall mandate to create "spaces for women to think themselves in ways that are powerful" (51). Juxtaposing exaggerated femininity with tortured masculinity for either comic relief or cathartic release of vicarious suffering develops the idea that tech environments, including online/game spaces, are not safe for women. When even your fictional female role models are viewed through the gaze, you experience the sense that no space within media or society is safe from objectification. Notably, the trope of the female warrior, which "follows and adheres to the pattern of male heroism" (Hohenstein 42), is used to trick viewers into believing that these female avatars hold real power over male gamers when, in actuality, even their strength is hyperbolized. Special Agent Scully only enters the virtual reality game to save Special Agent Mulder from replicating gunslinger Maitreyas, but her oversized gun and military armour speak to the aggressive masculinity of hyperreal spaces (see Figures 4.10). Likewise, Maitreya boosts her weapons engagement by feeding off of male aggression. Together, these manifestations of the trope of the female warrior work to eroticize female competition and rivalry.

Aggression is also a theme in drama TV that encourages female characters to fight amongst themselves (see Brown 2003; Oppliger 2013). There is research to suggest that



(Figure 4.10: Scully enters the virtual reality game in full military gear.)

Credit: FOX; screenshot by author.

exposure to media violence can cause viewers to act more aggressively in their daily lives (see Anderson and Bushman 2002), but Hilgard, Engelhardt, and Rouder's (2017) study cites publication bias in Anderson and Bushman's experiment, instead calling for future "experiments testing effects on aggressive cognition and physiological arousal" (769). Regardless of which side of the debate one falls on, it is clear that critical observation of "masculinized power" (Parks 122), as expressed through the value of aggression or violence, is still needed to dismantle toxic forms of masculinity that disrupt stories with strong female characters. *The X-Files* generally troubles aggression through comedy, noir, and pastiche, but Special Agent Scully remains a spectacle of the objectifying gaze through her aggressive behaviour. To this point, visual texts with similar treatments of female aggression address each other in complex and interesting ways. In an interview with Smithsonian Magazine, Chris Carter reveals that "*The Silence of the Lambs*

was an inspiration for *The X-Files*. It's not a mistake that Dana Scully has red hair like Clarice Starling" (J. Rhodes). Carter offers a "metatextual" (Stam, "Beyond Fidelity" 65) account of the psychological horror genre through the supernatural thriller genre and orients viewers through the shared lens of the white heroine. Beyond her physical appearance, Special Agent Scully is a double of Special Agent Clarice Starling because both fictional female FBI agents experience torture at the hands of powerful men. Starling (Julianne Moore) is the victim of hypnosis and psychotropic drugging by Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) and Special Agent Scully is the victim of medical rape by The Cigarette Smoking Man (William Davis). Beyond illustrating their shared psychology of resilience, the episode "First-Person Shooter" also highlights the transference of female aggression as female competition or rivalry. For instance, both fictional agents are forced to engage in violent acts against other women—Starling shoots drug dealer Evelda Drumgo (Hazelle Goodman) in *Hannibal* and Special Agent Scully shoots Maitreya's avatar in "First-Person Shooter." This is another example of the kind of intertextual doubling accounted for in Chapter 1. In this instance, the double reinforces the harmful belief that women with badges can gain power in male-dominated fields by committing acts of violence against their own sex.

Treating female characters as "mirrors" (Mulvey 12) of the gaze alienates them behind a lens of scopophilic terror. Related to this sense of fear is the figure of "the monstrous Other, . . . [which] is the catch-all for anything considered inhuman, abnormal, and threatening, [and] it can encompass and influence such other symptomatic categories as the racially Other, the feminine, and the queer" (Adkins 11). In fact, doubling is even more troubling when one considers that Starling kills a woman of colour and Special Agent Scully attempts to kill the virtual embodiment of a sex worker. There's also the fact that some of the actresses playing these

female characters identify as lesbian and bisexual, respectively. In their book entitled *Bad Girls: Cultural Politics and Media Representations of Transgressive Women*, communication scholars Susan Owen, Sarah Stein, and Leah Van de Berg argue that "embodied existence as Other is itself transgressive: I exist, therefore I transgress" (3). Narratives in which white heroines played by queer actresses target women in the margins incite a visual practice of Othering that lends itself to real practices of discrimination within communities and their sub-groups. Juxtaposing the female warrior trope (Starling-Scully) with the female villain trope (Drumgo-Maitreya), which explores female power (Campbell 12), disseminates a culture of conflict within already oppressive norms and constraints. A key expression of virtual women as monstrous Other is through representations of male torture. Before Special Agent Scully enters the game to save Special Agent Mulder, there is a scene in which Maitreya corners Special Agent Mulder near a locked exit door on the second level of the virtual reality game and feeds off of his anger and aggression until he is in immense physical pain. In her article entitled "William Gibson's 'Cyberpunk' *X-Files*," TV scholar Bronwen Calvert calls attention to the physicality of virtual embodiment: "The virtual torture of Special Agent Mulder takes a curiously embodied form. The virtual space Special Agent Mulder occupies is entirely physical; there is no sense of transition from the embodied world. . . . During his imprisonment in the game, Special Agent Mulder is never without his body: senses such as touch are retained and he feels pain within the virtual space" (47–48). Maitreya's very presence in the game is enough to incapacitate Special Agent Mulder. The idea that virtual women are common threats in immersive environments not only inspires fear but imagines a physicality of virtual embodiment that is male. As such, Special Agent Scully's violent attack upon Maitreya to save Special Agent Mulder's life feeds into the message that women are threats not only to men but also to each other. Displays of rivalry

among women are damaging to viewers because they push female characters into showing dominance rather than positive leadership qualities.

Encoding bodies (e.g. female domme, heroine, or villain) is a form of fetishization. An exemplar of encoding as a sexual model is celebrity culture. In their book entitled *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, TV scholars Su Holmes and Sean Redmond consider how "the celebrity self is prodded, probed, and exposed in such a way that revels in the processes of corporeal fabrication" (123). As Holmes and Redmond argue, "the body of the star or celebrity circulates in intertextual fantasy environments whereby fans/consumers are asked to like (love), and be physically like, the famed figure in question" (122). Drawing attention to the body/power narrative device for pleasure appeals to the commodity of pain. Expanding on Gervais and Eagan's (2017) sexual objectification theory, Seabrook, Ward, and Giaccardi's (2019) study on media consumption and sexual violence supports the conclusion that "objectification contributes to sexual violence indirectly by changing cultural norms about how women should be treated" (542). Garland et al.'s (2018) theory of cultivation plays a middle role in our understanding of the ways in which TV shapes perceptions of crime and gender:

> According to cultivation theory, persons, particularly impressionable youths who consume a substantial amount of TV programming, are likely to base their understanding of reality on the images and messages they receive from such programming (DeTardo-Bora 2009; Wimmer and Dominick 2003; Woo and Dominick 2003). The more one watches, the more ingrained these beliefs become (Surette 2015). Thus, crime drama TV shows, regardless of accuracy, not only shape viewers' perceptions of crime and criminal justice but also affect perceptions of gender normality. (614)

Distinguishing between what is a normal and abnormal interest in the pleasures of watching is

difficult when desire overlaps with obsession. The pursuit of male attention, social status, and fame has been documented in such visual texts as *Mean Girls* and *Gossip Girl*. *Wisdom of the Crowd* takes a more focused approach by documenting the self-on-display and impressing the dangers of possessive spectatorship through a criminal lens. The remainder of this section exposes the inner workings of the objectifying gaze that suture together fantasies of body and harm. An important step in challenging obsessive interest in encoded bodies is exposing the intrusive lenses that contribute to the dehumanization of women in media and society.

No matter how provocative, photographs, videos, and other technologies of the self do not justify the dehumanizing effects of obsession with the female body. In her book entitled *Bullies and Mean Girls in Popular Culture*, mass communication theorist Patrice Oppliger teaches that "our society, which Lipkins (2011) refers to as a 'vulture culture,' rewards humiliation and the demeaning of others and actually encourages bullying" (178). I argue that 'vulture culture' gives rise to cyber aggression and victim-blaming (e.g. 'She wants it!' or 'She asked for it!'). Bohner et al.'s (2009) study on rape myth acceptance points out "the myth that many women *secretly* desire to be raped" (19) as a strong example of a false belief that "denies, downplays, or justifies sexual violence" (19). The episode "Live Stream" explores the asking-for-it rape myth in the context of Internet fame. In particular, this episode spreads the harmful message that victims are willing participants in their own harassment. In this installment, Internet celebrity Dawn Lee (Julie Zhan), famous for her competitive eating videos, is murdered by her biggest fan, EchoAvenger98. Lee's food consumption is framed as a competitive sport for the pleasure of her hungry fans. Also known as eating broadcasts, these self-promotion videos depict women consuming large amounts of food and making slurping, humming, or other suggestive noises into a microphone. In scenes of possessive spectatorship (e.g. cyberstalking), the concept

of watching is closely associated with the act of consuming. All-consuming desire to become fulfilled (full/filled) is a symptom of the struggle for immortality that measures other uncontrolled feelings hungering to be met in a sort of cannibalistic fantasy (Gediman 6). For stars and their fans, fame is a want that originates in a wish for immortality that can only be realized symbolically (Giles 44). As we move deeper into the gender/technology interaction, I will make a final turn to the POV shot and its mobilization of the predatory gaze. My goal in using the de(re)composing model of adaptation is to plainly show viewers the closeness of their position to the objectifying gaze and its fixture in popular cultures of humiliation.

Narrating torture is a means to illustrate the silent presence and power of anonymous voyeurs, but the interchanging gaze of spectator as criminal or witness leads to potential confusion for viewers (Denzin 43). Relationship closeness to crime is seemingly distanced online but, in actuality, the Internet and other networked technologies shorten the distance between criminals, victims, and witnesses. *Wisdom of the Crowd* demonstrates how a live transmission of torture on the Internet is the amuse-bouche of murder sites on the deep web; the rumoured red rooms are sites for screening the darkest content and are cogs in the machine of a much larger "assassination market" (Chertoff and Simon 4). This show indicates that the desire to consume is bound in symbiotic relationship with the desire to destroy. In the episode "Live Stream," the POV shot interprets fantasies of harm through a single device of closeness. More specifically, the thrill of closeness is screened through semiotics of torture. Of particular interest is the human face, which measures the temperature of intimate meaning. Lee's bound and gagged posture implies an openness of the body and a concealment of the mouth (see Figure 4.11). Facial features are important indicators of emotion during the communicative process. By covering Lee's mouth and hiding her extremities, viewers (like the perpetrator) cannot interpret cues of

(Figure 4.11: Dawn Lee's murder is live-streamed on the Internet.)

Credit: CBS; screenshot by author.

non-consent. In essence, the "predatory camera" (Carney 99) technique used by the perpetrator decomposes Lee's physical cues of fear (e.g. closed eyes) and recomposes them as signals of desire (e.g. 'She's begging for it!'). How the eyes portray emotion, as popularized in the film *A Clockwork Orange*, is a fantasy of sadism, but it also represents the "wide latitude for interrogation" (McCoy 124) covered by TV-as-eye. If we are to understand TV as the power of seeing, then viewers' dual sight as 'prime mover' of the objectifying gaze and 'fly on the wall' suppresses outrage to spur identification with the anonymous voyeur. Overall, TV-as-eye is an act of looking at the motivations responsible for cruelty and crime.

Educating viewers about the criminal mind does not necessarily create more violence in society, as the CSI effect would have us believe (Baranowski et al. 96), but it does suggest that their perception of crime, victims, and the law is swayed by the images and messages they

receive from popular culture. Discussing male sexual desire through the visual language of torture is immensely popular in other erotic materials besides TV programming (e.g. film, literature, pornography, etc). Moving forward, it is important to keep tabs on how TV content conceptualizes the sexualized body to mainstream culture. Cultural awareness of BDSM has increased in popularity after the release of *Fifty Shades of Grey*, but drama TV's encoding of rapists and murderers as mere "kinksters" (Freeburg and McNaughton 6) not only misrepresents the BDSM community but enforces the predatory gaze as a normal sexual function for male viewers. The POV structure of the objectifying gaze refracts back onto social reality by shaping viewers' attitudes toward women through the dominant ideology shown in the shot. Judith Fetterley reminds us that, "as readers and teachers and scholars, women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one whose central principles is misogyny" (xx). As members of media and society, we need to encourage future scholars to study how and why the objectifying gaze surfaces across visual texts and popular cultures and what can be done not to insulate this perspective.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I study de(re)compositions of media and society in CBS' *Wisdom of the Crowd* and FOX's *The X-Files* that normalize the objectifying gaze. The consensus drawn from these analyses of gender representation in drama TV is that the gaze functions to reinforce myths and stereotypes about women's participation in tech. A de(re)composing model of adaptation is particularly useful in studying the sexualized body because of its timely goal to debunk fears about women in virtual spaces. Overall, these shows draw attention to both direct and indirect ways in which the objectifying gaze naturalizes popular cultures of humiliation as "intertextual device[s]" (Walton and Jones 66) across visual texts to reify the voyeuristic POV. More

specifically, the themes of suicide, fear, and gendered violence enter the matrix of drama to craft stories about women interested in STEM through technology-based mechanisms of gameplay, aggression, and fame. By applying adaptation theory to fearful and possessive spectatorship, scholars can continue the work of feminist critiques of a single point of view to producing texts that make room for diverse perspectives and experiences. In light of crime thriller films such as *The Counselor* and *A Walk Among the Tombstones,* further research could explore the methods by which the objectifying gaze operates through POV narration in American cinema. In the conclusion of the dissertation, we shall see gender intersect with social justice outside of the academy through community education and performance art.

Conclusion

Topic and Context

In a video produced by 20th Century Fox entitled "The Scully Effect," Gillian Anderson talks about her portrayal of Special Agent Dana Scully and the role *The X-Files* played in empowering women to pursue STEM and/or leadership positions:

> At the time that Scully showed up, we didn't see that type of female represented very much at all out in the world of television, which is what we look to more and more as examples of who we are and to help make sense of us as human beings. And so, to suddenly have an appealing, intelligent, strong-minded female who was appreciated by her pretty cool male coworker was an awesome thing to behold. And, I think that a lot of young women said 'That's me! I'm interested in that! I want to do that! I want to be that!' (20th Century Fox)

This actor commentary highlights three main observations: (1) the link between TV and society, (2) the effect of TV on pop culture, and (3) the influence of TV on identity (i.e. the construction of self). Who we are as human beings is a question we tend to ask in times of change. When I started writing this dissertation, the world was experiencing the rise of new human rights movements (e.g. #MeToo) and fiercely battling gender inequality (e.g. the 2017 Women's March). As my work in this dissertation draws to a close, it has been a year since the World Health Organization declared a COVID-19 pandemic, which has had consequences beyond health to safety. For example, Evans, Lindauer, and Farrell (2020) note that domestic violence victims are finding it difficult to access crisis resources during the pandemic (2302). I interrupt our critical discussion of TV's influence on society, culture, and identity with these notes on violence against women because we have to keep challenging stereotypes and changing norms so

that gender equality can be achieved, even in a pandemic. I work from the opinion that the TV narratives we consume need to commit to progressing toward gender equality to mimic the fight for human rights going on in society. In different shows, in different ways, we see intertextual and adaptive manifestations of the objectifying gaze, and how it serves isolation, not inclusion, and domination, not diversity. This makes it harder for female and/or queer viewers to see themselves as future leaders in their career fields when even their fictional role models are subjected to discrimination, harassment, and violence.

Key Findings

As a reminder, my dissertation entitled '*The Objectifying Gaze': The Role of Adaptation in Perceptions of Gender on Television* uses a case-study methodology to evaluate the impact of adaptation on drama TV and stake the claim that *concepts of adaptation, such as doubling, architextuality, citation, and de(re)composing, enforce the objectifying gaze and perpetuate mostly stereotypical perceptions of female and/or LGBT characters in drama TV*. To this end, I ambitiously endeavor to meet 6 research objectives, 3 research questions, and 3 research aims. My dissertation adds to research on gender representation in drama TV (Cuklanz 2000; Scharrer 2001; DeTardo-Bora 2009; Hust et al. 2015; Rader, Rhineberger-Dunn, and Vasquez 2016; Jermyn 2017; Garland et al. 2018; The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media 2018), but makes a unique contribution to the field by using adaptation theory to study drama TV's intertextual constructions of gender, sexuality, and violence. Moving away from adaptation as a term to describe a product (i.e. a text) and toward understanding adaptation as a process (i.e. the interplay of textual content) speaks to the way in which texts intentionally and unintentionally replicate the same stories about double characters using the same themes. There is a tension between adaptation and television that, until now, has not been fully analyzed, perhaps because

adaptation theory is traditionally confined to literature and film, but this dissertation embarks into the realm of drama TV to shed light on how popular series repeat similar narrative elements or controls (e.g. characters, settings, themes, etc) through concepts of adaptation (e.g. doubling, architextuality, citation, and de[re]composing) to insinuate messages about gender, sexuality, and the roles that people should play in society. The intertextual style of this dissertation approaches many fields of study, but always remains fixed in adaptation theory and continuously observes replication at the national level (i.e. American drama TV series) to battle the objectifying gaze. In the remainder of this section, I will demonstrate the main achievements of this dissertation, handling each chapter's breakthroughs, developments, or discoveries, as I evaluate the impact of adaptation on drama TV.

The first chapter of this dissertation inspects doubles or oppositions enforcing the uncanny in Netflix's *House of Cards* and *Orange Is the New Black*. From this case study, three key findings emerged: (1) the double scripts women as inherently flawed (i.e. 'bad, mad, or sad'), (2) the double serves to isolate and alienate LGBT characters, and (3) the double manifests a spatiality of death. The latter finding implicates a distinct landscape of doom and destruction in these shows that forms from negative classifications of gender and sexuality. This provides considerable insight into how female and/or LGBT characters are repeatedly associated with madness, punishment, and the fate of death. The main criticism that I received from my committee on an earlier draft of this chapter was that I did not fully delineate the double, so I addressed this feedback by properly defining the double, giving a brief overview of the screen theory debate (i.e. Freudian doubling vs. Lacanian mirroring), and tracing the 'look' of death-as-double from art. By finding the scopophilic gaze and the spectre of death in queer representation, I also meet the research objective of identifying the presence of the objectifying gaze in drama

TV and the research aim of analyzing the effect of a spatiality of death on the female body, the disabled body, and the queer body.

In the second chapter, I examine architexts or relations between discourses, genres, and themes from the art of drama and the science of detection in CBS' *CSI: Cyber* and *Person of Interest*. Evidence from this case study intimates three important discoveries: (1) the architext between embodiment and detection envisions empathy as a new pathway to authentic leadership and mentoring for criminal justice professionals, (2) the architext between improvisation (paidia) and detection suggests that an empathetic path to criminal justice can be forged through spontaneous and reflective practices like verbing, mirroring, and venting, (3) and the architext between competition (ludus) and detection conveys a unique approach to forensics through gameplay. These findings develop knowledge about belonging, leadership, and performance by incorporating play into 'serious' work environments. One suggestion from my committee on an earlier draft of this chapter was to restructure my theory, as it lacked cohesion. To address this criticism, I restructured this case study through Drama Studies (i.e. dramatic forms, techniques, and strategies) and consulted more relevant scholarship (e.g. Nicholas and Ng's [2008] study entitled "Blending Creativity, Science, and Drama"). Many research objectives, questions, and aims are met in this chapter. For instance, I formulate the term (a) embodied detection to describe the intersection between embodiment and criminal investigation, (b) the term figural déjà vu to describe adaptation theory as recognizing something in a text that one has seen before, and (c) the term ludic forensics to describe the gamification of crime-solving. I also propose future research directions of studying fictional representations of deviance in cyberspace, answer the question of how drama TV contributes to negative stereotypes of women and the LGBT

community by debunking ‘mad’ stereotypes, and analyze the effect of liminality on improvisation at the levels of emotion and identity.

The third chapter of my dissertation analyzes citations or quotations of trauma in CBS’ *Criminal Minds* and NBC’s *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*. My findings in this case study point to three serious implications: (1) true-crime citations eroticize violence against women, (2) ‘ripped from the headlines’ citations of campus sexual assault cases link male sexual aggression with social media misuse, and (3) citations of Internet memes, monsters, and mythologies normalize deviant online sociability. Taken together, these findings locate the objectifying gaze within drama TV. However, the most notable conclusion drawn from this case study is that drama TV sustains a visual style of MindWar (e.g. terror) through citations of PSYWAR aesthetics/principles (e.g. torture). One criticism from my committee on an earlier draft of this chapter was the elision of reality and fiction, so I took this comment into consideration by focusing less on reception theory and more on objectification theory. A growing amount of research objectives, questions, and aims are met in this chapter. Most notably, I examine the social and health issues of cyberstalking and campus sexual assault tackled in drama TV through citation. Several terms are also formulated, including networked textuality, self-referential intertextuality, and forensic adaptation, to describe the effect of adaptation upon media, society, and visual texts. Overall, citation appears to be the concept of adaptation that has the most influence on perceptions of gender, sexuality, and violence.

In the fourth chapter, I explore de(re)compositions or merges of media and society in CBS’ *Wisdom of the Crowd* and FOX’s *The X-Files*. Three significant results become apparent from this case study: (1) de(re)compositions of suicide configure social connection as emotional contagion, (2) de(re)compositions of music, silence, and the supernatural perpetuate fears about

death, technology, women in game spaces, and women in STEM, and (3) de(re)compositions of recurrent tropes (e.g. the female warrior trope) eroticize female competition and rivalry. Yet, the most intriguing observation from this case study is that drama TV sutures together fantasies of body and harm through a POV structure of narration in order to insulate the objectifying gaze. The main concern expressed by my committee on an earlier draft of this chapter was that I relied on an ambiguous concept of spectacality, so I replaced this general notion with well grounded theory from Slethaug on bricolage. By identifying a POV structure of narration, I meet the research objectives of proposing future research directions (e.g. POV narration in American cinema) to expand the current state of adaptation studies as well as identifying the presence of the objectifying gaze in drama TV. Additionally, I analyze virtualities of death (e.g. virtual heaven), assess the spectacle of violence against female avatars, and evaluate the impact drama TV has on social norms/gender roles.

Future Research Directions

Adaptation is an evolving academic field and there is plenty of work to be done to approach TV from a deeply intertextual lens. This dissertation acts as a springboard from which future researchers can dive into the study of the effect of intertextuality/adaptation upon gender representation in TV. Upon further reflection, there are many other concepts/models for analysis besides doubling (opposition), architextuality (relation), citation (quotation), and de(re)composing (merging) that can add to assessments of adaptation in TV. Some good options include: Elliot's (2003) *ventriloquism*, Stam's (2005) *metatextuality*, Leitch's (2008) *interweaving*, Cutchins' (2010) *parallelism*, and Hutcheon's (2013) *revisitation*. From these categories, future scholars can explore the 'spirit' of TV, or the 'commentary' of one show on another, or parodic 'returns' to art, or 'coinciding and contradictory' narrative threads, or an

'awareness' of other sources. My view of the research topic seems in line with current literature in the field of adaptation and gender and there are several angles I can explore down the line. For example, in her article entitled "'I Imagined a Story Where I Didn't Have to Be the Damsel': Seriality, Reflexivity, and Narratively Complex Women in *Westworld*," literature, art, and media studies scholar Susanne Köller shows how TV takes an intertextual approach to gender representation. Köller's attention to "audibility" (173) parallels my view of music as a de(re)composing technique that loops the media-society link through "traditions of scores in television" (173). Therefore, I could take Köller's 'visibility/audibility' approach a step further by studying references to song in drama TV that convey gendered or sexualized meanings. For instance, I am aware of the operatic soundscape of NBC's *Hannibal*. In a future publication, I could engage in a conversation about how the acoustics of the show take their cue from Baroque-inspired ornamentations of sexual obsession (e.g. love/loss), especially in the episode "Sorbet," which opens with Cleopatra's aria "Piangerò la sorte mia" from Handel's opera *Giulio Cesare*.

That said, this dissertation charts a course for many other meaningful studies beyond 'visibility/audibility' and gender. Broadly, another graduate student could write their dissertation on adaptation and gender representation at the national level, tracking the objectifying gaze in Canadian drama TV series (e.g. CTV's *Cardinal*), or at the international level, in British and Irish drama TV series (e.g. BBC Two's *The Fall*). Specially, there is a wealth of room for future research on intertextual doubling and masculinity. Another area for continued investigation is the architext between embodiment and crime. Personally, I would approach this particular research bearing by centering on the dramatic performance of gender and study fictional characters that play an undercover role. For example, Villanelle (Jodie Comer) is a skilled assassin who adopts a new persona at every turn in BBC America's *Killing Eve*. For those itching to return to

intertextuality in film, I hope my term forensic adaptation can aid scholars in studying how concepts of adaptation sustain the gaze of violence in media, society, and visual texts. One route is to examine POV narration in American cinema, such as Hitchcock's oeuvre or the Hannibal Lecter films, to better understand how eye-level shots create psychological terror through citations of torture. In terms of my own future work, I hope to continue studying gender representation in TV through the lens of adaptation by looking at pastiche in FOX's *Lucifer* (an imitation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*), allusion in ABC Family's *Pretty Little Liars* (to Nabokov's *Lolita*), and citation in FX's *American Horror Story* (to John Wayne Gacy's crimes). This study can include analyses of pastiche and hypermasculinity, allusion and sexuality, and true-crime citation and sexual violence. Together, these angles of analysis can provide a focused look at adaptation and gender in popular series by tracking the movement of the objectifying gaze from fictional/real stories into TV.

Final Call to Action

There are many lessons that I learned from the process of doing my PhD, such as the more obvious skills of project management, research, and critical thinking, but taking this stance on adaptation and gender representation also inspired me to strengthen my leadership and communication skills. For example, studying portrayals of female leadership motivated me to complete a professional development certificate program. Professional development in the area of leadership offered me the opportunity to learn how to manage individuals, teams, and organizations. Perhaps the most powerful lesson that I learned from my research journey at the University of Waterloo was about advocacy. While examining architextuality/campus sexual assault and citation/rape culture in Chapters 2 and 3, I learned that 1 in 5 undergraduate women in America will be raped during their post-secondary education (Krebs et al., *Campus Climate*

76). The more that I researched violence against women and the LGBT community, the more that I knew I had to play a role in affecting positive change, so I joined the volunteer team of a community group creating safer spaces for people who identify as womxn. I had the honour of performing original poems at events for International Women's Day and the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. My advocacy work was recognized by a pride organization and I had the opportunity to join 150+ LGBT human rights activists for a celebration of the community-building being done in Ontario. So, you see, I mean it when I say that doing my PhD has changed me for the better as a person and given me a voice not only as an academic but also as an artist. As a final call to action, I challenge my colleagues in a most positive way to try to integrate practices of experiential learning (e.g. volunteering) into their research process to make a difference not only at the academic level but also within their own communities (even virtually!). To conclude, it seems only fitting to end this dissertation and my PhD journey with an original poem on the strength and resilience of women. With hope, I offer "Power":

To the night-blooming flowers
with suns forming on the inside
from a cloud of dust,
you will trigger shockwaves
from your secret
rise and set,
nocturnal bees
will visit your display,
and the carpenters

will bore holes in boxes,

finding a way

out of the woods

on a spring day,

to the females with venom

who could sting,

but rarely do,

trapped in the hand

closed in a fist,

buzzing,

vibrating,

always in flight,

landing on light

and using the wave

to shake the roof.

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