

The Victim's Suffering Translated: *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and the Crime Genre

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(1) Crawling with maggots, melting away in decomposition, discoloured and mutilated – the bodies in *Crime Scene Investigation* (CBS, 2000-Present) are clearly meant to disgust. They disrupt the narrative flow with their abject qualities, but by doing so also provide particular pleasures to the viewer. These pleasures seem closer to those associated with the horror genre than any other in that they are connected to an affective experience of watching an audiovisual text: the disgusting bodies make us jump and look away; as Isabel Christina Pinedo (1997) argues in relation to the mutilated bodies of the horror genre, their 'gore' moves our own bodies. This suggests a remarkable shift in the crime genre that, as Martin F. Norden (1985) points out, has traditionally been associated with the cerebral. This article will investigate some of the most pertinent aspects of this shift. It will describe the changes to the crime genre that *Crime Scene Investigation* with its disgusting bodies encompasses and will ask how these changes affect our understanding of crime.

(2) With its emphasis on the detailed investigation of the body, the *CSI*-franchise is part of wider cultural shift in the representation of crime in film, television and literature which started in the early 1990s. The forensic sciences became increasingly important at this time in crime novels such as those of Kathy Reich and Patricia Cornwell, films like *Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme 1991), *Copycat* (Jon Amiel 1995) and *Se7en* (David Fincher 1995) and television dramas such as *Profiler* (NBC 1996-2000), *The X-Files* (Fox 1993-2002) and *Silent Witness* (BBC, 1996-). What they share is the emphasis on the mutilated body of the victim which, Deborah Jermyn argues, is indebted to *Prime Suspect* (see Note 1). Crime drama since then has 'routinely figured explicit description and images of forensics that would have been unheard of on prime-time TV in the era before *Prime Suspect*' (2003b: 49). In a later article, Jermyn highlights that

after *Prime Suspect*, the 'boundaries' which had once governed how much crime drama could show us of the corpse, and how it looked, would never be the same again. If any TV text seems indebted to this shift and pertinent to this discussion now, illustrating the degree to which television has become increasingly enchanted by the dramatic possibilities of forensic detail, it is *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. (Jermyn 2007: 7)

I here want to investigate what this shift to forensic detail implies in terms of the effects on the crime genre. I will highlight, firstly, that such an emphasis on the body involves a shift towards the horror genre which *Crime Scene Investigation* draws on liberally. By allowing the horror of the body to become so central to the pleasures of the series, it also puts greater emphasis on the victim in general than is usual in conventional crime drama.

(3) John Sumser highlights that, rather than murder, conventional crime drama investigates

actions leading to murder. The three things that need to be established in any investigation following murder are motives, opportunities and capabilities. Opportunities and capabilities are *necessary* conditions for being a suspect or a villain. (1996: 82)

All of these aspects of the investigation relate to the perpetrator of crime who is generally at the centre of the investigation as the term of 'whodunit' implies. *Crime Scene Investigation*, however, presents less a whodunit than a 'what happened'. This central question is shared by other forensic science dramas such as *Silent Witness* or *McCallum* (ITV, 1995-1998), and is also underlying in the sci-fi/crime hybrids of *The X-Files* and *Profiler*. All of these dramas give more consideration to what happened *to the victim* instead of focusing on the perpetrator. This greater emphasis on the victim will be a second aspect that will be examined in this article.

(4) As a consequence of the greater emphasis on the victim and the use of conventions from the horror genre, *Crime Scene Investigation* is able to offer an embodied experience of the crime genre which will be the third aspect this article will investigate. My hypothesis is that the embodied experience of crime narratives is one of the most important effects of the shift towards the forensic and the depiction of the body as abject because it allows viewers to experience crime not only as a cerebral puzzle but with embodied empathy. In my definition of the abject I follow Julia Kristeva (1982) who describes it as that which disrupts order and threatens identity. It sits at the border of identity, is the border and also disturbs this border. The corpse is, in her words, 'the utmost abject' (1982: 4) as it is no longer 'I who expel, "I" is expelled' (ibid.). The corpse is the most sickening of wastes and it is the final waste: in order to live, the person has to expel its bodily wastes. However, the corpse is a reminder that in the end what we believe is the essence of the person – its being alive – is expelled from the waste itself. The corpse therefore shows, visualises without signification and consequently without ordering discourses, that in the end we are only waste.

(5) I will investigate how the abject corpse relates to and troubles the conventions of the crime genre in *Crime Scene Investigation*. For reasons of clarity I will here focus on the original series which is set in Las Vegas and revolves around a team of five (later six) forensic scientists, headed by Gil Grissom (William Petersen). Although there are similar emphases included in the two spin-offs *CSI: Miami* (CBS, 2002-Present) and *CSI: NY* (CBS, 2004-Present), their narrative incentives differ from the original series, implying that the audiovisual construction of the text essentially diverges from *Crime Scene Investigation's*. With narrative incentives I mean the central theme that is at the heart of each series. In *Crime Scene Investigation* this is a celebration of science as an investigative tool, in *Miami*, narratives revolve around the establishment of justice for victims, while *NY* focuses more on the people left behind in crime, including the investigators. Generalisations that cover the three series are therefore

difficult to make. Before I begin my analysis, I want to briefly summarise some writing in relation to the crime genre in order to highlight what this shift towards the forensic might entail in terms of changes to the generic conventions. I will then examine in detail scenes in which the body is at the centre, following the logic of the series itself by starting with the scenes of the discovery of the crime in the teaser, before discussing the investigation of the body at the crime scene and last the examination of the corpse in the autopsy scenes.

The Disruption in *Crime Scene Investigation*

(6) Jane Feuer has rightfully criticised the use of film-oriented genre studies for television as television genres 'appear to have a greater tendency to recombine *across* genre lines' (1992: 158, emphasis in original). As Charlotte Brunsdon (1998) highlights, this also applies to the forensic science dramas which combine the crime genre with the medical genre. However, I here deliberately chose to follow Tzvetan Todorov (1977) and Stephen Neale (1980; 2000; 2001; 2002) as I believe that the shift towards the forensic is reflected in wider changes to the genre across media. Following the work of the Russian formalists, Todorov's primary interest lies in narrative structure and he suggests a model of an 'ideal narrative' which

begins with a stable situation which is disturbed by some power of force. There results a state of disequilibrium; by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction, the equilibrium is re-established; the second equilibrium is similar to the first, but the two are never identical. (1977: 111)

Neale (1980: 20) uses this model in his discussion of the detective genre in which, he suggests, violence quite literally disrupts the first equilibrium, necessitating a working through which relies on discourses concerning the law.

(7) When analysing the scenes of the teaser in *Crime Scene Investigation*, it becomes clear that it is not so much violence that disrupts the equilibrium than the abject body. Importantly, the body is here presented as abject not only because of the emphasis on gore: blood pools, crawling maggots and melting flesh. Rather, what makes the bodies of the teaser abject is that they are discovered by ordinary people who are engaged in everyday activities such as driving a car, looking at real-estate or spending time in a park. The body therefore encroaches on the everyday where it disturbs the identity of those who find it: it is seen 'without God and outside of science' (Kristeva 1982: 4), i.e. without the meaning-giving discourses of religion or science, and therefore has no other meaning than that of final waste. As the viewers are aligned in the teaser with the ordinary person, they too encounter the body as abject.

(8) By emphasising the everyday, *Crime Scene Investigation* makes use of an established convention of the horror genre: Cynthia Freeland (2003) and Vivian Sobchack (1987) both highlight how central this notion of the 'everyday' is to the American horror film where it is soon

disrupted by horror. In general, horror is the most apparent genre that *Crime Scene Investigation* draws on in this first scene. This also applies to the depiction of the mutilated body. Richard Dyer points out that 'traditionally, horror resided in what the monster, whatever it was, looked like or the fear it induced in the characters: now it is as often in its effect on the body, the horror of the damaged, distressed, suffering body' (1999: 59). As in the 1990's horror film that Dyer writes about, the horror in *Crime Scene Investigation* is constituted by the corpse which is depicted as suffering and damaged. There is a focus on the blood pools and wounds, often from the point of view of the discovering person. The framing and sounds of these shots are usually carefully chosen to emphasise the gore. In 'Sex, Lies and Larvae' (1.10), for example, the camera cuts from a close-up of the discovering couple to their point of view medium shot of a body crawling with maggots and insects. The insects are here introduced in the previous shots by buzzing sounds which dominate the soundtrack. In general, the camera tends to emphasise the mutilations of the body by giving close-ups and extreme close-ups of the bloody wounds rather than presenting the body in distanced long shots which is usually the case in more conventional crime drama.

(9) The horror that the body induces is given expression in the figure of the discovering person who tends to be a woman. In 'Assume Nothing' (4.1), for example, the scene starts with a woman on her housekeeping round in a Las Vegas hotel. As she enters, shouting a bored 'Housekeeping', the camera follows her in medium shot, showing how she opens the curtains with the help of the automated system. But when it is stuck, she walks up to the curtains to draw them open manually. As she opens the curtains a little further, she suddenly seems struck by something and turns around slowly, before starting to scream. Her screaming face is then shown in a close-up, before the camera cuts to a close-up of the mutilated body and finally an extreme close-up of the bloody wound. The presence of something threatening is foreshadowed by the sound of menacing strings, the eerie lighting of the corridor with blue and yellow lights and, not to be forgotten, the by then established convention of *Crime Scene Investigation's* teaser that, whenever there is a scene that suggests everyday-ness, it will soon be disrupted by the horror of a mutilated body. As John Corner highlights, the series format, to which *Crime Scene Investigation* adheres rigidly, uses 'concise repetition [which is] built into the opening minutes of each programme' (1999: 57) which allows for economic storytelling. This concise repetition, however, also creates very specific expectations which, when fulfilled, underline the series' conventions.

(10) The discovering woman who gives free expression to her terror in a scream is one of the conventions that *Crime Scene Investigation* quickly established. This convention again bears resemblance to an established figure in the horror genre, namely the only surviving woman in the slasher film, or as Carol J. Clover (1992: 35) calls her, the 'final girl'. Clover emphasises that the final girl is both gendered masculine and feminine: masculine in her attempts to fight off the monster and feminine in the emphasis on her terror and screams. It is this latter aspect that the discovering woman of *Crime Scene*

Investigation shares with the 'final girl'. Her horror and screams are also monitored in detail with close-ups as the case of 'Assume Nothing' exemplifies. In both the slasher film and in *Crime Scene Investigation*, the woman comes to personify the 'abject terror' (Clover 1992: 35) that the audience is supposed to feel with her.

(11) Other examples which feature a woman's abject terror can be found in episodes in which the teaser presents the crime being committed. 'Stalker' (2.19) is a particularly good case in point. Here, the camera stays for the most part in close-ups of the victim as she cowers first in her hallway and then in her wardrobe. In several close-ups, she is shown crying, biting her nails and shivering, all of which suggest the heightened tension of her fear. Moreover, every now and then, when the sounds in her house change, there are muffled shriek sounds which further underline her terror.

(12) The fear of the characters who are threatened with mutilation in *Crime Scene Investigation* is given expression in another shot that has become established in the horror film, namely the 'solitary reaction shot' as Pinedo calls it (1997: 52). What is unsettling about these shots, Pinedo points out, is that they reverse the logic of cause of effect: we see the terror of the character without seeing what caused it (ibid.). In 'Justice is Served' (1.21), for example, we see how a male jogger glances anxiously around him, his eyes eventually widening in fear, again shown in close-up, before we see something grey and blurry jumping towards him.

(13) The depiction of the body in *Crime Scene Investigation's* teaser, then, is marked by conventions borrowed from the horror genre. The abject qualities of the corpse that disrupt the equilibrium in scenes in which the body is discovered, are underlined by an emphasis on the terror the body induces and images and sounds that depict the body as mutilated and disintegrating with a particular focus on blood and insects. In scenes in which the crime is committed, conventions from horror give the scenes an unsettling moment replacing those presented by the corpse in scenes in which the body is discovered. The use of conventions from horror suggests that the viewer is, from the beginning, engaged with the narrative on a more emotional level which also affects the viewer's body – horror, after all, affects our stomachs, makes us jump – than in other crime drama. This form of engagement continues, I will show below, into the main body of the episode.

(14) In relation to the crime genre, *Crime Scene Investigation* presents an equilibrium that is not disturbed by violence, but rather by the effects of violence: the abject corpse and the horror of crime. This proximity to the horror genre, however, does not contradict *Crime Scene Investigation's* adherence to the crime genre. Barbara Creed points out that the horror film presents a 'modern defilement rite [in which it] attempts to separate out the symbolic order from all that threatens its stability' (1993: 14). By presenting the body as abject, *Crime Scene Investigation* presents the effects of crime as a threat to stability of the social order which is, however, eventually restored by the work of the investigators. In other words, *Crime Scene Investigation* presents a disturbance to an equilibrium that necessitates a working through. This working through, I will show in

the next section, relies on discourses of law and order and therefore adheres to the conventions of crime drama as Neale (1980, p.20) describes it.

The Body under Investigation

(15) Kristeva (1982: 4) suggests that discourses of religion or science render the corpse less abject because both religion and science fill the corpse with meaning. In keeping with other crime drama, *Crime Scene Investigation* uses another set of discourses which help to render the abject safe, namely discourses relating to the law. These discourses are in *Crime Scene Investigation* indicated by elements of the mise-en-scène which highlight the presence of the police: blinking sirens, the yellow crime scene tape and officers in uniform loitering in the background. Moreover, the sound of sirens signifies the arrival of the police. The discourses of law and order invest the corpse with the meaning of 'crime victim' which evokes a new set of associations which are organised into the following string of ideas: a crime has been committed, the police will investigate, eventually establish who the perpetrator is and give him/ her a just punishment. These discourses, therefore, also render the body safe as they work towards the re-establishment of order and its boundaries, which were disrupted by the murder of the victim.

(16) While conventional crime drama stays with these discourses, *Crime Scene Investigation* also makes use of scientific discourses and, in particular, medical discourses. The discourses of science similarly render the abject corpse safe as they read the mutilations in respect of what happened, thereby also investing the corpse with the power to reveal its truth. This truth does not only relate to what happened in general during the crime, but also to what happened to this particular body. They therefore fundamentally help to explain the suffering of the victim, putting the victim at the centre of attention in a genre that has traditionally been focused on the perpetrator.

(17) As I argued above, with the central question of 'whodunit', the investigation in conventional crime drama revolves around the identity of the perpetrator whose full or partial confession is often needed in order for the narrative to be resolved. In *Crime Scene Investigation*, the investigation revolves around the victim: how their body came to look like this, what trace evidence can be found on it and what the body can tell us about the crime. The investigation of the corpse establishes what really happened and therefore makes the confession of the perpetrator redundant, reversing the power hierarchy of conventional crime drama: no longer does the perpetrator have the power to speak the truth about the victim in his or her final confession, the victim's body now is the locus of truth.

(18) This is already apparent in the first scene in which the investigators are present. When they look at the body, the investigators search for the symptoms of crime: the round hole of the bullet wound, the bloody dent of blunt force trauma, the thin long hole of a knife wound. The investigator's gaze therefore follows the rationale of the medical gaze which, Michel Foucault highlights,

illuminates the body 'with its own light' (1973: xiii), rendering the body understandable because of its own knowledge. The gaze can therefore establish knowledge about the crime because it is knowledgeable itself. This, however, also suggests that the real power sits with the investigators who impose their knowledgeable gaze and delineate the victim as an object that is examined to give up its truth.

(19) The power hierarchy in *Crime Scene Investigation* is, however, more complex than that. The series suggests that the body has greater power than simply that of being a text that can be read. Rather, it gives the impression that the investigator enters into a conversation with the body. In 'Pilot' (1.1) this is implied in the framing: here, the scene begins with a medium shot of Gil Grissom as he approaches a corpse which lies in a dry bathtub. The shot is framed at the bottom by the textile of a sleeping back which the victim apparently put into the bathtub to sit on. The low angle framing from the bathtub suggests that this shot is from the point of view of the victim who meets the investigator's gaze by looking back. Furthermore, the editing of the scene follows the shot-reverse shot pattern which is conventionally used for dialogue in film and television, therefore giving the impression that the investigator is in dialogue with the corpse. In 'Cool Change' (1.2) the conversational aspect of the investigator's gaze is made explicit in a piece of dialogue between Grissom and the attending homicide detective:

Detective: Do you want to talk to her [the victim's girlfriend]?

Gil: Not yet. Right now, I want to talk to him [the victim].

Detective: How do you talk to a dead body?

Gil: I let him talk to me, actually.

Here, the priority of the victim is made particularly clear as Gil not only wants to 'talk' to the victim, but he wants to do so before he speaks to any witnesses or even the perpetrator (as the girlfriend turns out to be). This is in stark contrast to conventional crime drama in which first interviews with witnesses begin as soon as the detectives arrive at the crime scene, with only a brief glance reserved for the body. The victim's corpse in conventional crime drama thus appears marginal to the investigation and therefore also to the crime narrative. In contrast, the victims in *Crime Scene Investigation* appear to be given the agency to be able to look and talk back at the investigators, suggesting that they have more power than is implied in their being the object of the investigative gaze.

(20) The conversational aspect of the investigation which renders the victim a powerful partner to the investigator is, however, not continued into autopsy scenes where the corpse is again at the centre of the investigation. A typical autopsy scene begins after most of the post-mortem examination has already taken place. The camera here cuts between the investigators and the medical examiner, Dr. Al Robbins (Robert David Hall), as they talk. Images of the corpse are only included when the investigators' gaze is directed at the corpse. Importantly, the investigators and the medical examiner are only rarely framed with the corpse in close-ups and medium shots; only long shots show them standing next to the slab. This suggests that the

proximity of the investigator to the corpse, implied in the conversational style of earlier scenes, has been abandoned in favour of a more distanced, scientific gaze.

(21) In autopsy scenes, most of the close-ups of the victims are of their wounds; only a few shots show their faces which make the corpses' human individuality visible. The emphasis on the wounds therefore contributes to the distanced, scientific gaze which looks at the body as evidence, thereby rendering the corpse an object. This object is now also much cleaner than before: it has been washed of its excess gore and the mutilations are now explained in their relation to the crime. Thus, the body is here not only stripped of its power as a conversational partner, but it is also stripped of its ability to disrupt through its abject qualities. The body in the autopsy, therefore, seems safe and mastered.

(22) The body under investigation, then, appears stripped of its abject qualities. Discourses of law and science give the corpse meanings beyond that of final waste. Rather, these discourses work towards the re-establishment of the borders that the crime and the abject body have disturbed. *Crime Scene Investigation*, therefore, follows the generic conventions by providing a 'working through' which relies on specific discourses. What is different to conventional crime drama is that the discourse of law is complemented with medical discourses which – because they revolve around attempts to establish a diagnosis that can explain the suffering of the victim – give the victim a more central function than in conventional crime drama.

(23) By directing a scientific gaze onto the body, the investigators appear to be invested with power over the body. This notion, I have argued, is troubled by the framing of the victim as equal partner who enters into a conversation with the investigator. As I will show in the next section, the idea of mastery over the body is also problematised because the body continues to present a disturbing presence even when it is gazed at from a scientific point of view.

The Corpse's Continued Abject Presence

(24) Although *Crime Scene Investigation* suggests a mastery of the abject corpse through science, it continues to present moments that imply the opposite. In 'Pilot' (1.1), new lab member Holly Gribbs (Chandra West) leaves the autopsy room in disgust only to be confronted with corpses that suddenly appear alive again and, in 'Down the Drain' (5.2), Greg Sanders (Eric Szmanda) struggles to remain scientific, rational and distanced in the face of his first autopsy. A more insightful scene is given in 'Precious Metal' (3.18) in which Dr. Robbins explains to a trainee the effects of closed casketing on corpses while getting a corpse out of a closed barrel. The corpse has 'souponified', i.e. has become a waxy substance which has little resemblance to a human being. As Dr. Robbins continues his lecture, the camera lingers on the dripping of the decomposition fluids and the alien, transformed flesh, emphasised by dripping and squelching sounds, while also returning to the trainee who watches aghast before eventually leaving the room. Although the medical discourses and the

representation of the abject body here work humorously against each other, the scene underlines how easy it is for the body to break through its sanitisation. It remains abject for those who do not possess the medical gaze and therefore continues to pose a threat of instability. This suggests that the medical mastery of the investigators is imposed on the abject corpse, suggesting that the more natural reaction to the body is that of disgust. This is also implied in the *CSI*-shot.

(25) The *CSI*-shot is a sequence of cleverly edited shots that give the impression that the camera follows either a bullet, a knife or another object or substance into the body where the damage of the body is made visible. Karen Lury describes it as an 'extensive use of prosthetics, models and CGI in sequences most often associated with the autopsy of the victim(s), where 'snap-zoom' (accelerated zoom) sequences apparently recreate the entry of bullets, knives or even blood cells into the body' (2005: 45). The series markets the sequence as its own innovation (implied in the name of '*CSI*-shot') and other programmes, including *House* (Fox 2004-Present) and *Prison Break* (Fox 2005-Present), speak about similar sequences as if they have copied them from the franchise. In fact, the move into the body had become established in the 1990s in medical documentaries and science displays (Lury 2005: 48), and practically the same sequence had been used in the anti-war film *Three Kings* (David O. Russell 1999).

(26) In *Crime Scene Investigation*, the *CSI*-shot usually follows the medical examiner's explanations and starts with a quick dissolve into white (a 'flashcut') and then a close-up of the body where the wound sits. It then continues with a fast zoom onto the live body, while a seamless cut to a prosthetic or CGI image and the continuation of the zoom at the same speed give the impression that the camera now moves into the body where it comes to rest at the place where the fatal wound sits: the ruptured artery, the exploded heart, etc. These images depict the body again in its disgusting and terrifying fleshy materiality which is further emphasised by the sounds that accompany the sequence. Apart from sounds that are apparently connected to the form of the wound (a gun being fired for bullet wounds, a slicing sound for knife wounds, etc.), there are thud, squelch, slurp and rupturing sounds which highlight the fleshiness of the body and add to its abject qualities. As the zoom is very fast and the sequence consequently over in a few seconds, the viewer is not given the opportunity to look away. In other words, although the *CSI*-shot presents bodies that, like the female victims in *Copycat* and *Silence of the Lambs*, Jermyn argues (2004), connote *to-be-looked-away-from-ness*, the possibility of averting one's eyes is actually denied. Therefore, although the *CSI*-shot functions as a visualisation of the medical explanation by Dr. Robbins, the sequence actually presents more. Lury (2005: 32) highlights in respect to similar shots in *The Human Body* (BBC1 1998) that they enable a kinetic experience for the viewer, and this is certainly true for the *CSI*-shot too: they give a sense that we are taken on a rollercoaster ride into the body. However, because these shots depict the body as disgusting and do not allow us to look away, they provide a strong moment of embodied viewing experience which is

connected to their double function as visualisation of medical evidence and as moment of horror.

(28) Although the body in the *CSI*-shot seems to give up its medical truth (Weissmann and Boyle 2007) and appears to be embedded in the scientific discourse of the autopsy scene, the *CSI*-shot constitutes a disruption of the scientific distance because the viewer is taken inside the body, close to its fleshy materiality. Lury argues that the intimacy and subjectivity of the *CSI*-shot is opposed to the series' scientific discourse and suggests that the shot sequence is 'structurally pornographic' (2005: 54-56): the camera penetrates the body in order to monitor it for the truth that it holds, while images of the ruptured arteries gushing out blood suggest a moment of ejaculation, the 'money shot' that evinces that what happens on screen is real (Williams 1999). The viewer's pleasures involved in the *CSI*-shot are, however, not those of sexual pleasure – they are again closer to horror.

(29) As Pinedo (1997) suggests, some of filmic body horror similarly borders on the pornographic. Following Richard Dyer's discussion of gay porn (1985), she argues that porn and 'gore' share the same emphasis on creating bodily reactions in the viewer:

It is the very carnality that relegates hard core and gore to the status of disreputable genres. ... both are disreputable genres because they engage the viewer's body..., elicit physical responses such as fear and disgust, and arousal in indeterminate combinations, and thereby privilege the degraded half of the mind-body split. (Pinedo 1997: 61)

Pinedo calls these bodily pleasures elicited by gore 'carnography' as they centre on the display of the flesh of the body. The *CSI*-shot shares this effect with gore; however, because it is embedded in a scene which frames it as scientific evidence, it is not invested with the same sense of disreputability. Rather, the use of scientific jargon and explanations suggests a well-educated target audience which, within recent developments in television drama, highlights its ambition to be part of the 'quality dramas' of American television which both Thompson (1996) and Feuer (1984) point out rely as much on their ABC1 target audience as on particular production values to constitute 'quality'. As a consequence, the carnographic pleasures elicited here are invested with a sense of legitimacy: the *CSI*-shot, after all, teaches us about the damage done to the body.

(30) The implication of the *CSI*-shot, then, is that we learn through our emotional and physical response. The victim's body can function as a scientific model because it is stripped of its human characteristics and individuality in the autopsy scene and is therefore presented as the scientific object to be studied from the distance. At the same time, however, the body continues to disrupt through the *CSI*-shot, creating a subjectivity and intimacy to the object of study that is detrimental to a distanced, rational engagement with the object. Rather, the closeness enables the victim's corpse to move our own bodies and by doing so teach us about the physical reality of the scientific explanation. This entails a new reading of the whodunit that would

suggest it is no longer experienced only as rational and cerebral: it is now also affective. Importantly, this affectivity is triggered by the text itself by its emphasis on the abject body. Unlike the affective reactions to filmic representations that Laura U. Marks (2000) and Vivian Sobchack (2004) describe, it does not rely on memory and is therefore not dependent on the viewer's individual experience. Rather, the affective quality of *Crime Scene Investigation* is the result of the interest in forensic science and the depiction of the body as abject.

Conclusions

(31) I have focused my analysis of *Crime Scene Investigation* on scenes which present the body and have pointed to some remarkable shifts in the crime genre. No longer is the equilibrium disrupted by violence (Neale 1980: 20), it is disrupted by the effects of violence: the mutilated corpse and the horror of crime. The corpse in *Crime Scene Investigation* is presented as abject and therefore disruptive to the person discovering it, including the viewer, suggesting a much more emotional involvement of the viewer than in conventional crime drama.

(32) As a result of the disruption through the body rather than violence, the investigation does not centre so much on the question of who committed this violence (Sumser 1996), but on how this body came to be abject. While conventional crime drama uses discourses of law to reach a solution (Neale 1980), *Crime Scene Investigation* also uses scientific discourses, in particular medical discourses, which revolve much more on the injured body than those of the law could. Consequently, the victim is much more central the investigation narrative than in conventional crime drama. Moreover, the victim's corpse is in the early scenes invested with the power to speak of the crime and later in the autopsy scenes with the power to disrupt the distanced, scientific investigation, therefore having a more powerful role in the investigation narrative than that of object of the investigative gaze.

(33) Disruption, in form of the CSI-shot, brings the body and its trauma closer to the viewer and elicits pleasures which resemble the carnographic pleasures of body horror and entail a physical rather than cerebral response of the spectator. This implies that the damage done to the body can be felt by the spectator on their own bodies, suggesting that the effects of crime – victimisation – can be engaged with physically.

(34) What is interesting about this last point is that this embodied experience with the victims has been theorised in relation to the female investigator. Heather Nunn and Anita Biressi describe a moment when Sam Ryan (Amanda Burton) is moved to tears in an episode of *Silent Witness*:

The camera cuts between this imagery and close-ups of Ryan's face as she watches the film, first stunned and then moved to tears. Here, the role of witness is partly that of bodily registering of another's pain. The physicality of this

response is signalled, albeit inadequately, in the phrase "reflex of tears", which John Langer uses to describe the way in which a bystander to some terrible event "becomes the bearer of the emotional payload of a story". (Nunn and Biressi 2003: 197-198)

The physical response in *Silent Witness* is that of tears – a feminine reaction by a woman who is allowed and meant to feel for others. It suggests that this form of witnessing, the emotional registering of someone else's pain, is essentially connected to femininity. Although in *Crime Scene Investigation*, this witnessing is not connected to tears but to a more general movement of the body, it yet functions to emphasise the suffering of the victim and is therefore connected to a similar feeling for others. In other words: it is, like the tears in *Silent Witness*, an embodied empathy. While in *Silent Witness*, this empathy was felt by the investigator, in *Crime Scene Investigation* it is performed by the spectators, suggesting that the series creates a viewing position that is at least at times – in moments when the body is discovered or mutilated, in the *CSI*-shot – feminine. It is important to note, however, that it is not the only viewing position the series offers: there is also the distanced scientific gaze in the autopsy scenes which, as a medical gaze, has traditionally been gendered masculine (Jacobus, Fox Keller and Shuttleworth 1990). Rather than one gaze dominating the other, I would argue that they inform each other, one gaze providing scientific knowledge which is only complete when it is complemented by the embodied knowledge of the other: the medical gaze tells us what happened to the victim while the *CSI*-shot gives an indication of how painful it was.

(35) *Crime Scene Investigation*, therefore, presents another challenge to the genre in its move away from purely masculine perspectives (Munt 1994) to an approach to crime that can at least sometimes include a feminine perspective. As Hallam (2005) and Jermyn (2003) both highlight, this perspective seems essentially connected to forensic detail. By depicting the body as abject even after the investigation apparently sanitises it, *Crime Scene Investigation* continues this tradition that allows for the more feminine perspective of embodied empathy.

Note 1: The argument is also made by Julia Hallam (2005, p.86) who further highlights how in *Prime Suspect* this emphasis on forensic detail is connected to the investigation through women.

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