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Abstract

Policing is widely recognised as one of the most stressful occupations. Numerous studies have explored the ways in which stress impacts on the personal and professional lives of officers. Using this literature as context, the article explores the way in which representations of policing in film and TV have changed to reflect this issue, to the point where the predominant mode of representation is the dysfunctional officer broken by the job. Using bricolage as a research approach, three twenty-first century examples are examined; *Wallander* from Sweden, *The Wire* from the US and *Red Riding* from the UK, raising questions about the dystopian pleasures of these media texts with a suggestion of further work to explore the relationship between representations and the reality of the stresses of policing.

Key words: *Policing; Stress; Film and TV; Representation*

Introduction

The Criminal Justice System is a part of society that is both familiar and hidden. It is familiar in that a large part of daily news and television drama is devoted to it (Carrabine, 2008; Jewkes, 2011). It is hidden in the sense that, for the majority of the population, they have little, if any, direct contact with the Criminal Justice System with the result that the media may be a major force in shaping their views on crime and policing (Carrabine, 2008). As Reiner (2000) notes, the debate about the relationship between the media, policing, and crime has been a key feature of wider societal concerns about crime since the establishment of the modern police force. He outlines recurring themes in post-war debates in this field. For Conservatives, there has been an ongoing concern that the media is criminogenic as it serves to undermine traditional institutions, including the police. From the viewpoint of radical criminology, the impact of the media is two-fold. It exaggerates legitimate concerns about crime and emphasises the bureaucratic and other restrictions under which the police operate (Reiner, 2000). This is seen as undermining due process and legitimatising what can be termed a 'maverick' approach to policing. An early example of this can be seen in Clint Eastwood's *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971) movies where Harry Callaghan acts as a one-man law enforcement system outside of the formal legal process, which is portrayed as corrupt, inefficient, and too concerned with offenders' rights rather than protecting victims. From a police perspective, Reiner (2000) argues that film and TV drama creates a simplistic narrative of crime solving that is almost completely divorced from the reality of modern police work, a finding consistent with more recent work by Cummins et al. (2014).

Despite the ongoing portrayal of police work as dynamic and exciting, the majority of it is not (Cummins et al., 2014). To take one example, murder investigations involve a great deal of checking information, gathering statements and looking at tapes from CCTV, rather than the psychological profiling and car chases of the popular imagination. The end of the hunt for Peter Sutcliffe, The Yorkshire Ripper provides a good illustration. He was arrested following an essentially routine stop by police officers as his car had a faulty brake light (Burn, 1990).

In popular culture, the dominant portrayal, still, of police and policing is one of heightened drama with the investigation of serious crimes, particularly sexual crimes,

rampant serial killers, and murderous assaults by strangers as the staple diet of TV drama. This image has been developed to include the new technologies and techniques available. The high-tech crime solvers of *CSI* (Zuiker, 2000 – Present) are a modern version of the Holmesian detective genius. One interesting result of this is that such programmes along with *Prime Suspect* (La Plante, 1991-2006), *Waking the Dead* (Machin, 2000-2011), and *Silent Witness* (McCrery, 1996-present) - all of which feature gruesome crime scenes and post mortems or both - create a pornography of death. This allows for the showing of images of brutally assaulted and defiled women or children to become acceptable on mainstream TV largely without comment (Foltyn, 2008). The media, it can be argued, has a key role to play in the construction of knowledge of crime and policing. Policing has been ranked amongst the five most stressful occupations (Violanti, 1996) and changes in the representations of policing include characters and storylines which document the impact of investigating violent crimes. This has, in fact, become a key theme of the modern police procedural drama. Representations of the police officer on a continuum ranging from 'married to the job' to 'broken by the job' has a history dating back to the emergence of the private investigator in the Hollywood film noir era of the 1940s (Clarke, 2005). This article will explore this issue, tracing the development of the police procedural drama on TV and changing representations of policing. It is worth, though, first exploring the issues of occupational culture and policing and stress which feed into such representations

Policing and Occupational Culture

Sackmann (1991) defines culture as the collective construction of social reality. A great deal of the analysis of policing focuses on 'cop culture'. There are a number of difficulties with using 'cop culture' instrumentally. As Chan (1996) argues, occupational culture is not monolithic and is poorly defined. In fact, as Manning (1993) states, there are clear differences between 'street cop culture' and 'management culture'. The term 'cop culture' can, in fact, be interpreted as a label for a form of hegemonic masculinity (Hearn, 2004) found in police settings. The major themes here would be: an emphasis on action as a solution to problems; a strong sense of group identity and hyper-masculinity manifesting itself in a series of misogynistic and racist attitudes. In this schema, the police are hard-bitten, cynical and need to be aggressive to deal with the dangers that they face on a day to day basis. Reiner (2000) links the development of these cultural attitudes to the demands of police work itself rather than arising out of the wider society. Goldsmith (1990) suggests that these cultural attitudes are part of a

functional response to the demands of the post. Waddington's (1999) work on police sub-culture is important here. Waddington (1999) concurs with the themes outlined by Reiner (2000) emphasising the us/them division and in-group isolation inherent in the sub-culture. Waddington (1999) argues, however, that police sub-culture is more complex than just a set of shared values; it can be seen as a set of attitudinal variables seeking to explain police behaviour and as a construct that pulls together a broad spectrum of thought or practice. It is, Waddington (1999) argues, a bridging concept between what police officers may say and do in the canteen (canteen culture) and how they may act in public. Holdaway (1983) has suggested that there is often exaggeration at work in this context and that this gap may not be as large as is thought.

Two elements of Waddington's (1999) exploration of police sub-culture are particularly pertinent to the changing representations of policing over the decades and link directly to notions of police work as a stressful occupation. One is the conceptualisation of policing as 'dirty work' (Hughes, 1962). 'The police act in ways that would otherwise be exceptional, exceptionable or illegal' (Waddington, 1999: 299), violating privacy, often using force, and this is key in relation to boundaries and the ways in which boundaries can be blurred. Glorifying violence and acting within the rules of hegemonic masculinity (Hearn, 2004) creates an image of the heroic figure. Linked to this is the occupational self-image of crime-fighter. A review of evidence by Morris and Heal (1981) concluded that the police have little impact on crime rates and spend little time on crime-related tasks. Waddington (1999:300) observes: 'The very fact that police devote so much time and effort to affirming what their daily experience denies should alert us to its ideological importance'. It is the police officer as crime fighter that predominates in representations of policing and, as Manning (1977) has argued, this provides legitimacy for their action in the eyes of the external audience. Waddington (1999) concludes his appreciation of cop culture by identifying the fragility of police culture and the marginal position of the police in wider society. These are issues which have come to the fore in more recent representations of policing, often reflecting the stresses of the job.

As Manning (1993) suggests any discussion of police culture needs to explore the attitudes that officers have about their own roles but also the wider society that they live in and police. This is vital because these attitudes underpin officers' conduct. One

feature of this set of attitudes that has been highlighted is the police officers' exaggerated sense of mission. As Skolnick (1966) comments, the fact that police officers are charged with the defence of societal values (obviously, a contested concept) then it is inevitable that they see themselves as the living embodiment of these values. The knock-on effect of this is that those they arrest or come into contact with on a daily basis are seen as being 'other' or cut –off from mainstream society. In the Channel Four series *Coppers* (Phillipson, 2010 - present), a fly on the wall documentary series about the daily working lives of officers in the Nottingham force, officers used the term 'snafu' to refer to the residents of a local estate – when asked to explain the term one officer replied ' subnormal and fucking useless'. It would be generous in the extreme to see such comments as workplace banter or another example of the famously cynical police humour. They indicate that a tie has been severed between the police and the communities that they, after all, are employed to protect.

Policing and Stress

The policing environment is inherently stressful. Police officers come face-to-face with a wide range of society's most intractable problems on a daily basis (Kelly, 2005). Within this environment, police officers are expected to be able to react, quickly, appropriately and proportionally to events such as domestic violence, public disorder or serious accidents. This is part of the attraction of the role but it also brings with it the dangers that these factors will have a seriously negative impact on the mental health of individual officers. Kroes et al.'s (1974) study identified policing as the second most stressful occupation after being an air-traffic controller. The police work in an environment which requires them to be hyper- vigilant. There are long periods of mundane work whilst on duty – for example one of the largest complaints from police officers is the sheer volume of paperwork and bureaucracy that any intervention generates. This complaint is also the cry of the frustrated public servant across a range of settings ,including health and social care (Violanti, 1996). The dissonance is perhaps even greater when contrasted with the dominant media image of the police as assertive, dynamic thief-takers.

The factors outlined above suggest that police officers are likely to face high, possibly extreme levels of workplace stress. A number of aspects of the job, including the essentially macho culture of police departments, makes it difficult if not impossible for officers to raise these issues. Despite the wider recruitment of women and members of minority communities, the implementation of a series of diversity initiatives, police culture is very similar to that outlined in the classic ethnographic studies of the 1970s (Reiner, 2000). Attitudes to workplace stress are part of this phenomenon. Acknowledging any personal problem is still seen as a sign of weakness – it is part of the job. In Violanti's (2010) study, police officers identified the major causes of stress as the bureaucratic side of the job. It is interesting that those aspects of the job, such as the threat of having to deal with physical violence, which would to the outsider seem the most stressful, were largely downplayed. There is an increasing body of research that explores the long-term physical and emotional impacts of stress on police officers. As Violanti et al. (1998) argue, the fact that police officers, at the time of recruitment are fit, strong and healthy but subsequently retire early on health grounds and have lower life expectancy than the wider population, demonstrates the long-term impact of workplace stress.

A series of studies (Malasch and Jackson, 1979; Malasch, 1982; Violanti 1996; Violanti et al., 1998; Hackett and Violanti, 2003; Violanti, 2010) emphasise that being a police officer can put your mental and physical health at some risk. As Kelly (2005) notes, very little, if any, attention is paid to mental health issues in police training. Cummins and Jones (2010) argue that any police training in mental health awareness has to include a forum where officers can explore their own mental well-being. Part of the reason for this being the high level of need they identified but also the fact that a greater understanding of their own mental health is bound to improve working relationships with service- users. The emotional damage that policing can cause is related to the operational environment. As Weisinger (1985) states, officers on duty need to suppress emotions rather than express emotions. This is well illustrated in *Life on Mars* (Jordan, 2006 - 2008), a nostalgic revisiting of 70s' cop culture, discussed later when, following an officer being caught in an explosion, the solution to the post-traumatic stress he is obviously facing is to go to the pub. There is a well-established police culture of socialising with work colleagues – usually involving alcohol. This has inherent dangers, one of which, is that this serves to isolate and alienate officers from their friends and families. In addition, police culture encourages the belief that officers are somehow immune to these

pressures (Reiner, 2000). As noted above, the effects of stress are essentially corrosive. The impact is the result of years of a particular work routine and culture. As Kirschmann (2000) notes, police officers do not seek help because of a mixture of pride and fear. The nature of the work means that officers can become alienated from the wider community, including their own families. The result is that they come to rely on the 'police family' which struggles to acknowledge that any difficulties exist in the first place. This was another key theme of the recent study conducted with retired officers (Cummins et al., 2014).

One aspect of the increased interest in the problems of workplace stress in the past two decades has been the concepts of 'vicarious trauma' and 'burnout'. The individual symptoms of work place stress can include: depression, anxiety, poor sleep, headaches, decrease in sexual interest, withdrawal, irritability, poor communication, drug and alcohol abuse, low self-esteem and difficulty in decision making. Vicarious trauma is a way of exploring the impact of working with traumatized individuals. Initial work by McCann and Pearlmann (1990) was carried out with counsellors supporting the victims of sexual violence. Vicarious trauma is seen as a cumulative process where the worker, though not subject to the same traumatic events, begins to exhibit symptoms that are similar to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Adams and Riggs (2008) outline a number of possible symptoms including: anxiety/depression, somatic symptoms, emotional numbing and the blurring of personal and professional boundaries. The idea of vicarious trauma was subsequently applied to other professions, for example medical and disaster relief workers. The concept has also been used to explore the long-term effects of police work. The idea of vicarious trauma explicitly acknowledges that there is a possible emotional and psychological cost to supporting those who have undergone extreme sexual and physical trauma. The original study of vicarious trauma took place in an environment where one would assume that staff were much more aware of emotional issues. Even in this environment, it was difficult to support staff. The policing occupational culture often mitigates against an open acknowledgement of these stresses (Sackmann, 1991).

Methods

The authors' aim was to examine the way in which representations of policing have changed over a fifty year period with the officer broken by the job gradually becoming the predominant image in the early 21st Century, contextualized by an increasing body of academic work on police culture and stress.

A number of relevant texts were analysed using the approach of bricolage as a research method. This included reviewing previous literature plus the original analysis of 21st Century texts. Wibberley (2012:6) states that 'bricolage brings together in some form, different sources of data' and that 'the consideration of the process by which bricolage is built – however emergent – is an important aspect of the overall work'. Kincheloe (2005) argues that bricolage is grounded in cultural hermeneutics and this locates a research study within a cultural, social, political and his social framework. He states: 'Focusing on webs of relationships instead of simply things-in-themselves, the bricoleur constructs the object of study in a more complex framework' (Kincheloe, 2005:323). Thus, the method, argues Kincheloe (2005), draws the researcher to go beyond the boundaries of particular disciplines in addressing the complexity of the real world, a mingling of material reality and human perception. This active construction of a method which interacts with the object of inquiry may, for example, include the focus on central texts (i.e. particular film texts) but may also include what McKee (2003) refers to as intertexts about the texts (e.g. the author's own thoughts on their work) plus newspaper reports of the events used in the text and written versions of the text itself or the events described therein. Works by Levi-Strauss (1972) and Freeman (2007) talk of making sense of knowing, using a number of sources and this is similar to McKee's (2003) idea of using intertexts about texts as a part of their analysis. Mol (2002) sees a blurring of disciplinary boundaries as an essential part of the bricolage approach.

The 'faction' (fiction of the facts) at work in David Peace's *Red Riding Trilogy*, (Jarrold et al., 2009), based on a number of investigations by the West Yorkshire Police Force in the late '70s and early '80s, for example, can itself be seen as a form of bricolage in its drawing on real events and characters, woven together through fictional dialogue and mirroring the past in the present. Lincoln (2001:693) sees bricolage as 'the assembly of mythic elements, motifs, allusions, characterizations and other stock materials to form

stories'. In this sense the, Peace's work also represents the approach of the bricoleur. Kincheloe's (2005) notion of the object of study as culturally inscribed and historically situated is reflected in Peace's *Red Riding Trilogy* (Jarrold et al., 2009) for example. This approach is supported by Levi Strauss' (1972) ideas on the complexity and unpredictability of the cultural domain and Lincoln's (2001) notion of the bricoleur as anthropologist.

The work also takes an approach rooted in cultural criminology (Ferrell et al., 2008), or rather a development of Jeff Ferrell's original idea, which was to understand the public's mediated fascination with crime and violence as a form of spectacle or carnival (Jewkes, 2011) a celebration of criminal activity. However, Bolton (2005) drawing on Dyer's (1973) work, in examining Hollywood film noir has argued that the pleasures gained from watching the flawed characters and the inevitable tragedy of film noir is a dystopian spectacle, and the shift in representations of policing over the past fifty years can be read within this context.

The use, then, of bricolage to analyse texts, what Bentley (2005) has conceptualized as a post-structuralist approach, in his study of 1990s' British fiction, was seen by the authors as highly relevant and appropriate. A textual analysis approach using a search for specific language, phrases and signs and signifiers was devised, based on a framework suggested by Fairclough (1995), McKee (2003) and van Dijk (1993), and was applied to three contemporary texts (from Sweden, the US and the UK), all examples of dystopian spectacle (Bolton, 2005).

Cops on TV

Allen et al, (1997) argue that an interest in policing on UK TV was established by the popularity of *Dixon of Dock Green* (Willis, 1955-1976), reflecting a post-war social consensus model of policing. Jack Warner went on to play archetypal British Bobby, George Dixon, for 21 years. The character was originally seen as Constable 693 of Paddington Green in the Ealing film *The Blue Lamp* (Dearden, 1950). The homely and

reassuring values that Dixon represented were summarized in his catchphrase 'Evenin' All' and the setting, an idealized version of the East End of London, reflected key notions of white working class identity (Wilmott and Young, 1957). Clarke (2005:44) describes Dixon as a 'straight-backed, straight-laced, straight-thinking man with all the values of a boy scout'. It's community-based setting, holistic nature of the work, caring approach and it's early evening scheduling made it family viewing (Leishmann and Mason, 2003) and provided a sharp contrast to previous US produced police procedurals (Leishmann and Mason, 2003). Reiner (2003) sees Dixon as the starting point of the British police drama.

However, rising crime rates and public concern about crime, combined with the success of the 1960s' British new wave films (Zarhy-Levo, 2010) portraying the gritty reality of Northern working class Britain, often dwelling in the darker aspects of society, saw the emergence of a rival to Dixon, *Z Cars* (Kennedy-Martin and Prior, 1962-1978). It was set in the fictional Newtown, based on Kirby in Liverpool, mainly on an estate comprising people migrating from inner-city slum clearance. It reflected a mixed community, yet a lack of community, something that would emerge as a problem as the 1960s progressed (Sandbrook, 2006). The live shooting and hand-held camera work of the early series borrowed from the British new wave (Zarhy-Levo, 2010) and the focus on action and the patrol cars, produced a new kind of British police procedural. Interestingly, it introduced themes which were to become common in such procedurals in the following decades. Officers overworked and under-resourced, rising crime, particularly violent crime, and a hint of bureaucracy taking over. The officers who drove the *Z Cars* were also 'real' and flawed (Leishmann and Mason, 2003). As Reiner (2003:22-3) states: 'The iconoclasm of *Z Cars* lay in its warts and all portrayal of the police as adults with personal weaknesses and defects, rather than the Dixonesque superannuated boy scout image'. The drinking, womanizing, gambling and domestic violence engaged in by the officers of Newtown are the beginnings of representation of the stresses of the job, a theme which would be taken up by later UK series.

Newburn (1999) has noted that policing in the UK has produced periods of malpractice and misconduct throughout its history. The early 1970s is one such period. *The Sweeney* (Kennedy-Martin, 1975-78) which appears in this period is often seen as 'the

ultimate celebration of the police breaking the rules in order to obtain a conviction' (Leishmann and Mason, 2003:69) and introduces the idea of the blurred lines dividing police and thieves (King and Cummins, 2015). *The Sweeney* (Kennedy-Martin, 1975-78) owes a huge debt to Clint Eastwood's *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971), the original maverick cop in a film which transports Eastwood's firmly established cowboy persona to lawless 1970s' San Francisco. Harry's blatant disregard for rules and process in order to secure justice combined with the representation of senior officers as bureaucratic liberals obsessed with red tape, establishes themes taken up in *The Sweeney* (Kennedy-Martin, 1975-78).

Reiner (2003:24) sees *The Sweeney* (Kennedy-Martin, 1975-78) as the Dixon image stood on its head. 1960s' gang violence, violent crime rates, Robert Mark's crusade against police corruption and the rise of law and order as a key political issues provide context for *The Sweeney* (Kennedy-Martin, 1975-78). *The Sweeney* (Kennedy-Martin, 1975-78) is characterized by rule breaking, frustration with bureaucracy and thief-taking by any means necessary. It is hegemonic (Hearn, 2004) cop culture (Chan, 1996) writ large, with drinking and womanizing on the agenda. However, the main characters, Jack Regan (played by John Thaw) and George Carter (Dennis Waterman) also represent an early glimpse of 'broken by the job'. Like *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971), Carter is a widower while Regan's marriage has broken down due to the stresses of the job. Despite their gung-ho approach and their now infamous one liners ('we're the Sweeney son and we haven't had any dinner') their over-drinking and, often, unsuccessful or unsatisfactory attempts at womanizing and establishing relationships often create an atmosphere of pathos and vulnerability around the characters.

In retrospect, *The Sweeney* (Kennedy-Martin, 1975-78) seems to have provided a reasonably accurate portrayal of the blurring between the lives of police and villains. In the documentary *The Lost World of the 70s* (Norman-Butler, 2012), a section on Sir Robert Mark's attempts to stamp out corruption in the Metropolitan police force, features footage and interviews with members of the Flying Squad, explaining how they need to visit Soho, gambling dens and 'villians' pubs' to do their job properly, and how Mark seems to be 'more concerned with catching bent detectives than criminals'. Their visual appearance is similar to that of Regan and Carter. The programme outlined the links

between senior police officers, the porn industry, and protection rackets, and documents the arrest and imprisonment of key figures such as Flying Squad Chief Ken Drury and Commander Wally Virgo, as well as the fact that 600 senior officers left prematurely during the period of Mark's investigations.

In *Life on Mars* (shown on the BBC in the UK in 2006 and 2007), John Simm plays a modern detective who is in a coma and finds himself back in the 1970s' Manchester of his youth. There is a comic tension between the Simm character and DCI Gene Hunt played by Philip Glennister. Hunt is essentially a combination of Regan and Carter from *The Sweeney* (Kennedy-Martin, 1975-78). The programme was a huge success, tapping into the insatiable appetite for nostalgia in popular culture providing what Garland and Bilby (2001:115) have debated as "a paeon to 1970s policing". There are several audiences here – including those who lived through that time and admire the period detail. Gene Hunt rapidly became a cult hero, particularly for those on the political right opposed to politics, correctness and bureaucracy. This was part of a much wider discourse that suggested that despite early thirty years of neo-liberal government and a doubling of the prison population between 1992 and 2010, the Criminal Justice System had gone soft.

The transition from the 1970s to 80s saw the launch of the *Bill* (McQueen, 1984-2010), a return to Dixon-like community policy mixed with *Z Cars* estate based social problems, plus a range of 'equal opportunities' (Brunsdon, 1998) procedurals (see Heidersohn and Brown [2008] for an outline and analysis of female police dramas). The *Bill* (McQueen, 1984-2010) is interesting in that as it progressed it became more soap-like, with the private lives of its characters, often broken-by the job (Jim Carver as prime example) getting as much air time as the actual procedural plot.

It is the arrival of *Between the Lines* (Wilshire, 1992-94) in the 1990s which takes the blurring of the boundaries between policing and criminality, and the impact that has on the lives of those involved, a step further. Characterised by Brunsdon (1998:235) as 'grubby realism', it foregrounds police corruption, bureaucratic pen-pushers as a barrier to policing, sleeping with prostitutes as a fringe benefit and romantic sexual

complications around male and female officers' lives. The hegemonic masculinity (Hearn, 2004) of canteen culture (Waddington, 1999) is also present. Brunson (1998:239-40) states: 'Between the lines is strongly invested in the seedy glamour of a certain image of the heavy drinking, promiscuous plain-clothes man, with considerable commitment to the tendency of the pleasures of a defiantly laddish culture'. The tensions between personal and professional ethics (Leishmann and Mason, 2003) though, again result in the emergence of the broken by the job theme. Leishmann and Mason (2003) have noted that comparisons have been made with the US cop show *Homicide: Life on the Streets* (Altassario, 1983-1999) and it is at this point that the US police procedural becomes extremely popular in the UK. *Homicide* (Altassario, 1983-1999) is now seen as a precursor to *The Wire* (Simon, 2002-2004), running for five series and presenting a complex, nuanced portrait of police officers in a post-industrial US city. Politics and bureaucracy hampering crime-fighting remaining a central theme and, as discussed later, the series takes representation of the stressed-out, dysfunctional officer to another level.

Burn out and anti-heroism exists in late 20th Century drama but it accelerates as the 90s becomes the noughties. Leishmann and Mason (2003) identify Pat Chappel in *The Vice* (Simner and Pursey, 1999-2003) as 'a single man with a failed marriage and teetering on the verge of burn-out' (Leishmann and Mason, 2003:81). Drinking, messy surroundings and falling asleep fully dressed are attributes he shares with the *The Sweeney's* Regan and Carter. Criminal Psychologist, Fitz, in *Cracker* (McGovern, 1993-1995) also fits the profile of anti-hero with the addition of a gambling addiction.

As previously noted, US series such as *The Wire* (Simon, 2002-2004) take this anti-heroism and representation of the stresses of policing to another level. However, another key factor in the acceleration of this type of representation is the rise of popularity of Nordic Noir (and Euro Noir [Foreshaw, 2015]) in the UK in the 21st Century. Robert Murphy's 2010 documentary *Nordic Noir: The Story of Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (Murphy, 2010) charts the rise of the popularity of Scandinavian crime fiction and its TV and film spin-offs. In the documentary it is argued that there are a number of factors which made the Nordic countries a suitable setting for crime stories which draw on the 'Noir' tradition; the grey gloomy weather, the darkness and an atmosphere where

'bad things happen', the centrality of the dark secrets hidden within the apparent liberal Nordic model of politics, the unsolved murder of Swedish PM Olaf Palme in 1986 and natural anxieties caused by 'new' social issues such as immigration, asylum and an economic crisis. The works of Steig Larsson, Karin Fossum, Jo Nesbo and Henning Mankell all contain examples of central characters who are, typically, detectives worn down by the cares and stresses of the job and are far from heroic. Nesbo's Martin Beck is seen as the prototype for the classic Nordic detective (Murphy, 2010); human, flawed, having difficult relationships both at home and at work, a gloomy, dyspeptic character.

Mankell's *Wallander* (Mankell, 2005-2013), perhaps the most popular Nordic detective in the UK, follows a similar pattern, the ultimate stressed out, broken-by-the-job middle aged detective, particularly in the Swedish TV series version (there are three visual incarnations of *Wallander* (Mankell, 2005-2013). Here he is played by Krister Henriksson as anguished, uncertain, verging on the alcoholic, divorced and with a difficult relationship with his daughter, Linda, who is also a police officer. He is world weary, absorbed by the job and while the bureaucratic pen-pushers are still present it is the horrors that he has witnessed that weigh him down. In this sense the officers in David Peace's Red Riding quartet later filmed as the Red Riding Trilogy (Jarrold et al., 2009) have more in common with Nordic Noir than their earlier UK counterparts. Peace's work has been termed Yorkshire Noir (King and Cummins, 2013) and this will be discussed in the next section in more detail, along with an example of Nordic Noir and a US drama, all of which draw together themes which have emerged popular from a review of the relationship between policing, stress and the way in which this has increasingly become central to representation of policing.

Wallander

The *Wallander* novels have been filmed for TV both in English and Swedish with Kenneth Branagh and Krister Henriksson in the title role. Swedish film versions have also been made with Rolf Lässgard as Wallander. The longest running of these features Henriksson as Inspector Kurt Wallander, a policeman whose lot is certainly not a happy one (Clarke, 2005), a portrayal of a world weary man, worn-down-by-the-job, subject to

the stresses of both his external and internal environment. The insecurity and xenophobia of modern day Sweden and the dark and gloomy small town setting of Ystad, like Morse's Oxford, home to an unfeasible number of murders, provide the setting. Wallander is divorced (a common theme of the flawed, stressed-out police officer), semi-alcoholic lives alone in a house by the sea. In many episodes he is seen walking alone (or accompanied by his dog, Jussi) on the seashore. He has an often difficult relationship with his daughter. In an episode from 2005, *Innan Fosten* (Mankell, 2005) he tries to persuade her not to follow his route through the force, outlining the personal impact of policing: 'good cops can't quit' he tells her 'they allow themselves to be ground down without doing a thing to stop it. The job absorbs you. You don't even notice you are losing your wife and child'. He also makes numerous attempts at new relationships whilst immersed in the investigation of violent crime. *Missing* (Mankell, 2013), an episode from the final series provides a good illustration of the representation of the stresses of modern policing. In this episode the plot revolves around a missing child. The missing or murdered child is a common theme in police procedurals, adding an extra dimension to the stresses of the job. The plot often links a number of cases, often the trauma of previous cases coming back to haunt the current investigator. This is true of *1974* (Jarrold, 2009), the first of the *Red Riding* (Jarrold et al., 2009) films, which starts with a news conference about a missing child, setting off a trail of investigations which links to similar cases where the children were never found and eventually a local paedophile ring (King and Cummins, 2014). The plot in *Missing* (Mankell, 2013) draws on a number of real life cases; eventually a previous case that Wallander had failed to solve, is solved in the episode when the girl is discovered having been held captive by a paedophile for a number of years, drawing parallels with recent real life cases in Austria and the USA (Patterson, 2010; Kumar and Usborne, 2013).

Missing (Mankell, 2013) starts with the resolution of a plot from the previous episode, with Wallander, looking disheveled, returning to work after having been suspended for leaving his gun in a bar. Colleagues, unaware of his early onset Alzheimers, blame it on his usual semi-alcoholic state. In *Missing* (Mankell, 2013) Wallander is often seen walking alone, or with the ever-faithful Jussi, thinking, immersed in the job, the oncoming disease adding one more layer of confusion and dishevelment. Difficulties in his relationship with Linda, his daughter, and another new relationship feature in a number of scenes. At the beginning of the episode the scene is set as two separated, warring

parents exchange angry words as the father collects the daughter for an access visit. When the child disappears the parents seem to be prime suspects, particularly the father when it is discovered that he was intending to flee the country with her to avoid a custody battle. Wallander, however, is drawn back to the trauma of a previous unsolved case in which the mother was wrongly accused. The case, we are led to understand, still preys on his mind, again, something found in interviews with retired police officers in the UK in a recent study (Cummins et al., 2014). Flashback scenes from Wallander's thoughts play out on the screen as a prelude to Wallander being drawn back to visit the wrongly accused mother, having linked the cases via the discovery of a pen found near the site where the child in the current case disappeared, similar to that of the girl in the previous case. 'Why are you here?' she asks him, becoming angry, and as he leaves, the violent and traumatic world in which victim and police officer find themselves is exemplified as she tells him 'I still dream of killing you'. The case resolves with both girls discovered, the perpetrator being a local shopkeeper, but the twists and turns in the plot throughout the episode exemplify Hynes' (2012:1) argument that 'Wallander is living proof of the Nietzschean truth that if you gaze for long into the abyss, the abyss gazes into you'. This applies to all the examples given here and this is at the heart of the representation of the trauma of policing in modern-day police procedurals. It is a long way from 1950s' classics such as Ealing's *The Long Arm* (Freud, 1956) where the disruption of 'normal' family life is limited to Jack Hawkins' detective having to miss taking his son to an air show as duty calls, or putting up with a bottle of beer and ham sandwiches for his tea after coming home late from a case.

Successful resolution to episodes lessens the trauma for the audience, often an active decision by those who produce these texts. Jamie Nuttgens, co-producer of the *Red Riding Trilogy* (Jarrold et al., 2009) revealed to the authors, in an interview conducted in 2011, that Channel Four and Screen Yorkshire insisted on a changed ending for the final part of the trilogy 'just to give the audience some hope' (Nuttgens, 2011). As in *Missing* (Mankell, 2005) *Red Riding* (Jarrold et al., 2009) ends with the discovery of a missing child, some relief to the violence and trauma which characterizes the films.

The Wire

The Wire's (Simon, 2002-2004) Jim McNulty provides a further illustration of the stresses of policing and its impact. *The Wire* has become a globally popular police procedural text and McNulty's character is a direct descendent of the *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971) maverick cop model, opposed to the over-bureaucratic nature of modern day policing, providing a one-man resistance. He can also be conceptualized as drowning in his own bloody sea, an archetypal example of cop gone off the rails through the stresses of dealing with violent crime. For fans of the *The Wire* (Simon, 2002-2004) McNulty's exploits are legendary, a fact consistently referred to in the show. Drinking and having sex on duty, charging sex with a prostitute, as part of an undercover operation, to expenses, having sex on the bonnet of a car in broad daylight then flashing his badge to a passing cruiser to avoid arrest and a series of drunken one night stands are common currency in his world. He is, of course, divorced, has a difficult relationship with his ex, exacerbated by various incidents through the series, one of which sees him spending an access visit teaching his sons to tail one of Baltimore's biggest drug dealers.

Ever since Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe brought out a bottle and a glass from their desk drawer (Clarke, 2005) the link between the lone maverick detective and a overdependence on alcohol has been a given. In the opening scene of *Duck and Cover* (Simon, 2002-2004), an episode from *The Wire* (Simon, 2002-2004), season two, we see McNulty in the middle of what is, later in the episode, described as 'a drunken binge of legendary proportion'. Having finished a row with his ex wife over the phone he demands one more drink from Gus, the bartender at his local bar. 'Save some for the other customers for a change, Gus tells him' but serves him one more for the road after McNulty assures him he is not going to drive. The action cuts to McNulty driving, the Pogues (signifier of louche drunkenness and debauchery) playing full blast. McNulty crashes into the parapet of a bridge, denting the side of his car. Convinced he can make the turn without incident he goes back and tries again, this time causing more damage to the car and cutting his hand in the process. He is, all the signs would say, out of control, a mess, unaware of his own limitations. Next he goes to a diner, has a one night stand with the waitress, his injured hand leaving blood all over the bed. This immersion in sex and alcohol is central to McNulty's character and these scenes are common currency in

The Wire (Simon, 2002-2004), an attempt, it might seem, to push the maverick traumatized damaged detective character to its limits.

In McNulty's character there are parallels with some of the key themes around policing in David Peace's *Red Riding* (Jarrold et al., 2009). McNulty is staring into the abyss, y sea, operating, just like the West Yorkshire Police Force in the 1970s/80s around blurred boundaries between policing and criminality, a fact taken to extremes in a later series where he mutilates the corpses of homeless people and feeds false information to a local reporter in order to get more resources into the department. In this sense he is Dirty Harry or Gene Hunt, doing what it takes to sidestep the increasing bureaucracy and getting the job done, again, it seems, an attempt by the writers to take this to an extreme.

In a later scene from *Duck and Cover* (Simon, 2002) the audience is reminded of what McNulty represents; flawed policeman and traumatized detective in extremis. The scene is set on waste ground next to a railroad siding, McNulty's battered car as backdrop as he talks with a male colleague while they drink from a bottle. 'You had a night even for a legendary motherfucker like you' his colleague tells him. The constant use of the term 'legendary' applied to McNulty draws attention to the fact that the flawed police officer in extremis, as McNulty is, is part of a continuum, part of cop culture. 'What is wrong with you man?' asks his colleague indicating that he has, indeed, gone too far, again. 'Is that floater showing up in your dream again?', he asks, searching for explanations. This is a reference to a fellow police officer's body found floating in the harbor in a previous episode but also flags up the stresses of the job, the cases that come back to haunt officers and lead them down the road to self-destruction. There are, though, signs of redemption, writers' attempts to show that McNulty and characters like him are as complex, perhaps, relief for the audience from a constant trail of bad behavior or maybe a reminder of who the character was before he was as is now.

In a scene towards the end of *Duck and Cover* (Simon, 2002) McNulty goes for a drink with a divorced colleague. She is smartly dressed, has neatly bobbed hair and provides a visual contrast to a number of the women the audience has seen him have sexual

encounters with before. He drinks beer, not shots, and the bar is not the bear pit that his regular haunt is. She invites him back for another drink. When she goes out of the room McNulty surveys what is obviously the home of a single parent, with childrens' artefacts and pictures of them in a swimming gala attached to the fridge. McNulty recognises this environment as too wholesome for him and when she returns he is wearing his jacket. 'Long day' he says. They both understand and he leaves, demonstrating that he knows his limits, the audience perhaps a little surprised that he has some, nevertheless there is something endearing about the scene, a stark contrast to the rest of the episode's dystopian pleasures (Bolton, 2005).

In The Year of Our Lord

David Peace's Red Riding novels (1974; 1977; 1980; 1983) were published from 1999-2002 (Peace, 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2008d), initially in the UK and Japan, and filmed in 2009 as *The Red Riding Trilogy* (*Red Riding Trilogy: In the Year of Our Lord, 1974; 1980; and 1983* respectively) for Channel Four and Screen Yorkshire in the UK. There are no heroes in these novels, only the morally corrupted. Characters such as detectives Molloy and Holland in Peace's work reflect the values of the cop culture (Waddington, 1990) discussed earlier. They are forced to confront extreme misogyny and violence. They are overwhelmed by the brutality, misery and degradation in the places that surround them. However, they share many of the attitudes rooted in local places that are at the root of the hideous crimes they must investigate, the attitudes being embedded in the institutions in which they operate (King and Cummins, 2013). The officers of the newly-formed West Yorkshire Police Force in *Red Riding* (Jarrod et al., 2009) are faced with child murder, paedophilia, corruption involving criminal-entrepreneurs and involvement in the hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper.

The opening scene of *1983* (Marsh, 2009) is a flashback to a wedding in 1974, where a group of senior officers from the force discuss their plans to take control of vice in Leeds and Manchester. This includes plans to print and distribute pornography: 'out of the shop windows and into our pockets, the whole of the North of England, the girls, the shops, the mags'. Their criminal entrepreneurship (Smith, 2009) also extends to using their investment in vice to fund a venture with a corrupt local businessman. The blurring

of boundaries between the police and the criminal fraternity and the impact that has on the force in general and individual officers is another key theme of much contemporary police drama (King and Cummins, 2014; 2015).

In *1980* (Tucker, 2009), a police officer, Peter Hunter, is sent from Manchester to investigate West Yorkshire's handling of the investigation. Hunter is based on John Stalker, who had a role in the original Moors Murder investigation. Hunter, even though he does have an affair with a fellow officer on the investigation team, is possibly the only morally uncorrupted character in these novels. It is mainly through his eyes that we come to see the impact of the violence, brutality, misogyny and corruption on himself and other officers. The West Yorkshire force is rotten to its core. Hunter sees it for what it is. However, he acknowledges that individual officers did not start their careers this way. Hunter is struggling to balance his involvement in this case with his own family life. His wife has experienced a series of miscarriages but they are desperate to start a family. As he begins to become overwhelmed by the Ripper investigation, he begins to lose his moral bearings. He repeats throughout *1980* (Tucker, 2009) '*I catch him, stop him murdering mothers, orphaning children, then give us one, just one*'.

The sense of paranoia increases throughout the film *1980* (Tucker, 2009). The climax is the arrest and interrogation of Sutcliffe. Peace confronts the impact of the horror that officers meet in investigating the horrendous murders. The police are brutalised by the morally corrupt world that they inhabit. This theme is recurrent throughout the novels but reaches its peak as the Peter Sutcliffe character is eventually arrested in *1980* (Tucker, 2009). The investigating officer says to the suspect 'I'm the one you almost bloody killed as well'. The interview begins with a list of victims. In the novel, this is followed by an interior narrative/poem that is worth quoting at length. It demonstrates the way that the novelist produces moments of beauty from horror. It also sums up the emotional impact of the case on the officers

*'Sixteen hours later in the dark room
The dark room on our side of the glass
Our side of the mirror
Drowning, we're drowning here
Drowning in here in his bloody sea*

The bloody tide in –
The bloody tide high
The bloody things he's said
The bloody things he's done'

(Peace, 2008c:157)

In the filmed version of the *Red Riding Trilogy* (Jarrold et al., 2009) this feeling of being drawn in to the horror and violent world of the criminals they are investigating is created via a number of explicitly violent scenes, including the final scene of *1980* where Hunter is murdered by a fellow officer. David Peace (Tickell, 2003) has argued that this type of representation of violent crime; detailed and often hard to watch, is necessary in that it provides an antidote to much of the sanitized crime fiction on film and TV. He argues that in trying to reveal the impact of crime, particularly violent crime, on victims and those, such as police officers, faced with the horror of it, it begs wider questions about society, becomes a political act, and challenges explanation of violent crime which focus solely on the psyche of the victim or perpetrator.

Conclusion

As part of a body of work on policing and the media, Reiner (2000) has examined the way in which the legitimacy of the police in Britain has become intertwined with representations of policing. He argues that post-war, in a so-called 'Golden Age', the legitimacy of the police as institution and, it might be said, individual officers was largely unquestioned. He describes the police in this period as being regarded as 'sacred', reflecting the conservative social values of the post-war period in the UK. In this period cultural representations of the police were overwhelming positive – perhaps best summed up in the character of George Dixon in the hugely popular UK TV series *Dixon of Dock Green* (Willis, 1955 – 1976). The programme ended in a period when the legitimacy of the police as an institution came under increasing attack, with bureaucracy and corruption as key themes reflected in programmes such as *The Sweeney*

(Kennedy-Martin,1975-78) in the 1970s and *Between the Lines* (Wilshire, 1992-94) in the 1990s.

The portrayal of police officers on screen, then, has undergone a huge transformation. This article has traced this change in representation with reference to the emergent literature on police culture and stress in the period discussed. The three texts subject to original analysis by the authors represent a current resting point on a continuum where Ferrell et al.'s (2008) spectacle or carnival of crime now includes the dystopian pleasure of seeing police officers' lives disintegrate before their eyes (Bolton, 2005). It also represents a shift from stress caused by bureaucracy, consistent with findings on other large organisations (Violanti et al.,2010) to stress caused by the experiences of dealing with violence and the darker side of society; drowning in a bloody sea. The idea that George Dixon would acknowledge the impact of his work life on any aspect of his personal life seems fanciful in the extreme. There has been a significant shift in the way that police officers are portrayed. This shift has been one from the complete denial of any problems to a view that all cops are psychologically damaged in one way or another. If we look at the main characteristics of these police officers we can read them as almost classic cases of PTSD. It should be emphasised that none of the officers in *Red Riding* (Jarrold et al., 2009), *Wallander* (Mankell, 2005 – 2013) or *The Wire* (Simon, 2002 - 2004) or their colleagues and those around them see their behaviour in these terms. While *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971) was damaged, he was in control, whereas, in modern day representations, the predominant representation is an individual out of control, staring into the abyss.

In these portrayals police officers also lose any meaningful sense of boundaries, both personal and professional. In *Red Riding* (Jarrold et al., 2009), officers regularly assault suspects – clearly a feature of the policing landscape of the time – or sleep with local prostitutes. There is a form of paranoia that runs throughout *Red Riding* (Jarrold et al., 2009). The awful events that are being investigated seem to have ensured that the police have lost any moral sense that they may have once had. There seem to be no rules apart from 'this is the North where we do what we want'. Similarly, McNulty seems to have lost all sense of personal and professional boundaries ,while Wallander is a man broken by the job.

If then, as Reiner (2000) suggests, representations of policing in the media has an impact both on public perceptions and the development of policing, the predominance of the 'broken by the job' representations discussed here have a potential impact on the audience, police officers and policy makers. Given that recent work with retired police officers (Cummins et al.,2014) suggests that there is some correlation between the representation of the stresses of policing and the experience of retired officers, further empirical study in this area would seem to be an imperative.

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