CHAPTER 42

CRIME FICTION AND REALISM

Paul Cobley, Middlesex University

Although they seldom define the term, books and articles about crime fiction are often liberally peppered with the word ‘realism’. This is because, as Nicol (2010: 508) states, “Crime fiction has always been dedicated, in different ways, to producing a kind of realism”. Generally, such casual use of the term ‘realism’ with reference to crime fiction signals the relationship by which narratives of crime are firmly rooted in the mission to portray an important feature of social formations and its relation to other features of social formations. Furthermore, they are committed to carrying this out in a manner that does not have recourse to the fantastic – as, say, fantasy might – and does not primarily present its objects in allegorical terms – as, say, a theological epic like *The Divine Comedy* or *Paradise Lost* might. Crime fiction’s depiction of social formations relies, instead, on reference to broadly familiar institutions, objects, events and relationships. Moreover, it does so in way that is calculated not to draw attention to itself in respect of excessive poetic license, straining of the reader’s credulity, tropes or expression used principally for metric or rhythmic effect, or any other measures that might be found to be beyond the genre’s boundaries or the requirements of the narrative.

Yet, the relation of realism and crime fiction cannot be contained by this short definition alone. Note that Nicol, in his statement, refers to “a kind of realism” rather than just “realism” singular. Writers on crime fiction regularly note the ways in which sub-genres of the crime narrative represent an ‘advance’ or ‘departure’ in realism from other genres: the professional private detective as more realistic than the enthusiastic ratiocinator, the motivations of the hardened criminal as more realistic as opposed to the ‘amateur

cracksman', the depiction of geopolitics in the spy thriller as more realistic than the concern with consistent psychology and dialogue in narratives of single murders, and so forth. This acknowledges that 'realism' is multifarious, subject to change even within the genre of crime fiction, and not susceptible of one, unitary definition. It is why the question of what constitutes 'realism' remains vexed, even in the present, nearly two centuries after the term evolved into general usage.

If 'realism' can be condensed into one general problem of representation, within that problem there are nevertheless a number of overdetermined relations for crime fiction. A simple saying and a simple example illustrate the issue. The saying holds that 'the rendering of an object can never be the object itself'. In the example which might accompany this saying, if I utter the word 'knife' that word *cannot be* the knife in question or any knife. Indeed, it is not meant to be in such a relation of substitution, simply because it is a word and not the thing. Instead, the word and the knife it denotes are in a relationship of signifying or representation. Inherent in the relationship is the understanding that the word *stands in* for that which it denotes; the denoted object, therefore, does not even have to be present at the moment of utterance for the relationship to obtain.

What one must bear in mind with this example is that it only features a somewhat abstract act of representation, where one discrete sign is taken to refer to one object. This is seldom the norm in human experience. Moreover, narrative fiction obviously features an array of signs. It derives from a tradition, prevalent in the West and beyond, where narratives are recounted partly in prose - which represents institutions, objects, events and relationships in the manner of the word 'knife' standing in for the object *knife* – and partly in imitative mimesis whereby the speech of characters (irrespective of whether they existed) is reproduced verbatim, often within speech marks (Cobley 2014).

Object and Psychological Realism

So far what has been considered is only the 'realism' entailed by fiction's general reference to features of the world. Given that narrative fiction harbours a strong tradition of assiduously presenting the speech of characters, it is not unsurprising that it has also had a history of interest in, and depiction of, characters' psychology. Not only is realistic depiction a matter of general reference, then; it is also sometimes concerned with representation of features of the world through the prism of characters' psychologies. Such 'psychological realism', which is common in crime fiction and narrative in general, will present the world, at specific times or throughout a narrative, in relation to a character's perspective. In addition, of course – and, especially in crime fiction which is not devoted to narrating individual psychology alone, but in relation to such aspects of the genre as resolving criminal conspiracies – 'psychological realism' will be related to the plot and story events in a narrative. An early sound film example of crime fiction, Alfred Hitchcock's *Blackmail* (1929), is illustrative in this case. The protagonist, Alice (Anny Ondra) grabs a bread knife and stabs to death a man as he is sexually assaulting her. She flees the scene of the murder, but is worried that she has left behind evidence of her deed. The next morning, Alice hears her parents (Sara Algood, Charles Paton) speaking with a neighbour (Phyllis Konstam) who is evidently keen on gossip. They discuss the murder which has become headline news and Alice, in a state of high anxiety, zones in an out of the conversation, hearing only one word clearly, the shrill utterance of the word "knife" as it is highlighted on the soundtrack. Here, *knife* becomes not just a neutral object in the narrative but an object with specific resonances that serve not just the plot (in which she is blackmailed by someone who saw her exit the flat where she was assaulted) but also, in its prominence on the soundtrack, exemplifies psychological realism.

The implementation of psychological realism and what might be called 'object realism', as in the preceding discussion in which institutions, objects, events and relationships

are presented in more or less detail as familiar, has been central to crime fiction. The genre's concern with criminal and counter-criminal activities answers a demand that it narrate objects, facts and activities accurately, with fidelity to what is generally known about those things and with attention to the detail of more specialised activities. Thus, crime fiction partakes of general 'object realism', but also utilises 'forensic realism' (Jermyn 2013) in which professional knowledge usually unavailable to the public becomes part of the narrative. Often, such forensic realism asserts the veracity in its depiction by denigrating other narratives with putatively lesser claims to realism. The following example, from Nick Stone's *King of Swords* (2007), exemplifies this device of realism:

> 'That's the movie version', Gemma said, with a weary sigh. She was glad she'd never gone into teaching. She didn't believe in fighting losing battles. How could you compete with Hollywood myths? 'After death, the skin around the hair and fingernails loses water and it shrinks. And when it shrinks, it retracts, making the hair and nails look longer, and therefore giving the impression that they've grown. But they haven't, really. It's an illusion. Like the movies. OK?' (Stone 2007: 25-6).

As this example shows, specialist knowledge serves 'forensic realism' on the one hand, but also promulgates a more general 'object realism'. Indeed, this has been the key defining principle in the realism of at least three subgenres of crime fiction that have been devoted to professional minutiae in criminal proceedings: the police procedural, the legal thriller and the many narratives, particularly following the Scarpetta novels of Patricia Cornwell, that are devoted to the investigations carried out by pathologists (notwithstanding the fact that those charged with carrying out *post mortem* examinations in real life do not conduct investigations into crimes).

The impetus to record detail in realism has also been well observed outside the genre. Jakobson (1987: 25) notes the "*depiction of contiguity or the narrative act of focusing on inessential details"* in realism; Barthes (1989), also suggests that realism often consists of 'the reality effect', a narration of the inessential details in, say, the furnishing of a room that appears in the narrative. In such a narration, the presentation of the detail for its own sake theoretically guarantees the realism in the depiction. The strong orientation toward plot in crime fiction, however, means that while such details will not be absent from the genre's prose, they are more likely to be bound to the resolution of the mystery in the narrative and hence tend to be essential. As Gulddal indicates (Chapter 21, this volume), readers of crime fiction are compelled "to look for clues and hidden meaning in every textual detail".

Equally, the requirements of the mystery entail that 'object realism' alone is insufficient to produce compelling narratives focused on crime and the agencies of law. Again, the strong orientation of the genre to plot is important. Plot, since Aristotle, has been understood as the agency of causality in narratives (Cobley 2014) and its workings are closely related to the motive force of characters. Consequently, the protagonists in crime fiction are immensely important because they are either: the causes of the mystery or conspiracy that is central to the genre's narratives: the extraordinary individual(s) who will resolve the mystery; or those who are affected by mystery but lack the resources to resolve it. For any crime fiction to be at all credible – as opposed to a purely formulaic working through of the genre's elements – the characters in the narrative, driven by their involvement in the mystery, need to be constituted by some measure of psychological realism.

Psychological realism in crime fiction usually requires a delicate balance of the functional qualities required for characters to perform their roles in the genre and the kind of motivation that is customary to indicate psychological consistency in narrative fiction. Credibility will be strained and realism undermined if heroes, villains and bystanders are

mere ciphers, embodying good or evil as if these were pure, allegorical or fantastic qualities. Correspondingly, crime fiction faces the dilemma of presenting the commonplace nature of crime, a quotidian phenomenon in contemporary social formations, in a manner which is dramatic. The chief problem arising here is that, as has been recognized by crime fiction critics as long ago as Haycraft (1941: 228-9), "most real life crime is duller, less ingenious, less dramatic, lacking in what Poe called 'the pungent contradiction of the general idea', as compared with fictional felony". As such, 'object realism' is tempered by the demands of drama or narrative drive in crime fiction, whilst 'psychological realism' must negotiate the need to ensure that characters embody 'structural' functions (hero, villain, onlooker, etc.).

These dilemmas have been resolved by crime fiction in a number of ways. One move by which the genre has attempted to resolve some of the contradictions in figuring realism is by making murder integral to its narratives. If, as Palmer (1978) argues, crime fiction is defined by the fears of conspiracy prevalent at the time of the genre's inception in the nineteenth century – namely, the fear of theft and the fear of working people's combining for joint action – the inflection of those fears in murder, an unwonted irruption in social life, makes sense. The occurrence of murder as a result of a conspiracy is unusual enough to warrant its resolution by an extraordinary individual, in contrast to theft and the combination of working people which would most likely be combated by bureaucratic means. In this case, two situations are trumped. The first is the 'object realism' in which murder in real life is much less frequent and much more banal than it is in fiction. The second is the 'psychological realism' where everyone or no-one is exceptional in greater or lesser degree. The requirement to resolve an event as unprecedented in real life as a murder resulting from a conspiracy, yokes realism to the demands of the genre in which conspiracy-inspired murder can proliferate on a precedented scale (Cobley 2012).

Hard-boiled realism?

Another way in which crime fiction maintains its genre credentials while accommodating realism is by focusing on the work of the professional. Irwin notes how the novels of Dashiell Hammett perform this act by shifting emphasis in the process of criminal investigations from ratiocination (exact, rational reasoning) to the challenges of human relationships thrown up by crime. Irwin refers to the so-called 'Golden Age' of crime fiction, or the 'school of Mayhem Parva', exemplified by the works of Agatha Christie, Freeman Wills Croft, Dorothy L. Sayers and others which featured isolated murders solved by reasoning over clues by seasoned detectives (Watson 1971). As the 'object realism' of Golden Age crime fiction's focus on the detail of clues stagnated and seemed to become artificial, at the expense of 'psychological realism' in particular, a new approach to accommodating realism in the genre was needed. Irwin (2006: 184) writes,

> [I]n striving for greater realism, Hammett turned away from analytic-deductive plots in favor of character-driven narratives resembling novels of manners, but since Hammett's detective stories began as popular fiction appearing in what were essentially men's magazines, he had to find another plot element that would be as interesting and appealing to his male audience as the puzzle aspect of analytic detective fiction. And this element was the conflict between the professional and the personal, between work and relationships, in the detective's life.

As Irwin suggests, then, the focus on the professional in Hammett's work retained the general object realism and forensic realism that was bound up with the exigencies of investigation, but transferred emphasis to psychological realism in depicting occupational relations.

In fact, in the history of crime fiction, the reorganization in standards of realism discussed here is somewhat emblematic. For some of the contemporary purveyors of crime fiction, the motivation to produce particular kinds of narratives was no doubt inspired, in large part, by a desire to enhance realism in the genre. However, the arguments about realism at this stage of development of crime fiction can be seen as part of a more general movement of stagnation and regeneration or decline and renewal in respect of the parameters of realism. At a moment when the 'Mayhem Parva school' and the new, 'hard-boiled' writing of Hammett and others were both still contemporary rather than historical phenomena, Raymond Chandler, a proponent of the latter kind of crime fiction, took issue with the cosy artificiality of the former school. In a famous passage from his essay, 'The simple art of murder' (1944), Chandler wrote:

> Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse; and with the means at hand, not with hand-wrought duelling pistols, curare, and tropical fish. He put these people down on paper as they are, and he made them talk and think in the language they customarily used for these purposes. (1950: 195)

Clearly, this is a herald of the route to greater realism in crime fiction. It lauds Hammett's renewal of psychological realism, noting the importance of the motivation of those who murder. It marries that with object realism – "the means at hand", common objects that will nod to the banality of murder. It also promotes the possibility of mimesis, the ideal of representing people's speech with utmost accuracy.

To some extent, Chandler's lauding of Hammett is a justification of his own approach to realism. A key component of this approach is a specialized implementation of 'language',

not just in the imitation of the patterns of people's speech but also in narrative prose. As is well known, hard-boiled style consists of short sentences, usually without adjectives and adverbs. It features the use of terms from speech rather than the more 'flowery' terms used in some literature – e.g. 'said' is more likely to appear in hard-boiled crime fiction than 'asserted', 'queried' or 'expostulated'. Nouns are usually concrete and recognisable while, complementing object realism, verbs are stripped to a minimum with a heavy reliance on the verb 'to be'. Sentences will be mainly simple declarative ones and subordinate clauses are generally eschewed. These sentences tend to describe events in the sequence in which they occurred, directly and unmixed with comment. The resultant low-key representation is unemotional and can give the impression of 'objectivity' or greater realism. Coupled with the numerous unhappy endings, problematic denouements and lack of resolution in Chandler's narratives, hard-boiled crime fiction – in audio-visual as well as print versions – has unsurprisingly become associated with a closer imitation of life (the latter of which, unlike most narratives, also features a predominance of unresolved events and situations).

To a great extent, the hard-boiled tendency in crime fiction has become dominant as a means of attempting to ensure heightened realism. Despite the prose initially playing so prominent a part in the identity of hard-boiled writing, its influence has spread not just to printed crime fiction but also to audio-visual productions such as *film noir*, where narratives often feature a laconic, first-person voice-over, close imitation of criminal argot and, invariably, night-for-night shooting of scenes for the sake of authenticity. Yet, while the hard-boiled was closely associated with *film noir* and later versions of the private eye film, its influence has been discerned in a number of other areas of crime fiction where a low-key narration has putatively reinforced the realism of the narrative. The spy thriller from the Cold War onwards has employed a hard-boiled style (see Harper 1969), often to demonstrate how emotion has been crushed in the lives of the protagonists. Similarly, a broadly hard-boiled

approach has been evident in a form of crime fiction popular in the last decade and a half: so-called Scandi or Nordic Noir. The Danish television crime series *The Killing* (*Forbrydelsen*, 2007), for example, was lauded in the UK as a piece of exceptional realism, deriving from its "sombre aspect, funereal pace, and demands for absolute concentration" by which "it breaks every rule in the TV crime fiction handbook" (Graham 2011: 20). The extended focus of *The Killing* on the impact that the eponymous murder of Nanna has on her parents prompted critics to hail it as a major innovation in realism: "In frequently heartbreaking detail, we have been made aware of the bleak and everlasting effects of the fallout of a premature, violent death upon those who are left behind" (ibid: 20-1). Of course, the realism being applauded is manifestly a variant of the hard-boiled tendency in crime fiction.

It is here, in examples such as this, that the faultlines of definitions of realism in crime fiction are manifest. Hard-boiled fiction is no less a rendering of an object than Golden Age crime fiction. As such, it is every bit as artificial as Golden Age narratives. Indeed, Chandler's criticism of the Mayhem Parva school may also be the setting up of a straw man since crime fiction from that school is sometimes argued to be by no means as uniform or cosily artificial as the criticism of it might make it seem (see, for example, Light 1991).

What should be apparent from this discussion so far is that, even in the face of the great influence that the hard-boiled has enjoyed, there are different kinds of realism which are exercised in crime fiction: realism in respect of character motivation, realism in respect of dialogue, reason in respect of milieu, realism in respect of technical details, and so on. In turn, these have been contested by different proponents or schools of crime fiction. Furthermore, what is taken to be realism in the genre has been contested by readers or viewers, including critics, sometimes in concurrence with proponents and sometimes with contrasting views to them. These contests, too, have taken place at specific moments in the development of crime fiction and at specific moments in respect of the contemporary period

in general. That is to say, what is taken to constitute realism cannot be divorced from the events in, and opinions about, the contemporary world in which crime fiction is consumed. In an attempt to emphasize these points, I will consider Bodyguard, a major hit in the television schedules in the UK in Autumn 2019 and then worldwide.

Bodyguard: realism in the court of public opinion

Bodyguard is the narrative of a police officer and ex-Afghanistan veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder, David Budd (Richard Madden), who finds himself elevated to the position of personal bodyguard to the UK government's Home Secretary, Julia Montague (Keeley Hawes). She, in turn, may be the target of a terror plot in retaliation for her belligerent policies. Budd is at the centre of the action not just because he is the politician's bodyguard, a relationship complicated further as he and Montague engage in a sexual relationship. In addition, Budd, seriously disaffected by his combat experiences, is a comrade of a scarred ex-veteran of the Afghan campaign, Andy Apsted (Tom Brooke), who is seemingly more disaffected still. The series proceeds through a number of action set pieces and cliffhangers, and the series finale along with the opening, are particularly notable in this respect. The very first scene of the drama lasts 20+ minutes and features Madden, on a Glasgow-London train, discovering that the journey is endangered by a suicide bomber in the toilet of one of the carriages. Through a tense process of negotiation, he gently stands down the Muslim woman from her position, indicating that he can understand that she has been coerced into carrying out the terror act by jihadi men and, ultimately, with the arriving security forces, procures safety for the woman, himself and the train's passengers.

Amidst the hype and the intense mainstream involvement in this example of crime fiction, what is notable is the extent to which so much of the discussion of *Bodyguard* at the time of its first broadcast was concerned with 'realism'. Newspapers obsessed over whether

former home secretary, Amber Rudd, found the series realistic (Deen 2018); whether the technologies, terminology and political procedure were employed were accurate, according to specialists (largely yes – e.g. Clifton 2018; largely no – e.g. Turk 2018, Mozafari 2018); and why Budd's shirt colour magically changed three times on his first shift at work (Ross 2018). In one sense, this fixation on forensic realism and general object realism in a crime fiction is perhaps only remarkable for its scale, attendant on the popularity of the series and the demand for journalists to fill space. Certainly, the way in which *Bodyguard* writer, Jed Mercurio, regularly cited in interviews the meticulous research and expert advice – across the police, the security services and politics – underpinning the series (O'Sullivan 2018) is also fairly routine in below-the-line publicity for crime series and it illustrates the general demand of realism for the genre. What the intense and widespread involvement in *Bodyguard* provides is a picture of how central to crime fiction conceptions of realism are. Any plot inconsistencies – why the connection of veterans Budd and Apsted were not investigated by the police (O'Sullivan 2018), why "a traumatised Afghanistan veteran with a troubled home life was given the most high-profile security job in the country" (Cumming 2018) – were amplified into a matter of national debate.

While the questions of forensic realism picked at the detail in *Bodyguard*, it was clear that another debate over realism was developing. Because the series was seen to have "ticked all the state-of-the-nation boxes" (Cumming 2018) it immediately became embroiled in questions regarding whether its depictions matched social realities or whether they were more a matter of wishful socio-political thinking. News sources widely reported social media responses to the preponderance of female characters in roles of authority: Julia Montague, a markswoman, an explosives expert, the Head of the Metropolitan Police's Counterterrorism Command, a Chief Superintendent of detectives, a detective sergeant and a p.r. advisor to the Home Secretary. It was widely reported that viewers saw such female representation as

"political correctness" or "unrealistic" (e.g. Noah 2018, Pook 2018). Daisy Goodwin, writer of the television drama *Victoria* (2016-), in comments widely reported from her original *Radio Times* article (e.g. Singh 2018a, Gold 2018), stated that such roles represented "wishful thinking". Yet, the matter was, unsurprisingly, far from clear cut. Mercurio strenuously refuted the claims (Noah 2018), while the *Daily Mail* reported support for the "bold change" in representation (Coen and White 2018). Meanwhile, others pointed to the veracity of the roles, given that three women were currently heading up London's emergency services: Cressida Dick, Head of the Metropolitan Police; Dany Cotton, London Fire Commissioner; and Heather Lawrence, Chair of London Ambulance Service (Pook 2018). Some considered *Bodyguard* as, in the words of Trevor Phillips, former chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, "possibly the most misogynist piece of TV I've seen in years" (*The Scotsman* 2018); other hailed it as "2018's most feminist TV show" (Pook 2018). Yet others accused it of Islamophobia and misogyny combined for its portrayal of the suicide bomber, Nadia, at the beginning and end of the series (*Mediadiversity* 2018).

The case of *Bodyguard* reveals a number of aspects of the relationship of crime fiction and realism. It suggests that object realism is a perennial demand of crime fiction, particularly when large numbers of viewers, channelled by social media and press coverage, are invested in a crime narrative that depicts familiar objects, extraordinary situations and politically sensitive subjects. It demonstrates that there are different kinds of realism – particularly in respect of general object realism and forensic realism, where there is the demand for fidelity to technology, professions, historical events and occupational relations, among others. The case of *Bodyguard* also exemplifies the manner in which realism entails crime fiction conforming to certain standards of representation of social groups at specific moments in the contemporary period in which it appears. Even when it does so conform, its purported realism in one dimension might be subject to challenge from its depictions in another dimension, as

well as being subject to contestation in the arena of public opinion. It is notable, especially, that the question of psychological realism in respect of *Bodyguard* tended to arise in those discussions drawing attention to the roles of characters rather than those devoted to the role of occupation in object realism. Even so, if psychological realism is difficult to establish because of the intractability of fully understanding human motivations, it also seems that object realism is also hard to establish definitively.

Conclusion: realism or verisimilitude

One important conclusion to draw from this discussion is that realism is by no means an established entity that some texts or some genres possess. Indeed, this is not a new realisation: it was expressed as early as 1921 by Jakobson (1987: 25; italics in the original) in his list of definitions of realism as "*The conservative tendency to remain within the limits of a given artistic tradition, conceived as faithfulness to reality*" and then "*Realism comprehends the sum total of the features characteristic of one specific artistic current of the nineteenth century*" (cf. MacCabe 1977). Yet it is not enough to prevent the continued demotic use of the term, especially in relation to crime fiction. Clearly, what is taken to be 'realistic' is constantly changing in response to public opinion or *doxa*. So, while 'realism' endures as a term, it is often difficult to elude the fact that it implies some phenomenon that is stable. Given that crime fiction is so profuse, dominating television schedules and print publishing (Singh 2018b), not only is the demand for realism in the genre wider than it is for other genres, it is arguably more subject to the vagaries of popular changing tastes and predilections than such genres as literary fiction.

One modest proposal for those who wish to engage in scholarly analysis of crime fiction is that the kinds of questions considered above could be addressed within the rubric of 'verisimilitude' rather than 'realism'. The former suggests not a 'gold standard' of veracity,

but a mutable relationship, with fiction responding to standards of fidelity that are constantly changing in a complex relationship with *doxa* or public opinion (Todorov 1977). This might enable a greater understanding of both the rapid rate of innovation in crime fiction and the aforementioned intimacy to popular taste.

References

Barthes, Roland (1989) 'The reality effect'. In: *The Rustle of Language*. trans. Howard R. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 141-8.

Clifton, Katy (2018) 'BBC *Bodyguard*: Government source lifts the lid on how accurate the TV drama really is' *Evening Standard*. 4 September (https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/government-source-lifts-lid-on-bbcs-smash-hit-drama-bodyguard-a3927331.html Accessed 22 August 2019).

Cobley, Paul (2012) 'The reactionary art of murder' *Language and Literature* 21 (3): 286-98.

Cobley, Paul (2014) *Narrative* 2nd edn. London: Routledge.

Coen, Susie and White, Faye (2018) 'Women rule the roost in BBC's new drama *Bodyguard* as 7million tune in to watch first episode' *Daily Mail*. 27 August (https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6103817/Women-rule-roost-BBCs-new-drama-Bodyguard-7million-tune-watch-episode.html Accessed 22 August 2019).

Cooke, Rachel (2018) '*Bodyguard* is convoluted and preposterous – but it's impossible not to get caught up in' *New Statesman.* 29 August (https://www.newstatesman.com/2018/08/bodyguard-bbc-review-drama Accessed 22 August 2019).

Cumming, Ed (2018) '*Bodyguard* finale: why I'm not convinced by the "best" show of 2018' *The Guardian*. 17 September (https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-

radio/2018/sep/17/bodyguard-finale-why-im-not-convinced-by-the-best-show-of-2018 Accessed 22 August 2019).

Deen, Sarah (2018) 'Former home secretary Amber Rudd plays coy when asked if *Bodyguard* is realistic' *Metro*. 16 November (https://metro.co.uk/2018/11/06/former-home-secretary-amber-rudd-plays-coy-when-asked-if-bodyguard-is-realistic-8108988/ Accessed 22 August 2019).

Gold, Tanya (2018) 'Why is the BBC killing Eve, not Steve? It is the wrong kind of feminism' *The Sun*. 11 October (https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7466270/why-is-bbc-killing-eve-not-steve/ Accessed 22 August 2019).

Graham, Alison (2011) 'Lessons of *The Killing*'. *Radio Times*, 26 March-1 April, pp. 20-1.

Harper, Ralph (1969) *The World of the Thriller*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Haycraft, Howard (1941) *Murder for Pleasure*. New York and London: Appleton-Century.

Herron, Mick (2017) *Spook Street*. London: John Murray.

Irwin, John T. (2006) *Unless the Threat of Death is Behind Them: Hard-boiled Fiction and Film Noir*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Jakobson R (1987 [1921]) 'On realism in art. In: Krystin Pomorska and Stephen Rudy (eds.) *Language in Literature*. Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press, pp. 19-27.

Jermyn, Deborah (2013) 'Labs and slabs: television crime drama and the quest for forensic realism' *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 44: 103–109.

Light, Alison (1991) *Forever England: Literature, Femininity and Conservatism between the Wars*. London: Routledge.

MacCabe, Colin (1977) 'Theory and film: principles of realism and pleasure' *Screen*. 17: 46-61.

Mediadiversity (2018) '*Bodyguard* adds to a long and damaging media trend of depicting brown people as terrorists' 7 December 2018 (https://www.mediaversityreviews.com/tv-reviews/2018/12/5/bodyguard Accessed 22 August 2019).

Mozafari, Laurence (2018) 'BBC's *Bodyguard* has a lot of inaccuracies real-life bodyguards have issues with: "There's a lot of things we could pick apart"' *Digital Spy*. 28 August (https://www.digitalspy.com/tv/a864948/bbc-bodyguard-episode-1-2-inaccuracies-real-life-bodyguards-issues/ Accessed 22 August 2019).

Nicol, Bran (2010) 'Patricia Highsmith (1921 – 1995)'. In: Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (eds.) *A Companion to Crime Fiction*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 503-9.

Noah, Sherna (2018) '*Bodyguard*'s Jed Mercurio hits back at "politically correct" gripes' *Metro*. 29 August (https://www.metro.news/bodyguards-jed-mercurio-hits-back-at-politically-correct-gripes/1201979/ Accessed 22 August 2019).

O'Sullivan, Kyle (2018) '*Bodyguard* creator Jed Mercurio slams critics who question show's accuracy as he debunks massive plot hole' *Daily Mirror*. 20 September (https://www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-news/bodyguard-creator-jed-mercurio-slams-13283069 Accessed 22 August 2019).

Palmer, Jerry (1978) *Thrillers: Genesis and Structure of a Popular Genre*. London: Edward Arnold.

Pook, Lizzie (2018) '*Bodyguard* is 2018's most feminist TV show – here's why' *Stylist*. 2 September 2018 (https://www.stylist.co.uk/opinion/bodyguard-feminism-tv-keeley-hawes-richard-madden-bbc/224814 Accessed 22 August 2019).

Ross, Ally (2018) 'The coffee spill stains BBC's *Bodyguard* – but I'll give it another shot' *The Sun*. 28 August (https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7113688/bodyguard-coffee-spill-ally-ross/ Accessed 22 August 2019).

Singh, Anita (2018a) ‘*Bodyguard* undermines battle for female equality, TV writer Daisy Goodwin complains’ *The Telegraph*. 9 October 2018 (https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/10/09/bodyguard-undermines-battle-female-equality-tv-writer-daisy/ Accessed 22 August 2019).

Singh, Anita (2018b) ‘Crime pays: thrillers and detective novels now outsell all other fiction’ *The Telegraph*.11 April (https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/04/11/crime-pays-thrillers-detective-novels-now-outsell-fiction/ Accessed 22 August 2019).

Stone, Nick (2007) *King of Swords*, Harmondsworth: Michael Joseph, pp. 25-6.

Watson, Colin (1971) *Snobbery with Violence: English Crime Stories and their Audience*. London: Eyre Methuen.

The Scotsman (2018) ‘*Bodyguard* “most misogynistic” TV show in years’ 22 October 2018 (https://www.scotsman.com/news/uk-news/bodyguard-most-misogynistic-tv-show-in-years-1-4817953 Accessed 22 August 2019).

Todorov, Tzvetan (1977) *The Poetics of Prose.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Turk, Victoria (2018) ‘How realistic is *Bodyguard*? A real Personal Protection Officer tells all’ *Wired*. 22 September (https://www.wired.co.uk/article/bodyguard-finale-realism Accessed 22 August 2019).