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Human Nature and Cop Art:
A Biocultural History of the Police Procedural

Human Nature and Cop Art: A Biocultural History of the Police Procedural

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies

by

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July 2015

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Abstract

Prior to 1948 there was no “police procedural” genre of crime fiction. After 1948 and since, the genre, which prominently features police officers at work, has been among the more popular of all forms of literary, televisual, and cinematic fiction. The received history suggests that much of the credit for this is due to Jack Webb, creator of *Dragnet*.

This study complicates that received history and traces the historical emergence of this signifying practice to early 20th century ideologies of social control and the conjuncture of social forces that ultimately coalesced in the training practices of the Los Angeles Police Department, which was itself at this time undergoing unprecedented change. It is there that the form is born as “cop art”, an expressive formula unique to a new American police subculture. From these beginnings the genre has established an important presence within the global media landscape.

In tracing the genre’s circulation within the cultural economy, 1948-present, I consider the intersection of the cultural and the biological, or, simply, the biocultural. The biocultural perspective asserts that social behaviors, even signifying practices such as the *procedural*, may be motivated or otherwise determined not exclusively by culture or nature, but co-determined; i.e., the product of an evolved human nature acting in relation to the constructed environments (culture) resulting from human symbolic action.

Acknowledgements

H.L. Mencken once wrote, “Life is a dead-end street.” That’s true enough, I suppose. Fortunately, we don’t have to travel the road alone. The list of family, friends, professors, colleagues, associates, staff, students, and strangers who’ve assisted me in ways big and small, often unknowingly, would simply be too long to include here. Your support, encouragement, chiding, and forgiveness has been and always will be more greatly appreciated than I could say. My note to all of you is, “Thank you.”

A special note of gratitude is owed to my dissertation adviser, Professor Tom Rosteck. Your willingness to allow me to explore Darwinian ideas relative to cultural work was very gracious. I know doing so added a lot of work on your part to familiarize yourself with ideas outside the field of cultural studies. I don’t think every professor would be so accommodating. Thank you. Your reviews of earlier drafts of this project always made the writing better and the thinking clearer.

Also, to the other members of the committee, Professor Frank Scheide and Professor Thomas Frentz, thank you both. Your quick work in reviewing this project is very much appreciated. Moreover, it’s been your collegial mentorship during the years of my coursework I’ll remember most. Believe it or not, you’ll both serve as (partial) models for the kind of professor I aspire to become.

And finally, to the one likely to be next to me when I reach the terminus of life’s dead-end street, my wife, Kim. Your suffering as I tortured myself over this project will be rewarded—I promise! Thank you for being there in every way when I was here, in front of my computer, writing. I love you.

Dedication

To the processes of blind variation and selective retention, you've made a biocultural man of me.

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Introduction

The present work begins from a simple observation of everyday life in 21st century America: Our society and culture are awash in cops.¹

Look around. Need a police officer? Dial 911 or, instead, you might go to your nearby shopping mall, where your local police department operates a convenient retail storefront. More commonly, however, cops are looking for you. Local traffic patrols on streets and highways are pervasive, as are any number of various security, sobriety, immigration, and contraband checkpoints. Public transportation facilities—airports, train and bus stations—are crowded with local police and a new breed of post-9/11 federal cop, the TSA agent, whose daily interactions with passengers seem to violate the rules of basic human dignity. Public spaces of all kinds, city, county, and federal administrative offices, courthouses, post offices, local parks, recreational facilities, sports stadiums, and seats of governance are all characterized by a highly visible police presence. Even primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities too, have police officers patrolling their campuses as a matter of course. Beyond perhaps the church, temple, or synagogue, there are few public spaces without a visible, if largely unnoticed, police presence.

Police ubiquity extends to the virtual world, too. News stories involving police activities fill the headlines of printed newspapers and online news sites; police stories dominate radio and television news broadcasts and provide endless fodder for the blogosphere and social media. Additionally, fictional representations of the professional police officer daily flood the imagination of millions of Americans. Such representations make policing the single most represented occupation across popular media platforms, literature, film, television, video games,

¹ As a former police officer, an ex-cop myself, I use this colloquial term with deepest respect.

and music (Harris, 2004). That these representations are overwhelmingly violent is common knowledge and supported by years of research. In fiction as in everyday life, the cops have us surrounded.

Contemporary policing practices reveal not only the ubiquity of police but also the attitudes and tactics of cops themselves. I refer here to the well-documented rise in the use of violent, military-styled raids and para-military units, a.k.a. SWAT teams, for routine and otherwise low-risk law enforcement activities (American Civil Liberties Union, 2014; Balko, 2013; P. B. Kraska, 1996, 2007; P. B. Kraska & Cubellis, 1997). There is something remarkable about the pervasive use of armored personnel carriers, grenades, and semi-automatic rifles in assiduously choreographed assaults by men clad in flak-jackets and camouflage and whose putative duty is to protect life and property and to serve the People.

Eastern Kentucky University criminologist Peter Kraska estimates that paramilitary police units conduct 50,000 such raids on American homes and businesses annually (P. Kraska, 1999; P. B. Kraska, 2007; P. B. Kraska & Kappeler, 1997). A 2014 report issued by the American Civil Liberties Union (ALCU) estimates that 79% of SWAT deployments are searches for contraband (*i.e.*, not takedowns of violent criminals). As I write these words, police in the U.S. city of Ferguson, Missouri are drawing international attention to this issue as a result of their use of such militaristic tactics to conduct crowd control at a public protest.

A simple internet search of the terms “police militarization” using Google Images confirms Kraska’s characterizations. The images show countless press photos from across America graphically depicting the hyper-militarized character of present-day policing. From small towns and rural counties to the largest of our metropolitan regions and cities, cops appear as occupying soldiers. Police militarization has accompanied rising police ubiquity and, until the

events of Ferguson in August of 2014, had largely escaped the notice of the mainstream press and the broader public. Police, while becoming more ubiquitous in our lifetimes have also grown increasingly more militaristic in their attitudes, weaponry, dress, and tactics.

There is yet another observation of modern policing, casually referred to as “police misconduct,” that is less a trend of modern times than it is an apparently intractable feature of the institution. Abuses of authority, unnecessary uses of force, and public corruption are chronically present across police agencies and throughout their history (Armstrong, 2012; Sherman, 1978).

Here in the digital age, data on daily police misconduct is so readily available that watchdog organizations, such as the American Civil Liberties Union (“Police Brutality,” n.d.) and the libertarian Cato Institute (“National police misconduct reporting project,” n.d.), are able to aggregate that information into online databases that are updated daily. Incidences that could once be explained away as isolated cases of local malfeasance can now be seen as part of a much larger reality. As Ohio University’s Judith Grant has observed, misconduct is so common to police work that it should not be thought of as misconduct at all but as an inherent feature of policing (Grant, 2003). The historical persistence of police (mis)conduct, despite decades of various political reform efforts, suggests that such behavior may be structural or otherwise systemic.

From the above, a set of preliminary, relatively uncontroversial conclusions can, I think, be reasonably drawn. The first of which is that it is nearly inconceivable that one could live through a single day in America without some exposure to the police, either direct or indirect, real or fictional. Secondly, the odds that any encounter with police will involve military-styled state violence are higher today than at any time in our lifetimes; and lastly, policing, i.e., awarding power to some over others for the purpose of social control, tends to result in the

myriad abuse of that power by those to whom it is granted. Together these three conditions comprise the current state of domestic policing in the U.S; or, what I rather unimaginatively call herein, the *policed state*.²

Taken together, the phenomenon of the “policed state” prompts attention and study. Given that the *policed state* so defined is a recently constituted social condition having arisen without particular notice by many scholars, the media, or the wider public, a basic question arises: “What’s going on here?”

The Problem

There should be little doubt that the tangible and cultural ubiquity, militarism, and (mis)conduct of police in everyday American life is overdetermined by long-developing trends, driven by historical events, cultural institutions, competing ideologies, government policies, shifts in socio-cultural values, representations of perceived realities, and the discreet acts and motivations of organizations and individuals. However, the present circumstance cannot be reduced to a single causal explanation. The *policed state* has become normalized, naturalized, the accepted “taken-for-granted” condition of life in the United States through the complex processes of negotiating social realities. These constitute the context within which I examine the police procedural sub-genre of crime fiction, considering how this signifying practice might have

² All of the above, it should be said, is intended as a dispassionate description of policing in 21st century America. Whether the *policed state* is, on net, good or bad for American society is perhaps debatable. Whether the circumstance is or is not socially desirable, or a necessary condition to the relatively peaceful/stable social order enjoyed in the U.S. is a question I do not endeavor to address. The evaluative questions are not here considered relevant to the observable facts comprising the *policed state* as I’ve defined it (Rollin, 1975).

contributed to the general acceptance of the *policed state* as the “normal” condition of American society.

As a communication scholar interested in the various roles played by fictional narrative in the social construction of everyday life, I am keenly interested in understanding the part played, if any, in the acceptance of the *policed state* by popular media representations of police, particularly those literary, cinematic, and televisual representations known collectively as the police procedural subgenre of crime fiction (henceforth, the *procedural*). As the name suggests, what distinguishes the *procedural* from other forms of crime fiction is the form’s focus on police procedures. *Procedurals* are conventionally realistic in their depiction of police operations and structural subdivisions of labor, often eschewing melodrama in favor of focusing on the police response to crime and social disorder (Wilson, 2000; Nichols-Pethick, 2012).

Prior to 1948, there was no such thing as the *procedural* as such. Like the *policed state* itself, the *procedural*’s emergence is relatively recent, and over the years has achieved a ubiquitous presence. As a widely disseminated fictional depiction of police activities, attitudes, tactics, and procedures, often with direct police input, these narratives are thought to be potentially important cultural artifacts, historical records capable of aiding our understanding of public notions of policing in American society (Arntfield, 2011; Dove, 1982; Nichols-Pethick, 2012; Wilson, 2000).

Beyond being an historical record, however, media theory suggests that the representations, the discourses, surrounding *procedurals* may play an active part in shaping the widely held beliefs about police and policing within any given society. To the degree that those beliefs inform public behavior and legislative policy, thereby guiding the use of state police

power, the significance of understanding the role of the *procedural* genre in constructing those beliefs becomes imperative.

Finally, *procedurals* enjoy wide media distribution, are extremely popular with media audiences, and have dominated the American representational landscape of policing since the middle of the 20th century. For these reasons, the form is herein considered particularly relevant to the construction of contemporary conceptions of the role of police in our putatively free society (Nachbar & Lausé, 1992, pp. 1–35).

The focus of the present work, then, is to investigate the relationship, if any, between the *procedural* genre in literature, film, and television and the contemporary *policed state*. It is a search for articulations that will help us make better sense of the *policed state* and our attitudes and responses to this new social arrangement. The study seeks to interpret events that have in part led to the *policed state* as the relatively unquestioned everyday practice of negotiating policed environments, i.e., the socially constructed common sense norm widely accepted by the general public. The analytical task, therefore, is to explicate the communicative processes of a particular form of human behavior—storytelling in the *procedural* form—and its consequences. The study must ask, who is telling these stories? Why? To whom? To what effect? What do the stories mean and, more importantly, how are those meanings constructed and shared? And finally, have these meanings played a significant role in shaping public acceptance of the *policed state*? If so, how; and in what ways?

So the problem addressed in this study is not strictly the *policed state*, nor is the problem limited to interpreting particular *procedurals* as texts to be read for intended or resistant meanings; the problem is to view the *procedural* as a particular cultural activity—an actual human behavior, a signifying practice, or a set of storytelling behaviors—undertaken by

individual human beings complete with their own discreet motivations, within particular social contexts, and for specific purposes, that have led to various consequences. The aim here is to reveal the articulations—the symbolic connections—among the various stages of meaning-making that support the prevailing and relatively uncritical social acceptance of the *policed state* as a necessary fact of life.

Conceptual Framework

The circuit of culture model (the *circuit*), as developed within the field of cultural studies is useful here (du Gay, 1997; Hall, 1997). The model sets forth an empirical/theoretical analytic framework that identifies five interconnected sites, or moments necessary to consider in the process of cultural meaning-making: production, representation, reception (consumption), regulation, and identification.

The model is empirical in the sense that each site in the *circuit* is imagined as an observable moment in the circulation of any artifact throughout any given society. Clearly, cultural artifacts are each produced, represented, received, regulated (by law, social norms, and/or market forces), and used to forge individual and group identities by a given someone, at a given somewhere, at a given sometime, and within a given context. Each of these given moments, therefore, can be identified, described, and explored. The *procedural* is a certain type of artifact whose movement among the various sites of meaning-making can be modeled by the *circuit*.

However, the theoretical underpinnings of the *circuit*, which elucidate the complexities of how meanings are constructed is where the real work is done. Meaning is not thought to be given in any particular moment of the *circuit* but is derived through the interactions occurring between

and among each moment. Therefore, each moment in the process is not investigated independently of one another but, instead, must be explored in light of the symbolic relationships that connect them (du Gay, 1997). These connections are conceptualized by a theory of articulation (Slack, 1996), which seeks to explicate the processes by which culture is arbitrarily, or conventionally constructed through discursive webs that symbolically connect each moment of meaning-making.

Simply stated, and for my purposes, articulation is understood as a descriptive account of how meanings are constructed and come to be taken for granted as common sense through repetitive use. The term, “articulation,” refers to how we use language (discourse) to construct meanings by arbitrarily linking unrelated concepts through a system of denotation, connotation, and evocation. The symbolically-linked concepts are said to form a temporarily unified meaningful whole. The un-relatedness among the various concepts are ignored or dismissed. The articulations are a sort of unspoken agreement within discursive communities, conventional usages of representations that facilitate shared understanding. These agreements are further said to be negotiated among competing interests.

For example, take the idea of American patriotism as an example of an articulated reality. The common sense understanding of the concept is constructed, produced and re-produced through representations such as we could imagine a scene depicting U.S. children eating apple pie in a park as an American flag waves in the background and a band plays a familiar march. In this scenario, each symbol connotes a relationship among the others where no relationship actually exists; i.e., there is no concrete relationship among apple pie and children and national flags and military marches, although the common sense view is that few scenes would be considered more patriotically American. By symbolically linking such disparate institutional

concepts as family, tradition, nationalism, and the military, these images together create a temporary unity of ideas that evoke a sense of patriotism, where the meaning of patriotism comes to entail supporting militarism. The un-relatedness among the concepts is ignored. The repeated circulation of like-articulations normalizes the construction of this meaning of patriotism to form a relatively stable, taken-for-granted view that patriotism necessarily entails an uncritical support of the military.

Articulation as described above can be conceived as the *cultural architecture* of constructed meanings, which result in the emergence of historically contingent social formations that, by all accounts, is the normal or natural condition, when in fact it is merely the arbitrarily or conventionally constructed condition. In this view, it would be imprecise to merely say that patriotism is a social construction; instead, it is more precise to say that by articulating concepts in representation, such as family, tradition, nationalism, and the military, we socially construct our notion of patriotism. In light of this, we might ask ourselves what is the *cultural architecture* of our constructed notions of police and policing?

The above model of articulation is especially relevant to my project given that my aim is to explicate any role of the *procedural* in the process by which the *policed state* became an accepted norm of American social life. The *procedural* is a particular representational form whose discourses have articulated certain concepts related to policing. Could those have also played a role in our coming to unquestioningly accept the *policed state* as I have described it? I suggest that by examining certain historical discourses surrounding 20th century policing as they have circulated within and among texts, audiences, and institutions we might discover some connections between those representations and the *policed state*.

However, like others (Pinker, 2010; D. S. Wilson, 2005), I am not fully satisfied by purely cultural explanations of social construction—mostly because those deny or ignore any possible relevance of evolved human predispositions for perception, representation, and reception in the construction of meaning. It appears that the assumption that no meanings are given at the moment of representation, and that all meanings are negotiated is in err. Recent research into human cognition alerts us to the fact that indeed some meanings are given; i.e., some representations among and between people require no cognitive interpretation as the process is generally understood to work. It appears to be especially so with regard to the signaling of human emotions, motivations, and intentions.

The conveyance of meaning in this formulation is accomplished in part by so-called “mirror neurons,” which seem to allow us to experience moments of representation more so than interpret them (Barry, 2009; Gallese, 2005), and by so called Theory of Mind, a psychological capacity for understanding the intentions of others (Frith and Frith, 2005). In light of these and other recent advances in evolutionary biology, genetics, neuroscience, and psychology, it’s intellectually unsettling to think that something called human nature has no relevancy to contemporary human affairs when clear patterns of species-typical behaviors are so universally evident across various human societies (D. E. Brown, 1991). Human nature, it seems to me, plays a role in our cultural constructions and our cultural constructs impact our natural behavior. We evidently live in a world of both constructed and fundamental meanings whose processes and effects are undoubtedly mingled. We humans are biocultural beings.

Central to the biocultural perspective is the recognition that all life processes are the product of broadly Darwinian forces (Dawkins, 2010; Pagel, 2002). The human mind, which is quite obviously the ultimate source of all things cultural, evolved capacities for meaning making.

Like every other organ in the human body, the mind evolved its capacities to perform certain myriad functions related to the survival and reproduction of our genes. Our perceptions and representations, therefore, are not likely to be completely arbitrary or always merely conventional. Humans do not perceive and represent just anything or everything in the environment. Through elaborate and complex cognitive processes “designed” over millions of years by evolutionary forces, humans perceive the material world and those *particular* patterns, shapes, light waves, and movements that are relevant to our well-being. We have an evolved disinterest in the irrelevant.

It follows that for our representations to be most meaningful to others those must possess some non-arbitrary characteristics. They must be constructed in such a way in which they’ll be perceived, or attended to by others. While it is logically possible to articulate concepts in wholly arbitrary ways, these constructions would likely be meaningless, or at least less-meaningful to others who naturally perceive according to the brain’s evolved mechanisms for perception. The result would be that wholly arbitrary constructions would be largely ignored as noise, if perceived at all, or perceived as mere curiosities or subjective instrumentalities. Any analysis of cultural processes that does not account for the process that makes culture possible, i.e., natural selection by blind variation and selective retention, seems to me unnecessarily incomplete and probably somewhat misguided.

Evolutionary theorists insist that biologically speaking, given the extremely lengthy time lapse in which significant evolutionary change occurs (thousands of years), it is implausible to think that the evolved structures of the human mind do not play a significant role in structuring contemporary articulated realities because those structures just have not had enough time, evolutionarily speaking, to change; therefore, it is far more plausible that our cognitive capacities

for symbolic communication and cultural production continue to serve the evolutionary functions for which they were selected.

In light of these considerations, the relation of these concepts to those of cultural studies is troubling and at the same time interesting. I am curious to consider just how arbitrary are our articulations? Are they wholly conventional as many within the field of cultural studies assume? I'm unsure. Surely some articulated realities are more or less arbitrary than others. It is unremarkable to note that some cultural constructs clearly garner greater attention, persist interminably, and exert more hegemonic force, while others never catch on, fade away quickly, or reproduce no discernable social relation. In other words, some succeed and some fail. This suggests to me that persistent, successful constructs possess some fundamental, intrinsic character that partially explains their robustness. Something about these makes them more deserving of the mind's attention and, thereby, facilitates their taken-for-grantedness because on some level they really do make common sense or represent some dimension of a more or less "fixed" reality. How our evolved biology intersects with cultural production, therefore, is an added concern of this study.

I earlier pointed out that "*procedurals* enjoy wide media distribution, are extremely popular with media audiences, and have dominated the American representational landscape of policing since the middle of the 20th century;" I have not asked or answered why this is so; nor have I considered what the interpretive gains might be made by answering these questions from a broadly Darwinian, or biocultural perspective. I address these next by starting from what I see as the basic cultural studies perspective.

A standard view from a cultural studies perspective attempting to explain why some representations succeed might be described thus: *Powerful elements of society who control the*

means of cultural production produce representational artifacts that privilege their own interests at the expense of the interests of the less powerful in society. This results in social formations structured in relationships of power and dominance. Arbitrarily articulated realities persist so long as they continue to serve the interests of the powerful elements of society and change only in ways that maintain those relationships, unless actively subverted or contested by progressive elements of society (Barker, 2011; Johnson, 1986; Lewis, 2008).

Clearly, there is some truth in this view. There is no shortage of examples of self-serving representations produced by those in power; nor is there a shortage of social relations characterized by power and dominance. However, to suggest that the representations of the powerful are self-serving, which they often are, does not explain why the less powerful would attend to those representations, or why those representations should persist. Clearly, the representations of the powerful elements of society would be rendered inert if the less powerful did not attend to them. If the representations of the powerful were not attended to, they would not persist. This is especially true within capitalist economies within which culture industries are self-liquidating upon a failure to attract audiences (provided they're not subsidized).

Critical scholars have variously turned to speculative theories of Marxian false consciousness, Althusserian ideology, and Gramscian hegemony to explain the phenomenon. In my view, however, the basic truth of Darwinian processes offers a compelling alternative account—humans are naturally predisposed, cognitively determined (partially) to perceive and represent the relevant, or instrumental reality in representations and ignore the irrelevant. Theories of false consciousness, ideology, and hegemony rely on a human mind that attends too much to the irrelevant and are, thereby, largely the product of culture. I want to suggest that perhaps the assumed un-relatedness of disparate concepts in our theory of articulation conceals a

deeper relationship among them, one formed in the deep past of our evolutionary history. In this case, social formations of unequal power are seen as an effect, or by-product of non- or less-arbitrary elements of discourse. To ferret these out, we need a better account of the process of social construction.

Daniel Nettle (2005) is among a growing list of scholars (Bordwell, 2007a; B. Boyd, 2009; Carroll, 2004; Pinker, 2004) who argue that successful cultural constructs map onto the cognitive structures of the evolved human mind. In extending this line of thought, I suggest that those constructs which come to be taken as common sense are those whose articulations are less arbitrary. The upshot is that the human mind, shaped by millions of years of evolution by natural selection to perceive, conceive, and represent the natural world in ways instrumental to our species' survival and reproduction still articulates concepts for these purposes. In light of these conditions, I conceive of sociocultural constructs as the hand axe of the human mind, instruments designed to solve particular problems related to survival and reproduction that were encountered by our ancestors in our evolutionary past. In this view, the *cognitive architecture* of the human mind likely limits the range of arbitrariness found in successful constructions of meaning. As David Bordwell put it:

As humans we have evolved certain capacities and predispositions, ranging from perceptual ones (biological mechanisms for obtaining information about the world we live in) to social ones (e.g., affinities with and curiosity about other humans). By exercising those capacities and predispositions and by bonding with our conspecifics, we have built a staggeringly sophisticated array of cultural practices—skills, technologies, arts, and institutions...we designed them to mesh with our perceptual and cognitive capacities...[each is] a tool exquisitely shaped to the powers and purposes of human activity. (2007a, p. ix)

I suggest that, if Bordwell, Nettle, and others (Andrews & Andrews, 2012; B. Boyd, Carroll, & Gottschall, 2010; R. Boyd & Richerson, 2008; Carroll, 2004; Gottschall & Wilson, 2005) are right in asserting that our “skills, technologies, arts, and institutions” are “designed to

mesh with our perceptual and cognitive capacities,” then the *procedural* is such an art so designed (Indeed all of our persistent negotiated/socially constructed realities are more or less so designed).

The persistence and effects of *procedurals* can be understood in broadly biocultural terms less arbitrary than prevailing notions of social relations of power and dominance; that is to say that the *cultural architecture* that undergirds our social constructions, those modeled by the *circuit of culture*, is contingently shaped by the *cognitive architecture* that has evolved to solve particular kinds of problems related to survival and reproduction. This suggests that something other than, or in addition to, the interests of the dominant class are being served by our articulated social formations, something more universal to both media producers and consumers.

To summarize the conceptual framework upon which I have based my analysis, the *circuit of culture* is understood as a useful model for describing the articulated nature of constructed realities. The various sites in the circulation of texts within society are accepted as moments significant to the construction of meaning. However, instead of assuming that the articulations of apparently disparate concepts are wholly arbitrary or merely conventional, I consider the possibility that there is a non-arbitrary relationship inherent to persistent constructs which arise from our evolved psychology. I have very consciously attempted to set aside ideological assumptions of the cultural and political economies in order to play with the idea that human nature—defined as species-typical traits and behaviors universal to all human beings regardless of cultural difference, guided by our evolved *cognitive architecture*—render contingent, but less arbitrarily articulated social conditions that are more or less meaningful to the degree that those articulations comport with said evolved human nature.

Method

An important part of the present project is to ground a hermeneutical approach in Darwinian thought; i.e., I intend to develop a biocultural perspective and interpretive method of critical mass media analysis that reconciles social constructivist approaches with theories of evolutionary psychology. It is my attempt at a more holistic, less ideologically driven understanding of what is going on between our mass mediated representations and social life.

To that end, I make use of theoretical knowledge generated across the natural and social sciences and the humanities. My work is interdisciplinary and eclectic. Mine is an effort to follow the example set by James Carey by “go[ing] elsewhere into biology, theology, anthropology, and literature for some intellectual material with which to [study communication from a constructivist perspective]” (2009, p. 18). Furthermore, I share Carey’s view of scientific method, where method is understood as a commitment “to certain valued habits: full disclosure, willingness to provide reasons, openness to experience, and an arena for systematic criticism” (p. 61) which, nevertheless, “does not entail doing away with [empirical] research methods” (p. 71).

Keeping the above in mind, Carey outlined a basic three-step approach to research that guides my work: “look at the practices people engage in, the conceptual world embedded in and presupposed by those practices, and the social relations and forms of life that they manifest” (2009, p. 65). I take him to mean that we must ask and answer the questions, “What have people done/what do they do; what must they have believed was/is true about the world which led them to act; and finally, what have been the consequences in terms of social formations of these actions and beliefs?”

To search for answers, I have made extensive use of publicly available artifacts, library archives of historical newspapers, reports and commentaries, biographies, academic studies and journals, police training manuals, film and television reviews, social media, and, of course, I have reviewed countless *procedurals* across formats, e.g., novels, films, and TV.

Literature Review

Federal law enforcement policies, notably the 1970s era “war on crime,” the 1980s redoubling of efforts in the “war on drugs,” and specific post-9/11 policies that allow for the transfer of surplus military equipment from the U.S. Defense Department to domestic police agencies are often cited as reasons for the rise of the *policed state* (American Civil Liberties Union, 2014; Balko, 2013; P. Kraska, 1999; P. B. Kraska & Kappeler, 1997); others argue that paramilitary policing stems not from a war on crime but a war on the underclass who have become both enemy and victim (Meeks, 2006); Hill, et. al., argue that rising ubiquity and militarism among police stems from America’s use of domestic police agencies in filling a perceived gap in national security (S. M. Hill, Beger, & Zanetti II, 2007); an ethnographic study of a paramilitary police unit suggests that military equipment and tactics lend an element of enjoyability and control to the largely mundane and unpredictable job of police work (P. B. Kraska, 1996). No doubt all of these factors and others have contributed to the *policed state*.

What is too little understood from such studies, however, is the role of popular representations of police in literature, film, and television as those relate to the *policed state*’s taken-for-grantedness. How, for instance, have popular representations of police fed back into the warrior mentality—which is to ask of their role in constructing identities; or, how do *procedurals* represent those elite status sub-cultures to the general public? How are those representations received? The works of Balko and Kraska in particular are invaluable descriptive

accounts of the current circumstance and point to normative causal factors important to understanding what is going on; none of the above works, however, consider the role of the *procedural* in normalizing widely held notions of police and/or policing.

Since its inception, the modern *procedural*, its origins traced to the 1940s (Palmer, 2008; C. P. Wilson, 2000; Dove, 1982), has achieved and maintained a disproportionally significant presence and popularity in American media (Reiner, 2010; C. P. Wilson, 2000) yet, surprisingly, comparatively little has been written on the subject per se (Nichols-Pethick, 2012). Social scientific approaches to media consumption have attempted in some cases to explain the *procedural* genre's appeal through various uses and gratifications (D. Brown, Lauricella, Douai, & Zaidi, 2012; Reith, 1996), and effects researchers have thereby linked crime dramas to gender attitudes, like, for example, the relationship between such representations and social attitudes on sexual violence against women (Custers & Van den Bulck, 2013; Lee, Hust, Zhang, & Zhang, 2011) and attitudes relative to male masculinity (Scharrer, 2001). Other studies seek to discover the influence of crime dramas on political views (Holbert, Shah, & Kwak, 2004; Mutz & Nir, 2010). Studies such as those cited above tend to confirm the idea that the consumption of particular narratives serves an informational function among audiences about things other than the police. People's views of the world, it is argued, are shaped to some degree by social learning through the consumption of police representations. To the degree that representations of police influence our beliefs about police, a generally favorable view emerges (police are almost always the "good guy"). A key factor in this effect appears to be the degree to which audiences empathize with police characters (Mutz & Nir, 2010). While these studies appear to identify the presence of a positive associative effect, they mostly rely on theories of cultivation in explaining the process by which the effect is manifested. George Gerbner and his associates posit that

repeated viewing of such fictional representations of police, over long periods of time, cultivate acceptance of police authority in light of a “mean world” (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002); critics, however, have pointed out that the attitudes supposedly cultivated are also present in non-viewers, which tends to undermine the cultivation thesis (Hirsch, 1980).

More critical approaches to the *procedural* in the literature over recent years narrowly focus on socio-cultural factors related to power and dominance, such as class, race, and gender (Creeber, 2002; MacDonald, 2002; Sydney-Smith, 2007; Turnbull, 2010; C. P. Wilson, 2000), or crime and deviance (Reiner, 2010). These studies tend to examine just one text, a particular film or television show, which limits what those have to say about the *procedural* form itself. The narrow focus of these studies on relationships of power and dominance obscures the role of other social relations that seem to matter to the social order at least as much; say, for instance, relations of cooperation and mutual benefit, or authority and legitimacy to name two (Carey, 2009).

While these cultural studies offer some insight into the operation of power in society, they tend to ignore the historical development of the genre and treat artifacts as if they sprang to existence fully formed. Further, as Lawrence Grossburg (2010) has recently observed of cultural scholarship generally, many of these studies tend to prove what is already known. In other words, much of the recent critical work serve only as discreet examples of representational phenomena that are assumed to already be well-understood by scholars (Barker, 2011; Hall, 1997; Lewis, 2008).

I tend to agree with Grossburg on the point, although I disagree with him on the fix (he argues for a commitment to “radical [cultural] particularism” (2010), whereas I argue herein for a consideration of biocultural universalism).

The recent scholarship concerned with popular representations of police has become redundant and is not moving the conversation forward. Less charitably, much of it suffers from obscurantism, while other studies devolve into inanity, calling the whole project of cultural studies into question (Bérubé, 2009; Ferguson & Golding, 1997). Re-examining some of our assumptions seems in order. Notwithstanding, there are three significant works which focus on the *procedural* form more generally, and it is among these that the present work is situated. They are: George Dove's 1982 book, *The Police Procedural*; Christopher Wilson's 2000 book, *Cop Knowledge*; and the 2012 work of Jonathan Nichols-Pethick, *TV Cops*.

Dove's work is unique in the fact that it is the only such work to focus solely on literary texts, i.e., novels, although he subscribes to the orthodox view that television's *Dragnet* is the genre's definitive example (p. 12). He seeks to establish the *procedural* as a distinct sub-genre of crime fiction, complete with a narrowly defined set of conventions that today would be considered too restrictive; for example, in Dove's view, *procedurals* are concerned only with the work of detectives, not uniformed officers. This view would remove from the canon such literary texts such as Joseph Wambaugh's *The Blue Knight*, and TV's *Adam-12*, *The Rookies*, *TJ Hooker*, and, to an extent, *Hill Street Blues* to name just a few. This view results from Dove's mistaken belief that uniformed officers do not conduct ongoing criminal investigations according to set procedures. Additionally, this view overlooks the instrumental role of the uniformed officer to the work of the detective.

Regardless, of more concern is how Dove's detective-centric view contradicts one of his own key insights concerning the popularity of *procedurals* among audiences. Namely, he argues that "the police procedural is the only kind of detective story in which the detective has a recognizable counterpart in real life." Nobody knows anybody like Sherlock Holmes or Sam

Spade, Dove suggests, but *procedurals* align with societal “preconceptions carried over from the non-fictional world. Everybody...knows the police detective” (p. 3).

While Dove’s main point is correct—*procedurals* seem to have an authentic connection to lived experience in a way much fiction does not—I venture to say that those experiences with uniformed officers far outnumber those with detectives in shabby sports coats. Everybody knows the uniformed cop, either personally or professionally, and our preconceptions and representations of uniformed police and policing matter to any analysis of the *procedural*.

In any event, the appeal of *procedurals*, according to Dove, lays in this connection between lived experience and its representation. True enough, I suppose; however, he never really gets to why this is so. He relies on an unsatisfactory tautology: people know and like fictional police because they know and like nonfictional police. The point hardly needs to be made that people know and like other people in all sorts of career fields, but we do not consume media representations of, say, accountants accounting at anything near the level of police policing. The question raised is, why are people uniquely interested in viewing fictional representations of their nonfictional experiences of police, in particular? The previously discussed evolved psychological mechanisms for perception/attention, conception, and representation appear to offer at least part of the answer. There is perhaps something present in *procedurals* that captures our attention at a fundamental level to a degree other representations do not (Nettle, 2010).

The upshot of Dove’s analysis, however, is to suggest that the conventions of the form do not limit the genre’s ability to respond to all manner of social exigencies, “...the procedural, rather than being a prosaic tale limited to commonplace situations and surroundings, is an instrument of almost unlimited flexibility,” Dove writes (p. 249). Nichols-Pethick (2012)

implicitly concurs with Dove on the point but argues that contra this position, the scholarly view of the *procedural* that has come to prevail in the field is just the opposite. That is to say that the dominant scholarly view of *procedurals*, according to Nichols-Pethick, is that they “are limited by the genre’s formulaic nature” and, further, “this formula provides moral reassurance and champions an inherently conservative social agenda by focusing on the essential wisdom and virtue of those who enforce the law...and offer protection from all who threaten the social order” (p. 2).

Nichols-Pethick, as did Dove, sees this prevailing view as too prescriptive, and as a somewhat simplistic view of the *procedural*’s role in shaping public attitudes of police. He argues persuasively that the *procedural* draws widely on current social and political issues to tell stories that respond to a variety of social, economic, and political concerns from a variety of perspectives. The narratives of *procedurals*, he argues, are instrumental to the public’s broader understanding of the social order and often work to challenge the prescriptive view by rehearsing progressive themes. It is not his intention to argue whether *procedurals* are conservative or progressive, however; instead, he views the *procedural* as a specific site where meanings are negotiated within a specific socio-political milieu and in response to the demands of industry. Much like the present study, he wants to look at production, representation, and reception of these stories within a broader cultural context.

As Dove’s study was limited to the novel, Nichols-Pethick focuses on the televisual, with particular emphasis on how the *procedural* is filtered and formed by the commercial interests of television—the cultural economy. Like much of contemporary cultural studies, however, Nichols-Pethick proceeds on the unspoken assumption that discourse is the only, or the primary force at work in shaping meaning. Wilson (2000) attempts to problematize this presumption

when he observes the tendency of cultural theorists to view “popular narratives as products of an autonomous culture industry, responding entirely to its own imperatives and formulae, or as a realm of culture separate from police authority itself” (p. 212). Wilson’s is an appeal, however latent, to Durkheim’s social facts hypothesis (the idea that social facts can only be explained by other social facts), which leads to an unspoken assumption: that human nature plays no significant role in determining social facts. From an evolutionary perspective, Wilson, Nichols-Pethick, and Dove all ignore the animating force of meaning itself, *Homo sapiens*.

Wilson’s *Cop Knowledge* is the only work to examine aspects of the *procedural* in all of its most popular forms, literature, film, and television. In it, Wilson, to a degree, presents the view criticized by Nichols-Pethick that *procedurals* are essentially conservative texts. Police in this view are resistant to progressive change due to institutional inertia, racism, and distrust of the public they are appointed to serve. The strength of Wilson’s analysis lays in its attempt to connect the current state of policing to historical developments within policing itself, and to our own cultural storytelling practices. Its faults lay in its insistence that storytelling is a culturally specific practice. It’s not. All cultures tell stories with a remarkable degree of thematic and structural similarity, suggesting that our evolved human nature may play a role in determining the stories we tell and the stories we attend to. As David Sloan Wilson, citing Daniel Nettle, writes, “...if we ask what themes would most interest a nonhuman primate, those are the themes that are most prominently featured in Shakespeare and indeed all of literature” (2005, p. 29). To the degree that these themes underlie the *procedural* form, they remain unexplored. What all writers on the topics of the *policed state* and the role of *procedural* texts lack is an account of the necessary relationship between the evolved nature of human beings and their cultural constructs.

Of secondary consequence is that while seemingly all scholars writing on the *procedural* acknowledge that authors and screenwriters often observe actual cops at work, interview real cops at length, and study police manuals, none seem to acknowledge this for what it is: the appropriation of the stories of actual police officers who are not negotiating public meaning so much as they are negotiating their own lived experience.

An important limitation, therefore, to the existing scholarship is the exclusive focus on socio-cultural factors. Recent advances in neuroscience, physics, biology, and psychology undermine prevailing notions of cultural determinism, even weaker ones. Our models of what is going on in the world, it would seem, ought to comport with our observations of how humans actually act. That is to say that this study acknowledges before anything else that human beings, *Homo sapiens*, are animals without special standing in the universe despite our widespread beliefs otherwise. Our species has not by faith or reason transcended its evolved nature or otherwise fully escaped nature's influence on human behavior or, therefore, nature's impact on human culture. As Nettle writes, culture is

...ultimately constrained by the fact that evolution made the mind, and the mind makes culture, the mind generates it, the mind learns it, and the mind uses it. If it is unlearnable, unusable, or unmemorable, it changes or disappears. Thus, the structure of the mind is one arm of the explanation of why the cultural constructions that persist around us persist, the other arm being the environment or context. (2005, p. 59)

This more holistic view concludes that the biology/culture binary is misleading. Human action, motivated by our evolved natures and mediated by symbolic expression, creates cultures by which we adapt and, reciprocally, those cultures influence and shape our behaviors. We're biocultural.

Organization

The main body of the study is divided into three main chapters. The first examines an array of historical forces that are thought to be significant in giving rise to the procedural form. More specifically, I argue that social conditions in the early part of the 20th century saw the emergence of an ideological consensus regarding the state's obligation to ensure social order. The appearance of police in the popular imagination reflects the growing significance of police in the daily affairs of average citizens and displaced earlier representational forms of private approaches to solving social conflicts. Historical economic, political, and biological forces of production coalesced in the training practices of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), giving rise to a storytelling culture motivated by status-seeking within the department that was later appropriated by Jack Webb for the production of television's first *procedural*.

In chapter two, I turn my attention to texts, or the moment of representation, asking not just what is being represented but why and by whom. Here I argue that *procedurals* are cop art, stories that belong to that particular American sub-culture known as police. The genre, I demonstrate, rests on a remarkably stable internal structure that maps to the evolved structures of the human mind and, surprisingly, reveals a sense among police of their own social exclusion from the broader public and a resulting hostility. In this view, articulations of crime and criminality, or even police work itself are considered cursory to fundamental questions regarding the purpose of narrative fiction and its role in managing social relations.

In the final chapter, I examine a selection of audience responses to *procedural* texts that suggests that emotional displays are perhaps a structural feature of *procedural* texts essential to satisfactory meaning making. In this view, human attention to *procedurals* depends on the presence of empathic signaling, which is perceived as particularly salient to one's own welfare.

A connection is drawn between audience responses to fictional police and their real-world correlate response to actual police encounters, suggesting that cops are perceived as a kind of social threat that requires monitoring, and *procedurals* provide a forum for doing so.

Chapter One: Production

The widely-held view of media scholars regarding the origins of the *procedural* is one which locates those origins to a greater or lesser extent in the films, *The Naked City* (1948) and *He Walked by Night* (1948) (Dove, 1982; Palmer, 2008; C. P. Wilson, 2000). The coincidental year of release of both films, 1948, serves to mark that year as the beginning of the modern era *procedural* in literature, film, and television. Coincidentally, the latter film co-starred a little-known actor named Jack Webb, who would later go on to create the *Dragnet* radio, television, and film franchise, and who is regarded by many as the father of the *procedural* genre (Hayde, 2001).

According to received history, the two films owe a debt to the hardboiled detective fiction of novelists like Raymond Chandler and James Cain, and to the *noir* film tradition of the '40s. Webb, the narrative goes, in creating the genre's prototype television series, *Dragnet* (1951-59), along with its iconic Sergeant Joe Friday, borrowed the semi-documentary style and visual aesthetics from both *The Naked City* and *He Walked by Night* to develop the signature form of realism that came to define the genre's initial iteration (Palmer, 2008, pp. 61–62). The distinctive thematic style, focused as it was on the bureaucratic rationalization of police work, mimicked America's larger post-war acceptance of the instrumental rationalization of production and consumption more generally. Building on this notion of the *procedural's* mimetic qualities, Michael Arntfield has noted that:

Police procedurals endure in the American historical record as interactive public documents. They offer evidence about the collective values of their time, mirroring public sentiments on issues like violence, civil liberties, celebrity, and the general fear of crime. In other words, police procedurals are artifacts inscribed with the cultural mores and socio-political circumstances surrounding their production, for better or worse. (2011, p. 92)

The above account of the *procedural*'s origins and social character is best described as the orthodox view. But this view is attenuated in scope and does not consider fully the historical conditions under which the form arose; nor does it go deep enough into the social, cultural, or biological particulars that were the genre's progenitors. Indeed, as we shall see, the history of the *procedural*, particularly that history as it relates to the genre's production as modeled by the circuit of culture, is largely unknown.

What follows is a broader picture of the prevailing historical and sociocultural milieu from which the *procedural* form arose. First, we will consider the contingent historical conjuncture of ideological and institutional forces which shaped the burgeoning art prior to its emergence in 1948, ultimately tracing the *procedural*'s systematic production to the instrumentally rationalized training processes of the Los Angeles Police Department. Second, from the perspective of the biological dimensions of the *procedural*'s production, we will forge articulations among the cultural practice of storytelling, the evolved human predisposition to seek social status through story, and the production of early, i.e., foundational, *procedurals*. In short, I will demonstrate that the *procedural* is a product of social, cultural, and biological—sociobiological, or biocultural—influences within a contingent historical context.

Prelude to the *Procedural*

The well-chronicled big events of the decades leading up to 1948 and the emergence of the *procedural* form, e.g., World War I, the market crash of 1929, economic depression, the resultant rise of fascism in Europe, and the imperial ambitions of Japan were all met with resounding responses by the national government of the United States. To put it plainly, the world was more or less regarded as being in a state of disorder, and that condition was met with an unprecedented degree of federal intervention aimed at producing and maintaining order.

President Roosevelt's New Deal, the formation and activities of his National Recovery Administration, and America's military responses in Europe and the Pacific were at the time widely perceived, although not entirely uncritically (Fried, 2001), as successful federal interventions into serious economic, social, and political problems the world over (Alter, 2007; Cohen, 2010; Persico, 2014).

Questions as to whether the interventions were economically efficacious, morally appropriate, or legitimated by historical conditions, which would be relevant in other contexts, are not taken up here, neither are answers assumed nor denied. What I offer here is an interpretation of that larger event—the taking of unprecedented federal-level action—as it relates to the emergence of the *procedural* form. It is enough for my purposes to stipulate that, collectively, these historical events can be seen as constituting an intensified era of federal interventionism. That is only to say that the era encompassed a time period, roughly 1915-45, marked by largely unprecedented actions taken by the national government that reflected the belief among many that social, economic, and political order could and should be produced through planning, policy, and procedures implemented and enforced through the democratic state. The observation is a rather dispassionate, empirical one.

Such beliefs in the central planning of institutions, economies, and societies, of course, varied greatly in their particulars but had been in ascendance among social theorists since at least the time of Thomas Hobbes. However, historical conditions in America during the first half of the 20th century were such that the depth to which federal interventions reached the level of personal behavior was extraordinary. The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution's Prohibition on the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol stands as exemplary of the claim. At bottom of the interventionist era was the notion of social control *vis-à-vis* the intentional

management of social relations and personal behavior through state institutions or otherwise by governing elites.

Ideas for achieving social order comprised much of the social and cultural ether of the West at the time. The various precepts of Taylorism, Fordism, Freudism, Keynesianism, socialism, fascism, federalism, and behaviorism all were swirling about to varying degrees and configurations in capitalist societies across the Western world throughout the era, as was Max Weber's influential critique of the bureaucratic rationalization of society, which was first translated into English from its original German by Talcott Parsons in 1930 (Weber, 1930). Not surprisingly, themes of social control were reflected in the literature of the day. Yevgeni Zamyatin's *We*, Charlotte Haldane's *Man's World*, Aldous Huxley's *A Brave New World*, Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here*, Naomi Mitchison's *We Have Been Warned*, Ayn Rand's *Anthem*, and Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* were each published in English between 1926 and 1940; George Orwell's *Animal Farm* arrived in 1945.

Although distinct in their ideological perspectives, each has social control and order as central themes. Perhaps nowhere is the theme better explored, and thereby revealed as a dominant cultural current preceding the dawn of the *procedural*, than in Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932/2013). In it, the Western world's preoccupation with issues of social control was on full display. "Stability," said the Controller, "stability. No civilization without social stability. No social stability without individual stability" (p. 37).

Huxley's work was intended as a literary warning to the excesses of social control. Its didacticism was largely dismissed by critics and readers at the time of its publication (Murray, 2002). The dismissal was broadly based on the widely-held notion, at least among many critics,

that in such chaotic times as those of the 1930s the last thing one needed to be worrying about was too much control where there was none at all (D. Watt, 1975).

The sentiment was to a degree shared across the ideological spectrum. On the progressive left the sentiment was derisively captured by Granville Hicks in his 1932 review of Huxley's book for *The New Republic*: "With war in Asia, bankruptcy in Europe and starvation everywhere, what do you suppose Aldous Huxley is worried about? ...He is worrying about the unpleasantness of life in the utopia that, as he sees it, is just a century or two ahead" (D. Watt, 1975, p. 219). On the political right was literary critic Henry Hazlitt, who wrote of social disorder, "...there has probably never been a time when the world has not had an oversupply...Only when we have reduced them enormously will Mr. Huxley's central problem become a real problem." Hazlitt then went on to conclude his 1932 review of *Brave New World* with the implication that such a degree of social control imagined by Huxley was "futile" (Watt, 1975, p. 216-217).

The idea that social controls were desperately needed and that government was responsible to provide order seemingly comprised a good deal of Western consciousness. "I do not abhor [Huxley and D.H. Lawrence] as the first figures of an advancing anarchist army," wrote C.K. Chesterton in 1933. "On the contrary, I admire these men as the last figures of a defeated anarchist army" (D. Watt, 1975, p. 230).

A majority of Americans certainly seemed to agree with Chesterton that the state had a crucial role to play in producing social order. Voters in 1932, 1936, 1940, and 1944, by convincing margins elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whose campaign rhetoric leading up to the 1932 presidential election reflected the promise of social order through proper state regulation. Roosevelt argued that his vision of social control emanated from the American

tradition of decentralized, constitutionally limited federalism. He laid it out plainly in a campaign speech delivered August 27, 1932 at Sea Girt, New Jersey:

The experience of nearly one hundred and fifty years under the Constitution has shown us that the proper means of regulation is through the States, with control by the Federal Government limited to that which is necessary to protect the States in the exercise of their legitimate powers. This I submit is the principle embodied in our Democratic platform. (Roosevelt, 1932)

The speech quoted here was made in the context of repealing, in Roosevelt's words, the "stupendous blunder" of Prohibition. The policy had long been unpopular and was by 1932 seen as the abject failure that it was (Okrent, 2011). Roosevelt's call for repeal, in keeping with the interventionist current, was made in concert with a call for the thoroughgoing regulation of beer, wine, and liquor by state governments in cooperation with the federal government:

We urge the enactment of such measures by the several States as will actually promote temperance, effectively prevent the return of the saloon and bring the liquor traffic into the open under complete supervision and control by the States... [and] We demand that the Federal Government effectively exercise its power to enable the States to protect themselves against importation of intoxicating liquors in violation of their laws. (Roosevelt, 1932)

The fault of the 18th Amendment, according to Roosevelt, was in "the forcing of Prohibition" of alcohol instead of regulating it. For him, Prohibition was at the root of domestic disorder, crime, lawlessness, poverty, and high taxes. "It is increasingly apparent," Roosevelt said, "that the intemperate use of intoxicants has no place in this new mechanized civilization of ours" (Roosevelt, 1932).

In other words, a rationalized society could not be expected to run smoothly if the individuals responsible for running its machines were made irrational by drink. One should be forgiven for hearing echoes of Huxley's Controller in Roosevelt's desire to "promote" temperance through laws which ultimately must be enforced. Roosevelt was pretty clear that

there was "No civilization without social stability. No social stability without individual stability" when he called for liquor's rigorous regulation for the purpose of promoting individual temperance.

The inherent contradiction of Prohibition's repeal was that it rescinded one regulation while demanding the creation of an untold number of new regulations and, by logical extension, regulators. Prohibition, of course, merely stands out as a particularly egregious example of a failed federal intervention into the ordinary affairs of average citizens for purposes of producing social order and personal betterment. Its repeal, however, instead of reducing government intervention into private lives, led to more, just as Roosevelt had called for. A flood of federal, state, and local regulation covering the manufacture, distribution, transportation, importation, sale, and consumption of alcohol followed Prohibition's repeal, including a number of local, idiosyncratic laws that can only be seen as regulating personal behavior. The laws determined who, when, and where people were permitted to drink. For instance, arbitrary age limits defined who could legally consume alcohol; so-called Blue Laws set limits on when one was permitted to purchase alcohol; and mandatory closing times for bars and pubs set limits on where one could otherwise buy, sell, or consume legal drink (Burns & Novick, 2011; Ogle, 2008; Okrent, 2011).

The point here is not that these regulations were either necessary or unnecessary, just or unjust, but that it was at this time that rules became the rule. The regulation of social behavior gained in significance following Prohibition's repeal. By mid-century and in light of the perceived successes of federal-level interventions into economic, commercial, and foreign affairs, state and local-level regulators extended the precedent-setting trend of interventionism to other issues of local order, as they had been called to do by Roosevelt in the run up to Prohibition's repeal.

Aggregate data on the growth of local regulation is somewhat hard to come by but the fact of it hardly seems to need confirmation. The growth in local regulations can be reliably reasoned, if need be, from the more well-documented growth in the amount of federal regulation over the years since WWII. The growth in federal regulation has been exponential, rising by one measure “from 19,335 pages [of regulations] in 1949 to 134,261 in 2005” (Dawson & Seater, 2013).

Our own lived experience tells us that we are safe in assuming that the local regulation of social behavior has roughly followed this same trajectory, as anyone who has ever had the Kafkaesque experience with local bureaucracy knows. Those interested in understanding the causal mechanisms driving the growth of regulators and regulations could do worse than to read Robert Higgs’ treatment in *Crisis and Leviathan* (1987). However, for my purposes here we need only to agree, as William James once observed, that “Invention...and imitation are the two legs, so to call them, on which the human race historically has walked” (1925). If we grant the truth of James’ aphorism, which is to admit only the power of social learning by cultural transmission, the notion that state and local regulators of social life would arise in the wake of federal regulators is no radical proposition. Indeed it is the very thing Roosevelt had called for. State and local regulators would merely extend the interventionist approach modeled by the federal government in national and foreign affairs to their own local jurisdictions.

The predictable analog of such increases in regulators and regulations in the main of society is an increased police presence in everyday life. After all, a regulation is nothing more than a suggestion without a mechanism to enforce it against those resistant to broader hegemonic forces. The police are the final enforcement mechanism of all regulations proffered by the state. Increases in regulation necessitate increased policing within pluralistic societies wherein

resistance to hegemony is to be expected. The principle is rather axiomatic if laws are to be taken seriously. More laws equal more police.

In this view, then, the emergence of the *procedural* form rested upon the realization of the predictable result of the ideological consensus regarding social control, an increased local police presence. Early *procedurals* reflect the growing significance of the regulatory state to American life more generally, extending to the realm of private relations the changing attitude of Americans regarding ubiquitous and militaristic state interventions into all things economic, social, and political. The emergence of the *procedural* form marks a transitional moment in American history when majority notions of how social order was to be achieved was transformed from that of something perceived to emerge more or less spontaneously, i.e., from bottom up to a top-down regulatory responsibility of government institutions.

The rather sudden appearance of representations of police in the *procedural* form, circa 1948, marks an important moment in the rise of the *policed state*. It reveals the tacit existence of a broad general agreement between the people and the state for the interventionist regulation of social life and, further, serves as an acknowledgement of the necessity for increases in policing. This new social formation first found expression in the *procedural* form and, as we will see, has rarely, if ever, been contested.

The production of the *procedural* form, however, relied heavily on concurrent developments within the entertainment film industry. As film historian Robert Sklar has suggested, in the decade before *Naked City* and *He Walked by Night* introduced audiences to the *procedural*, filmmakers had discovered that the more efficient route to profit was in an explicit embrace of the regulatory state and only tacit resistance to it (1994, p. 175).

Although it is a bit disingenuous of Sklar to suggest that capitalism's "self-interest[ed]" profit motive was the lone, or primary institutional force at work in the studios' capitulation (p. 175). The 1915 Supreme Court decision in *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio* ruled that film production was: "a business, pure and simple, originated and conducted for profit, like other spectacles, not to be regarded ... as part of the press of the country, or as organs of public opinion" (*Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio*, 1915). At issue was the free speech rights of filmmakers. Stripped by the court of any Constitutional protections against censorship, studios were somewhat limited in the types of films they could make. No one should be surprised when, if regulators would treat films as a commodity, film studios would behave like manufacturers. If post-Prohibition films tended to reproduce traditional values (Sklar, p. 175), which they often did, it was not entirely due to the profit motive—there was plenty of profit to be made in films that challenged social norms, as the early careers of Charlie Chaplin and Mae West affirm—instead, it was because those films that reproduced emerging conceptions of law and order were likely to be approved by censors.

Of course the effect of the *Mutual Film Corp.* decision wasn't felt until the 1930 adoption of the Motion Picture Production Code (the Code), and even that was weak tea. It was the Code's more vigorous enforcement by the Production Code Administration (PCA) beginning in 1934—not un-coincidentally following Prohibition's repeal and the rise of the regulatory state—that led to the industry's capitulation to regulators. The Code, enforced by the PCA, was, in all practicality, the regulation of the movies by the national government in collaboration with the Catholic Church (Margaret Herrick Library & Primary Source Microfilm (Firm), 2006). Whatever autonomy was retained by the studios under the guise of self-regulation was rather superficial. At the core of the Code was the insistence of a moral duty to obey legislative dictum:

“Law, natural or human, should not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation” the Code, which was approved by Roosevelt Administration regulators, stated.

It is apparent that among the first effects of the rising regulatory state on films was the commodification of social control—it was really the only film product the PCA permitted. It was a rather meta-phenomenon. While regulating film content, the Code also inculcated the values embodied by the regulatory state, social control and, thereby, assured the reproduction of the ideological consensus.

The debut of the *procedural* form in 1948 merely extended the commodification of social control to local policing for mass consumption. At a minimum this move helped to legitimize expanding the use of the state’s police power to resolve everyday issues of social disorder by excluding or reducing the representation of alternatives. Agents of the state became the star of the show and *procedurals* displaced earlier forms of crime fiction, namely the gangster and private detective genres, which had been predominant throughout the 1930s and ‘40s. The role of police officer in social life, which was largely absent or peripheral in these genres, became central to everyday life in *procedurals*, as we will see.

“More than any other genre, gangster films set the character of the first golden age of Depression-era movies,” (Sklar, 1994, p. 179). Sklar goes on to write that gangsters were the central focus of these films because audiences could identify with those characters as products of social disorder who wished to lash out at it but, ultimately, become victims of it (p. 179). Others have suggested that audiences identified with gangsters as the everyman in his struggle to succeed despite corrupt institutions (Silver, 2007, p. 262). Robert Warshow’s “The Gangster as Tragic Hero” (1962) claims that the fictionalized gangster, a heroic figure forever doomed to

failure and death who must continually struggle for release from social constraints, represents the culture's ambivalence toward order and freedom (1962).

With whatever character traits audiences were identifying, they were those possessed by criminals, not cops. Reviewing these films today, it is the absence of police officers that is conspicuous. The more influential gangster films of the era, *Little Caesar* (LeRoy, 1931), *The Public Enemy* (Wellman, 1931), *Scarface* (Hawks, 1932), etc. all feature criminals as the lead protagonist, as did later successful films of the '30s, like *Algiers* (Cromwell, 1938) and *The Roaring Twenties* (Walsh, 1939). While these films and those like them ultimately reduced to anti-crime morality tales thanks to the PCA, the police presence was always ancillary.

For instance, in *The Roaring Twenties*, the only significant police presence in the film occurs when cops are used by one group of criminals against a competing gang. In this instance, police officers are merely a plot device inserted to move the story along. The only other significant appearance of police in the film is in the anti-climactic epilogue, serving in their after-the-fact administrative function. The ancillary role of police in these films is as common a thread as their shared moral didacticism. In fact, the absence of police in the gangster films of the period was so apparent even at the time that it motivated the production of the film *'G' Men* (Keighley, 1935) in an effort to establish police as having some positive presence in film (Silver, 2007, p. 168).

Also exceedingly popular during the run up to the *procedural* was the figure of the private detective, whose cultural presence reflected the nation's mild antipathy towards police involvement in personal affairs. As in the gangster films of the '30s, the police did not star in these depictions but played ancillary roles. Fictional characters turned to private-eyes in part because not every personal trouble was seen as a matter demanding police intervention. Cultural

representations of private citizens prior to the interventionist era generally did not depict them as relying heavily on the regulatory state to resolve personal conflicts; nor did they often welcome police interference into daily life.

Consider, for example, that protagonists often turned to other private citizens, made contractual agreements for service (Phillip Marlowe got \$25 a day, plus expenses), and solved problems without much state intervention. Quintessential private-eyes Sam Spade and Nick Charles were products of novels written by Dashiell Hammett in 1930 and 1934, respectively, and cast the mold for later fictional detectives like Chandler's Marlowe in 1939 and Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer in 1947. In all of these and their many imitators, the role of the police was largely administrative and in service of characters capable of producing and maintaining order without much overt police intervention.

Among the recurring themes in these depictions is how the police often get in the way of the hero's solving of the mystery to everybody's satisfaction. Both in the 1930s' novels and their 1940s' film adaptations, for instance, Spade in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), Marlowe in *The Big Sleep* (1946), and Charles in *The Thin Man* film series (1934-1947), all find their work made more difficult by police interference. When Nick Charles is told by a police officer in Hammett's original novel that he should be glad the police were present at the scene of events, Charles responds characteristically, "Yes, pretty lucky for me, or maybe, I wouldn't've got shot" (Hammett, 1989, p. 33).

The upshot is that crime drama of the 1930s and '40s tended to marginalize, de-emphasize, and disinvite much of a police presence. And, again, as in the gangster films of the '30s, the police in private detective fiction generally arrived after the plot conflict had been

resolved, usually to lead the perpetrators to jail. These representations reflected a world in which cops were less visible, less a part of the everyday life of citizens.

The *procedural*, however, reversed this construction. The police, as representatives of the state, took center stage in popular culture as the predominant actor in addressing social conflict. By focusing on the activities of police, private solutions, such as those depicted in earlier crime drama, were subordinated to public ones. In *procedurals*, personal behavior (private, economic, familial, sexual, etc.) among individuals become matters of the state. Perceived social conflicts would now be seen-on-TV as something to be resolved by calling the cops, not Sherlock Holmes, Sam Spade, or Nero Wolfe. Privileged representations of police would soon dominate the screen while gangsters and private-eyes would now occupy the marginal space. However, as we shall see, this was not accomplished through the films *The Naked City* or *He Walked by Night*. Instead, a conjuncture of the forces outlined above with local conditions, particularly those affecting domestic policing, and the rise of television would lead to the exponential rise of the *procedural* form and the privileging of representations of police.

It should be made clear, too, that at the historical moment of Roosevelt's call for increased regulation by state and local governments, these institutions were held in generally low regard by the public, a circumstance arising from years of well-publicized corruption. Widespread instances of local government malfeasance and misconduct, including that of police agencies, had created an identity crisis for institutional policing itself. Police officers and policing were almost universally held in low regard among the general public.

We will see that early *procedurals* were consciously orchestrated public relations campaigns, administered by police officials in jurisdictions across the country, designed to address the institutional identity of policing. However, for reasons partially attributable to

geographic happenstance, the LAPD, due to its proximate location to centers of cultural production, became the driving force behind the production and representation of the *procedural* form. The production history of the *procedural* is, as I argue below, in a very real sense the internal history of the LAPD.

At the end of World War II, then-LAPD Deputy Chief Richard Simon, writing in 1950, claims that the war had decimated the ranks of the LAPD. According to Simon, the department was unable to effectively recruit, hire, and/or train officers during the war years because eligible men had either enlisted or been drafted into the war effort (Simon, 1950). This personnel crisis was further exacerbated by the release of pent-up demand for more officers to meet the perceived needs of a growing citizen population fearful of crime, communism, The Bomb, and heightening racial tensions.

After the war, between 1946 and 1949 the department hired a remarkable 2,700 officers to meet its personnel needs, a number that constituted eighty-percent of the total of those holding the rank of police officer in the city. By 1950, fifty-nine percent of the city's rank-and-file police officers had fewer than two years of experience on the job (Simon, 1950). Clearly, it follows that those (almost exclusively) male veterans of WWII (Parker, W.H., 1957) really did not know how to be police officers and few experienced officers were available within the force to teach them. Predictably, policing services were uneven and inconsistent. Moreover, absent procedural standards, officers necessarily took an *ad hoc* approach to handling calls. With a majority novice force combined with a shortage of experienced officers to train and lead, the LAPD had an urgent need, according to Simon, to centralize and standardize the training of its inexperienced workforce (Simon, 1950). The department needed effective operational controls.

While noteworthy for its clarity, Simon's account is handicapped by the omission that the 1930s and '40s had also been an era of the crudest forms of public corruption at all levels of L.A. city government, including at its police department (Rasmussen, 1999). Stories of police corruption at the LAPD littered the front pages of newspapers and appeared as a recurrent theme in pop culture, as any reader of Raymond Chandler novels knows. Early attempts at eliminating corruption in the late 1930s led to resignations, firings, and indictments of dozens of LAPD police officials. This effort failed to prevent ongoing bad behavior among officers—as evidenced by the 1948 revelation that throughout the war years many officers had been involved in the operation of a prostitution ring and protection racket. The depletion of personnel within the ranks of the LAPD resulting from WWII and the corruption scandals of the 1930s was exacerbated further by yet another round of forced-retirements, indictments, firings, and resignations of veteran officers stemming from these latter scandals.

At mid-century and despite police reform efforts, the LAPD bore the well-earned reputation among many in the community as a relatively corrupt and thuggish organization. For example, in a 1949 survey of 3,000 Los Angelenos commissioned by the LAPD, only twenty-nine percent of respondents rated officers as “unquestionably honest” in the dispatching of their duties. Nearly forty-three percent of those surveyed considered officers' routine treatment of suspects, i.e., their use of force, to be either “consciousless and brutal” (17%) or “whatever degree of force found convenient” (27.6%) (Gourley, 1953, pp. 48–49).

The statistical measures, however, do not account for any possible chilling effect attributable to the LAPD as the source of the survey. Certainly some respondents may have been reluctant to express negative views of the police to the police themselves for fear of retribution, especially in a climate so aware of police corruption. That may explain why the general sense

among the officers of the LAPD was that the citizens' view of police was even worse than indicated by the survey.

For example, according to then-LAPD Captain G. Douglas Gourley, writing in 1953, "American police departments have a *serious public relations problem*" (emphasis in original):

...there are many *adverse beliefs* concerning police which exist in varying strength throughout the land. Among these are the frequently found convictions that policemen are uneducated and of low mentality; that they are selected for physical strength and courage alone; that they are of doubtful honesty and integrity; that they are engaged in a continuous offensive against society; that they are often rude and domineering; that they get angry easily, and assume a "smart-alec" attitude more easily; that they resort to the illegal "third degree;" and that the only way to be safe from this tyranny is to have wealth or "pull." (1953, p. 3)

Worse still, Gourley writes, is that while these claims are overbroad when applied to all officers and departments, they have each,

...unfortunately, at various times and places...been successfully proved. Today's policemen have inherited the reputation of their predecessors—and the police 'past' has been rather inglorious. The iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations (emphasis in original). (p. 4)

Such attitudes appear affirmed in a 1947 National Occupational Research Study of Occupational Prestige (North & Hyatt, 1947), in which it was found that low public opinion of policing was a nationally held opinion and not just a local phenomenon. Of 90 occupations ranked by the NORC study, "Policeman" came in 55th.

The prescribed remedy for this low public opinion was what has come to be known as the police professionalization movement (S. E. Walker & Archbold, 2013). "The reform agenda of the professionalization movement included securing expert leadership for police departments, freedom from political influence, the application of modern management principles to police organizations, and higher personnel standards for officers" (p. 37). I certainly would not be the first to point out that the professionalization movement in policing mirrored the larger national

context associated with centralized bureaucratic control and the principles of scientific management (S. Walker, 1977). It was from within this context at the LAPD that the *procedural* form took shape.

Officer Training Gives Rise to the Form

The LAPD at mid-century was faced with two big communication problems: 1. training a large, inexperienced and un-aculturated workforce and, 2. address low public opinion. Compounding the former was the dearth of veteran officers who could model proper behavior for the 2,700 untrained officers that now comprised the bulk of the force. That is to say, for reasons elaborated above, the cultural transmission of proper policing technique was not an option for the post-war LAPD. The department's organizational imperative was to centralize and standardize training while fostering a new, professional (i.e., non-corrupt) policing culture.

However, the department soon discovered that it had a pedagogical problem, too. Despite the extensive literature concerning the sociology of crime, police administration, and scientific investigative methods available at the time, little to no existing literature was available on how to perform day-to-day police work (Parker, 1954, p. v; Simon, 1950, p. 513). That is to say, according to top LAPD officials at the time, no "how-to" book on performing the routine duties of a patrol officer existed. The handling of calls was idiosyncratic and their resolution hit-or-miss. In the absence of reliable training materials, the LAPD determined that it would have to create its own. So, in the spring of 1948, in an ambitious effort to train its inexperienced and un-aculturated officers, the LAPD set out to write the book on rationalized police procedures one page at a time.

The first step to this end was the formation of a new unit dubbed the Field Training Unit (the Unit). The Unit's mission was to centralize and standardize the training, and thereby circumscribe the performance of officer duties. Developing the materials that would constitute the core curriculum for the training was almost exclusively accomplished internally by the LAPD's polling of its own officers. Members of the Unit sought out and interviewed officers, detectives, and supervisors who had successfully handled a particular type of routine call, e.g., a residential burglary, a robbery-in-progress, disorderly conduct, etc. In the interviews, Unit members, believing as they did that general procedures could be derived from particular instances, asked each officer to tell a detailed story of a successfully resolved radio call.

Following the interviews, Unit members stripped the officers' stories of their narrative form in a process of gleaning and codifying proper procedures. These procedures were then published in *Daily Training Bulletins*, singular training lessons that could be accomplished in a 15-minute training session called the Roll Call Training Program. The training was held in conjunction with the established ritual practice of many police departments known as the daily briefing. The *Bulletins* were then professionally published, copies distributed to every officer, and the lesson covered seven-days-a-week by supervisors specially trained in pedagogy by the faculty of a local college (Simon, 1950).

This systematic approach served its intended mission relatively well. What were known as routine calls for service would now be addressed in a routinized, "professional" manner, i.e., "by the book." A closer look at the program reveals that officer stories were systematically processed and made instrumental for solving organizational problems in accordance with the values of bureaucratic rationalization. Stories, particularly stories in the *procedural* form, as we will see, functioned in two ways: first, as I have already indicated, they served the Unit's training

mission; second, they served as a partial solution to policing's public relations problem in a way that will become clear later in this section.

Among the results of this approach was the development of a new “professional” police officer identity articulated to cool detachment, efficiency, predictability, and control. LAPD officers were the first in policing whose identity became the product of bureaucratization. Flowing both explicitly and implicitly from the systematic prescription of officer duties was the systematic control of the citizens with whom officers interacted. Indeed, control of institutions, organizations, officers, and citizens became central to the notion of policing, just as it was throughout American society (Ritzer, 2013).

The narratives of the officers' stories themselves, however, were not lost in the Unit's codification processes, nor did they lay fallow. Instead, the officers' stories ritualistically circulated among the rank-and-file, binding officers together in a cultural system of shared beliefs about the nature of policing. In fact, stories and storytelling became a central feature of the LAPD's emerging post-war organizational culture and internal hierarchy.

Below, we'll consider how the officers' stories, in addition to serving organizational interests, were instrumental to the individual officers themselves in negotiating the emerging social hierarchy within the department. Ironically, stories, I argue, became a means to the achievement of individual status within the ranks of the department. Stories signified competency and, thereby, conferred status and so became a valued resource to that end for both the organization and individual officers. The value placed on story within the LAPD incentivized its enactment and led to major developments in the production of the *procedural* form.

Storytelling and Status

The narratives of officers' stories were stripped in the rationalization process by the Field Training Unit but, interestingly, those stories were then artfully re-imagined and restored to each published *Bulletin* in comic book-styled graphic illustrations. LAPD officer-artist Jack Dederick, who worked in the department's communications division, produced comic book-styled *procedurals* to accompany the lessons published in the *Daily Bulletins*. Dederick, who was clearly a talented illustrator and storyteller, re-imagined the officer stories into single- and multi-panel comics, complete with recurring, tightly stereotyped characters: Officer Sharp and Officer Apathy, Sergeant Sediment, Captain Cadence, Mr. Felony, et al (Parker, 1954). A typical illustration depicted either Sharp (the ideal policeman) or Apathy handling a radio call or other duty, correctly with professional aplomb in the case of Officer Sharp (*Figure 1*), or incorrectly with humorous incompetence in the case of Officer Apathy.



Figure 1, circa 1948 (Parker, 1954)

Dederick produced an untold number of such illustrations. His work is a very early, explicit instance of an LAPD officer turning to a pop culture medium to dramatize the “true” stories of the police in the idealized *procedural* form. Dederick’s work was obviously instrumental to the training mission of the Unit; however, it also appears to be nothing less than uncredited storyboards for scenes later dramatized in many *Dragnet*, and later, *Adam-12* television episodes.

Compare, for example, the scene in *Figure 2* to the remarkably similar scene depicted in season 1, episode 24 of *Adam-12* (Donovan, 1969). In both, an attractive, young, wealthy, blonde woman driving a convertible is ticketed by an impeccably mannered officer with whom she is flirtatious, and only her pet poodle is impressed. In a further similarity, in both Dederick’s illustration and the *Adam-12* scene the woman refers to her father’s wealth as a means of avoiding the citation. A cursory review of both *Dragnet* and *Adam-12* in light of Dederick’s work results in dozens of such correspondences.



Figure 2, circa 1948 (Parker, 1954)

One unintentional effect, then, of the LAPD's formation of the Field Training Unit and its subsequent solicitation, appropriation, and representation of officer stories was to lay the foundation for the *procedural* form that came to dominate primetime television in the 1950s and '60s, a form whose discourse made the mundane a police matter. Dederick's artwork is among the first of the *procedural* genre. It is at least as important, if not more so, than the films *The Naked City* and *He Walked by Night* because of the direct links it has to the subsequent work of Jack Webb on television's *Dragnet* and *Adam-12*.

To further elaborate the point, the Unit collected the stories of literally hundreds of officers. One of those officers was LAPD-Sergeant Martin Wynn. Wynn was working as a police-consultant on the film *He Walked by Night* when he met actor Jack Webb on the set. Wynn pitched a proto-*procedural* show to Webb who promptly rejected the idea. Months later, Webb, facing financial hardship, reconsidered Wynn's proposal and sought to collaborate with the sergeant in developing a show (Hayde, 2001).

In the summer of 1949, Webb found Wynn working at the LAPD police academy receiving training, likely from the *Daily Bulletins* illustrated by Dederick. It is well-reported that Webb, once it was clear that the LAPD would retain editorial oversight of the NBC green-lighted *Dragnet*, immersed himself in LAPD training materials, interviewed individual officers, and rode along with officers on patrol in order to gain insight into police officer characterization. According to Hayde, Webb decided "to play it straight, like a real cop" based on these experiences (2001, p. 19). Dederick's Officer Sharp appears to be the uncredited archetype upon which Webb's Joe Friday is based; note the "Just the facts, ma'am" demeanor of Officer Sharp in *Figure 2*; note especially the dog's Friday-esque characterization of how a policeman should

conduct himself. Anybody with even passing familiarity with Webb's Sgt. Friday can recognize the considerable similarity to Dederick's Officer Sharp.

Dragnet was conceived in 1949, at the height of the activities of the LAPD's Field Training Unit. The LAPD's interest in the show was as a means of addressing the department's public relations problem. *Dragnet* would be to the public what the *Daily Bulletin* was to the department's officers—a training text (Parker, 1954). What Webb did was to adopt the Field Training Unit's practice of soliciting stories from officers.

Over the years, an untold number of officers responded to an open invitation by Webb to submit their own “true” stories for consideration as potential *Dragnet* episodes (Hayde, 2001). Clearly, officers were already accustomed to this practice by virtue of the ongoing work of the Field Training Unit. Webb then turned to James Moser, the primary screenwriter of *Dragnet*, to re-imagine, *à la* Dederick, the stories for radio and television broadcast. The result of Webb's appropriation of the Unit's practices was the commodification of the stories—he took them to market—whereas the LAPD had merely instrumentalized them for management. Not insignificantly, Webb also paid officers \$100 (a large sum relative to officer salaries at the time) for their stories if he used them (Hayde, 2001), further incentivizing officer storytelling.

More importantly, such representations worked to conceal alternative approaches to policing while presuming the ideological consensus regarding social control. This uncritical acceptance of the need for police to mediate in the everyday affairs of citizens is the silent agreement normalized in all *procedurals* and found broad dissemination on television.

Concurrent of course to all the activity at the LAPD was the expansion of entertainment television. New York University's Mitchell Stephens claims that the number of television sets in

U.S. homes rose exponentially, from approximately 6,000 in 1946 to 12-million in 1951 (Stephens, n.d.). The demand for television programming had never been higher (Gomery, 1985). So when Webb approached NBC in 1949 with the proposal for *Dragnet*, the show must have looked too good to be true, the serendipitous proximity of the LAPD, along with its legal authority, made possible a number of economic efficiencies that would be hard to duplicate; e.g., a near-limitless trove of low-cost stories, plus city streets and buildings as ready-made sets among them. The result was an industry-state collaboration that provided a double bonus for television executives who could broadcast profitable entertainment programming that could also be rationalized as meeting with federal regulations for broadcasting in the public interest. The win-win for the LAPD, and policing more abstractly, was the selective control of information, an opportunity to present an idealized image of police.

But the transliteration of the *procedural* from training manual to television screen relied on additional outcomes of the Field Training Unit's work. One such effect was that, for many, the officers' stories became a means to myriad ends beyond training purposes within the LAPD. That is to say that the stories became a valued resource for achieving goals beyond training existing LAPD officers.

By 1950, the Field Training Unit had published hundreds of singular *Daily Bulletins* for internal departmental use as training materials. Sensing an opportunity to fill the gap in the training literature canon, the Unit had a collection of *Daily Bulletins* aggregated and bound into a single volume titled, *Daily Training Bulletin of the Los Angeles Police Department* (Parker, 1954). The 300+ pages book addressed everything from how officers should answer the telephone to how to respond to past and in-progress crimes, labor disputes, civil unrest, and natural disasters. As would be expected given the original purpose of the *Bulletins*, the book

became a fundamental text for new recruits entering the police academy. However, LAPD Chief of Police William H. Parker also saw the volume as a way to address policing's public relations problem, writing in the preface that he hoped the book would educate the lay reader.

What Parker saw in the book was an opportunity to bolster the department's (and his own) national and international reputation as a leader of the larger police professionalization reform movement. He had the book published simultaneously in three countries and distributed throughout the Western world. This move carried with it at least two important ramifications: first, just as Parker had estimated, it raised the institutional visibility of the department within policing circles. It cast the LAPD into a leadership role among law enforcement agencies, also improving the department's public image. The second ramification was how it quietly began to standardize policing values and tactics across national and international agencies, articulating the professional police officer identity imagined by the LAPD to the values of urban and rural communities alike. Where local idiosyncrasies in policing among locally isolated agencies had once been as common as the ad-hoc handling of calls among officers of the LAPD, now policing was represented as a homogenous, undifferentiated practice. The concept of "policeman" began to lose regional differences reflective of local diversity in values to a uniform meaning constructed by the Field Training Unit and Dederick. This effect would be exponentially redoubled once the *procedural* form made its way to television and standardized training became commonplace across the country.

In any event, more so than any artifact before it, the *Daily Bulletin* defined what the label "policeman" meant by articulating the concepts of detachment, efficiency, predictability, and control to officer identity through the LAPD's *procedural* representations.

Another more curious effect of the Unit's work vital to the *procedural's* progression to television involves the social relations it influenced among LAPD officers within the department. Recall that at the time that the LAPD had experienced a tremendous turnover in personnel. From the standpoint of interpersonal social relations, this meant there was a lot to be worked out in terms of informal social hierarchies within a newly emerging organizational culture. The individual officers who contributed to each singular *Bulletin* had been explicitly credited in print, both in the internally distributed *Bulletins* and in the internationally published book. In the words of Chief Parker, the officers whose stories became procedures were now regarded as police "expert[s]" (1954, p. v) and, according to Deputy Chief Simon, "[their word] was well accepted by the rest of the Department" (Simon, 1950, p. 514).

What Parker and Simon were describing in so many words is what evolutionary psychologists have identified as species-typical, prestige-based social hierarchical human behavior. That is, status hierarchies derived by the voluntary deference of others to those possessing skills perceived as superior to their own (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001, pp. 167–168). Far from an aside, the seemingly passing observations of Parker and Simon provide our first glimpse into how evolved human nature played an important role in the production of the *procedural* form.

From the Darwinian perspective, status is defined as a "*priority of access to resources in competitive situations*" (Cummins, 2005, p. 677). Status seeking is a universally observed (i.e., species-typical) behavior of human males, well-established in the literature of evolutionary psychology (Cummins, 2005; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Huberman, Loch, & Onculer, 2004; Wright, 1994, pp. 236–262). Females, of course, also engage in status seeking but do so less vigorously and in manners different than males. Given that the LAPD at the time (and

predominately still today) is a primarily male province, female behavior is not relevant to this discussion (this also explains my occasional use of the gender-specific “policeman” as opposed to the gender-neutral “police officer.”

Males seek status in a variety of complex ways in response to environmental, including cultural, pressures derived from the processes of natural, sexual, and cultural selection (Mesoudi, Whiten, & Laland, 2004; Miller, 1999). One such means is by force or threat of force (so-called dominance hierarchies) and another is through prestige, e.g., the deference voluntarily afforded those “expert” officers whose stories of successful police work became the procedures “well accepted” by other LAPD officers.

I should make it clear that an informal status hierarchy was bound to develop among the officers of the LAPD with or without the work of the Field Training Unit. Such a hierarchy was inevitable given the male-dominated ranks within such a competitive environment as that of the LAPD. The Unit’s work did not cause a status hierarchy to develop—such hierarchies are present “in every human society where people have looked closely for it” (Wright, 1994, pp. 238–242). Instead, the effect of the LAPD’s placing such high value on officer stories resulted in those stories becoming a signifier of competence, a valued resource for status attainment. Like the policing skills of marksmanship, defensive tactics, suspect interrogation, etc., storytelling signaled competence (Gottschall, 2012; Miller, 1999, 2001), effectively guaranteeing that the telling of stories would go beyond the needs of training. The significance of the stories in determining the emerging hierarchy was given not constructed. The curious effect of the Unit’s work was to create the conditions under which the evolved human predisposition to story (B. Boyd, 2009; Carroll, 2004; Gottschall, 2012) could flourish.

The significance of status seeking through story is that it articulates a critical component of human nature to the conjuncture of historically contingent conditions under which the *procedural* form arose. The inescapable fact is that the production of early *procedurals* was driven in part by the status seeking male officers of the LAPD. The big picture, then, of the production of the *procedural* genre is that prevailing ideologies of social order and instrumental rationalization, coupled with the economic logic of the entertainment industry and the institutional needs of policing, crystallized in the organizational processes of the LAPD and manifested a biocultural human behavior among individual officers: storytelling in the *procedural* form.

Perhaps the primary effect of this biocultural behavior was the emergence of a storytelling culture at the LAPD that would shape the representational form *procedurals* would take in the future. It seems likely given the value placed on storytelling that such a culture would be the outcome of the Field Training Unit's systematic and ongoing work. Jack Dederick and Martin Wynn certainly evince such a culture. More prominently, the careers of Gene Roddenberry and Joseph Wambaugh—both of whose writing, television, and film careers began as LAPD officers—further suggest that storytelling in the *procedural* form was a cultural practice of LAPD officers independent of Jack Webb, *Dragnet*, or the Field Training Unit.

Roddenberry, while a colleague of both Dederick and Wynn at the LAPD, and prior to his creation of the *Star Trek* franchise, had his first screenwriting successes with the TV show *Highway Patrol*, an episodic *procedural* popular in the early 1950s. Wambaugh, who came later in 1960, is arguably the most prolific inheritor and practitioner of the tradition, having created numerous *procedurals* across mediums literature, film, and television. The innumerable uncredited officers whose stories became *Dragnet* and, later, *Adam-12*, adds the decisive weight

to the evidence for both the existence of the LAPD's status seeking, storytelling culture and its influence on the production of *procedurals*. When one looks closely at the processes undertaken by Webb in creating *Dragnet*, as I have done above, it becomes clear that the show stands as evidence of nothing less than the wholesale appropriation of the departmental culture that had emerged from the work of the Field Training Unit.

I have argued that national ideological trends in the first half of the twentieth-century favoring increased state intervention into all manner of social life—exemplified notably but not exclusively by Prohibition, the New Deal, and America's involvement in World War II—established the broader social conditions that facilitated the rise of the *procedural* form. In this view, the *procedural* emerged in consequence of ideologies favoring increased state regulation of personal conduct. The emergence of the *procedural* signaled the realization of a new social formation wherein police would necessarily play a larger role in the daily affairs of the everyman/woman.

The entertainment industry's influence on production was significant but relatively minor when compared to actions taken within the LAPD, namely the formation of the department's Field Training Unit, which unwittingly operated as a pre-production company. For his part, Webb did all the leg-work necessary to turn the Unit's work into a radio and television show and serve as the program's iconic Sergeant Joe Friday. The history of the production of the *procedural* genre is tantamount, however, to the internal history of the LAPD; further, the conditions created by those historical actions elicited from the LAPD's own officers an evolved psychological response to seek social status through storytelling, in this case, such behavior gave rise to the *procedural* form. In the Darwinian view, *procedurals* are a specific form of

biocultural activity which, as we have seen, articulate at national, institutional, organizational, and individual social levels (Fu, Plaut, Treadway, & Markus, 2014; Markus & Kitayama, 2010).

The production of *procedurals*, however, also articulate to the moment of representation of the genre. In the following chapter, I argue that *procedurals* have remained remarkably stable in structure and theme as a result of stable features of our evolved psychology and the relative stability of social conditions in America since 1949. The genre, I argue, is cop art, an artistic expression of a distinct sub-culture (police) whose view of prevailing social conditions and their socially determined place within that formation has led to evolved patterns of behavior, namely exclusion and hostility.

Chapter Two: Texts

The premier of *Dragnet* aired on national television December 16, 1951, making the jump from radio where the show had aired since the fall of 1949. Titled “The Human Bomb,” it opens with an establishing shot of the city of Los Angeles and a bit of voiceover narration. (J. Webb, 1951). From all appearances the city is running smoothly, people and cars moving about in an orderly fashion. The audience soon learns, however, that a man with a bomb is threatening to blow up city hall if his demands for the release of his brother from jail aren’t met. An austere Sergeant Joe Friday (Jack Webb) is called to the scene. There he meets with the officer in charge, is apprised of the situation, reviews some preliminary investigatory details, and is then tasked with the unenviable job of disarming a man with a bomb. The public, we’re told, has been evacuated. Sgt. Friday, along with his partner, an older, wry Ben Romero (Barton Yarborough), initiate negotiations with the man. Other officers conduct an off-camera search of the man’s home and find dynamite there, increasing the probability that the bomb carried by the man is authentic. The situation Friday and Romero face calls for some ingenuity on their part, some cleverness in devising a plan that will allow them to successfully disarm the man despite the risks to their own personal safety. Their plan works. The conflict is resolved. The man is arrested and sent to jail.

“The Human Bomb” is exemplary of the *procedural* genre’s basic narrative arc, while also revealing a number of characterizations which become hallmark structures of the form. In act 1, a crime is being, or, alternatively, has been or will be committed, thereby disrupting an otherwise orderly universe; in act 2, somber, serious, sardonic, and/or otherwise severe police officers undertake the application of procedural police work and, with an additional bit of fast thinking on their part, resolve the tension; finally, in act 3, the criminal is arrested, convicted or

killed, justice served, and, most importantly, order is restored. It's a basic formula that has endured, with modification, since 1948.

For instance, consider this 2012 episode of *Law & Order: SVU*, titled “Twenty-Five Acts” (Segonzac, 2012). It opens with a bit of voiceover narration, quickly cutting to an establishing shot within the offices of the Special Victims Unit (SVU) of the New York Police Department (NYPD). The detectives are going about their daily routines, engaging in a bit of office-related dialogue as they drink their morning coffee. In parallel action a woman appears on a television talk show and is later raped in a hotel room by the talk show's male host—order is disrupted. The uncompromising SVU detective Olivia Benson (Mariska Hargitay) and her brash, younger partner, Amanda Rollins (Kelli Giddish), are summoned to the hospital and begin their procedural investigation. They first interview a witness and then the victim. Other SVU officers interview the suspect, while yet another detective conducts a mostly off-camera investigation into both the suspect's and victim's pasts, uncovering pertinent details in the process. The suspect is arrested and charged. The situation SVU-members face demands a bit of ingenious rhetorical manipulation of the suspect on the part of the SVU-prosecutor. His scheme is successful. The suspect is convicted and is last seen being remanded to custody—order is restored.

To be sure, I have glossed over many intricacies to the plots and other important features of both of these works. For example, “The Human Bomb” is rich in contemporaneous allegorical Cold War references, articulating actual and widespread fears of nuclear warfare, e.g., The Bomb and mutually assured destruction, to domestic crime and policing. “Twenty-Five Acts” is richer still in contemporary allegory, articulating the sado-sexual themes of the popular novel, *Fifty-Shades of Grey* (E. L. James, 2012), to chapter twenty-five of the *Holy Bible's Book of Acts* and

socially contested notions of rape, due process, and cultural attitudes regarding sexual relations. These details, too, reveal a stable feature of the genre—the instrumental rhetorical use of historically contingent social conditions by somebody for some purpose. I’ll return to these later in this section as part of a more detailed analysis.

For now, I simply mean to introduce my initial premise, namely that the *procedural* form has remained a remarkably stable genre from its inception. Indeed, one might recognize the basic structure as I’ve described it as the same basic structure of earlier crime dramas—with one notable difference: in *procedurals* cops are the stars of the drama. *Procedural* protagonists, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, are public agents of the state not private citizens like Sherlock Holmes or Sam Spade. And therein lays the critical role-reversal from private to public solutions to social conflict and imposed social order. Concealed by this turn from private to public is the presumptive ideological consensus regarding the state’s obligation of social control. Police and policing are not represented as the result of political calculations but as the natural condition of a free society.

Of course anyone unfamiliar with the genre could not be blamed for wondering if the above examples are truly exemplary of the generic formula. After all, my claim encompasses a vast collection of works and, well, two examples is by no means statistically significant. Conversely, those familiar with the genre might object that more recent and/or critically-acclaimed works, like *Hill Street Blues*, *NYPD Blue*, and/or *The Wire*, are worlds different from the *procedurals* of the 1950s.

Notwithstanding, I hope to put any doubts as to the genre’s stability to rest over the course of the next several pages of analysis. There I will be drawing examples from a wide selection of popular works spanning the entire history of the genre, each sharing the same basic

formula. Indeed, I based my conclusion as to the stability of the form only after having reviewed multiple episodes of each of *Dragnet* (1951-1959), *Gang Busters* (1952-1955), *Highway Patrol* (1955-1959), *The Lineup* (1954-1960), *Arrest and Trail* (1963-1964), *Dragnet-1967* (1967-1969), *Adam-12* (1968-1975), *The Mod Squad* (1968-1973), *Kojak* (1973-1978), *Police Story* (1973-1978), *Hawaii 5-0* (1968-1980), *Hill Street Blues* (1981-1987), *Miami Vice* (1984-1990), *Law & Order* (1990-2010), *Homicide: Life on the Street* (1993-1999), *NYPD Blue* (1993-2005), *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* (2001-2011), *The Shield* (2002-2008), *Without a Trace* (2002-2009), *Cold Case* (2003-2010), *CSI: New York* (2004-2013), *Numb3rs* (2005-2010), *CSI: Miami* (2002-2012), *Law & Order: SVU* (1999-), *CSI: Crime Scene Investigators* (2000-), *NCIS* (2003-), *Criminal Minds* (2005-), *NCIS: Los Angeles* (2009-), *Hawaii 5-0* (2010-), and *Blue Bloods* (2010-), et al.; plus, I've additionally screened dozens of *procedural* films, including: *The Naked City* (Dasin, 1948), *He Walked by Night* (Werker & Mann, 1948), *Dragnet* (Webb, 1954), *Bullitt* (Yates, 1968), *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971), *The French Connection* (Friedkin, 1971), *The Black Marble* (Becker, 1980), *48-Hrs* (W. Hill, 1982), *Beverly Hills Cop* (Brest, 1984), *RoboCop* (Verhoeven, 1987), *Colors* (Hopper, 1988), *Heat* (Mann, 1995), *Minority Report* (Spielberg, 2002), and *RoboCop* (Padilha, 2014) to name more than a few, while noting the many structural similarities among them.

Although some important inventional changes have most certainly occurred along the way, which I'll note as I go, I focus my analysis on the stable features that have persisted over the decades, avoiding a cursory analysis that might reduce to a simple compare and contrast of the genre's superficial differences over time, in order to examine and explicate the operation of the genre as a whole throughout its 67-year (and counting) history—a period we might call the procedural-era, 1948-present.

My approach here is further grounded in a biocultural claim; namely, that the genre's structural coherence maps on to and reveals certain evolved structures of the human mind. Drawing on contemporary literary theories of universal narrative structure, I'll show how *procedurals* reflect aspects of adaptive cognitive mechanisms responding to perceived social conditions in accordance with naturally motivated rules designed by natural selection for the management of social relations. That is to say that the genre's relative structural stability reflects relatively stable features of both the evolved human mind and the social conditions under which those representations have been made.

In support of this claim I'll apply theories from the fields of evolutionary psychology, which supports the idea that under certain perceived conditions human beings will act in a statistically predictable manner; i.e., if this situation obtains, then that response, subject to any number of constraints and other variables—the 'if-then' cognitive mechanism isn't the only rule in play at any given time and responses aren't slavishly determined by a single causal condition but are subject to other contextual influences such as social norms, institutional rules, and individual experience.

More specifically, I'll offer evidence that under conditions of social exclusion, the status-seeking human animal will tend to a display of hostility toward its excluder and/or engage in empathic signaling motivated by their need for social inclusion and status. I'll also present evidence that police officers have historically perceived themselves to be social outcasts from the broader public and argue that the *procedural* is at least in part the biocultural response of police to said exclusion. None of which should be interpreted as my saying that cops are marginalized or alienated in any Marxian sense. I'm speaking here interpersonally, affectively, about how

police, despite their relative position of power, have expressed a felt-sense of or belief in their own social exclusion.

Of course for any of the above to be the case, it seemingly must also be true that there be a tremendous degree of like-mindedness among the innumerable creators of *procedural* artifacts, but how can that be? The procedural-era is in its 67th year and includes the works of countless artists, many of whom are not police officers. How can a particular mental state and behavior be reflected by such a diverse array of artifacts over such a time period? I want to briefly address this question first by discussing the connections among representation and three particular aspects of *procedural* production: auteurism and convention, the police officer as technical advisor, and the influence of news media.

The roots of the *procedural* as an artistic form, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, lie in shifting cultural attitudes toward the state regulation of personal conduct as a means to social order. The form emerged at the very historical moment when police were becoming much more involved in the daily conduct of the everyman/woman citizen. As LAPD captain G. Douglas Gourley put it in a 1953 police training manual, “Today, everyone is a law-breaker” (Gourley, 1953). This new social arrangement, brought about by an increasingly regulated world, gave rise to stories told by and about the police. Police officers, as we have seen, were the dominant auteurs of the genre. *Procedurals* are cop art, stories told from the police point of view. Early works were principally the stories of actual individual police officers, sometimes told by the officer himself or by someone steeped in the world of policing. Successful early television shows of the genre, like *Dragnet* (1951-1959), *Gang Busters* (1952-1955), *Highway Patrol* (1955-1959), *The Lineup* (1954-1960), *Dragnet-1967* (1967-1969), *Adam-12* (1968-1975), *The Mod Squad* (1968-1973), and *Police Story* (1973-1978) took narratives directly from officers

and/or were produced in close cooperation with specific police agencies. Additionally, early feature films of the genre, e.g., *He Walked by Night* (Werker & Mann, 1948), *Dragnet* (J. Webb, 1954), *Madigan* (Siegel, 1968), and *The French Connection* (Friedkin, 1971) were either based on police accounts of ‘true’ stories or were fictions authored by actual or former police officers themselves. The above is also true of popular fiction, particularly the novels of former-LAPD Sergeant Joseph Wambaugh.

Collectively, these early works, for better or worse, established many of the form’s conventional representations of police, unavoidably inscribing the minds of a relatively small group of police officers on the subsequent works of others relying upon those conventions.

Furthermore, two additional developments in the production of *procedurals* have ensured that cops have largely remained the artists at the easel. The first is the now commonplace use of police officers as technical advisors on films and television (Colbran, 2014). The Internet Movie Database (IMDB.com) list of companies and individuals with police experience who offer advisor services to film and television producers is a long one. Typical services include script review and procedural technical advice from current and former cops. A common refrain of such services’ marketing materials is that their purpose is to promote authenticity and realism in *procedural* representations (“Cops on film,” n.d.). The individual contributions of particular advisors need not be great because they merely guide representations within the well-established conventional framework of Jack Webb, whose aim was, again, to “play it straight, like a real cop” (Hayde, 2001, p. 19).

The use of police advisors insures that characters talk the talk and walk the walk of actual police. Even when directors have police characters perform acts unlikely to be undertaken by an actual officer, as when in the 1982 film, *48-Hrs*, Detective Jack Cates (Nick Nolte) “borrows” a

convict (Eddie Murphy) from the state prison to assist him in his investigation, the act is often accompanied by authentic discourse and adherence to actual police procedure; e.g., we see Detective Cates retrieve his firearm from a locker outside of the prison as he leaves, but not before hand-cuffing Hammond. These acts do little to advance the plot but by adhering to police procedures (viz., the use of gun lockers at correctional facilities and the use of restraints on those in custody) directors not only restore authenticity to scenes from a state of suspended disbelief but insert the attitudes and values of police into their narratives.

The final development is less direct and is found in the routine use of press accounts of crime events, so-called “ripped-from-the-headlines” productions (Rogers, 2012). It is commonplace to acknowledge that today’s press is organized around a capitalist mode of production, seeking economic efficiencies where it can. Among news media’s common practices is to utilize official government sources, always available newsmakers and spokespeople, for much of the informational content later found in news reports. For the news media, this material is inexpensive, easily accessed, in rich supply, and its police-centricity largely accepted uncritically in order that reporters maintain future access to official newsmakers (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Among the effects of relying on press accounts developed from official police statements for *procedurals*, however, is to help keep the police perspective always already present. The police account of events lies at the foundation of works so produced just as they did when Webb was soliciting stories from patrolmen in the 1950s and ‘60s. As a result, the form is almost always on a deeper level representative of the police experience of their world and the social relations they inhabit.

Through the auteur’s utilization of foundational generic conventions developed by policemen, and their use of police officers as technical advisors and stories informed by press

accounts based on official police statements, the *procedural* has remained first and foremost the artistic expression of an American sub-cultural group known as cops, whose members share a broadly similar experience of the world and who, as human animals, cognitively and emotionally respond similarly to those experiences. It would not be gainsaying to claim that essentially the mind of some police officer(s) is nearly always present in *procedural* texts and representations.

With that, I'll proceed in the following manner: first, I will define three terms: *procedural*, text, and representation as I use them below. Second, I undertake a structural description of the form, elaborating on the previously outlined narrative arc, staple characterizations, and other structural elements. Third, I undertake to further develop my biocultural account of the genre. Finally, I'll return to "The Human Bomb" and "Twenty-Five Acts" in some depth in order to illustrate the biocultural analysis I intend.

Definitions

Procedural. Earlier, I described the *procedural* as a sub-genre of crime drama, where "genre" retains its original French meaning in denoting a type or kind of cultural artifact sharing certain properties with other artifacts and are, by reason of their similarities, grouped together under the label of genre. While various theories of genre abound (Feuer, 1987; Frye, 2000), I adhere to this folk understanding of the term. The *procedural* in this view is the corpus of literary, cinematic, and/or televisual forms of fictional artistic expression that takes as its central focus the professional activities of local, state, or federal police in the performance of their assigned duties and shares any number of conventional similarities in production, characterizations, subject matter, settings, themes, and motifs. The *procedural* is the name given to the aggregate whole of certain conventional depictions that can collectively be called a genre. For stylistic reasons, I may at times use the terms *procedural*, genre, or form synonymously.

Text. By “text” I do not mean to refer in the formalist sense to a text as a single, self-contained literary, televisual, or cinematic work—for individual artifacts I shall use the word episode, novel, film, or simply, work. By text I mean to refer to the *procedural* in relation to the world outside of the genre’s structures, which both informs and influences any particular work’s representations. If the *procedural* is a genre by virtue of the shared structural conventions among many works, the text is the shared relationship among the genre and the material and social world it inhabits and from which it emerged and upon which it relies for interpretations of meaning. Text, therefore, as I employ the term, refers to *procedural* artifacts, inclusive of the historically contingent conditions of authors and/or auteurs and their universally present evolved human psyches in relation to the prevailing social conditions, whether real or imagined, surrounding the production of artifacts.

Representation. Representation is meant to denote a communicative action undertaken by people through the text for some purpose. Representation, i.e., to represent, involves people articulating, or connecting through language and other symbolic systems various concepts assumed to possess degrees of relatedness, and when stitched together in discourse can form a temporary unity of ideas and meanings useful for forging alliances and creating avenues for individual and group identity formation. Sometimes the relation among concepts is strong, at other times they may be ambiguous or weak. Still at other times the concepts may be completely unrelated or even appear contradictory. In any case, the connections are routinely unacknowledged, unwittingly ignored or concealed in order that such articulations can achieve a temporarily stable coherent meaning instrumental to some human purpose (Hall). Representation as employed herein is the act of somebody weaving together an array of symbols of disparate concepts, beliefs, and/or worldviews into a unified meaningful whole for some reason[s].

Notwithstanding the constructed form of representations, however, the term as I use it here accepts and includes the fact of human nature as a knowable reality that is more or less accurately rendered in our symbolic actions. Indeed human nature is the very subject of our imaginative literary, televisual, and cinematic fictions (Carroll, Gottschall, Johnson, & Kruger, 2010), including *procedurals*, and elements of that material nature are always at some level articulated to our constructed formations. However, I don't take up a comprehensive defense of the representation of reality, which has been done elsewhere.³

Structural Dimensions of the Form

A 1973 episode of *Kojak*, "Knockover," opens with a well-dressed woman walking casually down a peaceful New York City street. She stops to buy a newspaper at a newsstand, even taking a moment for some jovial banter with the vendor before arriving at her apparent destination, a bus stop (Dubin, 1973). Moments later, the unidentified woman is murdered, shot twice as she sat reading the newspaper while apparently waiting for a bus. NYPD Lieutenant Theo Kojak (Telly Savalas) is called to the scene. There he begins his procedural investigation. He interviews witnesses, inspects the body and crime scene, and confers with his colleagues, doling out assignments to each before moving on to search the victim's home. There he finds a clue, a photo of the victim in a restaurant accompanied by an unidentified man. Kojak directs the crime lab to enhance the photo in order to identify the restaurant to which he then proceeds, leading him to an identification of the man in the photo. A search for the man leads Kojak to suspect that the man is part of a conspiracy to burglarize an unknown bank. Through an astute review of collected evidence, Kojak deduces the location of the bank, arrives on the scene with

³ See, for instance: Bordwell, 2007b; B. Boyd, 2010; Mallon, 2013; Pinker, 2004; and D. S. Wilson, 2005.

other officers just in time to arrest the thieves in the act and, in so doing, he learns that the man in the photo is also the murderer of the woman.

I'm tempted to see the basic narrative arc of the *procedural*, shown again in the above described episode of *Kojak*, as entirely aspirational. From such a perspective, the *procedural* may constitute a genre of quasi-utopian fiction set in an imagined society pragmatic enough to admit the persistence of occasional anti-social behavior but rarely doubting in the state's institutional approach to social control. Order is the norm but once disrupted the institutions of law enforcement promptly restore things to the status quo. Accordingly, it might be said that the *procedural* serves as the cultural expression of our collective fantasy, our hoped for reality, which is wholly imaginary and wherein the American criminal justice system somehow equates to justice. Underlying the genre's quasi-utopian aspirations, it could be argued, is the fundamental promise of social order vis-à-vis the bureaucratic rationalization of society by the state that emerged during the first half of the 20th century.⁴

Equally tempting, however, is to account for the genre's narrative arc by an appeal to the ordinary, common sense conception of police work. Everything is fine so long as everybody obeys the laws governing personal conduct. However, when a law is transgressed, the police initiate a response according to standard operating procedures that guide their own actions and leads to the arrest and conviction of criminals. That is what cops ideally do, isn't it? So we should not be surprised that a genre of police fiction predominately shaped by police officers with direct knowledge of the job would reflect the basic structure of police work itself: a crime takes place, disrupting order; police investigate; criminals get arrested and convicted; order is

⁴ See pages 30-36 of the present work for my discussion of this.

restored. The narrative arc of *procedurals* in such a view may simply reflect a folk understanding of procedural police work that serves well-enough as a rough, if idealized, approximation of real life.

A deeper consideration of the narrative arc of *procedural* storytelling, however, reveals that the pattern is consistent with what cognitive and evolutionary psychologists, and many literary theorists have identified as the universal structure of narrative. In “Reverse Engineering Narrative,” Michelle Scalise Sugiyama (2005) writes, “The literary consensus is that stories consist of character, setting, actions, and events—linked temporally and/or causally—and conflict and resolution,” and these elements appear universally throughout time and across cultures (p. 180-181). Clearly, the narrative arc of *procedurals* fits such a framework. It is built upon the temporally/causally-linked actions of human characters within a setting presenting conflicts in need of resolution. Human characters, action, setting, conflict, and resolution—these are the necessary and universal components of narrative but, importantly, these theorists suggest that the universality across cultures and time reveals something akin to the psychic unity of our species (Prino & Job, 2006), thereby mapping narrative structure to the very structure of the human mind. That is, the universal structure of story reflects the universally-shared structure of the evolved mind.

Along these lines, evolutionists argue that the human capacities for perception, conception, and representation evolved in reciprocal relation to challenges faced by early hominids in ancestral environments (Barkow et al., 1995; Pinker, 2004). That is, many of our multitudinous cognitive capabilities are domain specific—mental widgets evolved for solving specific problems related to survival and reproduction. In light of the biological realities of evolution by natural selection, the capacity for art, including narrative, is considered by many to

be a functional adaptation of the human mind (B. Boyd, 2009; Carroll, 2004; Dutton, 2011; Nettle, 2005; D. S. Wilson, 2005). That is, for the cognitive capacities needed to tell and understand stories to have evolved, they must have delivered some fitness-enhancing benefit. We should be asking what such capacities are for.

One attractive theory is that stories construct an imaginary world, a kind of virtual space wherein otherwise experiential information can be acquired and shared without any actual risk to the learner (Sugiyama, 2005). Obviously, if every young hunter-gatherer had to learn to avoid predators and other dangers by actually avoiding predators and other dangers fewer would have survived. Likewise, if every young hunter-gatherer had to learn on their own how to acquire food under conditions of scarce resources, many more would have starved. It is understood that the cognitive capacity for story confers a direct fitness benefit that contributed to the expansion in the size of hunter-gather tribes through the imaginative (cultural) sharing of critical information about the human relationship to the physical environment through storytelling.

As hunter-gather tribes expanded from tiny hierarchical groups of closely related kin to extended relations, the social environment grew more complex, as did the resulting human capacity for story (Nettle, 2010). The ultimate human motive of sexual reproduction (i.e., the survival of genes to the next generation) had to be accomplished within a social environment complicated by less clear answers to questions of social relations. Within such an environment, processes of biological evolution would have selected for cognitive mechanisms—a suite of mental widgets—for managing a host of problems and opportunities associated with an environment of extended social relationships. According to Sugiyama, “By simulating a variety of social relationships, behaviors, and consequences, narrative also provides us with an opportunity to gain information about our social environment” (p. 188). Story facilitates the non-

genetic sharing of information, i.e., cultural evolution, beneficial to reproduction by constructing more or less accurate models of the natural and social world and, subsequently, running simulations through those models. “The function of narrative, then, would appear to be the representation of the problems humans encounter in their lives and the constraints individuals struggle against in their efforts to solve them” (Sugiyama, 2005, pp. 180–186).

In short, human beings appear to tell stories in order to solve problems of survival and reproduction faced in their natural physical and social worlds. There is no compelling reason to think that human beings do not continue to tell stories for these same ancient reasons today. That is, stories likely continue to be instrumental for achieving the ends of proximate human motives such as status achievement, coalition formation, mating success, and self-preservation, which all subserve the ultimate motive of gene survival through sexual reproduction (Buss, 2005; Nettle, 2010; Rosenbaum, 2010).

Applied to *procedurals*, the stories are thought to be only superficially about police work or crime, or more esoteric concerns such as good and evil. On a deeper cognitive level, and given that *procedurals* are the stories of and by police officers, these narratives reveal the operation of the evolved human mind within a particular social setting as it attempts to manage real world human relations that somehow impinge on natural human motives. The story world of *procedurals* can be thought of as the representative model naturally conceived by police of their perceived social environment and the human relations they must navigate. I look at that model social environment, along with a closer look at some of the significant universal elements of narrative next.

In the story world of the *procedural* there is the police and there is everybody else; i.e., there are police and there are non-police characters. Accordingly, the *procedural* is largely a

depiction of how police officers relate to the non-police members of society. The non-police is subdivided further into two socially constructed general categories: citizens and criminals, and each of these two subcategories are populated by various types of stock characters. Citizens typically include crime victims and witnesses, peaceful others, and sometimes officers' family and friends. These characters are typically prosocial, i.e., "regular," "law-abiding," capital-C citizens. Conversely, the criminal category includes anti-social types, e.g., informants, low-level crime figures, and suspects/perpetrators. The three groups, citizens, cops, and criminals, comprise the basic framework of the genre's social story world and it is the social relationships among these that appear to lay at the heart of the form.⁵

It's important to note here that the basic *procedural* story world framework of police/non-police—citizens and criminals, finds its origins in historic police discourses. Most notably, the citizen/cop/criminal framework is implicit to the well-worn, mid-century metaphor coined by LAPD Chief of Police William H. Parker in describing police as a "thin blue line" (Shaw, 1992) separating citizens from the criminals who would harm them (Parker, 1950, 1957). This tripartite worldview persists to this day in modern police discourses, as we shall see below, so it is no surprise that such a perspective has continued to organize the *procedural* story world.

⁵ Of course I shouldn't be taken too literally. The lines I'm drawing above are not always as clear cut as it may sound. Sometimes characterizations are drawn with more complexity than at other times, blurring such distinctions among the three groups. The corrupt detectives Vic Mackey (Michael Chiklis) of television's *The Shield* (2002) and Detective Alonzo Harris (Denzel Washington) in the film *Training Day* (Fuqua, 2001) stand as notable examples of a character who frequently transgresses the boundary separating cop and criminal. However, as a general rule, such conventional lines of demarcation usually hold and the basic framework consisting of citizens, cops, and criminals offers a reliable overview of the procedural story world, its inhabitants, and each group's putative relationship to one another.

While the “thin blue line” metaphor itself has somewhat fallen out of fashion, the sentiment persists in a fresh metaphor that has emerged among modern police that simply reproduces the old. Today’s police routinely describe the relationship between police and non-police analogously to that of the sheep, the sheepdog, and the wolf in direct correspondence to citizens, cops, and criminals. For instance, Wahpeton, North Dakota, Chief of Police Scott Thorsteinson, in a statement to journalists following public criticism of his department’s role in the death of a local teenager, dismissively invoked the metaphor thusly: “Law enforcement...we're generally not popular. The sheep dog is not loved by the flock and they're hated by the wolf but we do it anyway” (Arick, 2015). Likewise, Seattle Police sergeant Christopher Hall, a 15-year veteran of the department, stirred a minor kerfuffle in the local alternative press when he took to Facebook to say, “...regardless of how you feel about the police, the sheepdogs will continue to protect the resentful sheep from the wolves” (Herz, 2014).

The extent to which the sheep/sheepdog/wolf metaphor has permeated modern police agencies and culture in the United States is considerable and easily revealed by a simple Google search (“About Sheepdogs, Inc.,” n.d., “Swat team posters,” n.d., “The sheep, the wolf and the sheep dog,” 2013; A.D.D. Cop, 2013; Anonymous, 2015; Blatchford, 2013; Borelli, 2006; Clay, 2001; Johnson, 2015; MacLean, 2015; Silverii, 2013; Staff, 2012; Terry, 2015; S. R. Watt, 2013).

Of particular interest inherent to both metaphors is the representation of police as being isolated from and resented by the citizen. While a sense of antipathy shared by police and citizens toward criminals could be expected given their inherent conflicts of interest, the construction of these pervasive metaphors self-identify police as an excluded Other in relation to the citizen. Key to understanding the significance of this is revealed in Thorsteinson’s and Hall’s

respective references to police unpopularity and citizen resentment. These sentiments are neither unique nor recent among police officials. Cops have long expressed in their public writings, speeches, and police training manuals a sense of social exclusion from the general citizenry; see, for instance, August Vollmer (Gourley, 1953, p. vii; Vollmer, 1936, p. 66), William H. Parker (1957, p. 6), and G. Douglas Gourley (1953, pp. 4–6). Each of the cited examples in their own way make the argument that police are resented because they have to enforce unpopular laws against citizens that result in the stigmatization and ostracization of police in the concrete moment of enforcement against individual citizens.

To offer but one specific example, in a 1955 address to the League of California Cities, Chief Parker said that police were “unwanted...[and] rarely considered by the public to be a vital element of their life together...As a result,” he continued, “the individual police officer operates with a remarkable lack of public support, cooperation, and trust...the policeman has become a public symbol upon which the wrath [of the people] is vented” (1957, pp. 137–138). The quotations attributed to present-day officials such as Chief Thorsteinson and Sgt. Hall illustrates the persistence of these long-felt sentiments of public exclusion.

Throughout the procedural-era, the metaphoric and explicit characterizations made by actual police of their relationship to the citizen connotes one of conflict, social exclusion, and stigmatization—and there is certainly no lack of lexiconic evidence of the latter, e.g., flatfoot, pig, nark, fuzz, etc. Police believe that the public animus directed at them arises from the unwarranted anger of an unappreciative public antagonized by police enforcement of increasingly common regulatory approaches to social order. Not surprisingly, this viewpoint is a thematic staple of the *procedural* form, finding, for example, vivid expression in a 1968 episode of *Dragnet*, wherein a locally-televised public affairs show openly debates the worth of police to

society. In the episode, titled “Public Affairs,” Sgt. Friday is invited to sit on a discussion panel and weathers a barrage of criticisms from a hostile, unappreciative, and critical public (J. Webb, 1968). The episode openly depicts the police and the citizenry locked in conflict over the proper role of police in society, and citizen criticisms of police are rather derogatory. The theme is common to the genre; see, for instance, the 1988 film, *Colors* (Hopper, 1988), and “Chief,” a 1974 episode of *Police Story* (Vogel, 1974) for further illustration of the point.

Further, citizens (victims, witnesses, and peaceful others) often refuse or resist police assistance in *procedurals*. In a 1979 episode of *Hawaii Five-O* (Badiyi, 1979), for example, the victim, his family, and his friends flatly tell Steve McGarrett (Jack Lord) that a police investigation is unwelcome, cops unwanted. Of course for their part police dismiss the desires of the citizen in deference to the demands of justice.

Such scenes are so common to the genre as to be hackneyed. Sometimes the conflicts between citizens and police rise to a total rejection of a police presence in a community, as in the film *Fort Apache: The Bronx* (Petrie, 1981); or when in an episode of *Hill Street Blues* a pair of white male officers investigate what looks to them to be a burglary in-progress by a group of otherwise peaceful Hispanic males, leading to the officers getting physically beaten and run off (Butler, 1981). Chief Parker’s portrayal of the plight of the individual officer relative to the citizen is perhaps most intensely depicted in a vignette from the novel, *The Blue Night* (Wambaugh, 1972), wherein Officer Bumper Morgan engages a peaceful group of protesters on the streets of Los Angeles. The group quickly becomes angry, their resentment of Morgan’s presence and ideological posture overwhelming. The threat to Morgan’s safety becomes so apparent that he must be rescued by other officers.

The point to be taken here is not that these representations of fictional characters are somehow representative of human nature or some other fixed reality but, instead, are indicative of a general perception among police officers that their presence is unwelcome in many social situations. Cops see themselves a kind of necessary social pariah and this perception is reflected both in actual police discourses and *procedural* representations, as we have seen.

Indeed the *procedural* form's very focus on police officers itself reflects the sense of social exclusion felt by police. By isolating police activity, marginalizing non-police, and focusing on police protagonists, the form itself reproduces the explicit and implicit divisions delineated in police discourses. That is to say that the form's foregrounding of police officers and activities relegates citizens to anonymous faces in the crowd, forgettable witnesses and victims, and forgotten or ignored loved ones, etc., presenting the police of *procedurals* as operating in a world separate from the citizenry. Every cop or squad is an island. The felt exclusion of police officers is reflected by the *procedural* form's very subject matter, and very often extends to representations of the personal lives and relationships of *procedural* leads, a discussion of which follows.

The primary character, or lead protagonist in any *procedural* is a police officer or officers, sometimes uniformed, as were the officers of *Adam-12*, *The Rookies*, *CHiPs*, and *T.J. Hooker*, but more commonly they are plain-clothes detectives of the sort found in *Gang Busters*, *Ironside*, *Cold Case*, and *Without a Trace*. The officers are overwhelmingly Caucasian males. This is consistent with both the overrepresentation of males relative to women in law enforcement generally and roughly representative relative to minority male officers as a percentage of the U.S. population according to data from the U.S. Department of Justice (Reaves, 2010). The sex or race of police protagonists in *procedurals* matters little, however, as

it relates to the largely stable, conventionally masculine characterization that has defined the role (Scharrer, 2001).

The *procedural* cop is a serious sort, intense, clever, and determined. Joe Friday, Steve McGarrett, Theo Kojak, Christine Cagney, Olivia Benson, Lily Rush, and Hotch Hotchner, et al., are characteristically all business and possess astute observational skills. Many seem hardened by the job and display a degree of cynicism and cool detachment, although it's not uncommon for them to occasionally take a case very personally. They often possess an ironic or gallows sense of humor, e.g., "Three deaths and a kidnapping and I'm only on my second cup of coffee," Detective Lenny Briscoe (Jerry Orbach) symptomatically says in an exemplary moment of a 2003 episode of *Law & Order* (Platt, 2003). At the extreme end of such grim humor are satiric characters, like Officer Roscoe Rules, who is depicted as once answering a citizen-bystander's question, "Anyone hurt bad?" by holding aloft the severed head of a traffic accident victim and saying, "Yeah, this one got banged up a bit" (Wambaugh, 1975, p. 57).

The police protagonist can be quite somber, brooding, or an otherwise private personality, rarely, if ever, jovial, upbeat, or particularly extraverted. Their approach to the job is professional, orderly, and controlled, but internally these characters are in chaos, frequently haunted by personal demons like alcoholism (e.g., *NYPD Blue*'s Andy Sipowicz, *Cagney & Lacey*'s Christine Cagney, and *Hill Street Blues*' J.D. LaRue) or by some personal trauma in their childhood; e.g., the characters Sonny Crockett, Lily Rush, Mike Logan, Gil Grissom, Olivia Benson, Jack Malone, and the 2010 iteration of Steve McGarrett all experienced some level of family dysfunction or distress in their youth that is a source of continued tension in their adult lives. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, they tend to display a singular focus on solving their assigned cases, seemingly driven by an internal sense of justice and are dogged in their pursuit of

it. Police protagonists are often heard referring to working overtime, pulling double shifts, or getting little sleep as a result of their efforts to solve a crime for the achievement of some greater good or personal satisfaction.

One effect of their dedication to the job is that protagonists spend much of their time with other police officers, and these relationships are often the only consistent ones in their lives. Indeed, police protagonists tend to trust only themselves and other cops (Wambaugh, 1975).

Their distrust of non-police regularly extends to citizens, including family and friends, who are often believed to be incapable of understanding the policeman's predicament. This in turn usually leads to discordant personal relations between police and their loved ones. The television show *Police Story* often made this a central focus of characterizations (Wambaugh, 2011). One particular episode, "The Wyatt Earp Syndrome" (Collins, 1974), tells the story of how an officer's identification with the role of policeman alienates him from his family and friends to the point of the destruction of those relationships. In a recent interview, the show's creator, Joseph Wambaugh, says that the story is built around a widely held belief among LAPD officers in a so-called John Wayne syndrome wherein cops begin to take themselves too seriously and leads to just such outcomes (O'Connor, 1975; Wambaugh, 2011). The episode ends with the officer (Cliff Gorman) in tears and alone in his own home, abandoned by his wife and child. All that is heard is a police dispatcher's voice on the officer's police radio filling the otherwise empty space, symbolizing the divided worlds of police and citizen.

While not stated in so many words, the John Wayne syndrome leading to divorce and familial estrangement among police officers is a recurrent, conventional theme in *procedurals*. Divorce arising from the protagonist's police officer identity plays an important role in the

character development of many iconic *procedural* leads, including Joe LaFrieda, Sonny Crockett, Frank Furillo, Andy Sipowicz, Lenny Briscoe, Hotch Hotchner, and David Rossi, et al.

The job is at times explicitly given as the reason for discordant personal relations between the police and the citizen. In “The Big Interrogation,” a 1967 episode of *Dragnet*, Sgt. Joe Friday candidly tells a rookie officer (Kent McCord) who is distressed over his relationship with his fiancé, that being a police officer necessarily entails being ridiculed by your friends, hated by your enemies, and rejected by your citizen-loved ones (J. Webb, 1967). More recently, this message tends to be conveyed subtly but no less plainly, as when in season one, episode eight of *Blue Bloods*, rookie officer Jamie Reagan (Will Estes) and his fiancé, Sydnie Davenport (Dylan Moore), acrimoniously end their engagement due to her distress over his career choice (Pressman, 2010). Romantic or otherwise personal relationships between cops and citizens is often doomed in *procedurals*.

We might consider the lack of happily married *procedural* leads as evidence that in the story world of the *procedural*, police and citizens are largely portrayed as incompatible. A list of happily married *procedural* leads would be a short one, including perhaps Mary Beth Lacey (Tyne Daly) of *Cagney & Lacey* as the only significant example, her exception rather proving the rule, while actually contributing to her felt-sense of exclusion. That is, her marriage to Harvey (John Karlin) is not without frequent conflict over the demands of the job, as when in “Taxicab Murders” Lacey goes undercover as a cabbie, which causes discord at home (Arthur, 1984).

Lieutenant Frank Columbo (Peter Falk) often speaks endearingly of a Mrs. Columbo on the long-running series *Columbo* (Levinson & Link, 1971), but she is never seen on-screen at any time over the series’ on-again/off-again 30-year run, suggesting the possibility she exists only in Lieutenant Columbo’s imagination, a projection of the desired domestic life fictional

cops are routinely denied; or, perhaps, she exists only as an ingenious interrogation technique, as she is often invoked in just such circumstances by the intrepid investigator.

Far more common of the *procedural* protagonist is that they are single, often live alone, and suffer a string of failed romantic, familial, and other personal relationships, the failure of which is almost always tied directly to the lead's primary status as a police officer and which results in considerable emotional pain.

Indeed, in the story world of the *procedural*, cops are isolated loners, rejected, and often depicted as misfits in the citizen's non-police world. This theme is poignantly explored in Wambaugh's novel, *The Blue Knight* (1972). In it, Officer Bumper Morgan is nearing the end of a 20-year career at the LAPD. Throughout the novel, with his retirement imminent, a high-paying private-sector job already secured, and plans to marry his school teacher-girlfriend, he dreams of life as a citizen, only to be denied such an existence in the end, knowing that the citizen world has rejected his kind—policemen. That world is no place for him. Officer Morgan simply doesn't fit into any world other than that of the police officer, his whimsical desires for inclusion within the citizen's world notwithstanding.

The explicit sense of social exclusion expressed by actual police in their own public writings and its fictional representation in their artistic narratives, i.e., *procedurals*, is critical to any biocultural reading of the genre. In other words, to understand the social function of *procedurals* one must understand the motivation of its representations. My claim is that, if we take actual officers at their literal and figurative word, we have good evidence of their perceived exclusion. Further, as I've shown above, their felt-sense of exclusion is present in the structural framework of the *procedural* story world as well as in the metaphorical discourses of actual

officers and the *procedural* representations of police/citizen relations. Police apparently see and represent themselves as a kind of (necessary) social pariah, unwelcome outcasts.

The implication of this is that, in the United States where males comprise 88% of all cops (Reaves, 2010), we can expect police officers to exhibit a human male response to their social exclusion in accordance with their evolved psychology. Before moving on to a closer reading of “The Human Bomb” and “Twenty-Five Acts,” a brief overview of the psychology of social exclusion is in order.

Psychology of Social Exclusion

Humans are social beings. Yet social exclusion, or ostracization is a universal feature of all known societies and cultures (D. E. Brown, 1991). If we accept the basic fact of evolution by natural selection, the universality of social exclusion suggests that it is an evolved behavioral trait of humans, a psychological adaptation selected by recurrent environmental pressures which carries with it some fitness benefit. It is highly improbable that such a universal trait as social exclusion arose in geographically isolated societies from idiosyncratic cultural practices independent of an evolved human predisposition to the behavior. It is instead more likely a feature of evolved human nature, the behavior elicited by contingent circumstances for the management of social relations. Given that humans relate to one another communicatively, it seems reasonable that social exclusion would affect or otherwise implicate our cultural constructs.

Social, or group living conditions present a recurrent environment of both social opportunities and social threats. For example, living in groups provides greater opportunities for coalition formation, which furthers human safety, the sharing of resources, and access to

potential mates, etc. Conversely, group living means being subject to greater competition over status, resources, and desirable mates, etc., (Campbell, 2005; Kurzban & Neuberg, 2005). From the Darwinian perspective, these recurrent social conditions persisted over evolutionary time, resulting in the adaptation of specific psychological mechanisms for managing these opportunities and threats. The problems of social living are among the problems the human mind evolved to solve. That is, in light of evolutionary processes, the conditions under which our ancestors evolved predict cognitive adaptations for managing social relations. The available evidence supports the inference that humans do indeed possess such mechanisms.

Humans, like many other primates, display a species-typical behavioral pattern of discriminate sociality designed to reap the fitness rewards of group living while mitigating the costs. Evolutionary forces have designed distinct mental mechanisms, for example, one that favors kin and others for selecting our friends and associates, based upon myriad factors related to self-preservation and reproduction. Relatedly, natural selection has provided additional cognitive strategies, e.g., stigmatization, for dealing with perceived social threats (Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Kurzban & Neuberg, 2005).

After social exclusion became a persistent behavioral trait within communities, it constituted a recurrent feature of that social environment, leading to adaptations for the management of social exclusion. That is to say evolution equipped the human mind with psychological mechanisms for navigating environments in which persons have been socially excluded.

Among the responses to social exclusion is hostility on the part of the excluded toward their excluders (Kurzban & Neuberg, 2005). In fact, it is fairly-well documented that social exclusion leads to aggressive behavior on the part of the socially ostracized towards those from

whom they are outcast (Campbell, 2005; DeWall, Twenge, Gitter, & Baumeister, 2009; Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001). Furthermore, social exclusion is a source of emotional distress, which, not surprisingly, activates evolved patterns of empathic appeals, or distress signaling. It's likely that once social exclusion became a recurrent feature of social environments, the evolved distress signaling patterns present from childhood were recruited into mature forms of adult distress signaling somewhat more subtle than crying like a baby (de Waal, 2008).

It follows that if police believe themselves to be operating within an environment of social exclusion, their response—mediated, facilitated, and/or constrained by social norms, ideology, cultural mores, emerging standards of professional policing, prevailing laws, and subjective idiosyncrasies in personality—would nevertheless still be hostile in some manner to the public from which they felt excluded. In other words, it is the case of cultural factors attenuating biological responses. A close reading of the form suggests that *procedurals* serve this very function. In this view, the *procedural* form is, in part, both a hostile and empathic communicative response to perceived social exclusion; or, put another way, a cultural expression of a biological response to contingently perceived social circumstances; *i.e.*, a biocultural phenomenon.

In sum, it seems that police at mid-century availed themselves of cultural forms of expression, *i.e.*, popular media, as a socially acceptable means of aggression and empathic signaling. The *procedural*, for reasons previously given, has continued to perform this social function since.

I offer analysis below of the aforementioned 1951 *Dragnet* episode “The Human Bomb” and the 2012 *Law & Order: SVU* episode “Twenty-Five Acts” as a demonstration of a

biocultural analysis built on this conclusion. However, I focus here only on the police perception of social exclusion and its attendant hostile response. I'll pick up the topic of empathic signaling in a subsequent chapter.

“The Human Bomb” and “Twenty-five Acts”

Let's revisit the 1951 premier televised episode of *Dragnet*, “The Human Bomb.” To briefly outline the plot, the audience is told that a man named Vernon Carney (Stacy Harris) has walked into city hall carrying a homemade bomb and is demanding that his brother, Elwood (Sam Edwards), be released from jail on threat of his detonating it. Both men, the audience is further told, are “small time thieves” who have been “in and out of jail” over the years. All citizens have been evacuated. Only police and the Carneys are ever identified on-screen. Sergeants Friday and Romero try negotiating with Carney but their efforts fail. They then devise a plan whereby Romero will be lowered by rope from the floor above the room occupied by Carney and enter through an open window so as to surprise Carney from behind while he is distracted by Friday. After some impromptu revisions, their plan is ultimately successful. Carney, unaware of Romero's having entered the room from behind him, is easily overtaken by Romero. Friday wrests the bomb from Carney and, according to instructions given to him by a bomb technician, places the bomb in a bucket of water and then rushes out of the building, only to trip and fall, sending the bomb crashing to the pavement, fortunately without detonating. The show ends with all of the officers sharing a good laugh over Friday's pratfall and the audience is told the fate of the Carney brothers.

Citizens are conspicuously absent from this episode. There are no victims, witnesses, nor crowd of on-lookers. Their absence effectively illustrates the separation of police from the citizenry. The presence of the general public is primarily achieved by its symbolic representation

in the episode's city hall setting. Conversely, a lone criminal, Vernon Carney, sits behind a closed door in a sparsely furnished office with a bomb on his lap. Meanwhile, the camera's focus is primarily directed upon the activities of police. In short, the whole scene is a straightforward depiction of the *procedural* story world: citizens, cops, and criminals. The conspicuous absence of the evacuated citizen-characters, in conjunction with the door separating the cops and the criminal, clearly delineate the divisions among the three groups. The camera's focus on cops provides a visual representation of the isolation of police from the two non-police sub-groups and each of these from the other.

Needless to say that fears of nuclear annihilation were palpable and ever-present among Americans at the time of this episode's airing in 1951 (Boyer, 1994; Ott, 1999; Weart, 2012); but it's important to remember that people were not just anxious over the nuclear threat in an abstract sense but were frightened in a way that affected their daily behavior (Lyons, 2003). This was the immediate post-war era of backyard bunkers, urban fallout shelters, duck-and-cover drills, and the advent of the Federal Civil Defense Administration (Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1953; "Photographs and pamphlet about nuclear fallout," n.d.). The horrors of war were fresh in the minds of many, the nuclear threat very real. Webb, in titling *Dragnet's* premier episode "The Human Bomb" by merely inserting the word 'human' into the then prevalent Cold War concept of 'The Bomb,' effectively articulated these very real fears of nuclear annihilation into an imagined isomorphic relation with domestic crime.

Webb builds further on these fears by layering-in references to the rising anxieties over mutually assured destruction that followed the Soviets Union's successful detonation of nuclear bombs in August of 1949 and again in September of 1951: "We go, you're going with us," Sergeant Joe Friday tells Vernon Carney. Moreover, the symbolic value of the episode's setting

at city hall, an obvious center of public life, suggests that it was citizens who were being threatened. The connotative links made equated the Soviet threat with threats posed by domestic crime, and implied the need for a police response to crime that was similar to the military's response to the nuclear threat posed by the Soviet Union.

There are of course a number of ways of characterizing such an articulation. On the ideological level, one might imagine an argument wherein the making of such connections resulted in the forging of alliances among reactionary elements of society amenable to drawing parallels between national defense and domestic policing, thereby maintaining institutional structures of power.

However, given that this artifact is a product of members of the LAPD, and that those officers openly characterized their predicament as socially excluded, and further given what we know about the hostile behavior of socially excluded human males, I don't think it's unreasonable at all to characterize (or at least to accept as plausible) such a rhetorical move as being unkind or callous...even hostile, although unconscious. Exacerbating peoples' existing fears of nuclear annihilation and articulating those to domestic crime is, at the risk of sounding hyperbolic, the greatly attenuated moral equivalent of placing a tarantula in the bed of an arachnophobe. To clarify, however, my claim is to say that beneath Webb's desire to entertain or inculcate, and beyond the profit motive of the television industry, and in addition to the reproduction of dominant ideologies, is the unintentionally inscribed hostility of police.

Accordingly, these articulations not only begin to reveal the adaptive hostile response of a socially excluded police but are themselves a moment of artistic invention wherein prevailing social conditions are articulated in such a way as to express police hostility toward the general public. It's a practice that eventually becomes conventional to the genre.

For instance, in subsequent examples of the genre, bomb threats in general became a recurring motif for the expression of hostility. Multiple 1950s era episodes of each *Dragnet*, *The Lineup*, and *Highway Patrol* all feature a public bomb threat as the central narrative tension. The fear-inducing potential of these stories was no doubt further heightened by the real-life, high-profile case of George Metesky, New York City's so-called "Mad Bomber," who between 1952 and 1956 planted a number of pipe bombs (22 detonated, injuring 15) in various public places around the city, creating a mild public panic. The national press coverage was intense during this time and public concerns stretched well-beyond NYC (Greenburg, 2011). The ironic twist, of course, is that bomb threats became a particularly timely motif for the latent expression of police hostility directed at citizens in *procedural* narratives.

All of the bomb-related *procedural* episodes, however, to one degree or another, played on Cold War fears of The Bomb, none more so than a 1955 episode of *Highway Patrol*, written by then-LAPD Sergeant (and pre-*Star Trek*) Gene Roddenberry, who recycled the title "Human Bomb" (Benson, 1955). In it, Roddenberry tells the story of an unemployed chemical engineer, Jay Detterick⁶ (William Vaughn), whose homemade bomb he plans to detonate at a chemical plant. By setting his story at a chemical plant, Roddenberry adds fears of chemical fallout to the widening web of hostile significance built on Webb's earlier articulation in *Dragnet* of a looming threat tied to mutually assured destruction and The Bomb. This stands as an example, I think, of what Joseph Carroll means when he writes that, "culture does not stand apart from the genetically transmitted dispositions of human nature. It is, rather, the medium through which

⁶ I strongly suspect that the name Jay Detterick was used to pay homage to Roddenberry's compatriot at the LAPD, Jack Dederick, who, as I explained previously, illustrated the department's training materials, which no doubt inspired Roddenberry as they did Jack Webb. I'm sure the two men shared a good laugh over this.

humans organize those dispositions into systems that regulate public behavior and inform private thoughts” (Carroll et al., 2010, p. 213).

However, to clarify, my argument here is that from a biocultural perspective, The Bomb and bomb threats were historically determined conditions used as material for the cultural construction of expressions of an underlying biologically motivated hostility. The motifs and tropes change with the passage of time and shifts in social conditions, but the sense of exclusion and the resulting hostility that typifies the relationship between the citizen and the police remains, albeit more subtly or complexly expressed in more contemporary versions of the formula.

For instance, the 2012 episode “Twenty-Five Acts” of *Law & Order: SVU* previously discussed supports this reading. Recall that the episode opens with a shot within the SVU office. The show’s police-characters are engaged in non-plot-driven conversation. The first such conversation overheard by the audience is one officer’s telling several others that a number of shootings have taken place in the city over the weekend. Detective Odafin ‘Fin’ Tutuola (Ice-T) contemptuously responds to this news by saying that the violence is the result of citizen demands that the NYPD end its highly controversial program known as “stop-and-frisk.”⁷

In theory, stop-and-frisk was to be employed against all citizens equally. In practice the tactic was used primarily against minority males. Civil rights groups sued in federal court to end the practice in 2008, and the policy was vigorously debated in the national press during the years between 2008 and 2014 (Hauser, 2008; Serwer & Lee, 2013). According to reports, the NYPD made over 800,000 such stops in 2011 alone. The vast majority, 90%, of those targeted for

⁷ Briefly, “stop-and-frisk” was the real-life policy of the NYPD inaugurated in 2002 that encouraged police to randomly stop citizens on the street and search them for contraband.

stopping-and-frisking were young men of color, and the searches resulted in relatively few convictions (Devereaux, 2012).

Publicly, police largely stayed silent in the face of rising criticisms, citing the ongoing civil rights litigation as the reason for not publically commenting (Rivera, 2010), but internally police defended the program as a necessary tactic for crime suppression (A. Baker, 2010a, 2010b). Following the federal court's pronouncement in 2013 that the practice was unconstitutional, police officials went on record in defense of the program. NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly is quoted as saying that stop and frisk "is essential to policing...As a matter of fact, you can't police without doing it" (Timm, 2013). Detective Tutuola's remark in this 2012 episode of *Law & Order: SVU* participates in this larger public debate. It is an I-told-you-so sentiment reflective of the well-known at the time position of the officers of the NYPD that crime would rise if the popular with police tactic were disallowed (Durkin & Edelman, 2013).

The upshot of Tutuola's remark is that citizens ignore, disregard, or otherwise exclude police at their own peril. The remark also foreshadows the subtextual theme of citizens' disregard of and noncooperation with police that recurs throughout the episode; e.g., the victim and witnesses all resist, and in one case refuse outright, to cooperate with the SVU in their investigation. To use Chief Parker's words from 1955, "[Police are] unwanted" (1957, pp. 137–138) in this episode. As a result of citizen disregard of and noncooperation with police, as we will see, cops turn to the coercion of victims and witnesses in order to force association. In other words, the police undertake a hostile response to their social exclusion; it's a depiction of a folk understanding of human nature.

We have now expanded our context for the interpretation of "Twenty-Five Acts" and the functions of *procedurals* in managing social relations. However, there's much more socio-

historical context to consider. Specifically, the episode must be situated within the larger cultural struggle over contested meanings of rape and due process in which it also participates. The episode's title, "Twenty-Five Acts," is a mash-up of the popular sado-sexual novel *Fifty-Shades of Grey* (E. L. James, 2012) and the *Holy Bible's Book of Acts*, chapter twenty-five, which concerns the trial of the falsely charged Apostle Paul before the Romans and his right to face his accuser. Equally important are two high-profile, real-life alleged rape cases extensively reported by national media in the months prior to this episode's production. The first involving the International Monetary Fund's Managing Director, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, and the second involving CBS Correspondent Lara Logan.

James' novel, *Fifty-Shades of Grey*, was released in April of 2012 and, according to CNN, sold over 20-million copies in the U.S. by July of that year (Grinberg, 2012). That same news report makes clear just how quickly the novel invaded our cultural consciousness, generating news stories, numerous pop-cultural references, and the securing of a three-part, seven-figure movie deal for the book's author. The book is explicitly referenced in "Twenty-Five Acts."

The novel's plot revolves around a naïve college girl's relationship with a billionaire businessman who introduces her to sadomasochistic sex (S&M). The plot, however, is less important for my purposes than is the fact that its themes of consent and sexual violence against women were part of an ongoing public contest over what constitutes rape at the time of "Twenty-Five Acts." Further, the novel's characters plainly serve as models for the characters in the *SVU* episode. In it, the victim is a naïve college girl who has penned a wildly successful S&M novel similar to James' and the perpetrator is a wealthy celebrity who rapes her in a hotel during an S&M encounter in which she withdraws her consent to the violent sex and he refuses to stop.

Also relevant to the socio-historical moment are the alleged rape of a hotel maid by Dominique Strauss-Kahn and the alleged rape of Lara Logan by a group of unknown assailants as she reported from Tahrir Square during Egypt's so-called Arab Spring. Both incidents took place in 2011 and were widely and wildly reported. In the case of Strauss-Kahn, he passionately denied the accusation of rape, contending that the sex was consensual and accusing the woman of gold-digging. In press accounts, the matter devolved to a he/said, she/said affair. Ultimately, New York prosecutors dropped all charges against Strauss-Kahn due to problems over the alleged-victim's credibility (Rashbaum & Eligon, 2011). All of these elements of the Strauss-Kahn case are explicitly woven, mirrored even (with the exception of charges being dropped against the defendant), into the plot of "Twenty-Five Acts."

In the Lara Logan incident, the CBS news correspondent appeared on the television news magazine "60-Minutes" in May, 2011, to detail her assault. In the interview, conducted by Scott Pelley, she claims to have been sexually assaulted successively by a mob of men during a February 2011 pro-democracy protest in Egypt. No one doubts that she was attacked. However, at the time of the assault, various press accounts reported her attack as a "rape," while others called it a "sexual assault," sparking no small amount of public debate over the nuances of the two terms (Hallett, 2011; Quraishi, 2011)

The incident, along with the Strauss-Kahn affair and the *Fifty-Shades* phenomenon, worked to intensify national attention on the subjects of consent, rape, and due process, which was punctuated further in January of 2012 when U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced that the U.S. Department of Justice had revised and expanded its definition of rape to include a wider-range of acts (Holder, 2012). In all, including the aforementioned policy of stop-and-frisk,

these constitute the general milieu surrounding the production and airing of the *SVU* episode under consideration.

In consequence of this historical context, the plot of “Twenty-Five Acts” is far more complex than the plot of “The Human Bomb.” As I’ve indicated above, it brings together a host of socially contested issues framed by current events. While potentially important in other contexts, the ideological struggles that underscore the articulation of these issues are somewhat extraneous to my analysis. They are considered here—as was the fear of nuclear annihilation, mutually assured destruction, and chemical fallout in earlier *procedurals*—as historically contingent cultural material for use in the biocultural expression of police hostility directed at the general citizenry for the purpose of managing social relations—an evolved response. In line with that, let’s focus on the universal narrative elements of the *procedural* genre and the associated indications of social exclusion and hostility toward the citizen in order to reveal the stable features of the genre and the role of the evolved human psyche.

The generic *procedural* story world of citizens/cops/criminals (sheep/sheepdogs/wolves) is plainly evident in “Twenty-Five Acts.” There are citizen-sheep, a rape-victim and witnesses; there are the *SVU* police-sheepdogs; and there is a criminal-wolf (rapist) suspect/perpetrator, all clearly identified and linked by the story’s narrative arc. The conflict in need of resolution is a he-said/she-said account of rape.

To briefly rehearse the plot, the victim, Jocelyn Paley⁸ (Anna Chlumsky) is raped during what began as a consensual sexual encounter in a hotel room with a successful television talk

⁸ Jocelyn Paley/Scott Pelley, get it? She’s a woman whose sexual assault will be questioned publically.

show host named Adam Cain⁹ (Roger Bart). During the encounter, she withdraws her consent by saying, “Stop!” He persists by forcing the completion of anal intercourse. She does not report the incident to police. On the following day, however, one of her associates does report her injuries to police. Detectives Olivia Benson (Mariska Hargitay) and Amanda Rollins (Kelli Giddish) contact Paley in the hospital, where she is getting treatment for some minor injuries to her neck sustained during the assault. Paley is reluctant to characterize what happened as rape and she refuses to cooperate in any investigation or press the matter. Paley’s noncooperation is dismissed by Benson and the officers of SVU initiate an investigation, sending other officers to question the suspect/perpetrator Cain.

Cain, angered by Paley’s allegations revealed to him by police during questioning, tracks down and confronts Paley, raping her a second time.¹⁰ Thereupon, Paley visits Detective Benson at her home, blaming Benson for the second incident as being the result of the police’s questioning of Cain contra Paley’s wishes to not press charges. Benson apologizes but takes no responsibility, saying, “Are you ready to press charges now?” Paley relents but the upshot is that had she cooperated with police in the first place, the second rape would not have occurred. Benson’s is a somewhat coolly-detached compassion. Soon after, Benson introduces Paley to the SVU prosecutor, Rafael Barba (Raul Esparza), who tells Paley flatly, “You’re not going to like me when this is all done.” It’s a line Paley repeats back to him at the end of the show, affirming his prediction.

⁹ “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD” (Genesis, 4:1, KJV), get it? Adam Cain is a religious conservative that will violate an able life and should be cursed for doing so.

¹⁰ Multiple assaults, like in the case of Lara Logan.

Later, Benson and Rollins question a witness, a former female employee of Cain's, who they suspect may have also been a victim of a sexual assault by him. She denies the allegation. Benson and Rollins engage in some light to moderate intimidation—Rollins physically blocks a doorway, stopping the witness in her tracks, as Benson intensifies her questioning, suggesting to the woman that her mental and emotional health are at stake; i.e., she'll pay for not cooperating with police. The woman reluctantly provides some background information regarding Cain but resolutely refuses to cooperate in the prosecution.

As the investigation proceeds, some potentially career-ending and financially devastating information is revealed about Paley, causing her to express a desire to withdraw from the prosecution, i.e., the citizen-victim wishes to “drop the charges.” In response, SVU-members threaten her with prosecution for perjury if she withdraws, thereby coercing her continued participation in the case.

Meanwhile, a second witness, a former college professor of Paley's (Romy Rosemont), who had earlier lied to police in order to avoid involvement in the case (in order to conceal the fact that she, not Paley, is the real author of the S&M novel) comes forward to testify on Paley's behalf, but only after her own financial and professional life is destroyed by the police investigation. The episode ends with the successful prosecution of Cain; however, the personal, professional, and financial lives of the victim, Paley, and the college professor-witness are destroyed—and not because of the criminal acts committed by Cain but by their compelled cooperation with police. The dissatisfaction of citizens with the process reproduces police perceptions of their own unpopularity. In an ironic twist, it is only the citizen-witness who more resolutely refused to consort with police whose life is not shattered.

On one level, “Twenty-Five Acts” appears to be a story about the problems police encounter in conducting criminal investigations of rape; namely, the challenges of obtaining the cooperation of victims and witnesses in such cases. In the end, the demands of justice excuse the police use of threatening intimidation in compelling citizen cooperation. That the citizen’s personal and professional lives are ruined is perhaps acceptable collateral damage.

On a straightforward biocultural view, the story appears to be about the problematic social relationship between citizens and cops, at least as perceived by police. Police are unwelcome, unwanted, and unappreciated by the very citizens—victims and witnesses—they claim to serve (sheep-sheepdog). The episode reveals this sense of social resistance to a police presence among the citizenry and depicts a hostile (coercive) response by police (viz., the bullying of the victim and witnesses) that is consistent with the science of social exclusion. However, this is a rather naïve reading, too. The characters of SVU are, after all, fictional.

The social context framing the text consists of ideological struggles over stop-and-frisk and rape. For police, it was a time of intense public scrutiny of their conduct. The results of a Quinnipiac University public opinion poll released in August of 2012, just two-months prior to the airing of this episode, indicated that a slight majority of New York voters were opposed to stop-and-frisk. Among minority voters, it was 3 to 1 against (Smith, 2012). The citizenry was rejecting the tactic as a socially acceptable action of police. Such a rebuke, I think plausibly, would be rather naturally received by actual police as socially excluding. Given these circumstances, we might reasonably expect that the predictable hostile response on the part of police might find its way, however latently, and, again, mitigated by social norms and cultural mores, into contemporaneous texts. To be clear, the broadcast itself was not a hostile act but the

hostility of actual police is latently present, inscribed by the direct and indirect police input previously discussed and reviewed again briefly below.

Central to my claim is that the *procedural* form is cop art, narratives that express the bioculturally-informed perspectives of actual police. I argued earlier that that perspective is embedded in the form by three central factors of production: the continued reliance on conventions developed by a relatively small group of police officer-artists in the early days of the genre's emergence; the present-day widespread use of police officers as technical advisors in film and television; and lastly, the use of news media accounts that depend on police officials for story content.

If I'm right, we might first consider if "Twenty-Five Acts" meets these three criteria. The short answer is, yes, it does. In addition to its being exemplary of the *procedural* genre in terms of conventional representations of narrative arc, characterizations, and story world, the episode also employed the use of Tim Hardiman, a 23-year veteran of the NYPD, as a technical advisor. Further, I think it's clear from my description of the social context surrounding the episode's production and airing that the episode's writers borrowed heavily from press accounts of high profile rape cases.

In light of this, I believe we can think more deeply about "Twenty-Five Acts" from a biocultural perspective than merely pointing to the actions of fictional characters as a representation of a folk understanding of human nature. In this view, the episode's narrative models a perceived social environment wherein police must navigate their own felt sense of social exclusion; i.e., it reflects the cop's perceived social condition and the nature of police-citizen relations. Similar to Jack Webb's use of existing fears of nuclear annihilation in "The

Human Bomb,” the topic of rape and implied dire warnings of rising violent crime serve as timely motifs for the underlying hostile response of police to their imagined condition.

I have argued that the *procedural* is by and large the product of actual police. As such, the form reflects the perceived social condition of cops. Whether or not their understanding of their social world reflects true conditions or not is somewhat irrelevant to interpreting their narrative representations from a biocultural perspective. Police believe themselves to be apart from the citizenry, a necessary social pariah. In light of current evolutionary thought on human psychology, their narratives can be understood as a universal strategy for solving the social problems they face. In this view, crime and criminality are only superficially the topic of *procedurals*. Instead, the genre is most concerned with the social relationship between the police and the citizenry, the social exclusion of the former by the latter and the former’s evolved response to their exclusion and desire for inclusion.

I have focused on the hostile aspect of their response above because it articulates most clearly to the moments of production and representation but, as I previously mentioned, hostility is not the only human response to social exclusion. Empathic appeals, or distress signaling, is also a common response to social exclusion. I address this in the next section on audiences as it best articulates representation to reception in the circuit of culture. Specifically, my analysis of audience responses to *procedural* texts reveals a decided concern for empathic signaling—and I argue that audience demands for affective representations reveals an evolved preference for the kind of social information naturally conveyed by displays of emotion. In fact, it may be an essential feature of texts for the apprehension of audience attention.

Chapter Three: Audience

In this chapter I examine the audience and their response to *procedural* texts. To clarify from the outset, by the term ‘audience’ I merely mean the actual audience, revealed by their public engagement with *procedurals*, as opposed to, say, the implied, intended, imagined, ideal, or some other audience (Allen, 1987, pp. 87–89). It’s an attempt to look at the behavior people actually engage in, consider the presumptive beliefs that motivate that behavior, and look at some of the social relations that are manifested (Carey, 2009, p. 65).

My approach here will be ethnographic: relying on the sense in which the method was invoked by Stuart Hall, et al., in a recently updated edition of their seminal 1978 book, *Policing the Crisis* (2013). There the authors write,

Any approach that assists the journey towards a detailed empirical knowledge of a particular ‘social world’ can be ethnographic: wading through mounds of newspapers (primary materials for the ‘social world’ of social reaction); reading masses of secondary material in the form of books, articles and commentaries (...); and living and working in the social world [being investigated]. (xi-xii)

In addition to the “mounds” of print sources recommended by Hall in the pre-digital 1970s, I’ve found many dozens of online fan forums, blogs, and other Internet sites where everyday audience members openly engage *procedural* texts along with other fans. However, just as was Hall’s, my goal is ultimately a hermeneutic one. What I attempt below is an interpretation of audience response in light of a few assumptions to see if I can gain any insight into some of what’s really going on in *procedurals*. As such ethnographically-influenced work assumes, it’s not a search for a grand or overarching explanation of *procedural* fiction but a partial descriptive account of what people may be up to when they choose to consume *procedural* fiction.

For such purposes my approach offers some advantages to more traditional ethnographic approaches, such as that of Janice Radway in her seminal book, *Reading the Romance* (1991), for instance. Notably, the responses I was able to amass were unsolicited, effectively eliminating any potential priming or observer effects that undermine ethnographic work. This, I think, is particularly true of the individual letters to the editor and/or online postings that seem, for lack of a better word, organic, spontaneous, or in any event self-motivated. I suspect this is what the *Crisis* authors meant when they called print media “primary materials...of social reaction.” I suggest that this is likewise true of today’s social media.

Further, I think my approach addresses a particular weakness of social research, like that of David Morley’s approach in his *Nationwide* study, namely that of salience. As with Radway’s readers of romance, the *procedural* audience members considered below used their own discretion in choosing which media to consume, ostensibly because that media had some relevance to their lives. Morley’s participants may have volunteered to take part in his study but they had no choice of which media to consume, calling into question whether they cared at all about the messages upon which they commented (Chandler, 1997).

Additionally, such an approach allows me to survey a breadth of historical time that would otherwise be unavailable to me. The responses cover nearly the entirety of what I have earlier called the procedural-era, 1948-present. Further still, there is a degree of randomization across my target population with respect to age, ethnicity, geography, race, gender, and time, although I would be reluctant to generalize much to others on this basis alone. In many cases, I am blind to the social position of those whose responses I’m citing, and with others the information is thin. While this restricts my ability to comment much on the potential determining

effects of these factors, it allows me to focus on the singular commonality of the audience, their penchant for *procedural* fiction.

My interest in fiction stems from the empirically supported belief that human behavior, including social behaviors like producing and consuming fictional narratives is to varying degrees determined by a mix of that which we call “human nature” and “culture” and “experience;” or, as Gad Saad bluntly titled a recent article in the journal *General Review of Psychology*, “Nothing in popular culture makes sense except in the light of evolution” (2012).

What remains is to situate my biocultural perspective within the literature of cultural studies---specifically the audience-oriented work of Radway and Morley.

Radway, Morley, and the Biocultural

In *Reading the Romance*, Radway considers a female audiences’ engagement with romance novels. She locates the meanings derived by the women in the act of reading itself, more so than an engagement with the plot or other structural features of the text. On this view, the act of reading romances provides “compensatory pleasures” such as an “escape from the present,” “release,” and “relaxation.” Radway’s reading of her audience’s response was that these women, readers of romance, found the fictions instrumental to freeing themselves, at least temporarily, from their socially constructed roles as wife, mother, and homemaker. The more ambitious of Radway’s claims (following Nancy Chodorow) was that perhaps her readers were motivated to consume such narratives and derived pleasure from them as an ameliorative solution to a lost imaginary mother-daughter relationship (Radway, 1991).

I find in Radway a precedent, for both an instrumental view of fiction and for an appeal to psychology—how the mind works—in theorizing about human engagement with fictional narratives. I'll bypass any direct critique of Radway's invoking of Chodorow by simply noting that modern mainstream conceptions of how the mind actually works depart greatly from the Freudian view (Pinker, 2009).

A potentially more fruitful avenue might be found in considering that perhaps the motivations for producing and consuming fictions of all kinds lay in the instrumental purposes for which those cognitive capacities evolved. All of the human body's organs are the product of blind variation and selective retention and, thereby, many organs evolved multiple functions that enhance human fitness. The kidneys, for example, filter blood and process waste; the liver aides in digestion and also produces a protein important to blood clotting; and the brain, among its many functions, produces and attends to fictional narratives. The less plausible alternative is that the functions of the mind, like the functions of all other organs of the human body, are the product of natural selection and are the obvious source of culture and social behavior but those functions have no determining effect on the cultural constructs and social behaviors themselves.

If the cognitive capacities for fiction are adaptive to some purpose[s], an evolutionary view would have predicted Radway's discovery of the pleasure derived by reading romances. Among the remarkable feats of natural selection is its making the necessary pleasurable. That is to say that adaptive behaviors—those behaviors which deliver a fitness benefit—are often made pleasurable in order to increase their enactment (Clasen, 2012). The joys of sex, for example, ensure that more not less of it occurs, thereby increasing the potential reproduction of genes to the next generation (Miller, 2001). The inherent pleasures of imaginative play in children function similarly by engaging all manner of cognitive and motor skills necessary for self-

preservation (B. Boyd, 2009; Steen & Owen, 2001). The pleasure derived from the act of attending to fictions ensures our engagement with such texts (Mar & Oatley, 2008); however, the pleasure is not the fitness benefit or the ultimate motive, but it's more than just a compensatory bonus. Pleasure functions proximally to encourage an ultimately fitness-enhancing behavior.

None of which should be read as a condemnation of Radway's identification of fiction's instrumentality for addressing present social conditions. The demands of social expectations to live within the strictures of constructed female identities can no doubt be burdensome. Fictional worlds, even those that may reproduce the conditions of one's existence, potentially do provide a respite from one's everyday experience. Indeed this aspect of viewing fictions as a geographical space wherein meaningful action can take place is consistent with an evolutionary perspective, as we shall see.

Morley's work is interested in uncovering the relationship between the socio-cultural background of individuals and their interpretations of texts. As I noted above, Morley (relying upon theoretical work of Parkin and Hall) tests whether one's socio-cultural position, be it upper-middle, lower-middle, or working class, influences their decoding of culturally coded mass mediated messages. In refining the so-called Preferred Reading Model,¹¹ these audiences are said to interpret messages alternatively in one of three ways: by wholly accepting the intended meaning (dominant reading); by accepting most of the dominant codes but seeking to modify or resist some others (negotiated reading); or by rejecting all of the dominant codes (resistant reading). What Morley found was that disparate readings of texts were dependent on the various

¹¹ Hall, Stuart. (1980). Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse. In Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe & Paul Willis (Eds.), *Culture, Media, Language* (pp. 128-138). London: Hutchinson.)

cultural codes available to and applied by individual audience members. So it was not social position, or class that was determinative. The role played by social position is in how it influences (regulates, allows or disallows) access to the codes in which any text is encoded. Where one resides in the social hierarchy appears to have a determinative effect on what meanings are derived from cultural representations only to the extent social position facilitates access to varying competencies in reading/decoding texts which can overdetermine the meanings available (Morley, 1980). However, an evolutionary perspective may let us peek a bit deeper into what, beyond social position, may be involved in the effect Morley uncovered.

I think it's fair to say that Morley's *Nationwide* project is concerned with one's social position relative 'to' another's position and to texts within their constructed place in any given society, as opposed to exploring one's social relation 'with' another occupying a different social position, and both seem important to me. The former imagines the relationship again in terms of geography. One is 'here' another is 'there', one reads a text as X and the other reads it as Y. Each interprets the text differently because of the differences accruing to their social position. The latter is conceived temporally. 'We' are now, in the present, relating to one another through the text, each bringing to bear the range of particular discourses available to us resulting from our differing social position and those universally shared human communicative competencies resulting from our common evolutionary past.

For instance, I stand both in relation 'to' my boss within a socially constructed hierarchy and I also have a relation 'with' my boss that includes any number of interpersonal shared understandings that help guide our encounters. Our shared understandings are a mixture of overlapping cultural codes (those we share) and natural human communicative behavior. Additional complexities arise if we allow for the idea that within this culturally constructed

milieu something called a human being, complete with an evolved set of natural predispositions, is navigating the environment.

These distinctions, I think, can be brought into sharper relief through an evolutionary approach to fiction, and in our case the *procedural* in particular. Morley, for example, could tell us that police and non-police audiences may interpret *procedural* texts differently as a result of their access to discourses owing to their respective social positions (if they do), and how such social positions came to be constructed and determining; however, I don't think Morley has much to tell us, nor does he make any such claim, about the relationship one socially positioned audience has with another; for example, the relationship police have with non-police, nor do the *Nationwide* studies suggest how either relation might be managed or negotiated by natural human predispositions evolved for that purpose. Morley and the other audience-researchers of the time never conceived of it this way as they were asking alternative questions: they ignored human nature in favor of a socio-cultural framework.

However, for any representation to be meaningful it must be attended to jointly (synchronously or asynchronously) by both author and audience. Put another way, for any cultural representation to begin a negotiation of meaning it must enjoy some level of shared attention among people. What then, do humans attend to (aside from researchers' preferred artifacts)? Certainly we do not all attend to the same things all of the time, or to the same degree but, from a Darwinian perspective, there are some things we all pay preferential attention to some of the time; e.g., self-preservation, mating, status, coalition formation, kin relations, and many other proximate goals that subserve the ultimate goal of reproduction. Which of these is being attended to at any particular moment is subject to contingent conditions. Present circumstances activate physiological and corresponding emotional responses shaped by

evolution to direct the mind's attention to whichever concern is most pressing within the environment of the moment and hold it there until the concern is resolved or superseded (Tomasello, 2008). In light of this, it seems to me, our attention to fictional narratives likely depends on the representation of some salient feature of the text.

Particular artifacts, stories, appear to succeed or fail—persist in or perish from societies—to the degree that they garner human attention. Stories in the tragic, comedic, romantic, and horrific modes have all stood the test of time but not all narratives succeed. It's been argued that those artifacts of these genres that persist are those whose constructions articulate and activate universally present evolved psychological mechanisms for detecting salient features of our immediate environment, including the social. That is not to say that the *procedural* or any genre is natural, there is no *procedural* gene. Genres are constructed socially. It is only to say that the conventional representations of any given text activate or elicit (or not) an evolved response that commands human attention. We appear, at least arguably, hardwired for fiction but not in all instances.

It's been argued that our attendance to generic horror stories stems from our need to solve problems related to danger detection (Clasen, 2012); romance to problems of mate selection (Nettle, 2010); and utopian/dystopian fiction to problems of sexual reproduction, child-rearing, and social order (Cooke, 2010). Those particular narratives that persist are thought to be those that best arouse evolved attention directing mechanisms. Much overlap of course exists among the various motivations to attend to particular genres since thematic elements of each genre can often be found in the others. Individual audience members may be attending to discreet elements contained in a single artifact. David Nettle argues that the presence of various evolved motivations across genres explains our attention to fictional narratives in general because they

serve as a means to solving problems associated with prioritizing ultimate and proximate motivations (2010, p. 321).

It's likely that those representations that both simulate scenarios in which ultimate and proximate social problems must be solved and, secondly, those that effectively elicit a physiological response and its corresponding emotion would have tremendous attention garnering appeal. Further still, witnessing how others, even fictional others, solve these problems would be of great utility to a mind evolved for that purpose (Nettle, 2005, 2010). On this theory, it would seem that persistent audience attention to any genre, including *procedurals*, indicates that some present problem of social relations, one similar enough to a social problem present during our evolutionary development is represented in the generic *procedural*, thereby activating evolved psychological mechanisms of attention. I'll return to a discussion of what problem that might be a little later.

The above outlined biocultural view of human engagement with fictional narrative establishes the framework for the analytical interpretation of audience response that immediately follows.

Audience Response

In a March 1971 letter to the editor of the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, a man by the name of Rozell Leavell writes of having read Joseph Wambaugh's novel of that same year, *The New Centurions*, equating the novel's realism and authenticity to that of Jack Webb's *Adam-12*. Of the novel's characterizations he writes, "Wambaugh, a member of the LAPD...is a good storyteller. His characters come true to life and the talk they talk is exceptional. The entire book might be called an in-depth version of "Adam 12"" (Leavell, 1971).

Leavell's purpose in writing, however, is to later criticize Wambaugh's stereotypical portrayal of non-police blacks as "prostitutes, winos, pimps, and welfare recipients." Leavell's tone is thoughtful. He first suggests that police officers are undoubtedly acquainted with "black teachers, lawyers, doctors, councilmen, housewives, etc.," before going on to write, "what a fine author should have, if he hopes to endure and be remembered, is a vision, fairness, and compassion...for all mankind." The point of fiction, according to Leavell, is to provide a vision of the future "as we work toward better days" (Leavell, 1971).

The setting of *The New Centurions* is Los Angeles in the years immediately preceding, up to and including the 1965 Watts riot. Among the novel's primary themes were police/non-police relations and the often detrimental psycho-emotional effects these had on cops. Leavell's own historical circumstance was that of a black man living in Los Angeles at the time of the riot and in the years immediately preceding and following it.¹² His letter appeared in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, an African-American weekly newspaper that reported extensively on the events at Watts and the continuing issues related to police/non-police relations thereafter. Leavell's comparative reading of *Adam-12* is not insignificant. It is widely acknowledged that the show itself, which debuted in 1968, was an explicit public relations effort on the part of the LAPD and the city of Los Angeles. All of which suggests that Messrs. Wambaugh, Webb, and Leavell are engaging in fictional narrative behavior instrumentally, but not as an escape from their present conditions; on the contrary, it appears they are actively confronting their present condition.

On the surface, a reader might presuppose that the problem at hand concerns issues of class and race. Perhaps in his effort to forge an alliance among police and a presumptively white

¹² I've surmised Mr. Leavell's demographics from other sources, primarily other letters attributed to a Rozell Leavell that I believe he wrote, but is nonetheless somewhat speculative on my part.

middle-class by illustrating the psychological costs of police work borne by cops, Wambaugh erased non-police middle-class blacks from his representation and unconsciously articulated crime and non-police blackness. From this perspective, Leavell's letter appears to be what Morley identified as a negotiated reading, a broad acceptance of the denotative codes present in the text, yet, he simultaneously sought to modify the connotative codes of black criminality in furtherance of his own interests as a black man living in Los Angeles. Leavell clearly accepts Wambaugh's depiction of police, which included black officers, and he additionally does not deny the existence of black criminality. What he wants modified is the representation of non-police, non-criminal middle-class blacks. While it is impossible to confidently fix Leavell's precise social position (although his writing evinces access to upper-middle class discourses), it's likely that Leavell's objection rests on his perception of his own erasure—what's missing from Wambaugh's novel from Leavell's point of view are people like himself.

However, from another angle we can see Leavell's universal call for more "fairness, and compassion...for all mankind" as getting to something more fundamental than class or race. His appears to be a plea to refine *procedural* narratives in the direction of empathy so as to advance more than his own present interests. He seems, along with Wambaugh and Webb, to also want to repair police/non-police relations. To do so, Leavell makes a polite demand for more realism in regard to representation of blacks but also in regard to the representation of "fairness and compassion." Leavell reveals here a degree of empathic concern. He presumes that present social conditions can be repaired, or their repair can be aided, through *procedural* fictions. His reading of the text might include a regard for his own interests as a middle-class black man but his hope for the text appears altruistically desirous of empathy in service of addressing the common interests of all involved.

In another sample, writing in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in 1955, critic Larry Wolters, while reviewing *The Line-Up*, praises the show as “better than *Dragnet*” because the police characters are “more convincing and realistic [than Joe Friday].” Specifically, Wolters is critical of Webb’s rather dispassionate portrayal of cops whose “emotions always are carefully controlled.” Wolters prefers the more emotionally expressive detectives of *The Line-Up* whom to him, “seem less like actors and more like policemen.” Wolters connotes a discomfort with *Dragnet*’s unemotional cops. What he seems to want are more natural displays of emotion, and he is pleased when he gets them. His reading of the emotional expressiveness of the characters of *The Line-Up* allows him to sympathize with a world-weary detective who “retains a quality of gentleness” and the slightly “hard boiled” cynicism of another (Wolters, 1955).

Like Leavell’s letter to the *Sentinel*, Wolters’ review contains mention of two different *procedural* texts. Also, he appears to be engaging these texts instrumentally with a concern for the present. Instead of a comparative reading of the two texts, however, Wolters contrasts the two in a combined reading, offering a dominant reading of one and a somewhat negotiated reading of the other. Wolters, a middle-class non-police white man living and working in Chicago,¹³ proffers a reading of both texts that suggests his broad acceptance of the dominant codes inherent to the genre, namely the necessity, efficacy, and propriety of police. However, in contrasting the two texts he detects a favorable condition in *The Line-Up* where he responds positively to the emotional displays of the protagonists. *The Line-Up* is “better than *Dragnet*” because of the presence of emotional displays by police. In this moment, Wolters reveals his own empathic concern and latently expresses a polite demand for *procedural* protagonists who clearly

¹³ From the obituary of Larry Wolters, *Chicago Tribune*, Friday 28, 1969.

express emotively. As we will see, such a response is consistent with evolved patterns of attending to the empathic signals of others.

This particular sentiment persists. In another, much more contemporary example, the writer, a fan of the show *Hawaii 5-0*, puts it like this:

It's not often that I cry over screen presentations, especially not television shows, but I just had a good cry after watching "Ho'onani Makuakane" (Season 4) on the new, too-often-trashy remake. It brings to mind a statement that was made here at the time the episode aired, that if the producers would aim for this quality with each episode, they would have an A-1 class act of a television series. If you haven't seen this episode lately, it's available on Netflix. Watch it again, but keep a box of Kleenex close at hand. (H50 1.0 FOREVER, 2015)

The commenter is contrasting the original version of the show (1968-1980) to its current iteration (2010-), just as Wolters did with *Dragnet* and *The Line-up*. One has to read a bit closer but, like Wolters, what this commenter seems to be saying is that the original show is best but the new version could be as good or better than the old if it could produce emotionally affective narratives consistently. The polite demand for affective depictions is clear.

Yet another example: echoing Leavell, Wolters, and others, television critic Gary Deeb, writing in the *Chicago Tribune* of Wambaugh's *Police Story* writes:

"Millions of us owe Wambaugh a debt of social gratitude. Even in the fairytale world of TV, he brought us a weekly series which, at its best, portrayed the emotionally bruising side of big city police life. As such, it helped us understand better what it's like to be a cop." (Deeb, 1977)

Latent to Deeb's clearly dominant reading is the conception of emotional display as the communication of social information. Deeb presumes that we learn about police through the portrayal of the protagonists' emotional response to their situation within a fictional environment and, like Wolters, he celebrates the inclusion of such emotional signals. One might fairly presume also that, like Leavell, Deeb may have lamented the absence of such social information.

But in fact we don't need to presume such a lamentation. In an earlier writing, Deeb describes the officers of Webb's *Adam-12* thusly, "Officers Reed and Malloy are animated versions of the Police Manual and in my opinion about as real as Mother Goose." He then goes on to write of Wambaugh's *Police Story*, "[the show] has gained much acclaim for its emotionally bruising realism...I find Police Story generally outstanding in its depiction of cops...Adam-12, on the other hand, makes me want to retch" (Deeb, 1973).

Deeb's sentiment is remarkably consistent with, if more graphic than, Wolters' 1955 contrast of *The Line-Up* and *Dragnet*. But it is also common to much of the contemporary fan commentary that I studied. Typical is this 2008 post to a fan forum of the show *The Shield*, "After taking in a dark, complex and consistently excellent show like The Shield, watching an almost comical-by-comparison show like 24 with...wooden actors looking like they just stepped out of the salon just seems like a waste of time" (Greenlit829, 2008). What is implied by all of the above is the demand/expectation of and appreciation for narrative realism, especially regarding the inclusion of emotive signaling. Audiences want to know the emotional state of the characters.

Narrative realism is among the *procedural* genre's more conventional and stable features. Therefore, it's not surprising that the demand for, praise of, and claims to narrative realism among the genre's fan-base is a critical feature of audience reaction across time, as these responses gleaned from fan forums illustrates: "*The Wire* strives to be as real as possible. In short, it's not a pure fiction...the Show's creators...tell real life stories (lovemj, 2008); "After watching an hour of *NYPD Blue*, it's hard to imagine that we were watching fictional material, especially since the cases are often based on real events (Cogency1, 2005); "[*Law & Order* is] Real drama that could just as easily be real life. The closest thing to being a reality show without

being yet another stupid reality show (GT500Shilby, 2010). But taken together, all of the audience readings recorded above suggest that it isn't merely the depiction of physical reality in a general sense that seems pertinent but the depiction of affective reality specifically.

Of course neither Wolters nor Deeb are claiming that either *Dragnet* or *Adam-12* are devoid of emotional display on the part of their respective police protagonists. Any viewer familiar with either of the shows knows that the actors underplay the emotions of their characters but they're not emotionless. The term, "wooden," used by Greenlit829 to describe the actors in the TV show *24* captures best what these earlier writers were getting at. The affective state is muted, reserved, stoic, and ambiguous. All of Webb's cops got frustrated, angry, happy, sad, etc., at times, but the degree of expressiveness was frequently very low and it is this aspect of the portrayals that is explicitly disfavored.

Empathic concern for police protagonists, particularly *procedural* leads, is a common feature of the audience responses I surveyed. Here are just a few more exemplary remarks:

- In a letter to the editor of *Newsday*, dated April 29, 1981, a reader writes openly of her empathic response to the officers of *Hill Street Blues*, "It's great. I laugh, I cry; I just love the characters and their idiosyncrasies" (Ayasse, 1981);
- A fan of *Law & Order: SVU* writes, "The absence of Elliot Stabler (Chris Meloni) will be deeply felt by Olivia (Mariska Hargitay) and the rest of the squad when SVU returns in the fall. Although we have two new detectives to look forward to, Stabler will be deeply missed after a 12-year run at SVU" (Kate.moon, 2011);
- A fan writes of the marriage between two characters of the show *Blue Bloods*, "Love the relationship between these two. Linda sure has a lot to put up with, but Danny loves her more than life, so its (sic) all good" (Ashbury-Smith, 2015).

- Another writes of *Blue Bloods*, “We expect and saw the Regan family coalesce when Linda was hospitalized. Police officer or not, we expected Danny to act in the manner he did outside the hospital corridor” (edwagreen, 2015).

The above comments reveal that audiences not only recognize the presence of naturalistic displays of emotion in *procedural* fictions but expect them. Their expectations extend to both the emotions obtaining between the fictional characters and those that exist between themselves as audience members and the characters. Of course my point is not merely that these audience members are responding emotionally themselves. Such a claim would be utterly banal. Nor is my claim that such responses are unique to *procedural* fictions. The point is, contra Radway, who was following Stanley Fish in assuming that meaning-making is detached from any essential structural features of the text (Radway, 1991, p. 19), it appears as though the audience demand for emotional expressiveness, when it is muted or overly ambiguous, coupled with the celebration of its clear expression and the revealed preference for its unambiguous inclusion, suggests that emotional displays are at least presumptively an essential feature of *procedurals* for meaning construction. At the very least we can say that the muting of emotional expression apparently meets with a level of audience disapproval and its inclusion is preferred. We might even take the fact that the more affective style of expression has persisted in *procedural* storytelling while the unexpressive style has faded as evidence for emotion’s role in meaning making.

If we were to consider the view of Paul Ekman that, “Emotion is a process, a particular kind of automatic appraisal influenced by our evolutionary and personal past, in which we sense that something important to our welfare is occurring” (1992, p. 13, 2004), we might begin to

think that perhaps the *procedural* audience's intuition concerning emotion's essential role in deriving meaning from the text is at least partially correct.

The origins of empathy, according to primatologist Frans de Waal, are thought to lay in parental care of offspring that pre-dates the appearance of humans. Parents who responded to the evolved distress signals of offspring out-reproduced those of its kind that remained indifferent to the cries, thereby evolving a cognitive capacity finely tuned to attend to evolved empathic appeals.

Once the empathic capacity existed, it could be applied outside the rearing context and play a role in the wider network of social relationships...Empathy allows one to quickly and automatically relate to the emotional states of others, which is essential for the regulation of social interactions, coordinated activity, and cooperation toward shared goals. (de Waal, 2008)

Interestingly, de Wall, citing Hoffman (1981), goes on to point out that emotional understanding is not primarily a consciously cognitive action. Understanding emotional cues is an innate capacity for navigating a range of social situations without having to think much about it. Emotional literacy does not appear to be an entirely learned behavioral response. Humans, instead, appear to have direct access to knowledge of the emotional states of others—no interpretation required—the meaning of the emotional display is given at the moment of representation. So-called “mirror neurons” are thought to be the mechanism responsible for this phenomenon. These are said to work by reproducing a mirrored affective state in the mind of the observer, enabling vicarious experiences for social learning and allowing us to understand the intentions and motives of others. Furthermore, the mind makes little distinction between face-to-face encounters and mediated, fictional representations (Barry, 2009; Gallese, 2001; Giudice, Manera, & Keysers, 2009).

From this discussion we might surmise that the audience demand for more emotionally expressive police *protagonists* reveals a desire for more of the social information of a kind given in emotive displays than is present in those artifacts where it is muted or ambiguous. It seems to me to follow that if the detection of emotional signaling is automatic and serves an essential communicative role in our management of social relations, the absence of such signaling would cause a form of dissonance like that latent in the comments of Leavell, Wolters, Deeb, and the others. Conversely, the celebration and approval of those artifacts in which protagonist emotions are more clearly expressed reveals the satisfaction of the audience's desire for the social information so inscribed.

Nettle (2010), Ekman (1992), and de Wall (2008) tell us further that the function of human emotion is to draw our attention to something within our immediate environment that inheres to or otherwise implicates our own welfare. That is to say that emotion is adaptive, a part of an overall system of attention that serves proximate goals of survival and reproduction, like status, mating, and cooperation. Nettle (2010) argues that humans are “especially interested in attempts by others to sequester scarce resources” because access to resources is essential to survival and reproduction. “The key social resources in any primate society are status and mates” (p. 320). In other words, human beings preferentially attend to social threats that may impact these. Narrative fiction, Nettle further theorizes, is a supernormal conversation that maps to evolved structures of the mind that function to track the socially relevant behavior of others (pp. 317-321).

Looking again at the audience responses in light of Nettle, Leavell brings together Wambaugh and Webb, along with their narrative fictions and himself, within a context of strained relations between police and non-police as part of an openly acknowledged effort to

“work toward better days” (Leavell, 1971). The issues encompassed by the phrase are many and complex but can for the purposes of this discussion be fit under the rubric of police relations with non-police. Leavell’s own empathic concern for “fairness and compassion” includes Wambaugh’s and Webb’s cops as proxies for real police but extends these further in his negotiated reading to middle-class blacks. His emotions certainly seem to have drawn his attention to his own symbolic erasure. This condition no doubt impinges on his efforts to achieve social status and, therefore, commands his, and ostensibly others’, attention.

For his part, Deeb is likely being hyperbolic when he writes that *Adam-12* makes him want to “retch” and, so, his assessment may be thought to reflect similarly the sense alternatively conveyed by Greenlit829 that viewing such depictions feels to them like “a waste of time.” What Leavell, Wolters, Deeb, and our contemporary online commenters all connote by their comments is their own cognitive dissonance at the muted and ambiguous emotional expressiveness of stoic police characters. Their revealed preference for unambiguous emotional displays by fictional cops implies a sense of dissonance reduction and comports nicely with our evolved predispositions for acquiring social information empathically. Undergirding their critique is the silent acknowledgement of a communication breakdown, a lack of empathic signaling of social information critical to understanding the motivations and intentions of others that leaves them with feelings of uncertainty and a lack of affinity.

Beyond the somewhat latent expression of feelings of frustration and uncertainty at the underplayed fictional cops lays an intriguing nonfictional correlate. I refer here to the distress that arises from the fact that cops—real police officers—are trained to approach even the most banal situations in a manner that almost demands stoicism or worse. I don’t question the efficacy or necessity of police tactics here, but in reading publically available contemporary police

training materials (Fagan, 2000; H. Webb, 2011) one finds descriptions of ideal police/non-police encounters devoid of much affective display.

Driving this situation are officer fears of complacency, which is regarded among well-trained cops to be what kills many police officers who die in the line of duty. From the perspective of police, many situations in which cops contact citizens, so-called routine encounters, including the most mundane traffic and pedestrian stops, are considered a serious, perhaps life-threatening moment for the officer. Complacency in such moments is eschewed in favor of stoic vigilance.

Consequently, in many real-world encounters with non-police, cops routinely and by training display a muted or ambiguous emotional state consistent with this outlook, which is nevertheless often inconsistent with the actual circumstance obtaining at the moment as perceived by the non-police actors. That such encounters lead to social distress—uncertainty and anxiety—on the part of non-police, and that these are regarded as arising from interpersonal communication breakdowns, is well-accepted in the social-psychological literature on police/non-police encounters (Giles, 2002; Giles, Willemyns, Gallois, & Chernikoff, 2007).

However, applying the same evolutionary approach to the interpretation of such events as I did in the reading of audience response, we should conclude that non-police automatically and unconsciously interpret the affective state of cops, or at least try to, during such real-life encounters. The social distress that arises from policing tactics is likely at least partially attributable to the muted, ambiguous, or otherwise contextually incongruent emotional signaling detected by non-police when confronted by a cop (and no doubt exacerbated by socio-cultural contexts). The lack of social information critical to understanding the officer's intentions and motivations leads to a causal chain connecting cognitive uncertainty to physiologically induced

anxiety to emotions of social distress, ending in the perception of the police as a kind of social threat potentially salient to one's well-being, particularly their social status.

Given the present social reality regarding the overcriminalization of social life (Healy, 2004; Husak, 2009; Kadish, 1967; Luna, 2005), which has contributed to heated calls for criminal justice reform (P. Baker, 2015), the notion that *procedurals* are supernormal conversations that help non-police track the social threat posed by police is entirely plausible.

We might pause here to recall that in the previous section it was demonstrated that, by their own testimony, police often view themselves as a socially excluded other in relation to non-police. Here I have argued that non-police often view cops as a peculiar form of social threat. It's interesting to note that among the evolved strategies for managing social threats is aversion, deception, stigmatization, and social exclusion. That is to say that social exclusion is theorized to have arisen in our evolutionary past as a means to managing the social threats posed by others (Campbell, 2005; Duntley, 2005; Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Kurzban & Neuberg, 2005). If it's the case that at some deep level of cognition police are perceived as and responded to by non-police as a social threat, then the self-perception of police as a socially excluded other is predictable.

In light of all of the preceding, the *procedural* genre is conceived not as a site of ideological struggle, although it may serve that function as well, but as the attempt of a natural human being to navigate a social condition brought about by broad ideological consensus. The audience responses surveyed here range from negotiated to dominant, suggesting broad agreement with the prevailing denotative and connotative codes of law and order. Recall that in discussing the historical context of the *procedural*'s emergence as a signifying practice in chapter one of this study, the fundamental ideological agreement regarding social control by the state was central. The presence of police in the lives of non-police rose in conjunction with the

rising regulation of daily affairs. *Procedurals* emerged at mid-century as a reflection of this new social arrangement. In the course of enforcing laws ranging from petty to serious, cops routinely encounter an “irritated,” “uncooperative,” “resistant,” and/or “resentful” non-police response (Gourley, 1953) that has contributed to a sense of exclusion, which is evident in the sheep-sheepdog-wolf metaphor widespread in modern police discourse and discussed in chapter two of this study.

Also elaborated in chapter two is the hostile response of police to their perceived exclusion in a socially acceptable cultural form: the narrative fiction we call *procedurals*. In this final chapter three, we find an audience not escaping the present but confronting it, finding meaning in the act of consuming while actively searching for deeper meaning through the structural features of the text as a means of navigating real-world social relations with police and expressing their own need for the social information conveyed by emotive display.

My purpose has not been to make the unremarkable claim that fictions evoke emotion. That’s been known for centuries. Neither has it been to suggest that *procedurals* are a direct product of human evolution. Instead, my point has been to illustrate how our evolved psychology can guide attention to salient concerns of the real world which are nevertheless embedded in cultural artifacts. Police tend to be seen as a social threat by the general public. The natural human response is to avoid them to the degree possible and seek knowledge of their affective state when in their presence (as is the case when in the presence of any other). Police perceive citizen avoidance/aversion (and stigmatization) for what it is—socially excluding behavior. Further, they are trained to withhold the kind of essential social information usually conveyed by emotional signaling. *Procedurals* may be an attempt to solve this fundamental social problem of the *policed state*.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this dissertation I made a few observations of modern-day policing in America and set forth to explore two questions, one general the other specific, arising from them. The general question, “What’s going on here,” referred to the observable everyday ubiquity of militaristic police who seem to have us surrounded in both the real world of our daily existence and in the fictional world of our popular imagination. For referential convenience, I dubbed this social condition the *policed state*.

Related to this, the specific question concerned the apparent broad acceptance of the *policed state* as the normal, or natural condition of a free society. That is, cops are seemingly everywhere but the fact of it hardly gets noticed and I wondered, why? Obviously, such a condition is the result of myriad social and cultural factors—there’s a lot to consider in answering the question. As a media scholar, I sought to narrow my inquiry by focusing on whether the *procedural* sub-genre of crime fiction had played any role in bringing about, reproducing, and/or maintaining this prevailing social reality. Was there a connection, I wondered, between our benign acceptance of the *policed state* and our popular representations of police and policing?

There is a third question, too, underlying my analysis, one that asks, what role, if any, does human nature, i.e., species-typical human behavior, play in the construction of meanings assigned to *procedural* texts? That is, I wondered if any relationships existed between universally observed patterns of human behavior and the historically situated production of cultural artifacts, in this case the *procedural*, and whether there be any relevance to the existence of the *policed state*. In consequence, I have carried a naturalistic assumption into a cultural analysis, which, on its face, seems an anathema to the ordinary practice of critical

communication scholarship. Such a contradiction warrants additional discussion in order to situate what I've done here into a broadly cultural studies framework. Such a discussion is offered in closing, following a brief summary-synthesis of the preceding discrete treatments of generic *procedural* production, texts, and audiences, and is offered as a final conclusion to the project.

I noted in chapter one and throughout, that there was no such thing as the *procedural* sub-genre of crime fiction prior to 1948. In the years preceding mid-century, crime fiction was dominated by criminal figures (gangsters) and private detectives. Cops in these dramas were mostly marginal figures, often impediments to the goal-achievement of protagonists. This particular construction privileged, or prioritized the private and personal over the public. Fictional characters sought cooperative private solutions to social conflicts in part because it reflected a common social norm. At the time, not every matter of daily affairs had been historically viewed as requiring state action or regulation. The presence of police in the daily lives of the everyman was a relative rarity, and this basic fact was reflected in pre-1948 popular crime fiction. The *procedural* pushed these forms to the margins and police took center-stage in crime dramas. My task, then, became one of understanding the socio-historical circumstances that gave rise to this role-reversal—how, or why did cops become the “stars of the show”?

My approach was to first look at the historical conditions leading to the genre's emergence. Much of what I found was likely unremarkable to anyone familiar with early 20th century western history. Those early decades of the century were marked by great social upheavals, world wars, and economic convulsions—the world seemed a chaotic place desperately in need of social controls. Federal authorities in the U.S. undeniably undertook unprecedented interventions into foreign and domestic affairs. Various theories of how to

achieve social order swirled in the cultural milieu of science, politics, economics, philosophy, and sociology and were reflected in the literature of the day. Concerns over the dawn of a brave new world were mollified by the promise of order via bureaucratic technocracy. A general ideological consensus emerged—evidenced in large measure by the decisive successive electoral victories of FDR beginning in 1932—around the idea that the state should take a more active role in instrumentally regulating personal social behavior than it had in past decades. This consensus was a kind of necessary precondition, or progenitor of the *policed state* because it led to more legislation governing the personal activities of private citizens—rules of behavior that would require enforcement to be effective.

Of course the argument here isn't that the New Deal and/or U.S. foreign interventionism necessarily resulted in the *policed state* but that the arrival of the affirmative consensus concerning state intervention into heretofore private activities established the conditions for its benign acceptance. Somewhat ironically, the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 stands as an exemplary moment in this history. Rules became the rule in American life with the passage of the 21st Amendment, which ended the Prohibition-era. Encouraged by the federal government to enact rules governing every aspect of the distribution, sale, and consumption of alcohol, local authorities began an inexorable expansion in the scope of personal behaviors that fell within their expanding regulatory jurisdictions. One rule, prohibition, was dropped in favor of many rules.

The need for more local police grew in response to proliferating legislative dictums concerned with regulating an increasing number of mundane daily activities, which soon extended well beyond the regulation of booze. Whether the rules were necessary or efficacious is not relevant to the fact that increases in the regulation of personal behavior all but guaranteed an increase in the number of encounters occurring between citizens and police. The person of the

police officer became relevant to the lives of regular folks in a way they had never really been before. It's not surprising, then, that this new social formation would become the subject of popular representational forms.

The full effect, however, of this emerging relevance wouldn't be felt until after the interruption of WWII, which both disrupted the domestic policy agendas of legislatures and delayed the expansion of police departments by limiting the number of eligible recruits (the men were at war overseas). Following the war, the enforcement demands placed on police by both population growth in urban locales and the accumulation of multiplying regulations necessitated the expansion of policing ranks, which were already depleted due to firings and forced retirements/resignations stemming from widespread official corruption. Departments hired soldiers returning from war.

Concurrently, police needed to put their own house in order—eliminate corruption and professionalize—which they did by applying the same logic of instrumental/bureaucratic rationalization to policing that lawmakers and industry were applying to American society writ large. The scientific management approach to policing promised to routinize the increasingly common daily encounters between police and non-police.

These broad sociological trends of the early part of the 20th century altered the relationship between police and citizens in the direction of the personal. The films *The Naked City* and *He Walked by Night*, both released in 1948, exemplified a growing national consciousness to this new social arrangement, one in which police would be a prominent feature of the citizen's social world, no longer just a marginal presence. Knowing what cops were up to became socially salient to a much broader segment of the population.

However, the *procedural* truly took shape as a signifying practice within the specific context of the LAPD's efforts to train an unacculturated and inexperienced work force following WWII. Specifically, it was the LAPD's formation of its Field Training Unit in 1948 and their practice of soliciting and sharing the stories of actual police officers that established the form as cop art.

By 1950, approximately 3,400 men, almost all veterans of war, had in the span of about twenty-four to thirty months been gathered together in the hyper-competitive social environment of the LAPD—an environment that would have predictably elicited human male status-seeking behavior in the dynamic processes of establishing an informal social hierarchy (a point that becomes relevant to the meanings officers ultimately ascribe to their stories). Indeed the testimony of police officials of the day support the conclusion that stories told in the *procedural* form among cops conferred “expert” status on the officers who told them best. Officers found meaning in the telling of *procedural* stories. The evidence suggests that such stories became a valued resource as a signifier of competency among individual officers, conferring prestige in the natural processes of social hierarchy formation, which further motivated the practice.

Among the further unintended effects of all this soliciting and sharing of stories and status seeking—all in the name of discovering proper police procedure—was the emergence of a storytelling culture at the LAPD. Such a consequence, however, is unsurprising given the parallels between the Field Training Unit's processes and the anthropological record of the socializing role of story throughout human history and cultures. That is to say that the Unit's work mimicked more organic, self-organizing cultural forms of socialization through folk tales, hero myths, rituals, etc.—so the resulting storytelling culture of the LAPD, I think, is

unsurprising, if not predictable. However, it was within this storytelling culture that the *procedural* as a signifying practice was refined.

It is especially important, of course, to recall that the department's coincidental proximity to centers of cultural production—Hollywood and Burbank, plus the concurrent exponential growth in the entertainment television industry—presented an opportune moment for Jack Webb and the LAPD to appropriate police officer stories—and more importantly their sign value (competency/prestige)—and take them directly to a perceived mass audience in an effort to address prevailing low public opinion of police. By providing numerous economic efficiencies (endless low-cost story material, city properties as ready-made sets, streamlined permitting processes, etc.) to a growing television industry, such programming, in addition to being profitable, could be argued by broadcasters to meet federal regulations for broadcasting in the public interest. This confluence of state and industry interests, coupled with the prestige hierarchy and storytelling culture of the LAPD, determined the production of early *procedurals*.

The meanings LAPD cops had found in telling stories in the *procedural* form concerned their relationships to one another within a newly emerging sub-cultural context and social hierarchy. The extension of *procedural* storytelling beyond their ranks to mass audiences in popular forms extended the social function of story to the broader public. In other words, those stories functioned to define the relationship between cops and citizens. *Procedurals* are personal tales—fictions in more ways than one—but the stories are less about abstract notions of good and evil, right or wrong, or crime and criminality than they are about the relationship between the police and the citizens they putatively serve. This becomes clearer in taking a closer look at *procedural* texts—i.e., interpreting the officer's interpretation of social conditions—in chapter two.

What became evident as I began my examination of texts was the counter-intuitive discovery of a felt sense of social exclusion on the part of many police. I say “counter-intuitive” because at first blush it seems odd that cops, endowed with unassailable state power and privilege, would feel alienated. However, nonfictional police discourses have consistently proffered the case that cops believe themselves to be an unwelcome, if necessary, social pariah—sheepdogs—excluded and unappreciated by the broader public citizenry (sheep) and at odds with so-called criminals (wolves).

This is no sympathetic or apologetic reading of history. August Vollmer was making such claims at least as early as 1936 and those, as we have seen, have been consistently echoed by other police officials since. Indeed a 2009 article in *Police Chief Magazine* (not cited earlier) addresses the issue squarely. Written by cops for cops, the authors explicitly acknowledge the historical persistence and pervasiveness of such perceptions among cops, even as they call it a pernicious misperception (Tooley, M., et al., 2009). Whether or not cops are actually social outcasts is irrelevant to the fact, however, that this perception has been widely held among American police officers since the years immediately following Prohibition’s repeal and the expansion of the regulatory state.

If we concede that beliefs about the world influence behaviors within that world, we should expect *procedural* texts to help us understand a bit of what’s going on, but only if one accepts the argument that, at bottom, *procedurals* have largely remained the fictional representations of and by actual police officers. That is, *procedural* artifacts result from police behavior; e.g., storytelling.

My argument for such police authorship, articulates first to production in three ways. First, as early pioneers of the form, actual police officers made foundational contributions to the

genre's stylistic, thematic, and other structural conventions that inscribed the conceptual world of police upon those subsequent artifacts that rely on those conventions. Second, police officers have never been far-removed from the processes of procedural production. The common use of police officers as technical advisors in film and television has been a steadying hand in *procedural* production from the very beginning (Recall that it was an LAPD sergeant working as a technical advisor on the film *He Walked by Night* who first approached Jack Webb about telling the “true” stories of police on radio and TV). And finally, today's police further continue to influence *procedural* production through the common practice of media producers relying on official police statements to inform story content.

My claim that the *procedural* is “cop art” arises from the fact that when individual cops aren't the sole, hands-on creator of artifacts themselves (as they were especially so in the early days of the genre), the previous and contemporaneous efforts of other cops guide the hand of all producers in various ways. In effect, cops have remained the artist at the easel throughout the procedural-era. Further, given that the conceptual world of the *procedural* is so well circulated and the form itself so stable in its representations, *procedural* police are always already there. When in the opening voiceover narration of all iterations of the *Law & Order* franchise the narrator says of police, “These are their stories,” there is an inherent degree of literality.

The argument for police authorship/auteurism of *procedurals* is bolstered, too, by the internal structures of the form. There is a long historical record of actual police discourses that lays out in no uncertain terms the conceptual world of police officers. In that world there are citizens, cops, and criminals—sheep, sheepdogs, and wolves—and that worldview is mirrored in the basic narrative structure of *procedurals*.

More interesting is that the basic structure of the form is apparently universal, suggesting that perhaps what is afoot in *procedurals* reveals something about our human nature through the representation of socially constructed characters and imagined conditions and actions. At their most fundamental level stories are cognitive processes for solving problems proximate to gene survival, not exclusively limited to self-preservation, mating, status, and coalition formation. We have already seen that the emergence of *procedurals* necessarily articulated to problems of status within the internal social dynamics of the LAPD during hierarchy development. Once formalized as a set of signifying practices and popularized through mass media the problem narrowed only slightly. *Procedurals* continued to address problems of status but those external to policing not internal to the LAPD alone, focusing on the prestige-denial inherent to social exclusion.

If *procedurals* are merely a general form of story told about police, or about some social theme within a policing context, my further claims that *procedurals* reveal aspects of the evolved human mind as it pertains to the management of social relations between cops and citizens is undermined. However, as I've demonstrated, the stable thematic, stylistic, and conventional characterizations of *procedurals* well-support the conclusion that the felt-sense of social exclusion lamented over by actual police is a powerful latent element of the genre, connecting real cops and citizens to mediated cops and citizens through the fiction. So it is that cops are the storytellers and cops believe themselves to be socially excluded—what of it?

Science has done a fine job of researching the behavior of animals, including humans and other primates, under conditions of social exclusion. Among the more prominent observed patterns of response to such circumstances is the hostility of the excluded toward the excluder. The expression, however, of that hostility will be attenuated by both natural and cultural influences. That is to say that hostility doesn't necessarily mean physical violence. Indeed,

evolution predisposes individuals to avoid costly physical confrontations for obvious fitness reasons (generally, we'll only pick a fight we believe we can win without risking costly injury). Culture, however, provides individuals with a wide-array of socially acceptable forms of expressions of various thoughts and feelings.

We should not be surprised, then, if we find plot elements that suggest hostility—the presence of such is predicted by the science. That isn't to say that the hostility couldn't be consciously avoided (or re-articulated) in deliberate constructions of future artifacts. Nor does it suggest that *procedurals* are the only or primary mode of the expression of the police hostility that arises naturally from their felt-sense of exclusion. It only suggests that the presence of hostility in *procedurals*—in the form of articulations to social threats—reveals the operation of an evolved mind within a historically contingent social environment modulated by culture.

A further important point of my argument is that *procedural* representations of fictional behavior are not in any way a “natural” depiction of human nature. They are, after all, fictions, products of somebody's imagination and, therefore, as likely to be whimsical as they are to be “natural”. To point to such representations as examples of human nature is somewhat naïve at best. Instead, what I have shown is that story functions socially to navigate the liminal space between the biological and the cultural through a universally-patterned structure of narrative.

Real police officers have a perceived social problem—exclusion—arising from a historically contingent, constructed social environment (state regulation of personal behavior) entailing forced associations, or personal encounters between police and non-police. Among the responses to their condition has been cops telling stories about these encounters (this much is empirically established). Theories of evolved cognitive mechanisms “designed” by natural selection to address such a problem predict a hostile response, yet these are subject to the

constraints of social norms and cultural mores. *Procedurals*, in my view, are a socially acceptable way of navigating the biocultural tension by allowing for the subtle expression of hostility. This latter point plays directly into audience response by suggesting reasons why people attend so to *procedurals*—the representations have some salience to peoples’ lives as a form of social threat and, therefore, command attention.

Audiences have a revealed preference for consuming *procedural* fictions. As I write this, the top-four, most-watched television dramas for the current week—June 22, 2015—are *procedurals*, according to The Nielsen Company (nielsen.com). In fact, those four are the only dramas of any kind among the top-ten television broadcasts for the week. Such a circumstance is reminiscent of the early days of television, when *Dragnet* competed with *I Love Lucy* for the top spot in the weekly ratings during the first years of the 1950s. My primary focus in analyzing this audience was to directly examine and interpret a sampling of actual responses to *procedural* artifacts. And that’s what I did. What, I wondered, were people saying in response to *procedurals*? What meanings might they be deriving from their consumption, and do those meanings bear on the *policed state*?

What I found most prominently in audience responses was a recurrent expression of displeasure with dispassionate depictions of police and, conversely, praise for the more emotionally expressive police protagonists. Driving this desire was an apparent need for the kind of social information conveyed by affective displays. The communication of emotional states seems to be at minimum a preferred practice, if not an essential feature, of *procedurals* in order that audiences can make much sense from them. Dispassionate portrayals of police officers, like those of *Dragnet*, seemed to result in a bit of cognitive distress on the part of audiences. That dissonance was reduced when later depictions of cops were made more affective.

This seems to make sense in light of the research of Ekman (1992; 2004) and de Wall (2008) who tell us that the communicative role of emotion is the calling of human attention to features of one's immediate environment that implicates their welfare. It stands to reason that the uncertainty arising from the absence or ambiguity of such social information would likely be the source of the cognitive distress latent to audience responses to dispassionate *procedural* cops. The audience seems to prefer knowing what even fictional cops are feeling.

A further significant observation was the consistent tendency among audience members to link the fictional representations of *procedurals* to real world events and police. For instance, Mr. Leavell linked Wambaugh's novel, *The New Centurions*, and Webb's *Adam-12* to contemporaneous social conditions in Los Angeles at the time of his writing; Mr. Deeb was explicit in his claim that *procedurals* are for social learning about police; and Mr. Wolters and the online commenters extolled the virtues of the form's depictions of reality. Audiences find meaning in the instrumental utility of *procedurals* in gaining social information useful to the management of police-citizen relations. The audiences I studied made direct connections between the fiction and their conceptions of the real world of police, implying that there is more going on here than mere entertainment.

This demand for affective realism in *procedurals* has an intriguing real-world correlate in police-citizen encounters that links directly to the uncertainty and cognitive distress latent to the audience responses to fiction. In real-world encounters between citizens and cops, social psychologists have identified the source of the anxiety experienced by non-police during encounters with cops as stemming from uncertainty, the lack of knowing the officer's intentions (Giles, 2002; Giles, Willemyns, Gallois, & Chernikoff, 2007). Interestingly, conventional police training demands stoic vigilance to the dangers of complacency. Cops are trained to approach

every situation as if it were life threatening, which obviously calls for the enactment of behavior displaying an ambiguous affective state, one which is often incongruent with the actual circumstance to which they are responding. This, in turn, diminishes the social information that would otherwise be conveyed to citizens in normal social encounters, denying non-police of critical social information and, thereby, contributing to their distress and, further, to aversive behavior that would likely be perceived by police as socially excluding.

So it could be that human attention to *procedurals* is in part an effort to obtain information of a social threat not well-provided in their encounters with real police—an attempt to apprehend the motives and intentions of police as those relate to citizen welfare and made relevant to their lives by the rise of the regulatory state and the resulting police ubiquity in American society. The lack of this information, which causes observable anxiety in people during their encounters with police, leads to their aversive behavior perceived by police as socially excluding.

Biocultural Studies

My purpose in writing this dissertation was not to suggest that the *procedural* is somehow a natural form. It's clearly not. It, like all generic fiction, is socially constructed, derived from particular, historically situated origins. Instead, the argument has been that the *procedural's* being a culturally specific form does not preclude its resting upon a cross-culturally universal human nature. What we have seen is how universal behaviors, structures, themes, and meanings undergird a specific cultural form, suggesting that cultural products are partially constrained by the structures of an evolved mind. It's unlikely that such similarities would arise within geographically dispersed and otherwise culturally diverse populations, if not for a set of common cognitive features. Ultimately, the stories that succeed, those told and attended to, those

that persist in human societies concern proximate goals of gene survival, e.g., self-preservation, mating, status, etc.

In his book, *Making sense of cultural studies* (2002), Chris Barker writes,

As I see it, cultural studies has sealed itself off from the empirical rigors of science and the embodied nature of human beings...If cultural studies adopted evolutionary biology/psychology as a backdrop to its work on culture, then we would be better able to draw a more naturalistic and holistic picture of humans as animals that walk the earth adapting and changing themselves in the context of their environment. (p. 198-99)

Part of what Barker was getting at was that the evidence from these fields suggests that the concepts of nature and culture form a false-dichotomy. Human biology and culture are inextirpable because they are co-evolved, each having evolved in relation to the other over millions of years. Genes affect cultural behavior. Cultural behavior affects the gene pool. The reciprocal nature of this process forms a single process of evolution. "It is certainly a mistake to see language as either wholly cultural or biological in its operations since it is patently both" (p. 199). We are biocultural beings. Heterogeneous cultural practices stem from biological universals because of differential environmental inputs. We saw this in the emergence of the *procedural* form at the LAPD. The biological conditions (competitive males seeking status, i.e., access to resources) combined in part with the cultural conditions (police and prestige conferred by storytelling) to produce a particular type of cultural artifact which nevertheless express both universal and particularist concerns.

To get to the interpretive gains made possible by making such a turn to evolutionary theory we must begin by first recalling that, historically speaking, social formations were emergent phenomena not directed by conscious forethought. Socially undesirable formations have often appeared alongside socially desirable ones through human action and not always conscious human intent (Hayek, 1978, p. 37). They have been the result of the complex

dynamics of social negotiation within natural environments and processes. For contemporary scholars wishing to participate in what they believe to be positive social change through the conscious and intentional re-articulation of undesirable social formations, the utility of a biocultural conception should be clear. Understanding the relationship between our *cultural architecture* and our *cognitive architecture* would work to eliminate arbitrariness from any proposed re-articulations, rendering those more meaningful to the publics whose constructions they seek to alter. As D.S. Wilson puts it, “In short, the way forward for social constructivism is to become sophisticated about evolution, not deny its relevance to human affairs” (2005, p. 28).

Conversely, an attitude that dismisses the idea that representation and reception depend upon our evolved psychology runs counter to the empirical evidence for evolution by natural selection. Attempts to re-articulate undesirable social formations while holding such an attitude, therefore, takes the unnecessary risk of creating worse social conditions, good intentions notwithstanding. That is because given the emergent properties of social formations there is no reason to believe that a completely arbitrary, consciously articulated reality will lead to a socially desirable outcome. However, re-articulated social formations that comport with the evolved cognitive structures of the human mind are much more likely to succeed because they do not depend on coincidence (D. S. Wilson, 2005).

Further, I agree with Barker (2002) that by considering the naturally occurring constraints placed on human communication by our evolved psychology (Barkow, Cosmides, & Tooby, 1995), we restore the study of human possibility and potential for symbolic action to the center of the project of hermeneutics itself. The biocultural perspective displaces the assumption that human communicative potential is limitless, which invites nonsensical constructions. Instead, the perspective I am advocating directs the project of discovering those possibilities and potentials

within their natural constraints in a manner more likely to be fruitful in constructing socially desirable conditions. The biocultural perspective places the human mind and its capacities for perception, conception, representation, and shared attention at the center of the *circuit of culture*, acknowledging it as the source for the myriad articulations thereby modeled.

Finally, and somewhat less humbly, the biocultural perspective provides an academically sound foundation to our theorizing about communication as culture that is a true, or correct account of symbolic action. That is not to say that my account of the *procedural* has been the singularly “right” one. However, in developing and deploying a biocultural perspective that is grounded in the overwhelming empirical evidence for an evolved human nature, I’ve begun a research program from an intellectually defensible position that enjoys widespread, interdisciplinary consensus outside the narrow field of cultural studies. The interpretive gain to be made by a biocultural approach is the possibility of being right (Andrews & Andrews, 2012).

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