15 Ideology in Critical Crime Fiction

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And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment

—T. S. Eliot

15.1 Introduction: Ideology and Struggle

Social groups vie with each other to obtain and maintain status, wealth and power. Conflict is thus endemic in society. Every society seeks to regulate conflict in an attempt to avoid its own destruction. Formal legal institutions constitute one of the major social structures deployed in modern societies to control conflict. Since crime constitutes a violation of a law, it is symptomatic of conflict in some form or other.

As was argued in Chapter 4, crime fiction is a site of struggle, where ideologies battle to achieve hegemony;[1] that is to say, crime fiction is a social

[1] Although, for ease or argumentation, I limit my analysis to two English television programmes on 'classic' crime cases, the theme of ideological struggle is a constant in world crime fiction in all spheres of crime, a fact that is also witnessed by other chapters in this book. Mayr (Chapter 11) constitutes a cogent demonstration of the close, direct link between ideology and the attempt to achieve Gramscian hegemony. ('Gramsci normally uses the word hegemony to mean the ways in which a governing power wins consent to its rule from those it subjugates', Eagleton 1991, p. 112.) Ras (Chapter 14) shows how laws, their enactment and their violation depend on one's socioeconomic position, a strong determinant of one's political stance. Furlong (Chapter 8) uncovers the workings of the ideology lying behind translation strategies employed, demonstrating that the strategies selected aim at making the text conform to the cultural and ideological expectations of the audience, that is to say, at reflecting the socially dominant worldview. This thesis does not exclude that crime writers may be in the game for financial gain or some other motive. Any text expresses or implies a worldview, whatever force(s) may have led to its production.

location where ideologies seek to impose and maintain the worldview they embody and project. This is so since laws (and customs) are not natural endowments but are specifically created by humans in generally purpose-built social institutions, as is readily demonstrated by the differences in laws and legal systems in different cultures and in the same culture over time. Hence laws and crime provide a window onto socioeconomic structure and social and psychological life.[2]

In this struggle taking place in crime literature between visions of the world, two broad trends may be identified (Douthwaite 1995). The dominant, and more 'traditional', trend was illustrated by *Midsomer Murders* in Chapter 4. Prototypically, it is represented by the closed story with the 'happy' ending that makes relaxing escapist reading and provides psychologically reassuring security to the reader that society will continue in the form the reader knows, feels comfortable with and accepts (albeit to differing degrees, depending on one's tastes or worldview). The recent developmental pathway of this tradition moves from Poe through Doyle to the Golden Age (Knight 1980; Douthwaite 1995, 2004, 2017[3]) and, as was illustrated in Chapter 4, still dominates the scene today. The second, and minor, movement is the 'critical' trend which was initiated, in modern times, with the American hard-boiled school,[4] which in turn is partly a product of American literary realism, and which performs functions antithetical to the mainstream trend, varying from a critique of society (condemning barriers such as class, gender, race, age or religion, which create the Other for ready exploitation, as

[2] Kövecses and Douthwaite (Chapter 2) and Fludernik (Chapter 3) demonstrate that the use of metaphors sheds further light on extant conflict.

[3] Rowland (2001) and Reddy (2003) furnish a more gendered, and more radical, interpretation.

[4] As was seen in Chapter 4, American hard-boiled fiction does not possess a monolithic, solidly based theoretical political foundation. It undoubtedly has extremist components, such as the political radicalism of Hammett's *Red Harvest* (1929) and its denunciation of modern capitalism in an America where the new frontier is running out – California, where much classic hard-boiled fiction is set – and the Great Depression is setting in (though Pepper [2016, p. 144] correctly notes that Hammett espouses no Marxist cure for the evils he denounces). Both Hammett and Chandler depict 'urban plight, corrupt political machines, and *de facto* disenfranchisement of significant sections of the population through graft . . . [against] a background in which crime of a new and organised kind was to become endemic . . . The time was ripe for the emergence in a popular literary genre of a disabused, anti-authoritarian, muck-raking hero, who, instead of fleeing to Europe, like the sophisticates of lost generation fiction, stayed at home to confront crime and corruption on the increasingly unlovely streets of modern urban America' (Porter 2003, p. 96). However, as Reddy has pointed out, this very stance contained the seeds of its inner contradiction, that is to say, its white male-centred ideology which entailed racist attitudes against several social groups, including females (Reddy 1990, 2003) and ethnic and religious groups (Reddy 2010). Note that this does not contradict my earlier statement since a number of hard-boiled works do take a stance in defence of the rights of the dispossessed.

demonstrated in Chapter 2) to a debunking of the classic detective genre and to innovation in the novel (Kafka, Borges, Robbe-Grillet, Gadda, 'Nordic Noir', Camilleri).[5]

In this chapter I will examine the television series *Inspector George Gently* as a 'representative' of the critical trend. In Section 15.2 of the chapter I will indicate some of the similarities and differences between the *Inspector George Gently* and the *Midsomer Murders* television series. Comparison constitutes a method which will help identify the background of production and the diverse constructional devices which create the different worldviews that the works consequently display and how such constructional devices work to situate the audience. This chapter thus represents an extension of Chapter 4, which dealt with conservative *Midsomer Murders*. To the same ends, I will also draw pertinent comparisons between the *George Gently* television series and the novels by Alan Hunter which inspired the *Gently* TV series. Brief references are made to other works where these enlighten the discussion.

One of the main theses I advance is that the *Inspector George Gently* television series offers an in-depth analysis of the society it examines. The constructional components and techniques that will be identified in Section 15.2 of this chapter are one major aspect of how depth is achieved. Identifying these components will lead to uncovering the ideological differences between the radical and conservative camps.

The other major aspect that will be examined is how such techniques are realised in the interaction between the major participants. To demonstrate this aspect, Section 15.3 will carry out a close reading of two excerpts from two different episodes of the *Inspector George Gently* television series. The analysis will concentrate on the content of and the communicative techniques employed in the TV series in order to identify the stance the series conveys, comparing and contrasting it with the Chief Inspector Barnaby novels and the *Midsomer Murders* television series that is based on them. A comparison with the extracts of *Midsomer Murders* analysed in

[5] Crime fiction has ancient roots. What is offered here is a restricted summary aiming principally to identify two 'camps' which determine the essential nature of crime fiction. The preceding note on American hard-boiled fiction bears out this point. For the development of crime fiction, see, inter alia, Cawelti (1976), Grossvogel (1979), Mandel (1984), Hilfer (1990), Kayman (1992), Pepper (2000), Knight (2004), Horsley (2005), Nickersen (2010), Pepper (2016) and Leitch (2020). With regard to critical crime fiction, on Nordic Noir see Nilsson et al. (2017) and Stougaard-Nielsen (2017). On Camilleri, see Douthwaite (2004, 2007). Two volumes dealing with contemporary television crime series are Turnbull (2014) and McElroy (2017a, 2017b).

Chapter 4 will bring out the enormous difference between the two series in the profundity of the treatment of human relations and, consequently, of the social issues scrutinised during those interactions. It is my contention that such depth of analysis produces a realistic picture of the society depicted by the series, which consequently acts as a strong means of positioning the viewer to adhere to the critical stance taken in the *Inspector George Gently* television series.

Investigation into the ideological underpinnings of texts is crucial for many reasons. Two cogent motives identified by Hogan (2011) are (1) 'the development of stories is profoundly related to ideology' (p. 136) and (2) 'the main ideological effects of … a work … are likely to operate below the level of conscious awareness' (p. 137). Consciousness raising has always been, and will always be, a fundamental function of criticism.

15.2 *Inspector George Gently* and the Barnaby Novels and *Midsomer Murders*: Background, Differences and Similarities, Techniques

This section is divided into nine main sub-sections examining the components and techniques deployed in the linguistic and visual construction of the *Inspector George Gently* television series and other factors which affected the way the product was composed, such as the target market, success and the ideology of the producer. (On the importance of such factors see, for instance, Colbran [2014a, 2014b].) I begin with worldview, since this is the focal point of my analysis.

15.2.1 Worldview

Although the *Inspector George Gently* television series first found voice in the novels of Alan Hunter, I centre the analysis on the television series, for a number of vital reasons. The overarching motive is the one stated above: the television series provides the opposite worldview to that derivable from the Barnaby novels and *Midsomer Murders* television series, as illustrated in Chapter 4, and from Hunter's novels. '*Television Gently*' (*TVG*, to coin a phrase for ease of reference to the entire series) embodies the critical stance of crime fiction, whereas the Chief Inspector Barnaby novels and *Midsomer Murders* television series incarnate the conservative spirit.[6] While Alan

[6] Indeed, Turnbull (2014) classifies *Midsomer Murders* as 'cosy' (p. 67) and 'cosy Britishness' (p. 14) (on 'cosy/cozy' see Chapter 4, note 5).

Hunter's Inspector Gently novels do offer a modicum of social criticism, such criticism is bland, infrequent and barely adumbrated, consequently disbarring the novels from the truly critical category.

One proviso must, however, be made. Gently is no rabid leftist, either in word or in deed, as the discussion of 'Peace and Love' (season 3, episode 2 [S3 Ep. 2]) below will show). *Television Gently* takes from Hunter's Gently the same moral stance and his concomitant British bulldog attitude. Inspector Gently believes in the legal system and in the separation of powers. Thus, his job is to apply the law. On those occasions where third parties criticise the law or the legal system, he declares that that situation lies outside his jurisdiction.

In applying the law, Gently is totally equanimous. Thus, in the novel *Gently Sahib* (1964) Gently criticises the local police of a very small town for not having brought out the full responsibility of the rich capitalist mayor (who provides a lot of work and many houses for the local populace) when the latter, under the influence of drink and at the wheel of his Daimler, killed a pedestrian and was let off with a ridiculously light sentence for a minor crime ('So – a wigging, a fine, a suspension – instead of maybe three years!', p. 108). Indeed, Gently disapproves of the entire social structure of the town where the 'haves' keep everything under control to ensure the town lives 'peacefully'.

Text 1

Gently shrugged. 'I'm a trier,' he said. 'And I don't like any sort of murderer.'

'And you'll go by the book,' Cockfield said.

Gently nodded. 'By the book. Though it blasts your crime-free town wide open, I'll have the man who killed Shimpling.' (*Gently Sahib*, p. 137)

Murder is murder, whether committed by a car driver or a terrorist ('I don't like any sort of murderer'), and the law must be respected at all costs ('go by the book'), even if this leads to upsetting the peace and tranquillity of a staid, supposedly crime-free town ('blasts your crime-free town wide open').

Gently's tenacious, unrelenting, black and white character is further borne out in the novel *Gently Heartbroken* (1981) where the repulsive MI5 agent Empton plays a major role, since he supposedly leads the terrorist hunts. Empson is depicted as a cynical, cold-hearted, sadistic, deadly human being, whose main desire is to kill terrorists so that they can and will no longer constitute a threat to the safety of the country he serves. Naturally, torturing suspects is a fully acceptable means to achieve a good end in his view (though the suspicion arises that this sentiment is bolstered by a streak of sadism in his character).

Exactly the same strong moral stance manifested by Hunter's Gently characterises *TVG*, with one highly significant difference, which brings us back to the main argument, the radical difference in worldview. The ideological difference between the two characters is reflected first and foremost in a difference in character. Hunter's Gently is a staid, unflappable, highly controlled, detached character, whereas television Gently is driven by emotion and passion, greatly interested as he is in people and social matters, components which fire his commitment to the job.[7] Psychology and morality are closely interconnected. Consequently, television Gently's personality constitutes a key factor in achieving depth in the social and psychological analyses carried out during the episodes.

15.2.2 Success

The second reason for focusing on *Television Gently* rather than Hunter's novels stems from the success achieved by the two television series. Success is a factor of paramount importance in determining television production (Colbran 2014a, 2014b; McElroy 2017c). Success will be evaluated through three main factors: (1) production, distribution and sales, (2) awards and (3) critical reception.

Success as measured by quantity of production and by the distribution of the series in Britain emerges starkly from Table 15.1. The discussion of success will inevitably lead the discussion into another field, namely, that of technique, to which it is intimately connected. First, the facts and figures, as shown in Table 15.1.

While each episode of *Gently* regularly attracted five to six million viewers, the television series as a whole is characterised by paucity compared with the *Midsomer* television series – only twenty-five episodes, less than a fifth of the *Midsomer* series – and production erraticism (only one episode broadcast in 2007, two episodes each in 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2017 – the latter exhibiting a time lapse of five months between the two episodes – and four episodes each in 2009, 2012, 2014 and 2015, and no episodes in 2013) and, obviously, a far shorter run (ten years compared with over twenty). Comparing such data to that presented for the Chief Inspector Barnaby novels and the *Midsomer Murders* television series, Barnaby 'wins' the popularity contest hands down. Sales abroad confirm the picture.

[7] A number of the novels recount Gently falling in love with a French woman, who becomes involved in Gently's intrigues with political crime and the British and French secret services. Emotion is therefore expressed, but the way it is dealt with is a far cry from the depth and extension achieved in dealing with emotion in *TVG* (which, moreover, does not feature this love affair), as the analysis of text 3 will bear out.

Table 15.1 *Production synopsis of the* Inspector George Gently *television series*

Series	Episode	Date first aired	Title	Scriptwriter(s)	Producer	Director
	Pilot	8 April 2007	'Gently Go Man'	Peter Flannery	Jeanette McGrath	Serena Bowman Faye Dorn
1	1	13 July 2008	'The Burning Man'	Peter Flannery	Jake Lushington	Ciarán Donnelly
	2	20 July 2008	'Bomber's Moon'	Mick Ford	Jake Lushington	Ciarán Donnelly
2	1	3 May 2009	'Gently with the Innocents'	Peter Flannery	Johann Knobel	Daniel O'Hara
	2	10 May 2009	'Gently in the Night'	Peter Flannery	Johann Knobel	Daniel O'Hara
	3	17 May 2009	'Gently in the Blood'	Peter Flannery	Johann Knobel	Ciaran Donnelly
	4	24 May 2009	'Gently through the Mill'	Mick Ford	Johann Knobe	Ciaran Donnelly
3	1	26 September 2010	'Gently Evil'	Peter Flannery	Suzan Harrison	Daniel O'Hara
	2	3 October 2010	'Peace and Love'	Jimmy Gardner	Suzan Harrison	Daniel O'Hara
4	1	4 September 2011	'Gently Upside Down'	Stewart Harcourt and Peter Flannery	Caroline Levy	Nicholas Renton
	2	11 September 2011	'Goodbye China'	Peter Flannery	Caroline Levy	Gillies Mackinnon
5	1	26 August 2012	'Gently Northern Soul'	David Kane	Faye Dorn	Gillies Mackinnon
	2	2 September 2012	'Gently with Class'	Peter Flannery	Faye Dorn	Gillies Mackinnon
	3	9 September 2012	'The Lost Child'	Peter Flannery	Faye Dorn	Nicholas Renton
	4	16 September 2012	'Gently in the Cathedral'	Peter Flannery	Faye Dorn	Nicholas Renton
6	1	6 February 2014	'Gently between the Lines'	Timothy Prager	Mathew Bird	Nicholas Renton
	2	13 February 2014	'Blue for Bluebird'	Jess Williams	Mathew Bird	Bill Anderson
	3	20 February 2014	'Gently with Honour'	Jess Williams and Steve Lightfoot	Mathew Bird	Tim Whitby
	4	27 February 2014	'Gently Going Under'	Mike Cullen	Mathew Bird	Ben Bolt
7	1	29 April 2015	'Gently with the Women'	Peter Flannery	Peter Norris	Roger Goldby
	2	6 May 2015	'Breathe in the Air'	Peter Flannery	Peter Norris	Roger Goldby
	3	13 May 2015	G'ently among Friends'	Written by Tim Prager and Peter Flannery	Peter Norris	Tim Whitby
	4	20 May 2015	'Son of a Gun'	Jim Keeble and Dudi Appleton	Peter Norris	Tim Whitby
8	1	21 May 2017	'Gently Liberated'	Charlotte Wolf	Dominic Barlow	Robert del Maestro
	2	30 October 2017	'Gently and the New Age'	Robert Murphy	Dominic Barlow	Bryn Higgins

I now turn to the second criterion indicating success: awards. Another 'top of the pops' TV crime series is *Inspector Morse*.[8] While sales and viewing figures are high, having been sold to over 200 countries, *Morse* was also low on number of episodes filmed compared with *Midsomer Murders* and its production even more erratic than *Gently*: it ran thirty-three 100-minute episodes from 1987 to 2000, with a maximum of five episodes televised in 1991 and 1992 and only one per year in 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 2000.

However, if we take into account awards as a criterion for measuring success, then despite this 'inferior' performance compared with *Inspector George Gently*, the *Inspector Morse* series has done excellently, having won several awards, including six BAFTA awards, nine BAFTA nominations, an Edgar Allan Poe award, two UK National Television Awards and two Writers' Guild of Great Britain Awards. *Midsomer Murders* has fared less well in this area. It has won one prize, the OFTA Hall of Fame, and received seven nominations, five of which for the Golden Nymph from the 2012 Monte Carlo TV Festival. *TVG* has fared even worse, with four nominations and the Edgar Allan Poe award in 2016 for the best episode in a TV series, for *Gently with the Women*, to be precise, a fact I discovered after having selected to analyse this episode[9].

[8] *Morse*, while more critical of society than the Barnaby novels and *Midsomer Murders* TV series, does not engage in serious social debate, hence tends toward the conservative category of the genre. I employ the lexeme 'tends' since general rather than absolute statements are in order here, for real-world entities do not fit perfectly into Weberian ideal–type categories but are accommodated more comfortably by Roschian prototype theory, to which must be added the phenomenon of hybridization (in any scientific domain) which blurs categorial boundaries even further. Following that logic leads into the further observation that human beings are not either/or creatures, black or white entities, but manifest contradictions; they are ambiguous, a feature which Piper (2015) argues is exemplified by the contemporary television detectives she scrutinises: 'Television detectives are often morally ambiguous figures who have emerged amidst ambivalent feelings towards the police and yearnings for benevolent, community authority' (p. 155). McCaw's view is more radical, arguing that the 'inherent moral ambiguity of modern British TV detective fictions … compromises the representation of such evil in that moral boundaries are blurred, ultimately to the point where criminality and victimhood meld, and those holding state-sanctioned social positions can no longer be trusted' (McCaw 2009, p. 21). In my view, Barnaby tends more towards a black or white figure, a feature denoting a flat character in Fosterian terms. As was seen in Chapter 4, this does not mean Barnaby is extremely right-wing. He is not, to give just one example, racist. Thus, as Piper again points out (2015, p. 154), 'for a character to uphold official order while drawing attention to other moral and social injustices is simply to affirm another Foucauldian proposition, namely that "resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power"'. On *Morse*, see Thomas (2002), McCaw (2011), Turnbull (2014) and Donaldson (2016).

[9] My thanks go to Stephanie Sakson, our copyeditor, who pointed this out to me, given my lack of computer skills as well as for her excellent work on the entire volume.

Equally significant is a third criterion of judgement: both *Midsomer Murders* and *Inspector Morse* have received critical attention, whereas I have managed to unearth no in-depth analytical appraisal of *Inspector George Gently*. What limited criticism I have located is negatively oriented.[10]

[10] Although Piper devotes a lucid volume to 'voices of contemporary dissent in contemporary [British] television', it is emblematic of the lack of attention given to *Television Gently* that she allocates only one comment of fewer than three lines to the series (2015, p. 101) to the effect that Gently is always disapproving 'the racist or sexist attitudes prevalent in his own time', despite the fact that the period she is dealing with is 1992–2012 and the fact that her observation quoted above implicitly classifies *TVG* as a dissenting voice (p. 1).

Ruth McElroy's edited book (2017a) contains references to *TVG* in four chapters. In her 'Introduction' (2017b) McElroy limits her commentary to classifying *TVG* as a historical crime drama. In her chapter 'Women Cops on the Box', McElroy (2017c) again dismisses *TVG* with a single, uncomplimentary comment: 'The rise of female policing even extends retrospectively to historical crime as witnessed in the current series (2015) of the BBC's Inspector George Gently (2007–), which charts the rise of a woman police constable to the rank of police sergeant. As Charlotte Brunsdon (2012) has argued, this series "simultaneity suggests a greater confidence on the part of commissioners and schedulers of their ability to entice audiences with that combination of generic familiarity and women cops"' (p. 85). In chapter 1, Brunsdon is concerned with how twenty-first-century British television series present the police in an 'anti-terror state' where civil liberties are curtailed. With regard to three series – *TVG*, *Endeavour* and *Whitechapel* – she makes a single, disparaging comment: the three programmes 'allude to pre-twenty-first-century policing worlds, which, in addition to avoiding the anti-terror state, permit a range of anachronistic, and often rather smug, forms of retrospective political correctness'. No explanation, no supporting analysis is offered. The fourth chapter in McElroy's volume to deal with *TVG* is by Jonathan Bignell. His chapter analyses what cars can tell us about the programmes they appear in. His topic thus falls within what I have termed contextual detail in Section 15.2.7.2. I quote his only comment on *TVG* in full:

> Choices of vehicle are especially interesting in dramas set in the past, where cars function as indices of class, taste and gender identity but also to indicate period. In *Inspector George Gently* . . ., Gently (Martin Shaw) drove a Rover P5 and then a P6, solid, white-collar vehicles that signifies the 1960s setting carefully recreated in the series. But they belie Gently's progressive outlook, one that is contrasted with his sidekick John Bacchus's (Lee Ingleby) lack of the expected youthful liberalism that appeared to be signified by his MG sports car in the first series. The tweed-suited ex-soldier Gently is in many ways more au fait with the 'Swinging Sixties' than Bacchus, despite the latter's Beatle haircut and fashionable suits. The cars are a ruse that viewers learn to see through. (pp. 132–133)

Bignell's interest in the function of cars is well-grounded, and his comments on Gently being more radical than his younger bagman are correct. However, the latter comment ignores the Bacchus' real functions in *TVG* (such as representing conservative viewpoints and not abiding by the rules). Furthermore, Bignell's invalidation of Gently, hence, by implication, of the entire *TVG* series, because his cars 'belie his progressive outlook' is a value judgement founded on illogical argumentation, starting from the fact that it constitutes an ad hominem attack. In addition, were we to accept Bignell's mode of reasoning, then the significant number of university teachers, to name but one social group, who vote left-wing but drive expensive cars and live in luxurious houses, would all be bigots by definition. Bignell's value judgement 'ruse' constitutes another total invalidation of *TVG*, on the basis of a single 'fact', the type of car possessed. Finally, apart from the objections that can be levelled at the chapters just quoted, one should bear in mind that I make no claim that all the *TVG* episodes are perfect, for they are not, just as perfection is well nigh impossible in this world. As Turnbull (2014, p. 71) notes with regard to TV series, 'it is often tricky to talk about the stylistics of a television crime series as a

Accounting for *TVG*'s lesser market success, its lesser success in the award-winning arena, and the lack of critical interest shown in the series (Hunter's novels have received scant attention, too) is tantamount to investigating its stance, which in turn requires an investigation principally of its 'technique' (an ad hoc umbrella term here covering a wealth of constructional factors, including context). Given the inherently ideological nature of crime fiction, I start, however, with the central question of politics.

15.2.3 Politics

Political implications are the most obvious explanation behind *TVG*'s lesser success. Two factors are central here. First, the great popularity of conservative crime fiction reflects the fact that British voters have selected leaders such as Thatcher, Blair and Johnson, since the majority of citizens, and not only British citizens and not only those conservatively minded, believe in the rule of law. Second, there is also the issue that the influence of politics (of any inclination) can, at times, be overbearing. The *Gently* series, for instance, came in for criticism from conservative MPs, indirectly confirming *TVG*'s political commitment, another way of illustrating the fact that texts are sites of struggle.

whole, since it is quite possible to come across an episode that completely contradicts, or at the very least calls into question, any overarching authorial vision'. Despite infrequent imperfections, I hope this chapter demonstrates the value of *TVG*.

Wickham's (2010) article deals with the television series *New Tricks*. In doing so, Wickham makes a limited number of critical points regarding *TVG*. Unlike the previous works discussed briefly above, Wickham is complimentary for a number of reasons I find valid. His main focus is on the role of age. Gently expresses the viewpoint of a generation which is now passing away – the age which fought the war. Gently thus represents the spirit of that age group (as will be seen when dealing with the 'Peace and Love' episode). Second, and a consequence of the first point, age invites comparison with the present in order to understand and evaluate not only the past but also, and especially, the present, not simply by the old but also by the young. He argues that the historical setting being the early sixties does not mean the social problems dealt with have all been satisfactorily solved. Quite the opposite: 'Bacchus is the distaff view of modern life, self-obsessed, greedy and venal, rejecting any notion of the communal interest or shared experience. As such the character is a vision of Thatcherism to come, a warning that progress has come at a cost' (p. 78). Wickham thus posits a generational conflict as represented by Gently's conflict with Bacchus. Age conflict is the central theme of 'Son of a Gun' (S7 Ep. 4). Skinheads have appeared on the scene and the social conflict they represent is debated. Gently concedes that the economic situation for the young is far from encouraging, a stricture that applies to the current situation.

One statement which I find puzzling in Wickham's otherwise illuminating paper, however, is the following: 'The extremes of human emotion encountered in police investigations lend themselves to this drama, and even occasionally humour, of experience' (p. 79). This would seem to imply a positive evaluation of crime series. While I would fully agree with this stricture with regard to *TVG* (or radical crime fiction as a general category – with exceptions, obviously), I will argue here that conservative crime fiction generally lacks analytical depth for reasons I expound in this chapter. To see a person crying or screaming on discovering his loved one has been murdered or on hearing the judge sentence him to life imprisonment for murder is no guarantee of serious, penetrative literary and/or social criticism.

It was no coincidence, for instance, that the final episode ('Gently and the New Age', S8 Ep. 2), which was originally scheduled to be televised on 28 May 2017, was postponed due to the proximity of the date to that of the general election. It dealt with corruption in high quarters. When Gently fails to heed the warning to abandon his investigation, he is murdered by a secret agent in the pay of corrupt government officials on the order of their political masters. As we shall see below, *TVG* does deal with corruption in many sectors of society.

Despite the importance of politics, I hypothesise that far fewer episodes of *Gently* were produced for reasons pertaining to production, in the widest sense of the term, to which I now turn.

15.2.4 Producer/Writer and Intentionality

Colbran (2014a) signals the producer's/author's ideological stance as a major factor influencing the stance of a programme. *TVG* was created and overseen by English playwright and screenwriter Peter Flannery (born in Jarrow, County Durham), who also wrote fourteen of the twenty-five scripts. Table 15.1 reports the exact titles of the episodes. Significantly, Flannery is always listed in the credits as the creator of the series. Clearly, the intention behind the series and the way it develops is his.

Evidence in support of the nature of the intentionality behind *TVG* comes from the fact that Flannery is also well known for having written the BAFTA award–winning nine-part BBC television serial *Our Friends from the North*. Televised in 1996, the story covers the period 1964–1995. Through recounting the story of the lives of four friends, Flannery reconstructs the social, political and economic history of the North East of England of the period. *TVG* appeared approximately a decade later and manifests the same social and moral concerns voiced by *Our Friends from the North*. Unsurprisingly, crime plays a major role in the latter series too.

15.2.5 Context: Time and Place

TVG changes the location of the novels from Hunter's East Anglia to Flannery's North East England. Furthermore, while Hunter's forty-six novels cover the period 1955–1999, the events of the *Gently* television series take place approximately during the 1960s, namely, during the period following the initial post–World War II period and which saw the rise of the 'cultural revolution' in Britain. This included the youth movement, feminist movement, civil rights movement, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and various other radical manifestations, including trade union strife, at a time when the economy of the North East was in recession – the two major

industries of the area, shipbuilding and coal-mining, were nearing their end (over seventy pits were shut down during the decade), Mrs Thatcher was soon to come to power (1979) and Dr Beeching had already cut down rail services (1961), a phenomenon which would continue in the area as coal production dropped and mines were closed. To give an indication of what this meant in concrete terms, out of my twenty-strong A-level class in Sunderland, only one remained at home on entering the occupational marketplace; all the others moved south or abroad in seek of work.

Time and place thus help provide *TVG* with content which enables the series to deal with virtually all of the social, political, economic and moral questions which arose in that period of nascent turbulence and incipient change.

This stands in stark contrast to *Midsomer Murders* (see Chapter 4), which is basically atemporal, apolitical (so to speak) and located in an 'ideal' English countryside (in the Weberian sense of the term 'ideal type'). *Midsomer Murders* is devoid of social content and social analysis. The causes of murder are basically personal: envy, love, hate, revenge, money and so forth. They are seen only in the light of deviant individual behaviour. Similarly, Hunter's quiet, rural Norfolk where the problems of post-industrialisation and economic depression seem unheard of is far more suited to the conservative tradition, both politically and with regard to the crime literature tradition (especially that of the Golden Age – see Chapter 4): no deep social turmoil leaps out of the pages of Hunter's novels.

15.2.6 Titles

A further highly significant indicator of radical difference between *TVG* and Hunter's novels is the fact that only three of Hunter's original titles are maintained in *TVG*, and the other twenty-four episodes are drawn only blandly from Hunter's novels in some cases, not at all in other cases and in some cases they even 'subvert' Hunter's novels.

One glaring case of subversion is *Gently with the Innocents* (1970). Hunter employs the title ironically, since a gang of twelve-year-old schoolchildren systematically murder first an old man who is hoarding a treasure to take possession of that treasure and then anyone who stands in their way, attempting to kill Gently too when he finds the treasure. Shockingly, they are totally unconcerned by the fact that he is a policeman. When caught, they feel absolutely no guilt and no remorse.[11] The eponymous *TVG* episode, on the

[11] It is interesting to note that a work with a similar theme appeared in 1962, the novel *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess, nine years before Hunter's novel (1970). The latter followed a period (1950s and 1960s) where social criticism was rife in literature (e.g. the Angry Young Men) and protest movements were well under way, as described two paragraphs earlier.

contrary, has exactly the opposite theme: child abuse. A reform school is run by a warden and a policeman who methodically molest and beat the children in their care. Flannery's title is thus intended literally. This instantiation cogently bears out the 'political' difference between the novelist and the television series. Horrendous as the behaviour of the young gang in Hunter's novel is, no analysis of the origins of the crimes, of the social environment (bar the housing), of the families, of the educational system, is engaged in. On the social level, the novel is limited to describing the children's evil behaviour and a dilapidated housing estate. No social action is called for, directly or indirectly, not least because no solution is offered. However, the eponymous *TVG* episode engages with the issues of age and power, of the collusion between state offices (the police, the doctor in charge of looking after the children's health) rendering the exploitation of children a 'simple' affair, and of the devastating psychological effects of child abuse. On a more general level, *TVG* indirectly invokes equal rights, social justice, an end to racism, through Gently's behaviour, which is to be imitated, in exactly the same way that Tom Barnaby is 'presented' as a role model (see Chapter 4).

15.2.7 Verisimilitude

Unlike conservative crime fiction, verisimilitude is important to radical crime fiction for a number of reasons outlined in Section 15.2.7.1 below. One crucial function of authenticity is that it plays a significant role in creating ethical and emotional suasion. A cognitive explanation is advanced regarding how verisimilitude triggers emotional suasion employing Sklar's (2013) insights into suasion, extending his analysis to include Austinian (1962) commitment. A further aspect regarding verisimilitude is that it also creates a number of constraints which have important production consequences, which will be examined. Equally important are the modes by which authenticity is achieved. These are scrutinised in Section 15.2.7.2. I explore two main dimensions in this sphere which help guarantee that authenticity which brings about consequent audience involvement on the psychological and emotional planes: employing real-life cases as thematic material and the deployment of contextual knowledge. Illustrating the mechanisms by which these two domains trigger verisimilitude involves investigating the cognitive workings of emotion.

While Burgess' novel is acidly critical, Hunter's lacks bite and the intended criticism is a subcomponent, one which is highly indirect. Those interested may wish to compare these two works with Kubrick's film *Clockwork Orange*, which, I contend, employs a series of strategies which removes the social criticism present in Burgess' novel to turn the work into a box-office success (Douthwaite & Zurru 2009).

15.2.7.1 The Need for Verisimilitude and the Constraints of Verisimilitude

One important reason I hypothesise as to why far fewer episodes were produced of *TVG* compared with *Midsomer Murders* concerns two interrelated factors: format and verisimilitude. For ease of treatment, format will be dealt with in Section 15.2.9.

Creating novel plots and stories imposes constraints that are less stringent when inventing a whodunnit pure and simple, so to speak, than when fashioning programmes that are socially committed, as is *TVG*. Furthermore (and in part, consequently), 'pure' crime stories can be, and not infrequently are, riddled with inconsistencies and improbabilities, or are highly simplistic. (This thesis is confirmed by a mini-analysis of the series *Law and Order* in Section 15.2.9.1 where I deal with narrative structure.) Leaving aside single mistakes in a production that might be due to pure chance (or misfortune), one cogent categorial, hence important, example is furnished by McCaw (2009): the predilection for serial killers. Starting from the premise that 'in detective fiction there is not the structural possibility (within a whodunit which relies on the rabbit being pulled out of the hat at the end) to fully delineate a sustained narrative of wrongdoing' (p. 22), McCaw argues that 'evil' is oversimplified in the serial killer category. For instance,

> the psychopathic (flagrant criminal violation of society's rules, absence of conscience, callousness) is often conflated into the psychotic (rages, delusions, disorganised behaviour suddenly emerging out of nowhere) … [producing] what Otto F. Wahl calls 'shorthand encapsulations of evil'. (ibid.)

If, instead, one wishes to produce a work intending to seriously and convincingly debate social issues, simplification and falsification are better avoided, for such a work must come within limits of credible realism, or Aristotelian mimesis. *TVG* adopts a series of strategies and techniques which aim at achieving authenticity and as a result at convincing the audience of the justness of the stance conveyed.

Before proceeding to an investigation of those techniques, a second, and crucial, reason why verisimilitude is vital must be expounded. In illustrating the mechanisms of ethical and emotional persuasion in fiction, Sklar (2013)[12] argues that

> a reader who engages deeply with a work of fiction … may simultaneously disengage his awareness of the works of fictionality. He may have fictionality at the back of his mind, but the front of his mind, so to speak, is occupied by the *sensation of realism* that

[12] On the nature and effects of emotion on narrative structure, ideology and suasion, see also Hogan (2011).

the work produces. This is not so much a question of the 'suspension' of disbelief" as the *generation of temporary belief*. (p. 14, original emphasis)

Sklar argues against simulation theories (Currie 1998) and pretence theory (Walton 1997), which posit that people simulate being in or pretend to be in a given situation, consequently realizing, consciously, that the emotions so generated are as fictional as the fiction that generated those emotions. Instead, Sklar argues,

we temporarily 'believe' in the reality of the fiction that we are reading, or, at the very least, regard fictional characters as we would real individuals. (p. 17)

What I surmise is being argued here is that we do not, or do not only, employ cold cognition – a detached, distant, rational, conceptually analytical, scientific method to explore the meaning of a text – but we participate in the event, experiencing the event directly, as if it were real and we were present, even if only as observers. Observation is, however, a sufficient condition to activate 'participation'.

This interpretation is important since I believe this type of experience engenders commitment to one's values and, consequentially, actions to uphold those values, even though such actions may be 'only' mental, emotional actions/reactions, as I now argue. Commitment can be explained by referring to Austin's (1962) felicity conditions, namely, those conditions that must be fulfilled if the intention behind an utterance is to be correctly recognized by the addressee:

Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further must actually so conduct themselves subsequently. (p. 15)

Austin's position can be explicated quite simply. Let us take the classic utterance 'I will' in the official procedure dubbed a marriage ceremony. If I utter this expression to the sober young woman standing next to me and who is married to my best friend, a bank clerk who has just pronounced the words 'Will you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife?' and I am propped up at a bar after having imbibed half a bottle of whiskey, then the woman is most unlikely to take my words seriously. If instead, the very same question is proffered by a vicar, in church, when both the woman and I are sober and neither of us is as yet legally married, then she will most certainly believe that my uttering 'I will' manifests my truthful intention to take her as my lawful wedded spouse, for reasons deemed valid by society, such as my being madly in love with the said woman, since the socially established procedure (of the marriage ceremony) has been fully and properly carried out, with the correct

actors in the appropriate venue, and, above all, the actors have (or sincerely believe they have – or, put differently, are *committed* to having) the requisite thoughts and feelings for that socially defined event; that is to say, the participants are not engaging in an act of deceit.

Deceit is, of course, possible, as when I marry the above-mentioned woman for her money, and after a congruous period of time has passed I murder her, as happens in Margery Allingham's superb feminist short story *Three Is a Lucky Number*, which was based on the real case of George Joseph Smith.[13]

The example clarifies what I mean by 'commitment'. When in church I utter 'I will' I am committing myself to the veracity of my thoughts, feelings and intentions (all mental acts which cannot be proved with 100 per cent certainty), and the addressee is committing herself to accepting that implied veracity.

Returning to the veracity of one's emotional reactions to a text, rather than my reaction constituting simulation or pretence, I offer in support of Sklar's argument my reaction on one highly pertinent occasion, which, I would argue, is not simply the reaction of a single (and perhaps unrepresentative) individual, but the result of a 'typical' viewer's stance and reaction having been purposefully 'manipulated' by the textual material and the way that material is presented and developed. Thus, when, in Miloš Forman's film *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, the 'rebellious hero' Randle Patrick McMurphy tries to strangle authoritarian, sadistic head nurse Ratched[14] following one of her umpteenth acts of aggression against the patients, my reaction is to shout 'Go, man, go', so intense is the emotion aroused against the great injustices the head nurse perpetrates daily against the very patients she is supposed to care for and help. The determining argument, I would add, is the fact that emotion is accompanied by physiological arousal: my blood pressure increases, my heart rate quickens, I clench my fists. Such physiological reactions are not feigned.

This line of argument does not finish here. When I feel the injustice of Nurse Ratched's conduct, I am empathising and sympathising with the patients and with McMurphy. Empathy is a vital skill in successful communication and survival (Douthwaite 2000). Sympathy is also a crucial component of being human.

Applying classic cognitive psychology and communication theory (as in Emmot 1999; Douthwaite 2000; Stockwell 2002; Sandford and Emmott 2012) and reader response theory (Iser 1978), Sklar points out that a communicator

[13] The case was famous for two reasons. First, it was one of the earliest instances of similarities between crimes being employed to prove deliberation. Second, it was an important instance of the use of forensic science to gather evidence against the accused.

[14] The surname 'Ratched' might be explicated as 'wretched hatchet', a fair appraisal of the head nurse's character.

cannot provide all the information required to comprehend a situation. The text provides 'clues' which the receiver employs to build up the entire picture, 'either by establishing connections between elements in the text, or by drawing on notions that come from the reader's own experience' (p. 12). This leads Sklar to the important conclusion that as a result of 'intuitively fill[ing] in the picture using that which we know from the world of real persons, ... the end result [is] that the fictional world becomes peopled by characters who seem real to us as readers' (p. 12). The next step in Sklar's argument is that while it is true that 'fictional characters are imaginary ... this formulation tends to blind us to how similar the way in which we perceive "real people" is our way of apprehending fictional characters' (p. 13). Stated differently, 'there are important similarities between the basic processes involved in the concretisation by readers of "people" in fiction and people in non-fiction'.

Empathy (understanding others) and sympathy (sharing others' feelings and worldviews in various ways) are two of the most basic processes in human understanding and interaction. It is these processes which lead us not only to think Nurse Ratched is seriously wrong but also to feel such anger stir up in us that we wish to solve the problem radically (though not necessarily through murder).

Returning to my main argument regarding authenticity, since empathy and sympathy are at work in world building, a lack of realism will tend to impede these cognitive-emotional processes, hence the reader/viewer will not become involved in the text, and their worldview will be neither bolstered nor challenged. The reader/viewer will, in Gricean terms, opt out of the communication. They will not take it seriously, demoting it to escapist literature.

15.2.7.2 Meeting the Constraints of Verisimilitude: Contextualisation and Relevance

In addition to achieving authenticity, critical crime fiction must also achieve relevance if the social message is to be given credence. If someone believes that women have now achieved equality and that colour no longer gives rise to racism, then a text criticising patriarchalism and ethnic prejudice will produce little social effect. Thus, unearthing the identity of the killer of an old country dignitary murdered for his money might make comforting reading, but it is highly unlikely to awaken a social conscience since it bears scarce pertinence to 'ordinary' everyday lives. Here I explore how real-life cases and the text's activation and exploitation of knowledge of the world affect verisimilitude and thus act to position the viewer.

15.2.7.2.1 Real-Life Cases

One way in which *TVG* strives for verisimilitude is by basing several episodes on real-life cases. This has the suasive advantage of enabling the audience to

grasp the relevance of the events depicted by relating those events directly to their own lives instead of watching an episode which simply constitutes a story with a happy ending allowing viewers to sleep tight. 'Gently Evil' (S3 Ep. 1) recounts the real-life case of Mary Bell, an eleven-year-old girl convicted of manslaughter for having strangled two three-year-old boys, whom she was babysitting, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1968. A second instantiation is the case of the televising of the final episode being delayed because the storyline dealt with a controversial politician, referred to above. Third, *TVG* highlights police scandals in various episodes, starting from the initial episode, of which history provides many instances, worldwide. One important British example is that of the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad scandal. This included seventy-two people who were unjustly accused and condemned in the period 1974–1989 and who had their sentences quashed on appeal because of pre-fabricated evidence or of confessions obtained through torture (Plimmer 2017). The *TVG* pilot episode 'Gently Go Man' opens with the trial of corrupt Metropolitan police officers denounced by Gently. This recalls the episode of Met corruption denounced by the *Times* in 1969 and which led to Operation Countryman, an internal enquiry which ended with the conviction of twelve police officers and many more resignations (Turnbull 2014, pp. 52–53). A fourth instantiation is the reference to local government corruption in 'Gently among Friends' (S7 Ep. 3). This episode bears similarities to the case of T. Dan Smith, a Labour Party member who became leader of Newcastle city council in 1959 and engaged in redeveloping the slum areas, increasing his influence greatly. His career flourished, as indicated by his becoming head of the Northern Economic Planning Council. However, it came to a brusque end when in 1974 he was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for corruption.

Direct relevance to viewers' lives means specifically that such events may happen to the viewer (as in the case of employing a babysitter, in 'Gently Evil') or may have 'indirect' or not immediately obvious consequences on their lives, such as working in or living near a factory or power station which pollutes, or having a relative who does so (as in 'Breathe in the Air', dealt with below; see also note 15).

This in turn means a possibly higher level of attention and involvement (i.e. mental and emotional activity and participation in the events depicted) which in turn can lead to a change in attitudes and behaviours, to return to one of Austin's felicity conditions referred to earlier (page 15).

15.2.7.2.2 Context: Visuals and Knowledge of the World

Contextualisation and relevance are also achieved through attention to details or supporting material such as exploiting visual details and activating viewers' knowledge of the world. While 'real life cases' (the preceding sub-section) refer to entire cases, that is to say, both the framework and the details, by

visuals and knowledge of the world I refer, instead, to individual pieces of information or details. To borrow from psychology, the real-life cases are tantamount to frames (Minsky 1974), while details constitute the slots to be found in a frame.

Applying this ad hoc distinction, in *TVG*:

(1) meticulous attention is devoted to internal and external settings, including buildings, clothes, hairstyles and means of transportation, in order to recreate the environment and 'feeling' of the time, and
(2) references to the historical context are specifically incorporated. Both help convey social information as well as engendering intellectual and emotional reactions on the part of the viewers.

With regard to setting, internal and external shots of houses and buildings are an essential ingredient, as in 'Breathe in the Air' (S7 Ep. 2), which deals with industrial crime. A Swiss multinational corporation produced asbestos, which caused many deaths, as asbestos has everywhere. The relative poverty displayed by the working-class home of one of the many people who had worked at the factory and is now dying of mesothelioma, as had his daughter, many years previously, does not function simply to create authenticity, or as a tear-jerker. Far more importantly, it performs the vital symbolic function of signifying the inability of the have-nots to safeguard their rights against the powerful, the latter group visually betokened by their plush offices, rich houses (in particular, the country house of the doctor who defends the Swiss company's interests instead of those of the workers whose lives he should have been protecting), and expensive clothes and cars, not to mention the top London lawyers the company employs when its interests are at stake.

In one scene, where Gently and Bacchus go to the doctor's house to ask him questions, the two policemen get out of their car to find the doctor and the rich Swiss manager he is about to marry arriving back from horse-riding, dressed in suitable attire. Since 'Breathe in the Air' was produced in 2015, eighteen years after the first *Midsomer Murders* episode, an event of this nature cannot be ascribed to chance, but clearly constitutes a critical intertextual reference to the innumerable instances of horse-riding characterising quiet, conservative *Midsomer Murders* territory.

Similarly, 'Gently between the Lines' (S6 Ep. 1) has many external shots of areas due for demolition and of the poorly dressed inhabitants of those council houses, again highlighting the lives of the have-nots and the culture that comes with it, including conflict with the police, indicating the anti-police atmosphere that had built up in recent years and which challenges the benign view of the police as community helpers conveyed by such popular, long-running series as *Dixon of Dock Green*, which features the 'iconic British Bobby', 'the

embodiment of an ideal British policeman'[15] (Sydney-Smith 2002, p. 1; see also Brunsdon 2019).

While *TVG* does contain 'picture-postcard' (Turnbull 2014, p. 26, referring to *Midsomer Murders*) or 'rolling postcard' (McCaw 2011, p. 61, referring to *Morse*) travelogue settings in which Gently is to be found admiring the countryside or where he goes fishing,[16] ('escaping' from reality, viz. 'evil', to gain some respite), many of the settings are ugly, with darkness deployed at times to intensify ungainliness, thus evoking (positioning) negative emotional feelings in the audience. Stated differently, travelogue does not function merely to 'sell Englishness'; the beautiful countryside also serves as a counterpart to highlight the ugliness of many of the built-up areas, hence as a means of underscoring social criticism. Interestingly, the grim internal settings of the police stations by and large fall into this negative category, with obvious symbolic implications. (Midsomer 'nicks' run to higher standards.) A cogent example is provided by 'Gently with the Women' (S7 Ep. 1), an excerpt of which is analysed in Section 15.3.

Turning to knowledge of the world (Douthwaite 2000), recourse is frequently had to historical detail. In dealing with racism in 'Gently Northern Soul' (S5 Ep. 1) an excerpt is shown of Enoch Powell's infamous 'Rivers of Blood' television speech made on 20 April 1968. It is seen by Gently and colleagues in the police station, with several police officers conveying indirectly that they shared Powell's views. The impending Race Relations Act of 1968 is also referred to in the same episode. Gently and Bacchus visit a boarding house in search of a person of interest to find that a notice hung in the window says 'No Blacks No Irish No Dogs'. After the landlady has aired her racist views Gently 'invites' her to take down the notice and not to discriminate against any group, saying that after the Race Relations Act has been passed he will close her down if she continues in such (mis)conduct. When Gently is talking to the murdered girl's British black father, Martin Luther King Jr. also comes up in the conversation, with Gently admitting he admired Dr King because Gently is a policeman 'who approves of non-violence'. Since Gently is interviewing the father in his official capacity as lead investigator, his ethics prevent him from engaging in debates with the

[15] The series consisted of 432 episodes, which ran from 1955 to 1976.

[16] In the first minute of 'The Burning Man' (S1 Ep. 1) (the episode following the pilot), a dead body is found and although it is Sunday Bacchus goes to fetch Gently from his home. Bacchus is seen driving his car through the beautiful countryside, a traditional country house is shown, which the audience infer is Gently's abode, and then Bacchus is seen finally finding Gently fishing. This part of the show has absolutely no relevance to the solving of the crime, since it furnishes no direct information on the crime itself nor on any possible relevant contextual knowledge. It therefore constitutes basically scenic travelogue which will turn out to be a component of the entire *TVG* series. Not by chance, the final scene of the episode shows Gently having returned to the river to continue his peaceful fishing.

suspects and those helping him in his enquiries. Despite this statutory limitation, Gently's anti-racist attitude emerges quite distinctly.

The introduction in *TVG* of pertinent visuals and contextual, historical detail triggers the process of comprehension (recognising visual and historical information and understanding what it signifies – for instance, understanding the man making the speech is Enoch Powell and that he represented the extreme right racist group in Britain wanting to ban immigration of non-whites). The main function of this information is to help present an implicit social argument (hence to help the audience comprehend why such information is included at that specific point in the episode), one which aims at persuading the audience of the correctness of the critical stance taken in the series, both by nature of the argument itself (knowledge of the world)[17] and because the audience sympathises with Gently and the positions he takes. Stated differently, it triggers viewer involvement on rational, analytical and emotional levels.

In contrast to setting the socioeconomic and cultural scene in order to carry out social analysis, the visual environment in *Midsomer Murders* follows the 'aesthetic development of television drama' (Piper 2015, p. 13). Two trends which are crucial to the conservative stance may be identified, aimed at two sectors of the viewing public (though overlapping to some extent). On the one hand, the travelogue sets out to 'sell' British cultural heritage and British values, as seen through the ideological eyes of the producers or of what the producers believe are the values of their target audience. On the other hand, the aestheticism in which the production is bathed seeks to bolster the reassuring comfort the classic crime story provides to the middle classes as well as to appease their nostalgia for a lost Britain (Trimm 2018; Zahlmann 2019) through the 'pastoral myth of English village life' (McCaw 2005, p. 13). It is no coincidence that Brian True-May, the producer of *Midsomer Murders*, in his well-known interview to the *Radio Times* commented that the series was 'the last bastion of Englishness' (Turnbull 2014, p. 26; see also note 1 of Chapter 4).[18] Significantly, historical references of the type present in *TVG* are noticeably lacking in both novelistic and television Barnaby.

[17] This point can be demonstrated quite simply by referring back to the case of the asbestos factory. I have taught at the universities of Genoa and Turin. Over the years I have had several students who came from Casale Monferrato, a town where the 'Ditta Eternit' produced asbestos. Not one of those students did not know someone or, more frequently, have a relative from their extended family, who had died or was dying from an illness brought about by asbestos. To say that such a fact is shocking is to put the matter mildly.

[18] As a linguist, my interests in analysing *Midsomer* and *Gently* are to identify the stance taken by the two programmes, to demonstrate how the writing/filming techniques convey those differing stances, and how they seek to persuade the audience of the correctness of their stances. Hence my concentration on the 'texts' and on the linguistic and visual means employed. My desire to highlight crime texts as a site of struggle through highlighting the conservative versus critical text leads me to focus more on crime literature at a general level. By contrast, critics such as

15.2.8 Format and Goal

I now return to McCaw's (2009) argument that the standard TV crime format simplifies reality. In one sense I am still answering the question of how crime fiction can meet the constraints of authenticity. However, to do so I move to a higher level of generalisation. On that more general level, McCaw's stricture that the TV format cannot accommodate reality in depth is unacceptable as an absolute criticism. While this stricture may be applied to a significant proportion of TV crime programmes (the highly successful series *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, which has been running since 1999, springs instantly to mind), the *Gently* series demonstrates that depth may repeatedly be achieved in this genre. Indeed, the counter-argument that may be advanced is that the 'fault' lies not in the format per se as, I would contend, but in the goal behind the production of the fiction, since the fundamental objective of communication *is* goal achievement (Douthwaite 2000). Seen in the light of goal-achievement, conservative crime fiction may employ simplification, hence obfuscation, as a means of precluding analytical, critical thought in order to uncritically uphold the status quo.

While the half- or one-hour format, as is *Law and Order*, objectively offers extremely limited opportunity to achieve any kind of penetrative analysis, one and a half hours, the standard *Gently* episode duration, provides greater opportunity for depth. Nevertheless, the fact that conservative *Midsomer* standard run-time is 90–100 minutes confirms the thesis that it is not the format per se that determines the end product, but the intention in deploying the genre.[19]

McCaw focus on Englishness as the underlying ideological mainstay, hence their interest in myth (especially of the tranquillity and stability of English village life), cultural heritage, nostalgia and the travelogue (all of which I refer to in the course of this chapter), and how these themes and national identity are linked to the specific socioeconomic and political situation of Britain, especially of Thatcherite Britain. The result is two slightly differing interpretations, which are complementary rather than incompatible.

On conservatism and national identity in the large town (in this case, London), see Buchanan (2005). Buchanan analyses the British television crime series *Rumpole of the Bailey*, created and written by the British writer and barrister John Mortimer. Buchanan observes that 'Rumpole also appeals to a widespread nostalgia for a stable, homogeneous English racial and cultural identity' (p. 29). In this sense, *Rumpole* is in line with *Midsomer Murders* (see Chapter 4).

[19] Unsurprisingly, numerous critical studies draw attention to the fact that a significant proportion of crime fiction highlights the social causation of deviant behaviour as well as taking to task police corruption where it occurs (Turnbull 2014). Moody (2003) provides a panorama on crime films and television series, illustrating the social criticism the various schools of American and British cinema and TV in different periods have produced since the inception of the media and the socioeconomic and cultural conditions that gave rise to those schools, demonstrating how powerful and precise such analyses can be. Significantly, the analyses identify the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions which give rise to the criticisms such films and series advance. Piper (2015, p. 153) concludes her analysis of dissent in contemporary TV

15.2.9 Format and Narrative Technique

Two further constructional devices can help account for differences in the category of crime fiction represented by *TVG* and the category embodied by *Midsomer* (especially the television series). The first depends on whether the story is built around the characters or the around the plot of the murders. This can produce quite profound differences in depth of psychological and social treatment. The second is whether the text is a one-off production or whether it is part of a series. This latter factor will be sub-divided into three further dimensions which are again of some importance in distinguishing conservative from radical crime products: storyline, emotion and thematic complexity.

15.2.9.1Detection-Led versus Character-Led Storylines

Narrative technique may also abet prevention of depth. *Law and Order* is again a cogent instantiation. The series deals with both apprehending the criminal and his subsequent trial, in a rapid succession of short scenes, in which one suspect denies involvement and indicates another possible suspect, to whom the scene switches quickly, to return at some point to one of the previous suspects when further evidence emerges, and then moves, in the second part of the episode, into the courtroom where some setback in the trial is also

detective programmes by stating that 'complex societal and ethical critique is characteristic of rather than exceptional to the detective genre' of the period she analyses (1992–2012). In addition to the works quoted in notes 2 and 3, analyses of the relationship between crime and socioeconomic, historical, cultural, gender, ethnic and age factors may also be found in Rowland (2001), Sydney-Smith (2002), Echano (2005), Reddy (2010), Turnbull (2014), Piper (2015), Bordo (2020) and Chapman (2020).

McElroy (2017c) also examines gender, but in addition to critical comments on the theme she also points out that entertainment and capturing the audience are important factors in determining content and ideology. In drawing attention to the fact that in recent decades many TV series have seen a disproportionately high number of female lead detectives in British cop shows compared with real numbers in the British police force, she takes up Garner's (2017) observation in the same volume that 'ITV's audience is skewed female and the development of popular prime time fictions with women leads may well help to secure that audience whilst not alienating the crime genre's traditional male viewership' (McElroy 2017c, p. 85).

With regard to the issue of the influence of format, see Colbran (2014b). In addition to discussing the constraints created by format, she also investigates how the media, commercial imperatives and the ideological values of those involved in the story creation process affect programmes, concluding that all these factors impinge in determining the nature of the final product, market and ideology being especially influential. Colbran also discusses previous studies carried out in the same domain.

Turnbull (2014) also discusses format. One comment pertinent to this discussion will be quoted: 'crime series have, therefore, varied in the degree of attention they have paid to the drama of the ongoing characters as opposed to the investigation of the crime. Such differences in form and focus reveal the ongoing tension between the competing pull of documentary and melodrama, entertainment and edification, as they have played out within the genre' (p. 71). See also Sydney-Smith (2002).

introduced before the final verdict is reached.[20] Hence, limited time, two major scenarios (investigation and trial) and many events following each other in rapid succession means an episode provides virtually no scope for any kind of character or social analysis. Instead of offering stimuli for original, independent reflection, if anything, the programme (unwittingly) hints at how 'easy' it is to become a suspect. Thus, it is the event-packed narrative structure outlined above aided and abetted by its highly mechanical, routinised, formulaic structure which pre-empts breadth and depth.

Related to the preceding point is McCaw's (2009) suggestion that another technique pertaining to format which accounts for superficiality of treatment in television crime fiction is that in the genre the narrative is detection-led and not character-led. Consequently, virtually no possibility exists for character analysis in a single episode. *Law and Order* and *Midsomer Murders* may be classified as detection-led programmes since, although they do investigate motives for murder (though generally limited to the level of identification of the motive, without any analysis of how motivation has affected personality), they are nevertheless structured around the events which lead to the capturing of the culprit. By contrast, a concentration on character can, in the hands of a proficient writer and a willing, capable producer, lead to more profound analysis compared with a concentration on plot. However, I would add that one of the main causes of superficiality in crime fiction is the type of narrative structure adopted, that identified for *Law and Order* constituting cogent evidence in favour of this hypothesis. Narrative structure of this sort is, in turn, determined by goal, as illustrated above.

To bolster the argument that it is not the event-led structure per se that necessarily produces superficiality, I would further add that while the Coen brothers' film *Fargo* (1996) is detection-led, it does successfully concurrently investigate character and debunk crime fiction. For instance, in the scene where the chief of police of Brainerd, Marge Gunderson, arrives on the crime scene, she takes one look and immediately explains how the murder took place, à la Sherlock Holmes scrutinising his client at the beginning of a story and then telling the client and/or Watson everything about her through his powers of observation and 'deductive logic'.[21] The picture that emerges from

[20] The fixed nature of the programme seems to make it ideal for a Formalist Proppian style analysis (Propp 1928/2003) or a semiotic analysis such as Umberto Eco's investigation of the James Bond films (1966), which, however, goes beyond the remit of this chapter.

[21] On the variety of intertextual crime film references in *Fargo* and their (debunking) functions, see Luhr (2004), especially chapters 3, 5 and 6. Douthwaite (2021) analyses the scene of Marge arriving on the crime scene and its debunking of the Sherlock Holmes model.

Fargo first appeared on screen in 1996. Near the beginning of 'Bomber's Moon' (S1 Ep. 3), which was first televised in 2008, Gently is called to investigate a new murder. When he arrives on the scene, he examines the scene and the body in a way which is similar to that adopted by Chief Gunderson in *Fargo*. It, too, gives me the impression of debunking, especially because of

the foregoing analysis is one of some complexity, in which a variety of factors work together to create the final product. McCaw's distinction between detection-led and character-led plots is one of the important possible factors in determining the outcome of a work.

15.2.9.2 Stand-Alone versus Recurrent

I will now deal with three 'constructional' features which distinguish *TVG* from conservative productions such as *Midsomer*: (1) the different nature of the storyline in the two types of crime fiction, (2) the central role played by emotion in radical crime fiction in contrast to its marginal role in conservative crime fiction and (3) the thematic and a constructional complexity of radical crime fiction compared with the relative simplicity of conservative crime fiction.

15.2.9.2.1 Storyline

McCaw's observations (2009) regarding serial killer series are based on

> [e]xtended or multi-part crime shows [that] have the scope for writers/producers to engage with the complexities of serial wrongdoing such as psychopathy and sociopathy, and these diagnosable conditions are (as such) regularly conflated with broader notions of 'evil'. TV shows such as *Prime Suspect* allow for the consideration of individual behaviour and/or mental deterioration *over time*, which is key to any such popular 'diagnosis'. (p. 22)

TVG is also an 'extended . . . crime show'. While the crime (or crimes) in a *Gently* episode is solved in that single episode, as with *Law and Order* and *Midsomer Murders*, the series differs from the two inasmuch as it has a thread running through it – Gently attempting to make a real detective out of Bacchus (i.e. honest, efficient, devoid of prejudice – the moral model *TVG* propounds for the audience's acceptance) – a thread which is initiated immediately in the pilot episode.

The relationship between Gently and his bagman is crucial not only in this sense but also because Bacchus embodies ideas, goals and values which are the exact opposite of Gently's: Bacchus is conservative, racist even, and not averse to bending the rules to obtain an arrest and a conviction. Gently, instead, sees potential in Bacchus and so wishes Bacchus to change. Consequently, many debates, when not heated exchanges, take place over matters of principle. Furthermore, initially, Bacchus sees absolutely no need for change (erroneously) believing he is a good detective as well as a fetching male (hence a

its added (male) touch of Gently accompanying his words 'a bullet to the head' with his hand aping a gun and shooting at the dead skull. Whether this is deliberate intertextuality or not would be difficult to determine.

winning male!).[22] The seeds for significant interpersonal exchanges are sown, conflict necessarily constituting a crucial component, given the premises. The result is an intense ongoing relationship between the two men, complicated, hence heightened, by the arrival of WPC Rachel Coles, introducing a rival for Bacchus in Gently's favour and (non-sexual) 'love', jealousy representing another powerful emotion affecting human relationships. Even more exasperating, in Bacchus' jaundiced, chauvinistic view, is the fact that the rival is a woman! Bacchus will consequently do his utmost to one-up Rachel every time he can.[23]

The Gently–Bacchus relationship is consequently a constructional device as well as a vehicle for dialectic and social critique. Much more time and attention are therefore devoted to character in *TVG* and, principally, to how character and values affect behaviour than in Barnaby and Hunter. A significant degree of psychological depth is thus achieved in *TVG*, as will be demonstrated in the analysis of Text 3. Finally, Gently trying to help Bacchus mature, both as a man and in his occupation, is an aspect that endears Gently to the audience, not only because Gently acts as a father figure[24] but also because Bacchus is at times a comical figure and, primarily, because he represents negative values that the liberal audience does not concur with. Thus, the relationship represents a means of positioning the viewers, as the actual trajectory of the relationship (and the series) will show. As even this fleeting synopsis shows, realism and relevance to daily life are mainstays in *TVG*, a point that is underscored by the fact that character change in life is a slow process, as effectively illustrated in the series.

By contrast, *Midsomer Murders* is notable for its lack of deployment of any sort of *effective* sustaining narrative device employed by critical works like

[22] Bacchus' extremely high opinion of himself is one aspect of his character that Gently attempts to 'cure'. Early in the episode of 'The Burning Man' (S1 Ep. 1), Gently asks Bacchus if he knows what Zen is. Bacchus smiles and leans back in his chair (body language signalling relaxation and self-confidence) before he says he knows all about it – it is a type of fish. Even when Gently enlightens him on the subject Bacchus fails to lose his smugness and admit ignorance. In part, like Troy in *Midsomer Murders*' 'Written in Blood' episode, Bacchus has problems with authority and problems of insecurity. On the similarities between the two bagmen, see also note 24.

[23] Names are symbolic. Gently does indeed stand for a man who is essentially 'gentle', gentle with people and social issues. 'Bacchus' is an alternative for the god Dionysus, and Sergeant John Bacchus does love his women, his alcohol and his 'baccy', preferably old-fashioned style, with the woman staying at home catering to her master's needs and desires. Rachel is no less symbolic. She is the mother to Joseph, suggesting her role in *TVG* might be more 'fruitful' than Bacchus' and she is jealous of her sister Leah, drawing attention to Bacchus' emotions through being the opposite to biblical Rachel.

[24] One example of Gently's fatherly stance is to be found very early on in the series. In 'Bomber's Moon' (S1 Ep. 2), Gently learns that Bacchus is heavily in debt, consequently running the risk of ruining his career. Gently lends Bacchus the money he needs to stay out of the hands of loan sharks.

TVG, such as the introduction of a 'serious rival' as a means to complicate matters and to delve more deeply into human relationships. True, the series includes several scenes of Tom Barnaby's daughter, Cully, a significant number of which deal with her relationship with her boyfriend(s) and marriage in the offing. This theme is indeed protracted from one episode to another. Yet there is no real character analysis, no actual delving into the relationships involved. The theme has a purely ideological function: to portray Tom as the caring, understanding, loving father, protecting his daughter from his wife's maternal exaggerations, unlike the distant, god-like figure of Sherlock Holmes, and to demonstrate that the Barnabys are a normal, happy family with the problems every normal happy family faces and that the audience can consequently identify with unproblematically. This thematic component thus constitutes a means of positioning the viewer. Another theme, that of food and Mrs Barnaby's bad ('traditional' English) cooking, performs the same function: Tom is portrayed as a long-suffering husband (in this domain), as is daughter Cully, and the two commiserate with each other, as victims do, thus invoking sympathy on the part of the viewer, at times aided by a smile.

The same strictures may be applied to *Law and Order*. Threads of the private lives of the detectives do run through the series, but like *Midsomer Murders*, the references are fleeting and superficial, they do not constitute narrative devices, and the impression at times given is that they step in when the allotted 30 minutes cannot be filled by the crime story proper because of its scantiness, as described earlier.

15.2.9.2.2 Emotion

The second difference stems in part from and is inextricably intertwined with the first: the central role of emotion.[25] *TVG* has an interpersonal strand running through it, one which often peaks into highly charged emotional exchanges, especially between Gently and Bacchus, but not only. Crucially, such exchanges depend in part on character and on interpersonal relationships, but they also reflect ideological differences. This is necessarily so, since our values

[25] Echano (2005, pp. 189–210) deals with recent female hard-boiled fiction writers. She claims they 'faced the problem of how to combine the influence of traditional generic conventions, which were considerably misogynist, with the kind of female figures and worldview they wanted to portray. They did so by giving central place to three interconnected thematic strands: the protagonist's daily and emotional life; wider social problems regarding women's social roles and status; and other instances of inequality and injustice examined from a feminist perspective' (pp. 191–192). A similar analysis applies to *TVG*. McElroy (2017c) employs a similar feminist approach in analysing recent television series portraying female police detectives as the central investigative agent. She explores how 'a character-based emphasis on emotion and empathy allows for a more nuanced combination of realism and melodrama in the female-lead police procedural' (p. 83).

radically influence how we think and act, hence buttressing the thesis of the solidity of the psychosocial analysis engaged in by *TVG*. (The reader is directed to Hogan's 2011 study, significantly entitled *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories*. Hogan demonstrates the close link between narrative structure and ideology and emotion.) In addition to being intense, such scenes are frequent and protracted compared with the brevity, infrequency and general lack of intensity of emotion in Barnaby and Hunter, even though the Barnaby novels do have psychological portraiture as a basic component. Ultimately, in addition to being interesting in themselves, such aspects of *TVG* play a crucial role in positioning the viewer. Their depth, realism and pertinence to life, and especially to the social and moral problems those highly charged emotional scenes debate, make them highly convincing, hence persuasive.

A further comparison between Barnaby and *TVG* confirms the importance and interrelatedness of storyline and emotion: the relationship between boss and bagman. The relationship between Barnaby and his various bagmen (in the TV series and in Graham's novels) is but a pale shadow of the intense emotional and social relationship Gently develops with Bacchus. The close readings of Texts 2 and 3 are consequently intended to illustrate this intensity and to demonstrate that the relationship between superior and subordinate covers the gamut of human desires and emotions, providing rich material for profound analysis of human actions, thoughts and emotions, delving into the deep-seated, hidden motives driving human behaviour. In this way continuity is guaranteed to the series in addition to offering the opportunity for extended investigation of 'real' human life, all aspects which enable the viewer to empathise. Looked at from a different vantage point, myth is not a component of *TVG*.

A comparison with Hunter's novels will seal the point. In Hunter's novels, Gently's bagman, Dutt, is a totally different character from Bacchus and from Barnaby's assistants. First of all, Dutt plays a very minor role, not appearing at all in a good number of the novels. Second, there are virtually no emotional exchanges between boss and bagman; Dutt is neither stupid nor inefficient; he needs few words from Gently to understand what he must do; Gently listens to him because of his efficiency and reliability and because Dutt seconds Gently in all Gently thinks and does. In other words, Dutt is perfectly aligned with his boss. Thus, few words are exchanged, the exchanges are fundamentally work-related, and no intensely emotionally charged scenes of the type witnessed in *TVG* take place. This is in sharp contrast to Bacchus, who is a major actant in the *TVG* series, providing the butt to Gently. The Gently–Bacchus relationship is consequently also a constructional device as well as a vehicle for dialectic. A significant degree of psychological depth is also achieved in *TVG* for the very same reason, as will be demonstrated in the analysis of Text 3. The

Gently–Bacchus relationship thus differs radically in nature and function from traditional detective stories such as those by Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie and (to a lesser extent) Caroline Graham.

15.2.9.2.3 Thematic Complexity

Depth is also afforded by the nature and range of topics dealt with, through the intertwining of topics, thereby reflecting real life, and so enabling the vast and complex interrelationships between themes, characters and character traits, and social context to emerge, and by delving into the deep-seated motives driving human behaviour. This aspect will be approached by analysing the themes and their treatment in 'Peace and Love' (S3 Ep. 2). Such complexity thus avoids the simplifying polar opposites of the plot-driven versus the character-driven work, which can diminish the value of the social criticism voiced by either of those two polar opposites.

On the thematic level of crime, *Peace and Love* (henceforth *PAL*) deals with the investigation of the murder of a Durham University lecturer whose body is found on a quayside not far from the Swan Hunter shipyards which are at that moment (1966) overhauling British submarines carrying Polaris nuclear missiles. With regard to contextualisation, it should be remembered that the Cuban Missile Crisis, which risked causing a nuclear war, had occurred only four years earlier. Furthermore, the Russian football team is about to play in the 1966 World Cup Championship in nearby Sunderland. Political discussion is thus central to the episode, as is illustrated below.

As in all *TVG*, the crime and its setting are so designed as to enable a number of non-crime themes to be treated, starting from the CND protest against nuclear armaments, the ostensible principal non-crime theme of *PAL*, since the university lecturer is one of the protest leaders and the episode opens with the protest outside the shipyard. The opening scene shows the demonstrators approaching the gates of the Swan Hunter shipyards, provoking the retaliation of the police, scuffles ensuing.[26]

The second scene moves to the police station with the police booking in the people arrested. Gently comes down the stairs and encounters Bacchus, in uniform, who is just entering the station. Gently asks Bacchus if he was doing a 'bit of overtime' to understand why Bacchus is dressed in that unusual way (at approximately 2 minutes into the episode). Bacchus' reply instantly builds

[26] No scenes of brutality are pictured during the scuffles or at the police station subsequent to the arrests made. Given the critical nature of the series, *TVG* does not attempt to cash in on violence or prurience as forms of audience attraction, as does the film *Clockwork Orange* (see note 10). Those interested in cinematic technique may compare the techniques employed in the brilliant critical film *Nil by Mouth* (Douthwaite & Zurru 2009) with *TVG* (for instance, the use of darkness), in contrast to the sensationalism of *Clockwork Orange*.

up a picture of the negative side of his character, for his motivation is not economic but something which his role should not contemplate: 'You missed a right good scrap, sir. Hundreds of them turned up.' Bacchus' attitude and political stance are brilliantly classified by this one stark statement, made with a grin on his face. Put out by this unprofessional reply Gently immediately challenges Bacchus with a highly relevant question: 'Where's your collar numbers, John?' Collar numbers are required to identify officers lest there be abuse. Bacchus understands Gently's implicit accusation perfectly well and invents a plausible excuse: 'Must have got tugged off.' Gently immediately manifests his disbelief by asking the legitimate question (hence making the legitimate objection to Bacchus' defence): 'On both sides?' Bacchus is no fool and so invents yet another plausible excuse: 'It was a hell of a scrap, sir,' and turns away to prevent Gently from pursuing the topic further. At this stage Gently gives up, having made his point that Bacchus has a tendency towards improper behaviour.

Thirty-eight words are sufficient to clearly delineate a number of themes and features of *TVG*: improper police conduct, Bacchus' character and worldview, Gently's opposite view, the implicit argument of the absolute need for and respect of rules of conduct in a democratic society. (Bacchus does not contest Gently's view, but merely defends himself against Gently's accusation, implying he does not contest the rules themselves, since he knows full well that such an act would merely anger Gently.)

A second instance of Bacchus' malpractice occurs later, when Bacchus questions Elizabeth Higgs, the student who thinks she has killed Barratt, the murdered university lecturer at the centre of the police investigation (at approx. 28 minutes). The interaction is virtually a photocopy of the previous one. When Gently challenges Bacchus for not having offered Elizabeth a lawyer, Bacchus attempts to defend himself by saying the girl did not ask for one. When Gently presses Bacchus by saying she is 'only nineteen', implying she is too inexperienced to defend herself, Bacchus rejects the accusation by informing Gently that Higgs 'is studying Law', implying she knows her rights and can consequently defend herself. Gently again implicitly criticises Bacchus through his retort, 'Probably not even got as far as the Magna Carta yet', reinforcing the point that Higgs is young, inexperienced, unknowledgeable and so incapable of defending herself properly. Bacchus again shows that he is totally unconcerned about his failure to respect proper procedure. This constitutes one of the motives for Gently trying to change Bacchus' values. Furthermore, the event illustrates Bacchus' tendency to take things at their face value as well as his desire to solve a case as quickly as possible without worrying too much about the validity of his hypotheses, anticipating such behaviour in higher quarters (the next example).

The theme of police misconduct is recurrent in the episode. The most telling instance is when Chief Constable Lilley, who also happens to be Bacchus' father-in-law, goes to Gently's office to enquire about the state of the investigation to find Bacchus alone. Having been informed that the suspect who is being questioned is a young homosexual, Lilley believes the case is closed. When Bacchus informs Lilley that they have as yet no hard evidence, Lilley retorts, 'Are you quite sure about that, Sergeant? I mean ... lad like him? Never going to get a decent lawyer, is he?' Here Lilley is practically ordering Bacchus (as is implied by his addressing Bacchus not intimately, as his son-in-law, but formally, as a subordinate: 'Sergeant') to fabricate evidence if needs be, supporting his order with the 'justification' that the boy being a homosexual will find little public sympathy and being poor will not find a good lawyer who will be able to destroy the police position. When Bacchus implicitly supports Gently by replying, 'The DCI [Gently] thinks we still need hard evidence, sir,' Lilley (our symbolically 'lily white' chief of police) rejoins, 'Shouldn't be too hard to find though, eh?'

Thus, the crime theme is employed not simply as a crime to be solved (as in a conservative crime text) but as a means of introducing and enabling the investigation of other themes, in this case the themes of corruption, sexuality and class and all that such themes entail, again in very few words. Furthermore, these themes are introduced and developed 'naturally' in other scenes where they constitute pertinent factors in the behaviour under scrutiny, showing how such factors impinge deeply on everyday reality. This is far more than simply assigning characters to categories in moving towards the identification of the culprit and without any analysis of social and psychological consequences as in traditional conservative crime fiction.

Another aspect related to police conduct highlights police concerns with public pressure. Above, it was seen that the Chief Constable wishes to close cases, whether the real culprit has been found or not. One reason why this is so is public pressure: 'With Polaris in the county we are going to be under an intense spotlight.... Which means that if we can make it through to Christmas without incident, it's gongs all round' (at approx. 18 minutes). He then adds, 'Football tournament nonsense coming here as well,' referring to the 1996 football World Cup Championship. Since the USSR were scheduled to play in Sunderland, Lilley is implying that the championship constitutes another source of press pressure placed on the police, hence reinforcing the need to 'solve' Barratt's murder as quickly as possible.

The 'lowly' theme of football had already been introduced in the episode. When Gently is informed of the murder he goes to fetch Bacchus, who is playing football with other policemen (at approx. 4 minutes). The scene

shows Bacchus hugging the ball and failing to pass, engaging in complex dribbling and finally scoring a goal. While Bacchus is dribbling, his colleague shouts to him, 'You're not Greavsie, keep it simple!' Jimmy Greaves was England's most prolific goal scorer. What the policeman's comment highlights is Bacchus' character as an individualist who must succeed at all costs. Teamwork is not his forte. Without this implication, the introduction of the scene of the police playing football would have been irrelevant to the episode, a matter of filling in time. Instead, it is highly relevant to illustrating Bacchus' personality and allows a link up with the World Cup, which in turn allows references to Russia and communism, and to the pros and cons of nuclear weapons, which will be discussed later in the episode, and constitutes another instantiation of the fact that everything is interrelated, everything is significant, socially, politically. Not by chance, Chief Lilley exhibits the standard prejudices with regard to the sport: 'Just means more louts,' which is also a way of attacking his detested son-in-law, who is standing behind him.

Another instantiation of the interconnection between themes, in this case football with politics, occurs when the students are putting up CND manifestos, during which time Bacchus is talking to one of the female students who is trying to persuade him that nuclear missiles are bad and free love is good, the latter appealing to Bacchus' strong desire for female 'company'. The Head Porter Hexton comes out to interrupt the proceedings; the students swiftly disperse. Hexton gets into conversation with Bacchus:

BACCHUS : Soviets will be coming here soon.
HEXTON : Only for football, we hope. Roker Park will be sold out with all the Commies up here.
BACCHUS : Aye. The way things are going, there'll be a statue of Lenin on Gilesgate and all be learning Russian.
HEXTON : They've already taken over this place. Their tendrils reach everywhere. Even the governors. (at approx. 24 minutes)

The political truisms expressed in the few words above hardly need explicating. It is interesting to add, however, that Hexton belonged to the Long Range Desert Group, which acted behind enemy lines in Africa during World War II, working with military intelligence. Hexton has continued his 'army service' by acting as a spy on the students for British intelligence. Gently initially expresses admiration for Hexton, pointing out to a supercilious Bacchus (who says, 'He's a right old coot') that Hexton's 'war record is fairly impressive. Did you see his Military Cross?' Gently is thus implicitly criticising Bacchus for his age-based and cultural difference–based resentment of the 'old coot', a further window on Bacchus, who disapproves of anyone who is in the least bit different from him, hence

yet another interrelated theme.[27] Age as a marker of alterity is a constant theme throughout *TVG*.[28]

Gently feels bonding with Hexton since they were both in the war and both believed they were fighting for a better society (at approx. 8 minutes). Hexton thus externalises a common feeling for those of his age and social class when he says, looking round the college quadrangle and the students lying around on the lawn (i.e. doing nothing, in his view), 'You wonder if it was all worth it now, don't you, sir? The sacrifice. For this mob. No thought for anyone else of course.' Given class and his moral stance (fighting the war 'for this mob'), Hexton defends Elizabeth Higgs to the hilt, because she comes from a working-class home, her father being a welder, and because the 'other students here have family and connections to fall back on. She has none,' given that her parents fail to understand her and help her, in addition to their low socio-economic status. Thus, although she too takes part in the student protests, he does not name her in his reports, 'knowing' she 'will grow out of all this'. She is a brilliant student so he does not want to hamper her chances of a career.

Elizabeth's tutor is Professor Mallory Brown. Prof. Brown too recognises Elizabeth's great potential and she too hopes Elizabeth will have a great career given her own humble origins and having worked extremely hard to make herself a career. Brown is also Barratt's ex-lover. We discover that she was Barratt's sponsor and their relationship lasted only until he made tenure. Barratt has also tried to have relationships with all the females that he was

[27] A parallel emerges here between *Midsomer* and *TVG*. In Graham's novels and in *TVG*, the bagmen (Troy and Bacchus) are both depicted as right-wing, racist and at times superficial. As bagmen, they both fall within the crime genre tradition inasmuch as they both fulfil the traditional function of the ace detective's partner as a foil, with all the sub-functions that that role entails, including, for instance, using the foil as a means of conveying information to the reader or viewer. However, the radical difference between the conservative and the critical camps emerges clearly in this sphere too. Tom Barnaby makes little attempt to influence Troy in his ways of thinking, as the reader will see by referring back to Text 6 in Chapter 4, and specifically U27–U28: 'Your prejudices are your own affair, Gavin, unless they interfere with your work. In which case they also become mine.' Barnaby reinforces this position by making it clear to Troy that what is involved has nothing personal in it, but concerns exclusively the professional sphere, as is borne out by U28–U30: 'Our job is to extract information and to persuade people to reveal themselves. Anything that hinders this procedure is a time-wasting bloody nuisance. And I don't expect to find it coming from my own side of the fence.' This attitude is diametrically opposed to Gently's stance. When Gently discovers that Bacchus has not simply retrograde views, but, crucially, is not averse to engaging in morally questionable, when not illegal, activities in order to bring about a conviction, he continually attempts to accompany Bacchus along the road to Damascus to bring about his conversion to the straight and narrow path. The analysis in Section 15.3.2 of Text 3 from 'Gently Liberated' (S8 Ep. 1) is a cogent illustration of Gently's beliefs and behaviour in this sphere.

[28] In addition to episodes already mentioned, another excellent illustration of age conflict is to be found in 'Blue for Bluebird' (S6 Ep. 2), which deals with class attitudes and class culture in addition to incomprehension across age divides. See also the comment on Wickham (2010) in note 9.

attracted to, not caring a jot about their desires and their psychological and emotional well-being. When Brown discovers Barratt has made Elizabeth pregnant, she virtually forces Elizabeth to have an abortion. On this count she comes into conflict with Gently, because abortion was a crime at the time. The impression, however, is that Gently is also morally not in favour of abortion. The theme of abortion comes under the general debate regarding individual rights and freedom, and is connected to the theme of free love, proclaimed by many at the time.

Professor Brown constitutes the episode's spokeswoman of the non-radical left. She and Gently have several meetings, and during those meetings a significant proportion of their conversations is not directly relevant to the solving of crime but is concerned with social and political discussions, or is concurrently related to sociopolitical discussions. Gender is a case in point. When Gently challenges Brown on the issue of abortion, she rebuffs his position by stating that the prejudice against women is such that if they wish to have a career, then they must sacrifice everything to pursue it, including have a family. When Gently argues that prejudice against women is no longer so strong as to hamper them in their desires for fulfilment, Brown adamantly sticks to her guns, obliging Gently to withdraw from his own position. The setting, it must be remembered, is 1966. Since Gently is pro equality and far from stupid, his stance seems a little unusual. One possible explanation for this incongruity is that Brown and Gently enter into dialectical debate, hence difference is required on the ideological plane. Brown is a CND militant and a pacifist, hence she strongly disagrees with Barratt's belief in the use of violence as a means of protest. However, Gently is not in favour of abolishing nuclear weapons, afraid that such a move would leave the democratic countries at the mercy of the Soviet bloc. Clearly, for an ex-soldier (a recurring topic, since it is an important force that has shaped his character and outlook) and for a man near retirement, CND is not easy to digest. The text, however, expounds the argument for both sides, leaving the issue open. Since this particular issue does not affect Gently's liberal stance, the actual arguments are not relevant to the purposes of this chapter.

Instead, Professor Brown's liberal ideas are crucial. Believing in equality and freedom has many consequences for one's social behaviour. One of these is that she condemns Barratt's libertine conduct with females, since his greater experience, his intelligence and powers of persuasion and his status as a university lecturer make his manifold conquests amongst the female students an easy task.[29] When Barratt discovers Elisabeth is pregnant he refuses to take

[29] When Gently asks Brown if she knows 'of anybody who might have held a grudge against him [Barratt]', she answers, 'Half the female population of the university! Fraser embraced the ideology of sexual liberation with gusto. Spreading the gospel of free love even unto the freshers.'

any responsibility, abandoning her to her fate.[30] He lacks morals. This, of course, questions one of the major slogans chanted in CND protest marches, and reiterated throughout the episode: 'Make Love, Not War.' Free love, of course, was not simply a belief held by CND campaigners. In general, rebellious youth culture of the time employed sexual freedom as one of their weapons for contesting traditional society and seeking liberation. The two scenes of sleazy student parties in the episode constitute one of the means by which *TVG* draws attention to the possible negative sides of that culture. Again, everything is related to everything else. The text is tightly written to deal with a wealth of issues.

Brown also makes a criticism about Barratt's stance that was made of many extreme left intellectuals in Europe and America: 'Fraser loved the working people as a class, he proclaimed that with his help they would shortly inherit the earth. But he had very little interest in any of its individual representatives.' The implication is again one of a lack of morality and the possibility (which turned out to be a reality in numerous cases) that these intellectuals had no real interest in social reform but were merely using the protest to boost their egos or to advance their own careers.

The call for liberty and sexual freedom plays an important role in the episode. One of the students and a member of the CND group apparently takes a fancy to Bacchus. Indeed, she teases him, provokes him, tries to undermine his value system. One of the ways she does this is by preaching free love and giving Bacchus the impression she would accept a sexual relationship with him. Bacchus, whose wife is asking for a divorce, is highly attracted not only by this highly alluring young lady, but also by the idea of free love itself, heightened by the frustration of his marriage. However, the idea of free love goes against Bacchus' moral upbringing, against the values of his reference group, his father-in-law having put pressure on him not to divorce because of the scandal this would cause, unconcerned about his daughter's unhappiness. Indeed, one of the arguments the student uses with Bacchus is that her parents had a terrible marriage:

> My mum was the first girl my dad ever kissed. They were younger than me when they got married. They've been together for twenty-five years and they never say a kind word to each other. They're not happy but they've left it too late. (at approx. 59 minutes)

Bacchus is forced to admit that that also applied to his own parents. The discussion on free love and marriage in this chance encounter forces Bacchus to reflect, and in the end he will change his mind, (in part convinced by

[30] Returning to name symbolism, Barratt the womaniser and drinker could be explicated as representing a 'bar rat'.

Gently), and concede his wife the divorce she has requested to avoid living a life of torment which they will both regret. Thus, the episode is one in which some change is achieved. And it is achieved in an 'unusual' way, in a way Bacchus would not have expected, through someone challenging his value system. Finally, it is just another of the abundant instantiations in the episode, and in the series, that everything is interconnected.

15.3 Close Readings

15.3.1 Social Issues: Power and Gender Relationships in 'Gently with the Women'

'Gently with the Women' (S7 Ep. 1) constitutes a powerful critique of male patriarchy in the period described. The central character is Tina, a sex worker, who decides to report the rape she has suffered. The male policemen share the patriarchal values that the majority of males of the period held. Gently, instead, holds more modern views, which Rachel, his female detective constable, shares but generally dares not air in public given her minority status in the police force. I will examine one scene which lays bare the brutality of the male against the female. The scene is in two parts, interrupted by a brief cut to Gently in hospital. The scene consists of the police 'interviewing' Tina, who has come to report having been raped. Since the entire scene is long, I will examine only the initial utterances of the second part of the scene (starting at approx. 7 minutes into the episode).[31] (Statham, Chapter 10, offers a more detailed analysis of the visual components of the television series he analyses.)

Text 2
Bacchus walks into the police station and sees Rachel.

BACCHUS : [1] Morning.
RACHEL : [2] (*Rachel just stares at Bacchus and fails to return the greeting then looks down at the book on her desk.*)
BACCHUS (*goes up to Rachel and speaks in a low voice*): [3] There was actually a good reason.
RACHEL : [4] Which one?
BACCHUS : [5] Can't tell you.
RACHEL (*looking at him disgustedly*): [6] Out there, Sarge (*indicating Tina, a dishevelled-looking woman with excessive makeup and low-cut top*)
BACCHUS (*puts his head round the door and sees Tina sitting waiting, uncomfortably*): [7] What's she selling? Lucky heather? Clothes pegs?

[31] The transcription of the dialogue below and of that of Text 3 are mine. I have also added the description of the 'film directions' in order to provide part of the visual information available to the viewer. In the main, I have not retained the dialectal forms.

RACHEL: [8] I don't think that's all she's selling. [9] She says she's been raped.
BACCHUS (*sighs*): [10] Where's Gently?
RACHEL: [11] I haven't seen him.
BACCHUS: [12] Well, that's a shame, she could have wasted his time instead of mine.

[13] (*Rachel shakes her head.*)

BACCHUS: [14] Right, give me five minutes to get a cup of tea.
RACHEL: [15] Right.
BACCHUS [16] (*walks out and past Tina*)

Cut to Gently in hospital.
Cut back to interview room with Rachel standing, Tina sitting smoking, Bacchus comes in with a cup of tea for himself and his notepad, sits down, then Rachel sits down. Closeup of Tina's face, from side, showing her unease at being there, and having to wait. Bacchus looks at his notepad and drinks his tea.

BACCHUS: [17]: Right, Tina. [18] I'm all ears. [19] Who's been raping you, then, pet?
TINA: [20] There were three of them.
BACCHUS: [21] Where are we?
TINA: [22] In 'The Dun Cow'. (*Rachel and Bacchus exchange a knowing smile.*) [23] It's a pub in Peterlee.
RACHEL: [24]: Yes, we know.
BACCHUS: [25] Right, so there's four of you sitting in The Dun Cow ...
TINA (*interrupts Bacchus*): [26] Oh no, we weren't sitting together, like. [27] I was on my own.
BACCHUS: [28] Drinking on your own?
TINA: [29] Not against the law, is it?
BACCHUS [30] No, no, it's not against the law. [31] So this was ... yesterday, was it?
TINA: [32] No. Tuesday afternoon, week before last.
BACCHUS: [33] (*surprised, almost shouting*) Week before last? [34] And you've come in now, crying rape? [35] Tina, I'm going to stop you right there, pet, 'cause if you are wasting my time, I'm going to be VERY, VERY upset with you. [36] Do you understand?

Rachel turns to look at Bacchus.

TINA: [37] Aye.
BACCHUS : [38] So why's it taken you over a fortnight?
TINA : [39] Well, I wasn't going to come in at all, and then I was talking with some friends, and I just think they shouldn't get away with it.
BACCHUS : [40] Who?
TINA : [41] Men.
BACCHUS : [42] Right, I see, I see. [43] So, this is some women's lib point about men in general, is it?
TINA : [44] No, just the three what's raped us.
BACCHUS : [45] So you want to carry on, do you?

TINA : [46] Aye, 'cause I don't think they should get away with it. [47] These lads were all young, and they were drunk and they were violent. [48] They're going to go and do it to some other lass. [49] And they want stopping.
BACCHUS : [50] Right. If that's what you want, we'll carry on. [51] Descriptions.

Cut to Gently in hospital and then return to interview room where we find another policeman is now sitting next to Bacchus.

BACCHUS : [52] It was definitely the blond-haired one that grabbed you in the car park, was it?
TINA: [53] Yes.
BACCHUS : [54] Look, Tina, you said ten minutes ago that you weren't sure because he grabbed you from behind.

While Bacchus is talking a third detective comes in and hands Bacchus a file.

TINA : [55] Yeah, that's right. I don't know, it was one of them, wasn't it?
RACHEL : [56] Do you want a cup of tea, Tina?
TINA : [57] Oh, yes, please.
BACCHUS : [58] Tina, why have you not mentioned that you're on our files? [59] You're a prostitute. [60] Have you or have you not ... literally been asking for it?

Tina starts to cry.

OTHER DETECTIVE: [61] Oh, here comes the water works.
RACHEL (*to Bacchus*): [62] Prostitution is not a crime.
BACCHUS: [63] Well, soliciting is. [64] Three times in five years? [65] Literally been asking for it.
OTHER DETECTIVE: [66] And then charging money for it.
TINA : [67] I didn't mention what I do for a living because it wasn't relevant to what happened, was it? [68] These three lads, they were not clients.
RACHEL : [69] Sarge, there's too many men in this room.
BACCHUS : [70] What is it you want, Rachel? [71] Shall we get Pan's People in here? [72] How about that cup of tea? [73] Go on, I think we'll all have one.

In this early scene (at approx. 7 minutes in), Bacchus (viz. Dionysus) comes jauntily bouncing into the station full of testosterone, sees Rachel behind the reception desk and greets her (Utterance 1 [U1]). The previous evening the two had been working together taking the names of men going into a brothel, a dissuasive tactic employed by the police at the time to discourage men from employing such 'professional' services. One man they stopped turns out to be a CID Inspector. The Inspector explicitly tells Bacchus to 'back off', which the latter does, ostensibly since Bacchus is inferior in rank. Rachel objects strongly and wishes to take the man's name and address because she believes in

equality, seeing no reason why a policeman should be treated differently from other men, especially where exploiting women is concerned, thus courageously defending the weak, knowing she is going against a male and a superior officer. Another reason why Rachel suspects that Bacchus is defending the Inspector is because the Inspector is a man. What Rachel does not know, and what John Bacchus cannot tell her, is that Bacchus is secretly having an affair with the Inspector's wife. Consequently, he wishes to let sleeping dogs lie in order to avoid stirring up a hornet's job were the relationship to become public knowledge.

We also later learn that the Inspector is a regular visitor to the brothel. Moreover, not only does he abuse his position by obtaining the women's services free of charge, but he also likes hurting women physically, something he cannot do with his wife. Thus, a sub-plot which parallels the main plot is instituted with two policemen 'echoing' (Sperber & Wilson 1981) the rapist, since both policemen are 'exploiting' females as is the rapist. At the very least, Bacchus does so on a moral level, since he is betraying his wife. The police are thus not much better than the rapist, and the origin of their immorality is identical: male patriarchal ideology. Were one to challenge Bacchus on this, one can readily imagine him denying that his behaviour is as immoral as that of the Inspector or the rapist.

Rachel takes her turn signalling her disgust and anger at Bacchus' behaviour the previous evening non-verbally by simply looking down at the log book on the desk to avoid eye-to-eye contact with him (U2).

Bacchus cannot fail to recognise the illocutionary forces (Austin 1962) conveyed by her kinaesthetic signals, so he goes up to her and whispers to avoid anyone else hearing. He tells Rachel, 'There was actually a good reason' for his behaviour in order to justify himself and beg Rachel's pardon. Rachel, of course, cannot accept an explanation which fails to explain (Bacchus provides zero information, thus violating the Gricean [1989] quantity maxim, hence is uncooperative), so she challenges him to furnish her with his defence: 'Which one?' Note the stark, pithy direction of the challenge, indicating she has no intention of being fobbed off. Bacchus' continued refusal to explain without even hinting at a possible explanation – 'Can't tell you' (U5) – produces another non-verbal signal from Rachel and she proceeds to change the subject to underscore her implicit criticism of his non-cooperation, since she has no way of knowing the deep motivation behind Bacchus' refusal to share with his partner. Presumably, she continues to believe he is a male chauvinist pig, as was once the current expression. Again, Rachel's flouting of the quantity maxim by giving Bacchus as little information as possible, curtly – 'Out there, Sarge' (U6) – when indicating to Bacchus that there is someone waiting to speak to him, continues her display of criticism.

Bacchus puts his head round the door and sees a woman sitting waiting uncomfortably, dressed like a woman of very low class, as is implied by his redundant question to Rachel: 'What's she selling? Lucky heather? Clothes pegs?' (U7). Bacchus' deeply negative attitude towards the woman thus emerges instantly. This, of course, will influence the way he treats her during the interview. In fact, he has already pre-judged the issue without even knowing what the issue is. So much for legal evidence and objectivity!

Rachel's rejoinder informs Bacchus indirectly that she is a sex worker ('I don't think that's all she's selling', U8). If one considers Rachel's phonological signals and facial expression together with her words, then her response is ambiguous. On the one hand, we note the delicacy of Rachel's indirectness and the softener ('I don't think'), showing she has a different attitude from Bacchus towards the woman. On the other hand, a shade of iciness can be observed in Rachel's facial expression and body posture, presumably denoting that, as a female police officer, she, too, has a negative attitude towards a person whose profession is not morally sound. Rachel then informs Bacchus that the woman, called Tina, declares she has been raped.

Bacchus' reaction is astounding, to put it mildly. First he sighs, expressing disgust, and then he asks Rachel where Gently is (U10). This seemingly flouts the Gricean maxim of relation, since it does not appear to be relevant to Rachel's previous utterance, which counted as an invitation to Bacchus to go and interview the woman. When Rachel declares her ignorance on the matter, the real reason behind Bacchus' previous enquiry surfaces: namely, he is trying to avoid dealing with a prostitute: 'that's a shame, she could have wasted his time instead of mine' (U12). To explicate, this is unsavoury, dissatisfying, unchallenging work for Bacchus that will not help him obtain promotion, given Tina's social status, so he would prefer his superior officer deal with it. In addition, by indirectly expressing the wish to avoid certain situations which Bacchus holds are below him, a constant in his behaviour, he is also indirectly attacking Gently because of the latter's expressed social concern. Hence, we now comprehend that Bacchus's utterance 'Where's Gently' was a pre-question (Schegloff 2007), a preliminary move preparing for his subsequent utterance (intending, 'let's get him on the job').

In reply, Rachel manifests her subaltern female status by merely shaking her head in her next turn (U13), since arguing against such retrograde views is not merely a waste of time and psychologically taxing, but could lead to even greater ostracism on the part of her male colleagues.

Bacchus thus goes off for the proverbial English cup of tea before interviewing Tina (U14), conveying his lack of esteem for her. The camera has already provided the audience with a shot of Tina, sitting waiting, tense, anxious and bored (indicated by her facial expressions, her body posture, her downward direction of gaze and her smoking). Bacchus walks straight past her

as he goes for his tea, totally ignoring her. He has no interest in her case, no concern for her, and could not care less about her psychological and emotional state. She just does not exist, except as a nuisance.

After a brief cut of fifty seconds to Gently in hospital the camera returns to the police station. We first see Tina, sitting in the interview room displaying the same signs of unease, and Rachel standing up, the official 'dog watcher'. Bacchus comes jauntily in again, with a cup of tea (for himself only) and his notepad. He then sits down, so Rachel follows suit. Bacchus does not look at Tina, nor does he speak to her, but looks at his notepad and drinks his tea. After these preliminary niceties solemnly laid down by Dionysian etiquette to put the other person at her ease, Bacchus finally starts talking to her, thereby signalling to Tina that her lord and master has bestowed existence upon her being. His dominance continues verbally. His greeting, 'Right, Tina,' is extremely informal, given the opening word, 'Right', the lack of greeting (e.g. 'good morning'), and the highly informal form of address (Douthwaite 2000), the victim's first name. The tone is bright and jovial, as if they were friends discussing a happy event. Bacchus' next utterance, 'I'm all ears' (U18), confirms the informal, friendly style and its function (for Bacchus). His third utterance in this turn, 'Who's been raping you, pet?' (U19), is far more obnoxious. This is the informal language an adult employs with children (another superior–subordinate relationship). Confirmation of Bacchus signalling his superiority is his informal appellation, 'pet'. He shows absolutely no respect for Tina. Why should he? After all, isn't she a female and a prostitute to boot? Now it might be argued that his jovial, informal style constitutes an attempt to put the victim at her ease. However, the linguistic points made so far totally belie this hypothesis. Furthermore, Bacchus is far from new to such ungentlemanly, tactless, unfeeling behaviour.

Bacchus' next question, 'Where are we?' (U21), is again informal, 'friendly', given Bacchus' use of inclusive 'we' seemingly creating common identity, hence common interests. When Tina replies that she was in 'The Dun Cow', Rachel and Bacchus smile. Since Tina does not share common ground with the two police officers, she misinterprets this smile as conveying they are ignorant of the location and smiling because of the contextually potentially sordid name. Hence she explains that it is the name of a pub (U23). Instead, Bacchus corrects her mistake (U24), by informing Tina that the pub is well-known to both police officers, implying it is a disreputable pub.

Tina does not allow Bacchus to complete his following utterance – 'So there's four of you sitting in *The Dun Cow* . . .' (U25) – because she realises that Bacchus is implying that she was drinking in a disreputable pub in the company of three men. Tina is quick to point out Bacchus' mistake (U26–U27), because behind what appears to be a simple statement of fact lies an entire ideological universe with a prototypical scenario which is anything but

new, and which Tina is well aware of, being a woman and, importantly, a sex worker. (This is one of the many occasions during this conversation where Tina demonstrates she is highly intelligent, a fact Bacchus is unwilling to recognise.) Bacchus is implying that if Tina is a sex worker, if she was drinking in a disreputable pub, if she knew the men and were convivial together, then Tina knew full well what she was doing and most probably consented to the subsequent act, namely, intercourse.

This type of ideology is clearly identified by Drew (1992) and by Douthwaite (2002) in analysing a trial protocol in a case of rape. The bottom line is quite simple. The woman is the guilty person because she knew what was happening and allowed, if not wanted, it to happen. What might, without pondered analysis, appear to be an innocent statement, is value-loaded to the extreme, embodying an entire ideology in which the male may (justly) be a predator, and the female must defend herself by impeccable, unfaultable, super-moral conduct (e.g. not drinking with men in pubs, not wearing scanty clothing).

Literature is teeming with examples. One particularly forceful statement is to be found in Helen Zahavi's brilliant novel *Dirty Weekend* (1991). The heroine, an adult female, has just been to the (male) dentist's for an emergency filling. It is a holiday and there is no transport available, so the heroine accepts the dentist's offer of a lift back into the centre of town. The dentist, instead, drives her into a lonely car park. In the extract, when the dentist is about to rape the protagonist, he first 'explains/justifies' his behaviour with trenchant, patriarchal 'male' logic:

> '[My daughter]'s only thirteen, but she knows what she'll get if she sits in someone's car. So if she knows it, you must know it. And if you know it, and you still came into my car, you must want it. And as you want it, you're going to get it.' (p. 135)

It is significant that 'Gently with the Women' appeared in 2015, fourteen years after the publication of Zahavi's novel. The fact the *TVG* episode referred to the late sixties does not invalidate criticism in 2015, since the mentality under attack has far from disappeared.

Returning to the extract under discussion, it is equally significant that once Tina convincingly rejects Bacchus' statement (convincingly for the audience) ('[26] Oh no, we weren't sitting together, like. [27] I was on my own') and, consequently, the implications and the ideology lying behind that statement, Bacchus does not give up his line of 'reasoning'. Quite the contrary – he returns to the attack. 'Drinking on your own?' (U28) pertains to the same ideology – women do not go partaking of alcoholic beverages in disreputable public establishments, especially on their own, and if they do so, they are asking for trouble, for what else is a poor male to think of such conduct?

Tina again instantly picks up the implied criticism in Bacchus' words and counters forcibly with 'It's not against the law, is it?' The tag question format

(affirmative + 'is it') constrains both a reply and the content of the reply (agreement – 'No, no, it's not against the law', U30), thereby knocking out at least one brick in the wall of male patriarchal ideology. However, Bacchus' facial expression and tone of voice indicate he is loath to admit the point. That is to say, he does not relent.

Since U30 signals that Bacchus has formally lost that round in the argument (though remaining unconvinced), in U31 he changes topic: 'So this was ... yesterday, was it?' The nature of the question demonstrates that Bacchus has not given up his aggressive stance, since he knows full well from his earlier preparation of the case that Tina had been raped two weeks earlier and had not yet had the courage to go and report it. Hence the question, 'So this was ... yesterday, was it?' is designed to set a trap for Tina. First, Bacchus does not ask a direct question seeking unknown information, as would have been the case with an utterance such as 'When did this happen?' By providing part of the answer himself ('yesterday'), Bacchus is implying the precept that a person reports a crime immediately, with the concomitant implication that if one does not do so, something is wrong. Hence, the real illocutionary force of his utterance is that of a stark challenge: 'Why on earth did you wait so long before reporting the crime?' This illocutionary force implies another consequent illocutionary force, criticism: 'Waiting so long makes your report suspicious, not particularly credible.' Second, the hesitation following the verb betrays the fact that Bacchus is not telling the whole truth. This utterance thus constitutes another pre-question, since knowing what Tina will reply, he will be able to attack her again, as he does in U33. Yet again Bacchus parades his insensitivity, not realising how difficult it is for a woman to take action in such a situation. Such insensitivity will be displayed by the other male police officers with even greater force later in the scene (e.g. U61: 'Here come the waterworks'). Clearly, such behaviour positions the audience against the ideology Bacchus is enacting.

Tina has no option but to declare when the rape took place (U32). This offers Bacchus the golden opportunity to instantly launch a vicious open assault. Thus, his reaction 'Week before last?' (U33) almost shouting and with a facial expression also conveying (feigned) surprise, incredulity, criticism and anger is an argumentatively unwarranted as well as unprofessional explosion coming out of the blue, attributable only to the ideology Bacchus upholds.

The feigned incredulity and criticism are reiterated in U34 in a slightly more direct fashion: 'And you've come in now, crying rape?' Redundancy reinforces the effect Bacchus desires to have on Tina – battering her into submission. Significantly, the utterance is divided into two parts, when it could have been expressed in a single part. It is thus presented as if it were two independent ideas. The first part ('you've come in now'), represents the criticism for reporting the asserted crime 'late'. The second part ('crying rape')

performs at least two functions. First, the use of 'crying' rather than 'reporting' casts doubt on Tina's assertion that she was raped by implying she is acting as does a child when they thinks they have suffered an injustice. Second, 'crying' may here concurrently indicate making a loud sound, signifying in its turn the expression of a strong emotion. Thus, Bacchus is insinuating that Tina is laying it on thick two weeks later, thereby making the emotion unbelievable. In addition to the previous argument on insensitivity, there is the argumentative point that Tina has not been 'crying'. She has been fairly calm and her tone has been subdued. She is not enjoying herself in the police station. Bacchus is deliberately misrepresenting her intentions, with no evidence to back him up.

Bacchus needs this illegitimate line of argument, however, if he is to continue his attack. In U35–U36 he plays the angry father threatening the very naughty child: 'Tina, I'm going to stop you right there, because if you are wasting my time, I'm going to be VERY, VERY upset with you. Do you understand?'

First, 'Tina' is an attention-getter announcing trouble lies ahead. Second, 'I'm going to stop you right there' constitutes Bacchus illegitimately exerting his power because he has not let Tina finish her account but has already decided on the basis of the sole fact of her delay in reporting the crime that she is not telling the truth. It should not be forgotten that Bacchus had already pre-judged the matter at U10, when he had only seen her and had been told she had come to report having been raped. The hypothetical construction 'if you … I'm going to be …' is in no way hypothetical. Bacchus has already decided Tina is lying and he is threatening her with dire consequences. Third, the phonological pattern, with the special emphasis placed on 'VERY, VERY upset' and the lexical selection of 'upset' again suggest Bacchus is treating Tina like a child. Fourth, 'Do you understand?' is also typical of warning or scolding a child. Non-verbal signals bolster this interpretation: Bacchus' stern expression in pronouncing U33–U36 is accompanied by a head inclined forward and a hand holding a biro pointed at an angle and metaphorically jabbing at Tina in order to convey greater aggression. Further evidence is provided by Rachel, who deliberately, pointedly, turns her head sideways to look at Bacchus, astounded at his attitude. It thus constitutes an invitation to desist. Hence, in addition to Bacchus' negative behaviour, the audience is concurrently affected by Rachel's implied non-verbal criticism of Bacchus, given that she represents a 'decent', morally shareable position. Bacchus simply ignores her reaction.

This assault naturally produces the subjugated, one-word reply from Tina, 'Yes' (U37). She has but little choice in the matter.

Now the institutional as well as human issue here is not whether Bacchus is right or wrong, since Bacchus does not yet know whether Tina's assertion of having been raped is true or not. The issue is that (1) Bacchus has started from

the presupposition that Tina is lying; (2) he has done so without knowing anything about the case; (3) he is treating Tina as an inferior; (4) he is not giving her a hearing; and, crucially, (5) his entire behaviour, including his linguistic behaviour (specifically here, the presupposition), is culture-bound, dependent on his worldview.

Confirmation of this interpretation materialises instantly. Bacchus could have legitimately posed the question 'So why did it take you over a fortnight?' without pronouncing U28 and U33–U36 and rephrasing U31 into a straight, unloaded question. This would have made Tina less uneasy and provided her with the opportunity to tell her side of the story in a far less conditioned manner. But this, of course, is not what Bacchus wanted, for he believes he is right and must consequently impose his view on others, with any means possible, especially on 'inferior' Others.

Tina's explanation ('Well, I wasn't going to come in at all, and then I was talking with some friends, and I think they shouldn't get away with it', U39) is credible and highly commendable, as well as highly political. The first part of the utterance implies the attitude that she did not wish to be subjected to the public airing of her terrible experience and all its consequences, a perfectly normal reaction. Talking with 'friends' could refer to other sex workers, and one of the illocutionary forces of U39 would thus imply that Tina wants to avoid such events recurring, a hypothesis bolstered by U46–U49 below.

The moral/political aspect is underscored by Tina's curt reply in U41: 'Men', where she emphasises the category of the crime by referring to the class of the individuals committing the crime rather than the individuals. In this way Tina indicates she is talking about a social problem, not a personal one.

Bacchus immediately reacts negatively to this affirmation (U42–U43) by claiming that Tina is simply making political capital out of a personal incident, which might, to boot, be false. This, of course, is fallacious argumentation on the part of an official representative of the state. Bacchus is acting as a patriarchal male, and not as an unbiased policeman. Tina rejects his argument by saying she is reporting three individuals, not a category (U44). Stated differently, she is pointing out that she is not a 'libber' (to echo Bacchus' words, U43), protesting against men, but reporting a rape which is the product of culturally determined behaviour, and bringing such individuals to justice should help impede such behaviour in future, that is, bring about a change in categorial behaviour, if not in worldview.

With U44, 'No, just the three what's raped us', Tina has concluded her argument neatly and Bacchus is obliged to acknowledge this by discontinuing this line of 'enquiry' and returning to Tina's reporting of the crime, though he does so indirectly – 'So you want to carry on, do you?' (U45) – to reduce his face losses, since U45 enables him to imply that Tina does not have a strong case to present.

Now it is Tina's turn to be dominant, with U46–U49 making the motivations which were implicit in U42 explicit. Those motives are both logical and reasonable, hence convincing, to say the least: young boys who were drunk and violent and who could reasonably be predicted to repeat their criminal actions, a danger which society should attempt to avoid. No right-minded person would object to such a line of reasoning and the values bolstering the argument. Hence, Bacchus succumbs and – finally – gets Tina to make her report (U50–U51).

There is now a short cut to Gently in hospital. Despite its brevity and apparent 'emptiness', this scene may be hypothesised as performing several by no means secondary functions. First, it constitutes a break in the interview scene, creating a drop in dramatic tension, a breather for the audience. Second, given our knowledge of Gently, we are invited to think about how Gently (the Other, compared with the traditional policemen in that interview room) would have handled the scene, hypothesising that if he were to find out what has been happening, then, given his anti-patriarchal attitude, he would get angry and attempt to redress the situation, thus anticipating what will actually happen when Gently does return to the police station (as we shall see below) and is greeted in a most unfriendly fashion by Rachel, clearly indicating to Gently that something is amiss. Naturally, Gently goes off to investigate! The insertion of this scene thus constitutes an indirect method of positioning the audience. Third, it also enables a scene change. When the camera returns to the interview room, we find another two male detectives have joined the group. Consequently, not only does the tension return, but even greater pressure is being put on Tina. Finally, the three-part structure of the entire section (building up the tension, contrasting that anti-female attitude with that of a pro-female representative, then building up the tension even further) enables Gently to arrive on the scene as the 'saviour', yet again a mechanism for positioning the viewer.

Returning to the interview room, we find Bacchus is again trying to destroy Tina's testimony. While the illocutionary force of U52 ('It was definitely the blond-haired one that grabbed you in the car park, was it?') appears to be asking for confirmation of a previously stated fact, in actual fact the utterance is another pre-question, since U54 then points out a contradiction in Tina's testimony ('Look, Tina, you said ten minutes ago that you weren't sure because he grabbed you from behind'). The implication is that Tina is, at best, not telling the truth. The detective sitting next to Bacchus folds his arms, huffs and puts on an expression of disgust as Bacchus utters U54 to manifest his agreement with Bacchus' implied meaning. Tina is consequently obliged to admit she is not certain (U55). Bacchus' beginning with the admonitory 'Look, Tina' before pointing out the contradiction is a clear indication that he will not brook a denial, thereby. As a result, Tina is forced to expand her one-word

reply in U53, reiterating her admission of non-knowledge, but pointing out the logical fact that one of the three boys did rape her, the implication being that rape is rape, no matter if the victim cannot be certain of the identity of the rapist and that it definitely was one of the three boys she had referred to.

Bacchus is making this detail out to be a simple, black and white, either/or case: either Tina remembers and so her testimony is reliable or she does not remember, in which case her testimony is unreliable. Psychological studies have demonstrated that memory is a much more complex affair. Thus, in legal testimony a distinction is made between core (or central) details and peripheral details (Powell et al. 2013; Alho et al. 2019). Core occurrences are those details deemed central. If a witness fails to remember such details, then the testimony is judged unreliable. Failing to recall peripheral details should not, on the contrary, challenge the validity of the testimony. However, debate reigns as to what may be retained as core, and factors such as stress and anxiety may hamper memory performance (Alho et al. 2019). What is important in the text under scrutiny is that the male policemen make no such distinction and take no account of the witness' emotional state, pre-judging the issue on gender-based ideology rather than on professional criteria.[32]

While Bacchus is accusing Tina of misconduct, another detective walks into the room and hands him a file which contains Tina's police record of soliciting. Bacchus shows it to the detective sitting next to him, who puts on a facial expression conveying displeasure. This is a deliberate ploy to exert further pressure on Tina since Bacchus had already seen Tina's file well before he went into the interview room. It also prepares for further escalation in U59.

Given that Tina is being torn to pieces by Bacchus, Rachel attempts to diminish the tension by offering Tina a cup of tea (U56). Tina shows her gratitude for this psychological help through her words and intonation. Bacchus, however, ignores this and goes relentlessly on. He asks Tina why she has not mentioned she has a criminal record (U58), the implication being that a person with a criminal record will not be telling the truth and/or has less right to the protection of the law. This illocutionary force is redoubled in Bacchus' next utterance (U59): 'You're a prostitute.' As if this was new information to him! Finally comes one of the most classic instantiations of male patriarchal attitudes in human history (U60), 'You were literally asking for it.' Two reactionary concepts underlie this utterance. First, when a woman is raped, the fault is hers for having provoked a man. (Compare with the Zahavi extract quoted above.) Second, sex workers are 'professional rape victims' hence have no right to protest.

[32] The fact that at the time such a distinction was not yet available from psychological studies does not alter the inconsiderate, insensitive, extremist behaviour of the male participants.

As Tina starts to cry, Rachel again turns to Bacchus to give him a stare of surprise, anger and disgust. By contrast, the second detective utters, 'Oh, here comes the water works' (U61), implying that women (as a category) regularly employ emotional blackmail to defend themselves against legitimate criticism. The use of this particular dead metaphor implies that such behaviour is intentional rather than a spontaneous psychological reaction, another implication which questions the validity of the victim's reaction. This fallacious line of reasoning, too, is based on the age-old prejudice that women are emotional, illogical and manipulative while men are cold, rational and correct, well documented by many feminist (and other) linguists (see, e.g., Robin Lakoff's classic work on the subject: 1975/2004).

Rachel this time steps in with a verbal defence of Tina. Looking at Bacchus in an extremely angry manner, her face extremely close to his to reinforce communicating her aggressiveness and disagreement, she points out to him that prostitution is not a crime (U62), implicitly inviting him to desist from this improper line of 'questioning'. Challenged, by a female to boot, Bacchus immediately retorts that 'soliciting is' (U63). To reinforce his implicit argument that Tina is a hardened criminal, hence an unreliable witness, he immediately adds 'Three times in five years' (U64). He then reiterates his heinous accusation 'Literally been asking for it' (U65). Overkill, to put it mildly. Not to mention the illogicality of U65, since Bacchus fails to explain how being a sex worker entails asking to be raped.

In her next turn (U67–U68), Tina advances the incontestably logical arguments that being a sex worker is irrelevant to being raped and that the three boys were not her clients. Tina is thereby rejecting the second detective's implicit argument in U64 that Tina was accusing the three boys of rape when she was in fact charging them for her services; consequently, it was not rape.

At this point Rachel manifests female solidarity by rightly complaining that there are 'too many men in this room' (U69), a point she puts mildly by violating the Gricean quantity maxim by omitting to point out the males' bullying behaviour and prejudiced disbelief of Tina's story. Naturally, she does so because she is in a structurally weak position: she is female, in the minority, the lowest in rank, and the males espouse patriarchy. Hence, making her complaint would have led nowhere, or perhaps even to worsening the situation, as is instantly demonstrated by Bacchus, who responds to Rachel's protest by sending her out of the room, so that Tina remains the sole female, adding insult to injury by underlining Rachel's subordinate status by making her act as a servant – fetching the gentlemen a cup of tea! A woman's rightful place – in the kitchen! Such were the workings of justice.

Rachel leaves the room. In the corridor she encounters Gently and answers his inquiry about where Bacchus is in an angry fashion. As this behaviour is

totally out of character for Rachel, Gently immediately goes to the interview room, having correctly surmised that something is wrong. Once he has ascertained the situation, he immediately interrupts the interview, throws the 'gentlemen' out of the room and apologises to Tina for their behaviour. In future, male police officers will not outnumber female police officers when interviewing/interrogating females. He also institutes an enquiry into the number of cases of rape investigated by that police station to discover that none of the reports made by females of having been raped led to prosecutions. Gently is scandalised and is determined to rectify the situation.

The beginnings of change are a hallmark in *TVG.*

This four-minute scene provides an intense and accurate portrayal of the culture of the time and constitutes a powerful indictment of such social behaviour. Although progress has been made, racism against women, as well as against other categories of alterity (race, religion, age, sexual preferences), is still rampant today, as witnessed by attitudes and emotions in the current debates on immigration, COVID, social inequality and the welfare state, to name but a few. All the *TVG* episodes deal with social issues in such a way, hence their relevance to the modern audience, one major reason why *TVG* is so attractive.

15.3.2 Interpersonal Relationships: Emotion, Values and Ideology: 'Gently Liberated'

Television Gently investigates interpersonal relationships between the main characters to a far, far greater extent and depth than do the Barnaby novels and television episodes and Hunter's Gently novels. The amount of time and space devoted to such aspects (the Gricean quantity maxim, in pragmatic terms), the number of 'topics' dealt with, the sensitivity of such topics (most of the issues remain 'unsolved' today), the intensity of the emotions expressed, have no parallel in Barnaby and Hunter. Indeed, the *TVG* production begins and ends with emotion – the 'revenge' murder of George's wife, Isabella, in the pilot episode, caused by George's doggedness in pursuing police corruption, and George Gently dying on the beach in the final episode, as a result of having been shot in the back by a British government secret agent for having again refused to cover up occurrences of corruption in high places, thinking of Isabella – and has numerous references to Isabella throughout the series, with George revealing his life revolved around Isabella. The pilot episode also sees many of the basic themes dealt with in the series introduced, leading to highly charged emotional scenes right from the start. The entire series is replete with scenes of intense emotion revolving around basic human values and situations.

As we have already seen, one reason George did not resign at the end of the first episode was that he saw potential in Bacchus and wished to make him into an honest policeman, Bacchus having fabricated evidence in the past to get a conviction. In the pilot episode ('Gently Go Man'), we learn Bacchus wishes to get out of the backwater of the North East (the periphery) and join the prestigious Met, at the centre of Empire. Gently blocks this move for he knows Bacchus will find himself in the middle of corruption. The two men quarrel violently. The relationship between the two is extremely intense throughout the series, tending towards a conflictual father–son relationship, in contrast, as noted earlier, to *Midsomer* and to Hunter's Gently novels which are almost emotion-less.

Series 6 sees police officer Rachel Coles joining the two-man team, and Gently again creating a protective, fatherly relationship with his subordinate, one in which emotional exchanges are again important, for the very same reasons they are important for the Gently–Bacchus relationship. The psychological exchanges are less frequent and intense in Rachel's case because she arrives late in the series, because she has views which often coincide with Gently's (indeed, like Gently, one of her functions is to highlight Bacchus' retrograde views), hence there is far less opportunity as well as motive for intense psychological and emotional interaction, especially of a conflictual nature. Nevertheless, the quality of the relationship (like father and daughter) parallels that of Gently and Bacchus, and contrasts with Barnaby and Hunter.

I will illustrate these points by examining perhaps the most emotionally intense scene in the entire series. As in real life, the conflict stems from character differences, differing goals, frustrated hopes, jealousy, differences in opinion on extremely important moral and social issues. One central aspect which bolsters verisimilitude and which renders the exchange even more significant in human terms is the crucial fact that some of the conflict is due not simply to the difference of opinion, but also to the fact that on a few occasions, the moral issues constitute the 'external' excuse which triggers an extant personal character conflict. Such depth and verisimilitude are rare in detective fiction. The scene in question takes place towards the end of 'Gently Liberated' (S8 Ep. 1, starting at approx. 55 minutes, ending at 58:45 minutes). Since the text is long, I have omitted the first part. I concentrate principally on the verbal part of the message, though the non-verbal is commented on when crucial.

Text 3
Bacchus gives Gently a document.

GENTLY: [1] What's this?
BACCHUS: [2] It's a statement from a lad called Graham Arthur. [3] He was up by the Liddell house that night. [4] He said that he saw a woman on the

street outside. [5] Now, the timing was wrong, so I didn't think it was relevant. [6] And then when she confessed –

RACHEL : [7] Oh, God.

BACCHUS: it was a loose end. [8] And I just . . . I went back to tie it up.

GENTLY: [9] So, you got him to change his story. [10] Eh?

BACCHUS: [11] Yeah. [aab] Yeah, I told him to say that he was mistaken.

GENTLY: [12] This could have been Eve leaving the house. [13] This is reasonable doubt. [14] So how long were you going to hold on to this, eh? [15] Did you think you might just lose it? [16] And let an innocent woman rot in prison? [17] Do you think you decide when to dispense justice? [18] You're not a real policeman.

BACCHUS: [19] You mean I'm not you. [20] You're a saint, aren't you? [21] But you know what? [22] Saints in the Bible, they're all right, but in real life no one likes them much.

GENTLY: [23] I serve justice. [24] That's my life.

BACCHUS: [25] Yeah. [26] And it's all that you've got.

GENTLY: [27] Do you know, you're an embarrassment. [28] You're an accident waiting to happen. [29] Just look at the state of you, with your drinking. [30] You want to pull yourself together, Sergeant.

BACCHUS: [31] Except I'm not your sergeant any more, am I? [32] Hey, do you know why he stayed up here in the North. . .

RACHEL: [33] Don't.

BACCHUS: [34] Rachel?

GENTLY: [35] Go on.

BACCHUS: [36] To chop me down. [37] That's what he said. [38] He'd lost everything, he'd lost his wife. [39] He was on his way out of the force, and then he found himself a project. [40] I'd been given a transfer to the Met – but no . . . no, he needed something to restore meaning into his life. [41] To make up for the guilt he felt knowing that his crusades are the reason his wife was murdered.

GENTLY: [42] Get out.

BACCHUS: [43] You know, you tried to shape me into your image – well, are you happy now?

RACHEL: [44] John . . .

BACCHUS: [45] I've lost Gemma, I've lost my daughter – and this job is the only thing I have.

RACHEL: [46] John, don't.

BACCHUS: [47] And what about Rachel? [48] What's she going to do when she has to decide between being a detective and having a family?

GENTLY: [49] John, don't.

BACCHUS: [50] You've put impossible expectations on her, just like you did with me.

RACHEL: [51] John!

GENTLY: [52] I thought you had a future.

BACCHUS: [53] Ah, well, it's not your future, any more, is it, George? [54] Look, the old chief. [55] What's going to be left behind when you go? [56] Nothing.

GENTLY: [57] You're finished here. [58] I'm recommending you for suspension.

Bacchus leaves.

Gently arrives back at police headquarters very angry at what he has discovered regarding the malpractice of Bacchus and his boss at the time. He accuses them of having bullied the woman they had accused of a murder into a confession. The woman had succumbed to the great pressure exerted over her by the two (male) detectives. The confession led to her being found guilty and being sent to prison, where she was still serving her sentence.

Here the gender issue that was dealt with in 'Gently with the Women' (S7 Ep. 1) is again to the fore. Themes in *TVG* are not simply the object of scrutiny in one sole episode but recur in various episodes, confirming the social commitment of the series, as well as helping to achieve authenticity, since we each of us engage in interrelationships with people of all genders every day and our interactions vary according to our perceptions of them.

Under attack from Gently, Bacchus responds by handing Gently a document. When Gently asks Bacchus for an explanation (U1), Bacchus (U2–U6, U8) candidly explains what happened (his candidness is borne out by the tone of voice, relatively low volume and unconcerned facial expression), first admitting he made a mistake in interpreting the evidence and then further admitting he obliged a witness to change his statement so that it fitted in with Bacchus' hypothesis as to how the murder had been committed.

Rachel utters a censorious noise (U7) and turns away from Bacchus, thereby conveying her gross disapproval of his transgression. This reaction contributes, together with the nature of the infraction and its consequences (life imprisonment for the unjustly condemned woman) and Bacchus' attitude, to guiding the audience to wonder not simply at Bacchus' blatant flouting of the law by a police officer, but, more importantly, his lack of shame or regret at what he did. Both the concepts expressed and the matter-of-factness of the language Bacchus employs to convey those concepts confirm these points: 'Now, the timing was wrong, so I didn't think it was relevant … it was a loose end' (U5) – no emotion, no questioning, no revision of what he had done, a simple statement of bare fact as if the facts referred to were normal, run-of-the-mill phenomena of no consequence, neither personal, nor moral, nor social. This hypothesis is reinforced by the indirectness of Bacchus' final remark: 'to tie it up' (U8). In addition, by failing to call a spade a spade, Bacchus is trying to hide the gravity of his action.

Gently instantly brings Bacchus' deviation from the straight and narrow to light in a most direct fashion: 'So, you got him to change his story' (U9). Brevity (exploiting the Gricean quantity maxim), especially when contrasted to Bacchus' previous long turn, makes his statement (and not a question), even stronger rhetorically, as does Gently's lexical selections: informal 'got' giving the impression of Gently insinuating Bacchus' behaviour as 'normal' (as opposed to, say, formal 'obliged', which would be far less frequently

employed in such work contexts) and the ironic use of 'story', in lieu of formal 'testimony', underscoring the fictitious nature of the boy's statement. When Bacchus does not immediately take his turn, Gently insists with a pithy 'Eh?' (U10), aggressive in its brevity and informality.

Bacchus' minimal response betrays submission to the indefensible, the inevitable: a single word, 'Yeah' (U11), followed by a repetition of the same lexeme and a short clause stating the truth (U12).

Gently consequently makes hypotheses as to the real potential meaning of the witness' 'real' testimony ('This could have been Eve leaving the house', U12), concluding that this testimony would have cleared the accused woman's name ('This is reasonable doubt', U13). Implicit, therefore, are the consequent speech acts (Austin 1962) of accusation and criticism: 'you didn't do anything to put the situation right when you should'. Gently continues his attack on Bacchus by hypothesising that Bacchus was going to suppress evidence ('hold on to this' or 'lose it', U14–U15), returning once again to the immoral consequences of Bacchus' act ('let an innocent woman rot in prison', U16). Gently then accuses Bacchus of playing God, hence of implicitly believing he is superior to other men ('Do you think you decide when to dispense justice?', U17). This valid criticism leads to the conclusion that Bacchus is 'not a real policeman' (U18); that is to say, he is morally unfit for the job.

Gently's language selections are as equally significant as Bacchus' choice of words in conveying implicit value judgements and concepts. 'Hold on' (U14) is a conventional metaphor which conveys strength and/or force/violence (as other denotations of the same root, as in 'have a hold over someone'). The violence strengthens the accusation of illicit behaviour implied by the metaphors of not 'passing on' to the proper authorities what he is 'holding on to'. 'Rot' (U16) constitutes another dead metaphor, connoting destruction of life where life could have been sustained by correct behaviour and immorality (as in 'rot in hell' and 'rotten'). 'Innocent' (U16) is a value judgement pertaining to the domain of morality, and 'woman' (U16) again brings up the question of gender (since Gently could have employed the gender-neutral lexeme 'person'), implying the unequal social status between male and female and referring back to Bacchus and his boss forcing the 'innocent woman' to confess to something she did not do.

Unable to defend himself on the logical and moral planes, in desperation Bacchus turns to an ad hominem attack (U19). 'You mean I'm not you' accuses Gently of being a father wanting to fashion a son unto his own image. (The biblical reference is illustrated below when explicating U42–U44.) Stated differently, Bacchus is challenging Gently's moral stature by accusing him of personal rather than social interest on the part of a frustrated man. This is indeed a dire attack, especially since it is based on a foundation of truth: Gently is frustrated because his wife was murdered and he was forced to abandon the

Met and he did set out to make an honest policeman of Bacchus, treating him like a son! This is a typical human situation, where the grey area of the human psyche outweighs the clarity of the black and white moral zones. It is difficult to rebuff since we are such complicated beings and life does pose many difficult challenges which we are not always up to, a condition which no one wishes to admit. The emotion is so high-pitched and realistic precisely because 'human kind cannot bear very much reality' as T. S. Eliot put it in 'Burnt Norton'.

Bacchus' first attack was based on unreality. His second attack has the same logical base: 'You're a saint, aren't you?' (U20). Again, Bacchus employs a biblical reference. Humans cannot be saints because they are imperfect – to return to our grey area. But we also return to humankind being unable to bear much reality since 'saints in the bible . . . are all right but in real life no one likes them much' (U22). One might note that Bacchus dialectically re-employs the adjective Gently has just used to reject Gently's stance: 'real'. Gently is unreal, argues Bacchus.

This, of course, brings up the entire question of truth, honesty, corruption, allegiance: Does one live by the book (Gently's position throughout the series, though he does bend the rules slightly on extremely rare occasions[33]) or does one adapt to the demands society places on us to survive (Bacchus' position here and for most of the series, though with significant exceptions)?

Under such harsh attack, Gently finds refuge in his typical moralism (U23–U24): 'I serve justice. That's my life.' As the audience already knows, Gently's assertions are essentially true. However, the way they are expressed, at this specific point in the conversation, produces a negative effect on the audience, for Gently appears as a pompous, conceited being, thereby seemingly confirming Bacchus' charge of Gently feeling superior to other people, who, instead, are ordinary human beings who err. Again, the language is significant: brief, pithy sentences, quasi-religious concepts and lexical selections: 'serve', 'justice', 'my life'. Angry at the attack made on him by the person who has committed a serious offence, Gently feels like King Lear, 'more sinn'd against than sinning'. His deep disappointment makes him react

[33] For instance, in 'Son of a Gun' (S7 Ep. 4), Gently comes into contact with teenage Kit, whose father was a policeman whom Gently worked with and who was killed when the two men were on duty together. Kit was present at a bank robbery and so Gently meets him at the police station. He later takes Kit home and we find Kit's mother, who is obviously going through a difficult time. She indirectly 'invites' George to act as a father for Kit. Gently promises he will look after Kit. The episode recounts a series of bank robberies. By pure chance Kit meets the chief of the band, who has learned that Kit can repair Sten guns and so obliges Kit to repair his guns, threatening to kill his mother should he fail to collaborate. Given Gently's personal involvement, once the band is finally captured, Gently puts pressure on Bacchus to leave Kit out of the report, since going to prison would ruin both Kit and his mother and Kit was, after all, acting under duress. Bacchus concurs.

emotionally and stand on his high horse to distinguish himself from the sinner or, more technically, to confirm and bolster his challenged identity.

Bacchus immediately takes advantage of Gently's argumentative faux pas with a minimal response, 'Yeah' (U25), which may be explicated into 'you are quite right in saying that'. Bacchus continues this attack in U26, 'And it's all that you've got,' by infringing the Gricean quantity maxim, since this utterance adds no new information; it merely rephrases the same concept expressed in the previous utterance in order to emphasise the concept, to drive the point emotionally home to Gently, in other words, to hurt him.

Gently (U27–U30) counters on the same psychological, emotionally offensive plane. He aims directly at Bacchus' weak spots, one's behaviour when wishing to sink the opponent. Thus, he criticises Bacchus' reliability and capacity ('an accident waiting to happen', U27; 'your drinking', U28). Yet Gently himself is not one to refuse a drink. Inconsistencies are a part of human make-up.

Having had his defects held up to the light by Gently, Bacchus returns the 'compliment', and does so by trying to enlist Rachel's support in his war against his boss. He does so by addressing Rachel and asking her a question in order to obtain her attention and involve her in the 'debate': 'Hey, do you know why he stayed up here in the North . . .' (U32).

Rachel tries to make Bacchus desist ('Don't', U33) more than once, but fails since Bacchus is seething with anger and cannot control himself. Furthermore, Bacchus hates losing. U36–U41 all consist of ad hominem attacks verging on brutality. First, Bacchus accuses Gently of wanting to demean him ('chop me down', U36). This is Bacchus manipulating Gently's words in the pilot episode to place a false interpretation on them, since Gently wished to make a good policeman of Bacchus (see U52), which involved, among other things, getting Bacchus to stop planting evidence. Then Bacchus attacks Gently's motives for 'helping' Bacchus, interpreting 'educating' Bacchus as a substitute for loving his wife (see also U40) and for being almost forced out of the police force since he was persona non grata given that he had blown the whistle on corrupt colleagues, hence his transfer from the prestigious Met to the dull North East. But Bacchus goes to the very limits of decency, accusing Gently of being responsible for his wife's death (U40), since she was murdered in order to deprive him of the thing that was most precious to him, his wife.

Again, lexical selections boost the intensity of the verbal attacks. First, words connoting violence: 'chop me down', 'murdered', 'lost'; second, lexical items belonging to the religious domain: 'guilt', 'crusades', 'restore'. The attack is thus a moral one, questioning the motivation behind Gently's actions – not a saint, but a failure who is trying to compensate ('project', 'restore meaning into his life') for his 'self-inflicted' losses by damaging others

(Bacchus and Rachel). This turn therefore represents an attempt at annihilating Gently, and is based on the psychological, emotional and moral levels.

U42 continues Bacchus' ad hominem attacks by accusing Gently of wanting Bacchus to be like him. Bacchus' words 'you tried to shape me into your image' can be read on three levels. On the first level, Gently is Bacchus' mentor. On the second level, Bacchus' is Gently's substitute son, and on the third level Gently is assimilated to God, since in several religious traditions, Christianity included, theological doctrine states that man is created in God's image ('So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him', Genesis 1:27; 'multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion ... over every living thing', 1:28, King James Bible). Bacchus is accusing Gently of having tried to play all three roles and of having destroyed Bacchus in the process ('well, are you happy now?').

The form destruction has taken is illustrated in U44 and parallels Gently's 'downfall' (in Bacchus' reading of events): he has lost his daughter, his wife and his job. The difficulty is that Bacchus refuses to admit his mistakes, namely, that he has lost his family because he has been a bad father and a bad husband, and his job is not going as it should because of his erroneous conduct. As generally happens in heated discussion where the object is to 'win the argument', to let off steam or to harm the other as much as one can, Bacchus fails to bring his faults into the picture.

Bacchus then accuses Gently of having manipulated Rachel in the same way that he has manipulated Bacchus himself: 'And what about Rachel? What's she going to do when she has to decide between being a detective and having a family? (U46–U47). Ostensibly, Bacchus is defending Rachel against the insane manipulator. In reality, he is using Rachel as an excuse to attack Gently. In so doing he falls foul of several fallacies, first and foremost intentionality. He interprets Rachel's intentions for her and, what is worse, without asking for her opinion on the matter. Ironically, who is playing God here is Bacchus. Worse still, he takes Rachel for the traditional woman of the sixties – she wants to be a wife. Ergo, to groom her for promotion is to instil false hopes into her. Bacchus, of course, is back to his old gender prejudices, where the wife stays at home, minds the child and cares for her husband, as was seen in the episode 'Peace and Love'. Indeed, his jealousy has emerged in various episodes: Gently does not just love Bacchus, he also loves Rachel, and Rachel, despite the obvious drawback of being a woman, actually has a brain and uses it! Fire and brimstone!

Rachel protests: 'John' (U50), and Gently closes the proceedings with a curtly incisive 'I thought you had a future' (U51), countering Bacchus' arguments with a simple statement of fact justifying his position – he has been helping his sergeant because he was convinced Bacchus would make an excellent detective, thereby rejecting all of Bacchus' accusations.

In conclusion, this brief episode in an instantiation of how *TVG* deals with many moral and social issues which recur through an episode and through the entire series, dealing also in the psychology and emotions and intentions and goals of the characters in some depth, in stark contrast to Barnaby and Hunter.

Second, the realism of the scene, the intensity of the drama, its relevance to daily human life, hence the convincingness of the scene, together with the faultiness of Bacchus' stance, make the audience truly participate, and position the viewer in favour of the Gently ideology.

The debate about human values, about the things that affect our daily lives, about how law relates to social structure and morality, as also shown by the wide variety of topics dealt with, all make the series relevant to our own lives. We leave an episode feeling we have lived through something real, something touching, something important, to us and to those we care for.

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