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AN INFINITE CAPACITY FOR CO-CONSULTING:  
GENDER CONSTRUCTIONS AND MENTORSHIP ON CBS'S *ELEMENTARY*

**A thesis submitted to  
Regis College  
The Honors Program  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for graduation with Honors**

**by**

Heather Hufford

May 2019

**Thesis written by**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
I. INTRODUCTION: THE FRIENDS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES	1
II. READING ELEMENTARY AS AN ATTEMPT AT PORTRAYING GENDER EQUALITY	12
III. CONFLICTING PERMEABILITIES IN PATERNAL MENTORSHIPS IN “RIP OFF”	34
IV. INTERACTIONS BETWEEN GENDERED SPACE AND MENTORSHIPS IN “TERRA PERICOLOSA”	52
V. GENDERED CONFLICTS BETWEEN HARD-BOILED AND PROCEDURAL TRADITIONS IN “THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY”	75
WORKS CITED	110

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the conclusion of “The Five Orange Pipz,” *Elementary*’s Sherlock Holmes remarks, “They say that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains. It’s a very bad definition, but it does apply to detective work.” He promises his protégée that if she wants to be a detective, she’ll have to take pains. I love this quote because it seems to capture Sherlock’s brutal dismissal of the ideas he finds malformed, and yet it brushes against the things that make his work excruciating and satisfying. I liked it so much that I borrowed it for my title. I play with the idea that mentorship, like detective work, takes the pains to co-consult. It is one thing to offer one’s opinion; it is another to give someone a leg up so that they have the space to do the same. In a thesis about mentorship, it is only appropriate to thank my own mentors and friends, who likewise gave me this space to take pains on behalf of a subject I love.

Thanks to my advisor, Dr. Scott Dimovitz, for keeping me on track and remaining patient throughout the writing process. Thanks to my reader, Dr. Lara Narcisi, for her thoughtful commentary and supportive enthusiasm. It is because of their gentle guidance that this thesis is now a thing.

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## INTRODUCTION:

### THE FRIENDS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

There is a scene in Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client" where Holmes and Watson go out for dinner and discuss their case. A young woman has fallen in love with a murderer: she knows the facts of his life but will not see him as anything but the victim. Watson asks Holmes, "if the lady will not accept what is already known, why should any fresh discovery of yours turn her from her purpose?" Holmes replies, "Who knows, Watson? Woman's heart and mind are insoluble puzzles to the male. Murder might be condoned or explained, and yet some smaller offence might rankle" (Doyle 519).

There is a delicious kind of irony in the fact that as Holmes dismisses women as inscrutable, he unwittingly defines what we know as the murder mystery. Paperback detective novels and television crime dramas build themselves on the premise that detectives can depersonalize murder, observe the facts with a clinical eye and arrive at flawlessly logical conclusions. Murder can always be explained—condoned, even, in the darker stories—because there is an unwavering truth about what happened and why. The murder mystery demands a solution.

The thing is, "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client" is not a murder mystery: it's a heist. The victims and the killer are already bagged and tagged; the remaining problem is the lady's loyalty to her fiancé. Despite all the facts and figures, the woman

remains cold and unmoved, refusing to accept that her life is in danger. But Holmes is a professional: he gets his evidence, convinces the woman, and ends the betrothal. If there was a mystery after all, it was that of “woman’s heart and mind,” and according to *Baker Street Journal* writer Patrick Morgan, Holmes ends a better detective for it. By “learning that some women can be even more unemotional than he, Holmes is better able to relate to women and to understand them” (31). While Morgan casts this resolution as a net gain for the detective, it seems to me that he overstates the victory. By Morgan’s reading, Holmes is only able to grasp the notion of women as complex individuals when they have surpassed him at his own game of detachment. While this might seem in-character for the old detective, it belies a double standard. Holmes is free to learn about women and change his mind; the young fiancée, meanwhile, carries the curse of her initial mindset. Watson assumes that no “fresh discovery” will sway the lady—though she will change her mind, it is not because she was given the task of learning. That is something the detectives did for her.

As the decades have passed, Holmes’ legacy has thrived on fresh discovery. To this day, Holmes uncovers hidden truths and explores the seedy urban underworld, thanks in large part to the external discoveries mediated by print, film, and television adaptation. Each iteration of Arthur Conan Doyle’s short stories vivifies Holmes and his discoveries and expands the library of works carrying his flame. In some ways, this is an entertaining and inspiring development; however, with the recent rash of Holmes screen adaptations, scholars and fans alike have expressed concern that keeping Holmes alive also means reincarnating his sexism. Women remain the illogical background characters,

participating by watching the detectives, if not actively obscuring the truth. Certainly, most adaptations have an instinct to give their women characters more development and freedom than Arthur Conan Doyle did, but that kind of gift doesn't always take, and gets a little messy even when it does.

CBS's *Elementary* (2012–) features the most recent and most ambitious adaptation of “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client,” but the show made a name for itself with its controversial choice to adapt Dr. Watson as a woman. Note that I say “controversial,” but not “unprecedented.” Though *Elementary* struck many viewers as unconventional, it is not the first adaptation to feature Holmes living in the modern day, stationed in the United States, or partnered with a female Watson (as in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* [1987]). That said, this is, to my knowledge, the first time on television that a male Holmes' female partner has been *the* Watson—not a descendent, not a niece, but the one and only Dr. Watson in the flesh. This matters for two reasons. First, because Joan Watson is the only Watson, her reputation within the series stems from her own behavior—there is no ancestral Watson from whom she gains integrity. Joan can be compared alongside other Watson adaptations, but when *Elementary* contends with her, it's based on her own merit. Secondly, unlike in adaptations where Holmes and Watson are both women, Holmes' sexism must be confronted within the bounds of the relationship. Holmes' gender cannot be glossed over because his character has always depended on it for superiority.

*Elementary*'s freshness comes from its choice to explicitly turn Holmes from his creator's purpose. This show is not an instance where the same beloved Holmes and



Watson are encountered from a new and exciting perspective—not at all. In making Watson a woman, and in making her Holmes’ partner, *Elementary* makes a fundamental change to the characters and Conan Doyle’s intentions: women’s hearts and minds, after all, can no longer be insoluble puzzles when women are our friends. It makes the show different. For some, it also makes the show unlikeable. Holmes fans met *Elementary*’s 2012 debut with variations on anticipation and skepticism. I remember first hearing about *Elementary* on a message board around that time, where initial reactions were negative. My friends bemoaned the fact that Holmes was stubbly and protested Watson’s translation into a woman as homophobic. When someone finally watched it and reported it to be a generic murder mystery show, collective interest in the show evaporated—which was a softer blow than other responses. With the show still building its fanbase, cursory searches on Tumblr and Blogspot uncover posts “debunking” the *Elementary*’s premise and the posts in it. There were not necessarily more haters than fans, but those who disliked the show were more vocal and more thorough than those who did. *Elementary*’s choice to upend the canon gave it the power to correct problematic elements in the original stories, but somewhat at the cost of its perceived validity.

That said, what makes a valid Sherlock Holmes? Like many girls my age, the Holmes obsession of my teen years came in the form of BBC *Sherlock* (2010-2017), which heightened Conan Doyle’s narratives in a modern context. *Sherlock* was magnetic. One day in Spanish class, my best friend and I giddily traded our theories about the second season finale on our whiteboards instead of focusing on our actual assignment. For my seventeenth birthday, she made me a card with a picture of Benedict

Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman as the infamous duo standing side by side. She drew an arrow to Holmes labelled “this is you” and one to Watson reading “this is me.” Holmes and Watson have such a compelling, iconic friendship, and *Sherlock* celebrated that fact. It doesn’t surprise me that we wanted to identify with them and embody the characters on some level. But it didn’t last. The long-awaited third season was disenchanting, to say the least. *Sherlock*’s unsustainable maximalization of its source material, an overdependence on Moriarty for clout, clumsy and even inconsistent character development, and its queerbaiting bastardization of the Holmes-Watson relationship became all-too-apparent after that. Still, what strikes me now is that for all our enthusiasm, my friend and I spent those years obsessing over a show in which we as young women weren’t welcome.

From *Sherlock*’s first episode, Holmes identifies women as objects to shame, manipulate, and ignore. He is most in his element when he is announcing a colleague’s sexual history or dismissing the mortician who is desperately in love with him. As the show continues, women characters including a dominatrix, an ex-CIA agent, and a “psychopath” join the cast, but the fact that they are exotically dangerous does little to offset the fact that the strangeness of their undeveloped personalities vindicates their screen presence. The only woman Holmes really seems to trust and approve of right away is Mrs. Hudson, a landlady desexualized by her age as well as the fact that Holmes himself put her husband in jail. There is no room for law-abiding, geeky teenage girls in this universe: without criminality, sexuality, lethality, women are invisible. Some would argue that Cumberbatch’s Holmes merely reflects the sexism espoused by the original

character. This might be true, but it does not speak to the actual portrayals of women as bothersome and pathetic, sexual and manipulative, or else made exceptional by their criminal affiliations. In *Sherlock*, smart, collaborative women are a threat to justice or order, which makes Holmes' sexism a function of his intelligence and ability to see the truth. A distrust of women makes a better detective. But is that Holmes? Must the path to adaptational validity twine with misogyny for the story to turn out right? *Elementary* is one instance where creators said no—and it paid off.

My very favorite thing about *Elementary* is that Joan and Sherlock are best friends, and because they are friends, women have a definite and significant role in the detective's universe. This began as a joke, of course. Upon learning that psychological assessments of Holmes indicate an aversion to women, Rob Doherty, the show's creator, thought, "What would make Holmes crazier than taking the figurative rock he has in Watson and making him a woman?" (Rose). The idea suggests that a known sexist like Holmes would lose all stability when he has no male confidante at his elbow—what makes *Elementary* fun is that this is cast as a positive thing. Sherlock is still sexist, initially leveling the most cutting remarks at Joan in the hopes that she would leave. But just because she makes Sherlock "crazy" doesn't invalidate the fact that Joan is his rock. She actively keeps Sherlock grounded as he maintains his sobriety, and over time, the routines and partnership they build together anchors them in their emotional and professional journeys. In the shared care of their pet tortoise, in Sherlock's tradition of waking Joan in unusual ways, in Joan's disgust at Sherlock's experiments, the pair finds stability from day to day.

Setting Joan and Sherlock's friendship aside, though, *Elementary* is different because women have a place on screen even when they are not relevant to Sherlock's narrative. Joan is her own character with her own stories, and she is always in motion. Even after finding a home in detective work, Joan never stops wanting to grow. As she resolves professional disputes, makes amends with her neighbors, kindles a relationship with her half-sister, and decides to adopt a baby, Joan stretches her abilities as a detective and a friend. Every time, I come away thinking, "I want to solve problems the way she does." Yet Joan isn't alone as a compelling woman character. Some of Joan's most powerful storylines follow her relationship with her mother, Mary Watson, who lives with an Alzheimer's diagnosis. In later seasons, Joan meets her sister Lin Wen for the first time and finds a new friend in her. In these stories, Sherlock usually plays a minimal role—but there are many other women Sherlock admires and incorporates in his own life. Sherlock's love interests, Irene Adler and Fiona Helbron, are accomplished, skilled masters in their own trades. He relies on Ms. Hudson for her expertise in ancient Greek and befriends Kitty Winter because he sees potential to become a great detective. Women in *Elementary* are not defined by their specialties, allowing for impressive characters who make the exceptional everyday while still fostering the narrative palpitations that keep things weird.

A lot of things have changed since my *Sherlock* phase in high school, but the figurative rock I myself find in my best friend is still solid. *Elementary* is, for the most part, my thing, but her support and encouragement have been ever-present through the drafting of this thesis. It's funny—I wanted to say that, as high-schoolers, we would not

have liked *Elementary*, but I couldn't explain why. As I often do when I get stuck, I walked her through my problem, hoping that would give me some clarity. It didn't, but she had an answer: "Being exceptional feels so important in high school. We idealize ourselves—*Sherlock* fulfills that fantasy. However, as we mature, what we want is not idealism, but mirroring. We can never be Sherlock (and shouldn't be, really), but we can have healthy friendship like Joan and Sherlock do." I really liked what she said. It is a striking parallel to that birthday card she sent me: *Sherlock is you, Watson is me*. It was very important that we captured that ideal somehow, thereby naming our hidden exceptionalness and proving our significance. High school is a desperate time like that. Now, as unseasoned adults, we seek mirroring, or what I would consider the difference between "ultimate significance" and a "sameness of significance." I don't want to be the paragon that is Sherlock Holmes, but I like watching *Elementary* because he knows the same thing that I do: friendship makes us better. More compassionate, more attentive, more willing to take risks—having the support of a close friend can change everything. It has for me. What *Elementary* does so well is provide cathartic images of friendship, which inspires the catharsis of friendship itself.

Friendship is a good step forward for Sherlock Holmes. Every Holmes adaptation has a take on who Sherlock Holmes ought to be, and in writing Joan as Sherlock's primary relationship, *Elementary* suggests that Sherlock Holmes should be friends with women. Given that the detective genre routinely punishes and delegitimizes its heroines, this shift is an important one, and future adaptations will be held to the same standard. To be sure, *Elementary* is not a bastion of feminist representation in crime dramas—there's

more going on in the series than Joan Watson demanding a place at the table of logic and intellectualism. Yet through Joan and Sherlock, *Elementary* implies that Holmes and Watson's friendship can be a feminist act. That is, depictions of relationships filled with mutual respect and encouragement can work as a tool to repair the sexism previously represented in the same characters and situations. Is this an ambitious claim? Definitely. More than that, it might not even be a good one. There has been a lot of sexism in world history, and artists cannot paint over that ugliness with fictional people being nice to each other. But clearly, an attempt at change is being made. *Elementary* wants its audience to picture Sherlock Holmes as Joan's friend. That friendship is meant to alleviate Holmes' inwrought sexism, and maybe raise audience expectations for his character. I want to examine whether *Elementary* actually repairs anything.

This thesis focuses on *Elementary*'s third season, in which Sherlock's relationship with Joan is in shambles. Joan begins alone. Sherlock left for England eight months ago without so much as a goodbye, and she hasn't heard from him since. Joan runs her own detective business and makes her own enemies, enjoying a proud measure of success in her labors. The enterprise sours when the prime witness in a major case is murdered with no clues as to the perpetrator. As the trail grows cold, Sherlock steps back into Joan's life. This relationship is uneasy and injured. Joan isn't in a forgiving mood. She no longer relies on him for answers, but he rattles her more when he announces that he no longer relies on her for partnership. Sherlock did not return from England alone—he has a new protégée. Her name is Kitty Winter.

Kitty is the sort of character who rankles. Like Joan, she is dynamic and highly driven, but Kitty rearranges the world around her. Kitty interrupts the familiar Holmes-Watson duality, adding a third to a partnership that has, in one sense, lasted a century. When Kitty claims herself as a partner, she holds the threat of a “Watson do-over.” She is a new variable. More than that, she is not altogether likeable. According to actress Ophelia Lovibond, Kitty is “much more volatile than Watson ever was. She’s much less measured and kind of even, and she’s got a bit of a temper” (Doherty, et al.). Kitty is smart—and untrained, fierce, impatient, demanding—and easily threatened. More than that, she is recovering from the trauma of captivity and rape. As Sherlock and Joan learn to be friends again, they must reframe their relationship to incorporate and uplift Kitty as a member of their practice. At first glance, Kitty’s twelve-episode arc represents a familiar path for Sherlock and Joan: their job is to befriend a young woman and train her in the art of detection. But the stakes with Kitty are higher—for their roles as mentors and friends to function as a reparative act, Sherlock and Joan must contend with the instance of sexual assault and its accompanying dehumanization. Friendship is a humanizing act, which helps, but Kitty Winter’s story is no easy thing to fix.

*Elementary* posits that depictions of relationship can be an active, fertile response to sexist narratives, which it accomplishes in its third season by featuring Kitty Winter’s development alongside three mentor characters. In the first chapter, I review the body of literature surrounding detective fiction and crime shows, which supports my claims that the way *Elementary* constructs gender might affect audience members through fantasy and that mentorship has a problematic history within detective narratives. The subsequent

chapters respectively close-read three keystone episodes: “Rip Of” (3x5), “Terra Pericolosa” (3x6), and “The One That Got Away” (3x12). The second chapter tracks Kitty’s relationship with Captain Gregson, which seems to grant Kitty power as an apprentice female detective but actually reinforces the sexist boundaries of paternal mentorship. The third chapter considers Joan Watson’s mentorship alongside the use of the detectives’ gendered domestic space. Joan’s attempts at mentoring Kitty are not rewarded; instead, Joan’s only power as a mentor extends over Sherlock, which is an overall failure. Finally, the fourth chapter examines Sherlock Holmes’ mentorship of Kitty as a conflict between the moral universes of hard-boiled and procedural detective traditions, which, though flawed, ultimately empower the protégée character. A short conclusion reflects on the significance of this research. In this thesis, I will argue that the mentorships portrayed on *Elementary* are a continuation of recent crime dramas’ project to portray gender equality; however, the small victory of Kitty Winter’s empowerment is overshadowed by the show’s unsuccessful bid at overturning sexist mentorship tropes in detective narratives.



CHAPTER ONE:  
READING *ELEMENTARY* AS AN ATTEMPT AT PORTRAYING GENDER  
EQUALITY

Many fans critique *Elementary* for its sporadic use of Arthur Conan Doyle's stories as source material. In forcing Holmes to conform with the conventions of a procedural crime drama, the stories lose some of their dramatic flair, if not the exceptionalism core to the character. This is not true on all counts. Some episodes—like “A Study in Charlotte” (4x13) and “Hounded” (4x16)—make an admirable bid at reimagining some of Conan Doyle's most famous works. Conceding to the crime drama, however, tends to expunge the mystique that gave the originals their heightened glory. Some viewers criticize the disconnect between Conan Doyle's intentions and *Elementary*'s practice, but less-appreciated is the potential of a procedural drama set in the modern era to contend with contemporary anxieties like gender inequality without necessarily being bound to the faults of the first. In this chapter, I will discuss how *Elementary* engages the Holmes tradition, why that matters to audiences at large, and how sexism and mentorship have engaged in previous crime dramas.

On the whole, *Elementary* extends the cares of Sherlock Holmes to include our modern understanding of gender inequality and violence against women. This is most visible in season three with the introduction of Kitty Winter, a young rape victim whom Sherlock mentors as a detective as she seeks closure from the attack. Kitty's twelve-

episode arc is a clear departure from the Holmes canon, in which few characters outside the police force made a repeat appearance, much less moved in with Holmes and joined his practice. While the procedural form gives the adaptation the opportunity to engage with female-centric narratives as Conan Doyle never did, *Elementary* falls victim to the sexist limitations of its source material. *Elementary* engages with a healing-after-trauma narrative that intends to be an empowerment fantasy; however, conventions of the procedural crime drama tend not to validate equitable and truly empowering portrayals of women.

The first limitation of the procedural crime drama is in its backdrop of masculinity, which stems from hard-boiled and tough thriller detective dramas from the 1930s onwards. In “Policing Genres—*Dragnet*’s Texts and Generic Contexts,” Jason Mittell tracks how tough thrillers relate to film *noir*, and ultimately demonstrates how *Dragnet* compiles generic elements from previous detective and documentary films into the procedural drama. Mittell writes that tough thrillers focus on “an independent male detective solving a crime relying more on his masculinity and physical endurance than deductive skills, while painting a cynical representation of urban America” (130). Essentially, the tough thriller’s detective ties together crime-solving with a manhood bred of an inherently chaotic and brutal reality. While this description in no way totalizes the American detective, it identifies a meaningful precedent of masculinity that portrays isolation and violence as valuable and even ultimate ideals in an investigator. As detective narratives shifted towards the more “realistic” and team-based procedural

drama, the detective's aloneness lessened, but his physical endurance remained key to his identity.

Foundational to this shift was the dawn of the buddy cop story, which integrated detective work with partnership without sacrificing physical prowess. In "Watching the Detectives: The Enigma of the Female Gaze," Lorraine Gamman notes that "Heroes such as Starsky and Hutch, or Regan and Carter, are seen to solve crimes only after they have proved their masculinity—usually by 'courageously' and violently overpowering the opposition" (9). Like the tough thriller detective of the 1930s, detectives belonging to procedural dramas in the 1970s symbolically attained their right to implement the law through demonstrations of manly firmness. In the buddy cop iteration, however, the detectives' violence lends itself to the developing friendship, rather than detachment. While this physical endurance illustrates the detectives' legitimacy as law enforcement, it also legitimizes the detective partnership as a new bastion of masculinity. Within these narratives, the male detective partners have each other's backs, determined to fight for and with their friend, which is not only meant to be seen as courageous, as Gamman notes, but honorable. The buddy cop narrative, in other words, adapts the detective hero's masculinity to include partnership without sacrificing the character's central violence. While *Elementary* is not a buddy cop story, similar complications arise as the series explores male-female friendships through the convention of detective partnership. In particular, portrayals of violence that legitimize the characters as detectives or as friends threatens to masculinize female detective characters, upholding law enforcement as a male activity upon which women encroach. Furthermore, if a female detective depends

on borrowed masculinity for authority, partnership is not a source of empowerment or equity for her, leaving the genre's gender constructions largely unchanged.

Meaningful, too, is that the hard-boiled and tough thriller traditions are a separate entity from the classical detective tradition to which Sherlock Holmes belongs. In his essay "On Teaching Detective Fiction," Steven R. Carter writes that early detectives like Holmes "use reason to bring order out of chaos and to gain some degree of control over their world" (404). The classical detective has his own suspect constructions of masculinity, but there is far more of an emphasis on order than on violence. This is important because *Elementary*, unlike most procedural dramas, adapts source material from the classical genre to the format and conventions of the procedural, which has an ethic of teamwork and an assumption of a chaotic world that was simply not present at the time when Sherlock Holmes was written. In other words, *Elementary* is a cultural site of tension between three detective styles—adapting the classical to the procedural, and the procedural stemming from the tough thriller—and the conflicting values between the three result in a porous amalgamation of gender-constructing traditions.

Given the heavily masculine nature of the detective genre—and with that the near-certainty that the gender constructions presented on *Elementary* or any crime drama will be disappointing at best, if not veritable cesspools of gender toxicity—it bears considering to what end scholars study gender in crime drama. Why examine how gender is constructed in detective stories when we know it's going to be bad? There is a certain futility in seeking feminist representation in crime television, but to label all detective dramas as "bad" ignores the fact that problematic constructions of gender are not a

monolith. Julie D'Acci writes in her seminal book *Defining Women: Television and the Case of Cagney & Lacey* that studying gender on television requires a number of assumptions, notably that “gender (like all aspects of the human subject) is not something acquired and settled once and for all at birth or shortly thereafter but is constantly in process, continually being shaped, enacted, and reconfigured” (3). The fluid and evolving nature of gender, in other words, can be represented in television, and are guaranteed to shift over time. To study gender constructions on television means to examine potentially problematic representations in degree and kind. *Elementary* is particularly appropriate for study because its gender constructions are shaped and reconfigured from three detective traditions. Even if it did not, it would still be participating in a shifting process of gender that contains information about how audiences conceive of gender and how that is changing.

On top of that, the implication that gender representations on television have to be “good” or unproblematic to be valuable—or even enjoyable—is simply not true. In her essay “Melodramatic Identifications: Television Fiction and Women’s Fantasy,” Ien Ang discusses why women might identify with and take pleasure in watching characters like Sue Ellen from the soap opera *Dallas*. A “role/image approach” to representation takes the stance that an audience views an image like Sue Ellen as an “adequate model of reality,” which Ang critiques because “it can only account for the popularity of soap operas as something irrational. In other words, what the role/image approach tends to overlook is the large *emotional involvement* which is invested in identification with characters of popular fiction” (83). Ang’s thoughts are important because they suggest

that enjoying and finding meaning in problematic representations of one's own gender is an understandable and even predictable thing that people do. Ang does not try to justify women identifying with problematic content, nor will I (87). Rather, Ang highlights the mere fact that emotional involvement is a component of television's influence. Women who enjoy *Elementary*—for that matter, Asian and Black people, trans women, survivors of sexual assault, and people with other marginalized identities that appear on the show—may recognize serious problems regarding how the show constructs gender and race and yet find themselves invested in the show. Emotional involvement, for good or ill, influences these viewers and how they think, and examining gender constructions decodes the implicit messages in the content these viewers receive.

One flaw to this train of thought is that *Elementary* is not a popular show (and there may very well be more people who have declared an emotional investment in *not* watching it, thanks to the Tumblr uproar of 2012). As a final justification for why studying gender in *Elementary* might be important—even if it lacks a substantial fanbase—I turn to current doctoral candidate Suzanne R. Black in her article “The Archontic Holmes: Understanding adaptations of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories in the context of Jacques Derrida’s Archive.” Black considers Conan Doyle’s novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles* alongside the BBC *Sherlock* episode “The Hounds of Baskerville,” writing that “when consumed in tandem, the two hound texts are cumulatively enhanced. Thus, these two archive entries circumvent chronology to achieve an a-historical equivalence in which the notion of a ‘source’ is lost” (5). In bringing Derrida to Sherlock Holmes, Black exposes how time unites disparate Holmes

stories and adaptations that can be put in conversation with one another as equals. This means that a show like *Elementary* can be used to read back on the Holmes canon and vice versa, which I will do in my fourth chapter between Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client" and *Elementary*'s "The Illustrious Client" and "The One That Got Away." At the same time, the ongoing addition of adaptations to the Holmes Archive means that someday it will be possible to put other Holmes adaptations in conversation with *Elementary*, and the gender issues present in future adaptations may be inspired by *Elementary* or contradict them. Returning to Ang's emphasis on emotional involvement, it seems fair to say that while few people may be invested in *Elementary*, Western culture is invested in the character of Sherlock Holmes, and the role of gender in the Holmes Archive is still very much in process.

Knowing, then, that *Elementary*'s constructions of gender have an influence, it is noteworthy that the influence itself remains somewhat unclear. D'Acci continues from the assumptions she finds necessary to study *Cagney & Lacey* as a cultural force, D'Acci writes, "television (one of our culture's most productive technologies for generating images and meanings of masculinity and femininity) is a major participant in shaping the gender of its audiences" (3). In making this comment, D'Acci asserts that gender constructions, however fictional, have a real-life effect on the people who receive them. Although I grant that this statement is somewhat vague about how and to what extent television affects its audiences, I maintain that D'Acci's point stands without defining the effect in measurable terms. Some researchers choose to cite ratings and the prevalence of crime dramas to highlight their importance but noting that something is measurably

popular is not the same as finding something measurably influential. Indeed, in an age where broadcast television competes with digital streaming, such statistics can mean relatively little. More than that, digital streaming enables an era where our culture generates far more images than any one person could reasonably consume, which makes it difficult to make broad statements about an individual show's cultural reach.

Putting a scholar like Ang in conversation with D'Acci can help contextualize how the mechanics of gender construction create an impact, even if that impact is unclear. Ang does this by counteracting the "role/image approach" that requires a literal and uncritical perception of characters. Fictional characters, Ang writes,

cannot be conceptualised as realistic images of women, but as textual constructions of possible *modes of femininity*: as embodying versions of gendered subjectivity endowed with... specific ways of dealing with conflicts and dilemmas. In relation to this, they do not function as role models but are symbolic realisations of feminine subject positions with which viewers can identify *in fantasy*. (83)

In other words, a fictional character personifies a gendered way of being and in this personification, viewers find resonant identity constructions with which they empathize.

D'Acci and Ang agree that television shapes gender, but Ang is explicit in suggesting that television makes this impact through the mechanism of identification.

"Identification" is "the action or process of regarding or treating one thing as identical *with* another," which means that when viewers identify with a fictional character, the character is seen as indistinguishable from the viewer. Obviously, that sentiment could be



taken to a frightening extreme—like the people who become convinced they are Jesus, for example—but for the most part this process of identification is common and benign. One might expect a child to point to a picture in a book and proclaim that she looks “just like me;” one might also expect a *Sex and the City* fan to identify herself as a Samantha or a Carrie. That “just like me” sentiment would seem to be the source of both emotional investment as well as a potential avenue of gender in process, meaning that when television shows develop sympathetic characters, audiences can be changed in the process.

Whatever the danger of this potential influence, Ang does make clear that viewers perceive a pleasurable benefit from this identification. Ang writes that the pleasure of fantasy is in its unreality, saying, “through fantasy she can move beyond the structural constraints of everyday life and explore other situations, other identities, other lives” (83-4). In other words, when a character experiences an unattainable or unknown situation, the viewer can imagine what it is like to be that person performing that behavior without factors like impossibility or consequences in play. The premise of identification is key here, because if, in fantasy, a viewer and character are identical, then they share in the experience of the narrative’s outcome. Ang does distinguish between private fantasies and the public fantasies audiences find in fiction, but it is Ang’s position that the process of fantasy nonetheless applies to fiction in sufficient measure to merit contemplation (84). Knowing, then, that fiction is an avenue for pleasant and impossible fantasies that the viewer can herself experience, the appeal of *Elementary* and its third-season narrative becomes more apparent.

In inviting audiences to empathize with Kitty Winter, *Elementary* likewise operates as a public fantasy scenario that moves beyond everyday constraints. The premise itself is the stuff of imagination: a young sexual assault survivor moves into the home of a man fifteen years her senior, and not only does he make no sexual advances towards her—he is the greatest detective of all time and is teaching her his trade for free. When the survivor’s rapist threatens her publicly, she decides to kill him; however, her friends bring the rapist to justice. The young woman changes her mind and instead disfigures the man before fleeing the country, never having to account for her assault. It sounds made up, but that is the point. Encountering Kitty’s arc on *Elementary* as a fantasy offers the opportunity to interrogate the other situations and other lives viewers might identify with and internalize. Ang notes that “there is no punishment for whatever identity one takes up, no matter how headstrong or destructive,” which means that there is an intertwining freedom from reality and freedom to be anything at the same time (86). When Kitty’s narrative manifests certain themes in fantasy, such as being protected by a platonic benefactor, being assured of comrades’ support in crisis, avenging oneself, bringing an attacker to justice, and escaping criminal charges, *Elementary* presents “modes of femininity,” images of what a woman *could* be and experience. The last three themes are of special note, because in an era when few sexual assault survivors have their accusations taken seriously, much less gratified in a courtroom, a narrative in which the survivor gets to personally and legally avenge herself could be a timely and cathartic experience for many viewers. Granting, then, that *Elementary* operates as a site of fantasy

that presents multiple modes of femininity that viewers might internalize, our concern must shift to these modes' content and the implicit messages they carry.

Over the last few decades, procedural dramas have made an attempt to present gender equity, often by featuring an “equal” male-female duo in the starring roles. Early versions of this phenomenon include *Moonlighting* (1985-89) or *The X-Files* (1993-), but Sarah Kornfield has noted the prevalence of “equal” partnerships in a television cycle composed of *Bones* (2005-17), *Fringe* (2008-13), *The Mentalist* (2008-15), and *Castle* (2009-16), hereafter referred to as “the BFMC cycle.” In her article “Re-Solving Crimes: A Cycle of TV Detective Partnerships,” Kornfield uncovers the ways in which these crime dramas seem to promote gender equity through a reversal of gender stereotypes, yet never validate the female detectives for their “feminine” or “masculine” attributes. These shows are distinct in that they are episodic serials that feature a male-female duo as career partners, one of whom is in law enforcement, the other a civilian consultant; the male detective is flexible and emotionally attuned, the female detective is rigid and emotionally distant, and this is fuel for an intense, serialized slow-burn romance (204-5). Though all these aspects contribute to the implicit sexism of the show, the most insidious are those which constitute the gender reversal. In characterizing the female protagonists of these series with traditionally “masculine” traits, like logic or obedience to the law, the intended message is that women are no longer bound by the stereotypes of their gender. Likewise, men can explore their “feminine” sides without penalty. While Kornfield catalogues the ways in which these shows fail to use their gender stereotype reversals in

service of equity, the cycle depends on the faulty premise that women will achieve liberation when they can behave like men without punishment.

The fact that women have not been portrayed well in crime dramas explains why gender reversals are a tempting trope. Returning to “Watching the Detectives,” Gamman notes women characters were unimportant in procedurals featuring male detective partnerships. She asserts, “Female characters often intrude solely in order to supply a yardstick against which the heterosexuality of the male partnership can be measured—and secured” (9). Detective shows tend to portray women as sex objects. This is no surprise, but it distinguishes the female detectives who star in the BFMC cycle. While detectives Beckett, Brennan, Lisbon, and Dunham are love interests for the male protagonists, they are subjects and agents in their respective narratives. Even if they are beautiful, they are not eye candy. They are integral to the solution of each mystery, and this gives the appearance of a hopeful shift from the women who appeared only to confirm a male detective’s virility.

Though the BFMC cycle emphasized the contributions of their female detectives, they nonetheless fail to correct sexist narratives. In her article, “The Marititious Melodrama: Film Noir with a Female Detective,” Philippa Gates writes, “Feminist critics tend to disagree whether the parachuting of women into traditionally male roles—for example, that of detective—results in a feminist representation” (24). Conceding that pasting women into detective roles is better than portraying sex objects, if women characters nonetheless uphold patriarchal structures, they fail to actualize true liberation. In the cases of the BFMC cycle, female detectives are being parachuted not only into the

role of detective, but also into the role of “partner.” Rather than depicting a similar friendship present in male detective partnerships, the partnership itself becomes the yardstick that measures both detectives’ heterosexuality. On top of that, in correlating the female detectives with “masculine” characteristics, these characters often uphold the masculinity of the American detective and do not challenge it. In many ways, shows like these are problematic and yet make progress at the same time. The same is true of *Elementary*, and these tensions are equally complex.

Towards the end of her essay, Kornfield suggests that *Elementary*, at the time still in the throes of its first season, is the next iteration of the BFMC cycle with a twist. Unlike the gender stereotype reversals of the earlier shows, “In *Elementary* the emotionally detached character is male, and the emotionally attuned character is female, reasserting traditional gender norms for emotional acumen” (Kornfield 218). *Elementary*, it seemed, appeared to set up a procedural drama that would not challenge gender norms and yet would still punish its female detective for her inadequacies. I will be the first to admit that *Elementary*’s season got off to a rocky start, almost going out of its way to be sexist; however, in the long run the choice to run with “traditional gender norms for emotional acumen” distinguishes *Elementary* from the other four shows in the cycle. On its own, an absent gender reversal would not mean much, but it is paired with the absence of another key attribute of the cycle: a slow burn romance between the lead detectives. The Holmes and Watson partnership exists between friends, not lovers, and thus their relationship does not serve to assert heterosexuality in its mere existence. This does not mean that their relationship is without problematic gender constructions—to the contrary,

they are present as a largely unexplored territory in both Holmes and detective scholarship.

The gender scholarship that does surround *Elementary* tends to focus on the issues that arise through Joan Watson as a person and partner. Lucy Baker is critical of casting Watson as a woman in her article “Joan Watson: Mascot, Companion, and Investigator,” where she argues that regendering Joan “relies heavily on the maleness and implied masculine power of the original for its impact” (156). Essentially, even though Joan’s character broadens our understanding of Sherlock Holmes to include women, *Elementary* relies on the implicit patriarchy of the Watson character to give Joan worth and meaning. It may very well be that if Joan did not have Dr. Watson’s reputation or the legitimacy of Sherlock’s friendship, any narrative surrounding that character would have tanked. Baker’s argument that Joan is problematic as a woman character is in line with Gates’ recognition that a female character does not guarantee feminist representation. Constructing Watson as a woman can never escape or overcome the masculinity of the source material, even as it attempts to make Joan into Sherlock’s “equal.”

Ironically, it may be the “traditional gender norms for emotional acumen” that give *Elementary* a less problematic construction of gender than other shows in the cycle. In “‘There is No Genius’: Dr. Joan Watson and the Rewriting of Gender and Intelligence on CBS’s *Elementary*,” Helen H. Kang and Natasha Patterson praise *Elementary*’s nuance using a form that would tend to associate masculinity with intelligence and femininity with emotion. Kang and Patterson suggest that Joan and Sherlock’s first season arc offers “more nuanced and elastic gender representations where women,

particularly women of color, are unquestionably as capable and intelligent as (white) men, and where smart men are also emotionally vulnerable and imperfect” (140). That is to say, Kang and Patterson identify both Joan and Sherlock as being logical and emotional at the same time. While this may seem to replicate the gender-reversed emotional intelligence Kornfield problematizes in other shows, portraying the male and female detectives as simultaneously inhabiting two sides of a binary offers a third way that defies gendering logic or emotion at all. The extent to which *Elementary* actually upholds this third way is a subject for further discussion and one I address in my analysis chapters. As it stands, while *Elementary* may be a satellite member of the BFMC cycle, it paves a different path of gender construction in forgoing romance and hybridizing emotional intelligence stereotypes.

*Elementary*'s third season continues the pattern of finding a third way by introducing Kitty Winter to Sherlock and Joan's partnership. Because Joan and Sherlock are not love interests, their relationship allows for an intimacy as partners that can also absorb secondary characters. This occurs most frequently with Joan and Sherlock's law enforcement contacts, Gregson and Bell, whose personal lives become more significant as their friendships strengthen. Kitty, however, joins the show as a civilian consultant who works with Joan and Sherlock, which disrupts the traditional Holmes-and-Watson duality, the accompanying binary of logic and emotion, and the male-female balance. More than that, Kitty's arrival also represents the second time that a serialized plotline suggests that mentorship is one path to women's empowerment. The first example of this plotline occurred in the first season, in which Sherlock mentors Joan as a detective. This

mentorship is evidently effective, as Joan owns her own private detective business two years later. Joan's apprenticeship with Sherlock sets a precedent in which *Elementary* equates mentorship with a career-related empowerment that leaves one the equal of Sherlock Holmes.

A mentoring relationship is not immediately comparable to the staple romantic plotlines in the BFMC cycle, which tend to entrap their heroines in matrimony or motherhood. No such outcome threatens Joan or Kitty during their respective mentorships; while *Elementary* does erase Holmes' canonical asexuality, the show explores Joan and Kitty only as Sherlock's friends and protégées. Nonetheless, mentorship, like romance, represents a committed, if not contractual, relationship that sets the tone for the show's gendered power dynamics. Other shows in the cycle fail because they present images of equity without substantiating it. *Elementary*, on the other hand, depicts Sherlock as "creating" his own equals through mentorship, which implies a different kind of imprisonment within the confines of the mentor's creative—and masculine—will. Therefore, the key to understanding *Elementary*'s reassuring but potentially false images of empowerment requires an understanding of how mentorship portrayals in the past have created seemingly powerful heroines who ultimately reinforce images of patriarchal power.

In emphasizing mentorship in its third season, *Elementary* aligns Kitty with the mentored female detectives popularized before her. Mentorship in detective stories has been used to soften the impact of women detectives on screen. In *Defining Women*, D'Acci highlights the shifting relationship between the protagonist and the Law on late-



twentieth century police dramas as women began taking lead detective roles. D'Acci reports on "tensions surrounding the replacement of the active male body (the Law's equation with male power) with that of the female... The female cop was usually allied with a male mentor, a father figure or 'brother' cop" (117). In other words, while these shows began featuring women detectives, their relationships with mentoring characters allayed fears that the Law was becoming "feminized." Male mentors on television thus arose in part to masculinize and control female detectives, preserving the Law's male power on screen. *Elementary's* portrayal of mentorship differs in that Sherlock, Joan, and Kitty are civilian consultants who have a fluctuating relationship with the Law. At the same time, the characters' close relationship with the N.Y.P.D. means that the images of Joan and Sherlock tend to uphold the Law by default. Deviation is an extraordinary circumstance, but nor are they Law enforcers. Furthermore, that same police affiliation constructs a character like Captain Gregson as an image of paternal authority, equivalent to the Law's power. Mentorship in detective film and dramas is always linked to the Law's patriarchal power.

One might assume that Law-affiliated mentorships would create images of cold and institutional father figures, but this is not so: images of paternal mentorships often evoke an affection or sympathy towards the Law-aligned character. Linda Mizejewski calls paternal mentors "Daddies" in her book *Hard-Boiled and High Heeled: The Woman Detective in Popular Culture*. Analyzing *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), Mizejewski suggests that Clarice Starling would accept setbacks in a male dominated field "if she was inspired by a lost, good-cop daddy whose love she can secure forever by taking his

place” (184). In saying this Mizejewski identifies the “Daddy”—what I will call a paternal mentor—as an inspirational figure who represents moral heroism and the ideal to which a young female detective aspires. Clarice hopes to earn her father’s approval by following in his footsteps, not only as a good person but a “good-cop,” where her moral success is aligned with her conformity to the police institution. Applying this narrative to *Elementary*, Gregson arises as a potential Law-aligned paternal mentor whose approval Kitty might earn in her detective function. His approval as a father figure legitimizes the image of a young female detective within the Legal institution.

Joan Watson offers an unusual image as a female mentor, given that most detective mentorships gain their social currency from an association with male power. Mizejewski expounds on this theme when she notes that while Clarice has three Daddies in the film, Thomas Harris’s novel portrayed Clarice receiving support from several women. Mizejewski writes that in the film, “it’s safer to give Clarice a paternal rather than a maternal connection because she’s part of, rather than opposed to, a male tradition” (184). Filming Clarice in supportive relationships with women, it seems, would make her an enemy of the state. Her alignment with the Daddy characters therefore protects the police institution even as it also requires Clarice to be an image of masculinized womanhood who is “worthy” of the Daddies’ support. *Elementary* seems to turn from this pattern by emphasizing Kitty’s relationship with Joan. Like Gregson, Joan belongs to the N.Y.P.D.’s male tradition, but this affiliation might ameliorate the “opposition” of a maternal mentor. Even so, Joan’s role as a mentor is a potentially “unsafe” avenue where *Elementary* may circumvent reinforcing the Law.

It is also notable that while *The Silence of the Lambs* film does not emphasize maternal mentorships, shows in the BFMC cycle do. Given the closeness in age between the female mentors in these shows and the female detectives they support, it seems like they should not immediately be labeled “maternal mentorships.” Nonetheless, *Bones*’s Cam Saroyan, *Fringe*’s Nina Sharpe, and *Castle*’s Victoria Gates are notable leaders and employers who fit the bill for maternal mentorship. In one sense, it might be more accurate to call these characters “female paternal mentors,” because all three are stand-ins or replacements for male characters within a masculine-coded institution. Nina Sharpe, for example, works as a spokesperson for the fictitious corporation Massive Dynamic, filling in for the company’s elusive male C.E.O. On *Castle*, Victoria Gates replaces Roy Montgomery as the precinct’s captain, her predecessor being a replacement father for Beckett. Likewise, Dr. Cam Saroyan replaces the Jeffersonian Institution’s male director and does not attain her employee’s respect for some time afterwards. These characters are not necessarily “maternal” because they become like mothers to the other characters; rather, the relative masculinity of their institutional power grants the characters a parental authority within the hierarchical social order. This could be potentially be made more complex if a detective’s biological mother were put in tension with maternal mentors in the professional sphere, which may be a fruitful avenue of research in future studies. However, that line of thinking is not applicable to the BFMC cycle: Brennan, Dunham, and Beckett all have dead mothers.

Given that Joan carries the masculine background of the canonical Dr. Watson, she could also fall into the trap of being a paternal mentor who happens to be a woman,

but it is more appropriate to call her a female mentor. Joan makes a point of announcing her intention to mentor Kitty while also insisting she is “sure as hell not her mother,” which helps alleviate the maternal tension (“Just a Regular Irregular”). Furthermore, as a civilian consultant, Joan doesn’t belong to an institution—and because at this point in the series, Joan has not reestablished her partnership with Sherlock, Joan’s mentor work is that of a free agent. She is not a paternal mentor in disguise. Another key movement Joan brings to the mentorship is a turn towards developing a goal or skill: that of detective work. While the aforementioned maternal mentors are employers who generally keep an eye on things, Joan’s mentorship of Kitty has a specific and temporary purpose, which the show honors. When Kitty’s character returns in later seasons, Joan and Sherlock do not operate as mentors in the same way. Finally, as a female mentor, Joan is able to express an openness to a trusting and vulnerable relationship that would be inappropriate for the aforementioned maternal mentorships (which is a bitter kind of irony). One of the first things Joan does for Kitty is take her to support group meetings, building a solidarity between the two characters. That said, Joan’s potential as a female mentor aligns with the maternal mentorships in that they are often secondary to the apprentice detective’s mentorships with men. Joan is a teacher and emotional support, but she never reaches the same levels of trust and education that Sherlock accomplishes with Kitty. Male mentorships overrule both female and maternal mentorships.

Paternal and maternal mentorships rely on a parental, often institutional authority for their effect, but Mizejewski identifies the “dependable male ally” as a separate mentor path. Drawing from *The X-Files* and *Profiler*, Mizejewski observes that, “Like Scully,

Sam Waters had an entirely dependable male ally on the job, her friend and boss Bailey Malone, who respected Sam's work and trusted her unorthodox psychic technique" (110). In saying this, Mizejewski prioritizes the ally's course of action over his professional relationship with the female detective. Malone could be Sam's boss and even her friend without believing she is a capable agent and psychic, but he proves himself as her ally through his demonstrations of "respect" and "trust." Mizejewski does not go into further detail regarding a dependable male ally's constitution, but I will argue that Sherlock embodies and expands on the ally's role through his own respect for Kitty's healing process. Like Joan, Sherlock does not take on a parental role with Kitty (which is not to ignore his paternalism), but his ultimate willingness to release Kitty and trust her ability to make her own decisions fosters the model of allyship that leads to a more empowering mentorship. In fact, because of that willingness, I will argue that Sherlock is the only successful mentor in Kitty Winter's arc.

*Elementary* portrays mentorships to construct an empowered female detective even as those mentorships also reinforce negative messages about women. Kitty Winter's relationships with Sherlock, Joan, and Gregson represent a public catalogue of unfulfilled wishes, ranging from a desire for wild adventure to a need to be loved and trusted. Some of these messages are positive, but *Elementary* does not escape the sexist conventions of the detective tradition. But while contradictory messages may make *Elementary* inconsistent and unstable, they do not invalidate the show's potential impact on the audience and the audience's experience of gender. Kitty Winter's mentors represent three different mentorship paths that prioritize the police institution, female solidarity, and trust

in differing degrees. While Joan and Gregson tend toward negative representations of mentorship, Kitty's most empowering relationship is with Sherlock Holmes, whose trust in her may be the very thing that saves her.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### CONFLICTING PERMEABILITIES IN PATERNAL MENTORSHIPS IN “RIP OFF”

In the previous chapter, I explored how sexism and mentorship intertwine on *Elementary*; now, I can look at how that mentorship plays out in practice. In this chapter, I will evaluate paternal mentorship in *Elementary*, and not for nothing. Sherlock Holmes is patronizing. Nearly every Holmes adaptation nods to Holmes’ standoffish demeanor and condescending attitude. It is so often taken for granted that Holmes is patronizing, though, that his role as a patron is easily overlooked. Throughout *Elementary*’s third season, Sherlock prefers to describe Kitty as his protégée. The word “protégée” applies to a student “supported by someone with greater experience,” which is appropriate for Kitty as she relies on Sherlock for instruction as a detective (OED). At the same time, a protégée also “receives the protection” of their patron: the word is the past participle of the French “protéger,” which means “to defend (a person or thing) against danger” (OED). In labeling Kitty as his protégée, Sherlock implies that Kitty is in danger—and, as a survivor of captivity and rape whose case was never solved, there is some truth to that. This chapter will move the discussion forward by examining how the protection of paternal mentorship conflicts with the empowerment of women characters who have survived violence.

Protection after violence is a primary theme in “Rip Off” (3x6), which follows Sherlock and Kitty as they investigate a Jewish diamond smuggler’s murder while Joan is

abroad. During the investigation, Sherlock demands that Kitty sign a non-disclosure agreement after finding an unpublished book Joan wrote about him. After much probing from Kitty and the destruction of the offending document, Sherlock admits his trepidation at facing Joan's scrutiny and destroys Kitty's NDA in response. Meanwhile, Captain Gregson faces pressure from his daughter, Hannah, to publicly make amends with her partner, Stotz. Gregson had punched Stotz after learning he committed relationship violence against Hannah, but agrees to comply with Hannah's wishes and resolve matters with Stotz after receiving counsel from Kitty. Gregson's desire to defend his actions and Sherlock's parallel instinct to protect himself present a potential reversal of the "Daddy" character type outlined by Linda Mizejewski, but Gregson's patriarchal symbolism is not fully undermined. Gregson's relationships with Kitty and Hannah tend to reinforce the paternal narrative, but Sherlock's relative separation from the police institution creates the space to restore the young female detective's power.

Linda Mizejewski details the "Daddy" in *Hard-Boiled and High Heeled*, describing this character as a detective film patriarch who serves as the source of emotional motivation for a young female detective. Drawing from *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), Mizejewski describe the paternal-detective relationship as "a stereotype—daddy's girl, the soundbite for a complex character whose motivations need to be explained in a two-hour movie" (184). As the paternal mentor aligns the female detective with the police institution, his character operates as a shorthand for complexity in a young woman. In the case of Clarice Starling, for example, a simple desire to make her father proud is portrayed as complicated because she has three father figures to impress,



one of whom is a cannibal serial killer. In *Elementary*, Gregson is the primary father figure, but Hannah, his actual daughter, and Kitty are both female detectives motivated by his attention and approval. Both paternal mentor narratives seem to initially resist the mold—and are not necessarily without complexity—but a true reversal never takes place.

Gregson's role as a source of emotional motivation for Hannah is transparent from the beginning. Though Hannah rejects Gregson's advice to take legal action against her partner, her motives still tie back to her father. Hannah tells him, "I want to be captain someday, like you. But it's never gonna happen if people look at me and they see victim" ("Rip Off"). As with Clarice Starling, Hannah's complexity begins with the "daddy's girl" stereotype: she wants to be like him when she grows up, so to speak. Hannah's goals and ambitions are defined by her relationship with her father. Hannah's complexity does not end there, as there is much to discuss with her desire to avoid a "victim" label, but this, too, is tied to the larger police institution her father stands for. In contrast, at this point in the series Kitty remains somewhat tangential to Gregson's life, and Kitty's motivations stem largely from her own sexual trauma and her relationship with Sherlock. Hannah, in other words, seems to fit the "Daddy" narrative perfectly while Kitty share no such relationship with Gregson.

Hannah is the first to diverge from the stereotype when she insists that Gregson publicly make up with her abuser. Hannah does not seek Gregson's sympathy or approval; she only asks for his obedience. This is illustrated when Hannah confronts Gregson about making up with Stotz:

GREGSON: You know what [your commanding officer is] asking me to do, right? He wants me to find that piece of garbage, he wants me to shake his hand—

HANNAH: In front of cops. Like you attacked him in front of cops. It's a gesture. Everyone will know that the thing between you and him is done. They'll let it go.

GREGSON: The thing between me and Stotz is you. [...] You don't talk about it, he could do it again, to you or to somebody else. Is that the kind of guy you want in your department when you're helping run it?

In essence, Hannah does not cave to Gregson's wishes to please him. Her place as a "Daddy's girl" is placed in conflict with her potential for victimhood, and she undermines Gregson's paternal role to perform strength. Meanwhile, Gregson does not regret punching Stotz and has no interest in resolving their dispute. Indeed, he hopes to see Stotz's crimes publicly recognized. This is meaningful in part because while Gregson represents the N.Y.P.D.'s authority on a day-to-day basis with the episode, and in assaulting Stotz, Gregson turns against the institution he stands for. On the same token, both Gregson's assault on Stotz and his emphasis that Hannah take legal action against him demonstrates that the character nonetheless symbolizes justice within this interaction. Gregson's frustration with shaking Stotz's hand may seem rooted in a just indignation at excusing his daughter's abuser. The threat in completing this act is not just a threat to justice, however, but the integrity of the "true detective."

A “true detective’s” power is rooted in their potential for certainty. In “Schrödinger’s Rape: The Problem of Female Detectives and Sexual Assault on TV Procedurals,” doctoral candidate K.M. Ferebee identifies the detective as “one in whom objectivity, power, and boundaries play significant roles. The detective, like the scientist, is a consummate observer: his or her task is to see and understand facts that will lead to comprehension of the objective truth of a situation.” In other words, the detective’s ability to access truth depends upon their ability to create and maintain boundaries. The distinctions between façade and reality or subjective and objective make the difference between victorious solutions and cold cases. Similarly, the detective’s success requires firm boundaries around their person. Procedurals like *Law and Order: SVU* present the idea that “rape objectifies and ‘penetrates’ a person, collapsing their personal integrity and calling into question their agency and their ability to establish and maintain boundaries” (Ferebee). The takeaway here is that rape—and by extension, violation—corrupts an individual’s ability to see reality or truth for what it is. A raped detective might as well be no detective at all without the power to observe and to separate truth from deception.

Rape and violation do not cause “true” male detectives permanent damage. Ferebee adds, “The male detective, in other words, remains ‘safe’ (safely closed) in spite of his temporary or threatened loss of integrity, whereas rape serves to remind us that the female detective has never been safe. The male’s boundaries may be punctured, but they are repairable.” Ferebee suggests that a male detective’s rape, as seen on shows like *The Shield* (2002-8) or *Criminal Minds* (2005–), gets portrayed as a singular event; a female

detective's rape is seen as a risk of her existence from the beginning. "Rip Off" does not deal with concrete representations of rape; however, using instances of violation as a metaphor for rape in the lives of detectives and male mentors specifically offers some insight into how a detective's power is being portrayed and reinforced on television and in the Holmes canon. For a character like Gregson, a threat like Stotz is no small matter—if Stotz violates Gregson's boundaries, he has an impaired ability to access the truth. As the primary symbol of legal authority on *Elementary*, a downfall for Gregson leads to a downfall of justice itself. This violation of boundaries is mediated through Gregson's relationships with young female detectives, which calls the reparability of those boundaries into question.

Kitty and Hannah have faced rape and partner violence, respectively, so their positions as detectives threaten the truth and justice's stability in their profession. Ferebee identifies this as being most evident as "the female body is read as inherently, 'naturally' permeable, and permeable in ways that uneasily open it to transgression or appropriation." In other words, the female body's natural state is perviousness, open to physical and sexual assault as well as murder. This aligns with the fact that women are more often represented as corpses in crime films and dramas, but it has a different twist in "Rip Off." The A-Plot—the mystery of the diamond smuggler's murder—centers around men, where the victim, suspects, and perp are all men. The detectives get their evidence in men's gyms and male witnesses. One woman lawyer has a speaking role. Kitty and Hannah's traumas, meanwhile, create the substance of the B- and C-Plots, and because Joan is absent from the episode, permeability is the main link between the female

leads. While both women are portrayed as agents in their professional settings, the fact that they encompass womanhood within the episode results in a narrative which suggests that women detectives share in their threat to truth and justice. What, then, is a paternal mentor to do with two permeable detectives under his wing?

The major turning point in the episode occurs when Kitty offers to be Gregson's confidant. Kitty and Gregson meet in an outdoor café, shifting from the precinct's institutional restrictions to an open and informal setting. Their conversation picks up after Gregson finishes explaining to Kitty his decision to obey Hannah's wishes:

KITTY: I think you're doing the right thing. How you feel shouldn't be her problem. [...] I know I haven't been here very long, but I do know that perception matters. If she doesn't want to look weak, then she shouldn't have to.

GREGSON: He'll be around her every day. She's gonna have to see him every day.

KITTY: Everything that you've done for me, it's really helped. I'm sorry for what you're going through. You don't deserve it.

Kitty's reaction to Hannah's predicament can be read as a desire to reinforce boundaries, asserting that Hannah should have control over how other people experience her story. Considering this moment from a fantasy standpoint, Kitty's validation of Hannah legitimizes a portrayal of femininity that gives a survivor a measure of narrative control in the aftermath of a trauma. At the same time, if, after Ferebee, *Elementary* suggests that women detectives are inherently permeable, Kitty's support of Hannah's narrative control

seems to validate deception as protection. From this perspective, by rights Hannah lost her integrity once she became the victim of violence. Reinforcing boundaries only becomes possible by hiding that truth and circumventing the performance of victimhood.

This instance of boundary validation, however, is complicated by Gregson's instinct to protect. Gregson is frustrated that Hannah will "have to see [Stotz] every day, yet he also perceives "no choice" but to shake Stotz's hand to satisfy both his daughter and the Law. This constitutes something of a reversal of the paternal mentor narrative. Mizejewski writes that in this storyline, a female detective's motivations are "inspired by a lost, good-cop daddy whose love she can secure forever by taking his place" (184). In other words, the typical Daddy's Girl will take on the role of the Daddy, assuming his boundaries, and thereby gain his approval and affection. This is just the opposite in Hannah and Gregson's relationship. Gregson becomes the character seeking to earn his daughter's approval, and he must take on her boundaries as someone who accepts she has been violated to move the relationship forward. As Gregson reverses his paternal status with Hannah, however, this scene illustrates its conception with Kitty. Kitty's stance that Hannah should not have to look weak is undermined by Hannah's day-to-day interactions with the person who made her feel weak. Gregson's concern for his daughter and his apparent powerlessness move Kitty. Though Kitty's intentions are unclear, her sense that Gregson "doesn't deserve" the present situation marks a point when Gregson becomes a source of her emotional motivations. As Gregson seeks Hannah's approval, Kitty undertakes the traditional quest to please Gregson.

Thus, two separate paternal mentor narratives create two different power dynamics that prove to be on divergent, but never quite subversive, paths. Gregson's choice to publicly resolve matters with Stotz seems to present a positive portrayal of a detective with permeable boundaries. It remains true that Stotz never attacks Gregson as an individual, and Gregson's decision to punch him falls back on the cliché in which a father "fights for his daughter's honor" to assert ownership over her body. However, a different way to look at this scenario characterizes Gregson as an "ideal" or "good" father figure, whose conception of self-interest also applies to his child's well-being. If that is the case, then Hannah's permeability poses a threat to Gregson's boundaries. When Gregson complies with Hannah's wishes, his symbolic roles as a true detective and implementer of justice are forced to accommodate perviousness. At first glance, then, Gregson seems to hybridize masculine legal power with a more feminine permeability.

If Gregson's concession to Stotz were permanent, this moment might represent an evolution for both detective and more specifically paternal mentor characters. In practice, Gregson and Stotz's moment of resolution draws the narrative back into formation. The characters shake hands:

STOTZ: You should know, I'm quitting the department. Last day's

Friday. Cousin's got a personal security firm in Hoboken. It's a better salary anyway. Tell her I told you, okay?

GREGSON: Hannah will be glad to hear it.

STOTZ: I'm not talking about her. I'm talking about your friend. The English one.

As soon as Gregson concedes to permeability, the narrative rewards him by reinforcing his boundaries and securing his place as an inspiring paternal mentor for both of the young women with eyes on his behavior. Hannah's problems, for one, are solved in practice, if not in spirit. Her father has complied with her wishes to the letter. The man who hit her is leaving the force, restoring her boundaries' security in the workplace. This does not represent progress. Gregson does not have to change and Stotz is in fact rewarded financially for his departure. The events that take place are band-aids for the symptoms, failing to address the injury of patriarchy in any meaningful way. However, with her father and abuser taken care of, Hannah restores her narrative mission: following Gregson's footsteps so she might someday make captain. Gregson, likewise, enjoys the restored status of a father figure who can motivate his daughter's success in peace. Despite the detour into Hannah's wishes, Gregson comes out on top with his literal and symbolic power completely intact. The male characters keep their power, and with that power intact, the justice they represent remains stale and corrupt.

Kitty's implied violence against Stotz also concedes to the "Daddy" power structure. Stotz's urgent desire to see Kitty satisfied reveals that she has intervened in the situation on Gregson's behalf, revealing his motivating status in her life. Gregson incited this narrative by punching Stotz, jeopardizing his authority in the police power structure. Gregson avoids punishment by accepting the situation and making amends. But while Gregson does this to please Hannah, his real desire is to see Stotz held accountable. Kitty's actions satisfy this desire. Following the paternal mentor's behavior, Kitty turns to violence to uphold Gregson's power and integrity. It would make sense to consider



Kitty's violence as a matter of defending a fellow survivor, but Kitty's defense of Hannah is not framed in emotional terms. Kitty's assertion that Hannah should not have to look weak implies a distanced ethic she might apply to all survivors. When she tells Gregson "You don't deserve it," though, she expresses a personal sympathy ("Rip Off"). In an ironic twist, the protégée becomes the protector: Kitty threatens Stotz *for* Gregson. This emotional desire to replicate the paternal mentor's behavior and thus secure his love fits the pattern perfectly. That Gregson decides to let the act slide—as he confirms in "The Illustrious Client" (3x11)—suggests Kitty has indeed earned his approval.

"Rip Off" affirms the "Daddy" trope in Kitty's tutelage under Gregson; however, the episode seems to resist the same power structures in Kitty's relationship with Sherlock. In the second subplot, Sherlock seethes upon discovering an improperly deleted book Joan wrote about him and demands Kitty sign an NDA to avoid a similar invasion. Kitty's probing questions lead Sherlock to show her the draft of *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes* he has recovered:

SHERLOCK: If you must know, I'm raw from a recent violation. It's  
come to my attention that my last protégée was engaged in literary  
espionage. [...]

KITTY: She wrote a book about you.

SHERLOCK: My work, my methods. God only knows if she's retained  
copies [...]. In any event you can see why I find it necessary to  
circumscribe a razor-sharp cone of silence.

Like Stotz's violence, Joan's book represents a trespass into the "true" detective's boundaries. The *Casebook* is not a literal act of violence, as in Hannah and Kitty's histories, but Sherlock treats its existence as a compilation of militaristic intelligence. That may be a legitimate fear. To return to Ferebee, a detective's credibility and access to truth depend on his boundaries' strength. Joan's work represents an incursion of the highest degree—if her perspective were to rewrite Sherlock's understanding of reality, what right to truth would he have? In true detective form, Sherlock responds by demanding a "razor-sharp cone of silence," reinforcing his boundaries with the legal protection of an NDA. With the NDA signed and filed, Sherlock's power should be restored, and his reputation as a detective made impeccable once more.

Sherlock's power is disrupted by Kitty's tendency to prod. While Kitty hesitantly invites herself into Gregson's family drama, she questions Sherlock's reaction to the *Casebook* as soon as he shares it with her:

KITTY: I get why you're unhappy, but it's not like she's published the thing.

SHERLOCK: Oh, you would defend her.

KITTY: I say she has a right to make record of her work and her stories.

Sherlock takes an accusing tone with Kitty, suggesting he feels betrayed by her as well. In one sense, Kitty's remark stems from the fact that she, more than other characters, fearlessly trivializes the things that seem important to Sherlock. While Kitty's first line of dialogue intends to brush off Sherlock's frustration as insignificant, her response to Sherlock is interesting because it may tie directly to Joan's influence in her life. In "Just

A Regular Irregular,” Joan encouraged Kitty to start attending support group meetings as a part of her healing process. In fact, they end the episode by attending one together. Though *Elementary* avoids a voyeuristic focus on these support group meetings, only depicting Kitty’s presence there twice, it’s clear that reclaiming one’s voice and processing one’s past is an important part of those meetings. It’s unknown how much of her story Kitty shares with her support group or whether it involves writing that story down, but that isn’t essential information. We know Joan has influenced how Kitty understands the violence she experienced, and thus her story. In that way, it could be that in defending Joan’s right to storytelling, Kitty defends her own.

Kitty’s defense of Joan’s right to tell stories and control her narrative is consistent with her previous insistence that Hannah should not have to look weak if she doesn’t want to. In both scenes, the male mentors buck at an attack on their boundaries, and Kitty advocates for their female protégées’ right to authority in the situation. Once more, she takes the role of protector. Significantly, the offense against Sherlock was personal. Stotz was a police officer, but he was an outsider, no intimate friend of Gregson’s. Joan is Sherlock’s soul mate. Even if Sherlock was not a “Daddy,” he was Joan’s mentor, and Joan should seek to please Sherlock in the normative power balance, as should Kitty. Joan’s work and stories cannot be taken back, but the NDA Sherlock demands that Kitty sign operates as a corrective to the power balance. Sherlock forces compliance with his boundaries, whether they infringe on his protégées’ rights or not.

Sherlock's integrity as a detective is not the only role at stake here—Joan's authority is also bolstered by her power to penetrate. Kitty also threatens Sherlock with invasion when she accuses him of fearing judgement:

KITTY: You didn't know about her writing. You don't know why she kept it a secret... I could read it for you, if you like...

SHERLOCK: The truth is, you could benefit from absorbing an account of our casework. But Watson did not share the manuscript. And while she may have less exacting privacy standards than I do, she obviously intended to dispose of it. I cannot in good conscience hand it off. Perhaps if—

*KITTY abruptly pours soda on the laptop; it dies. SHERLOCK is taken aback. KITTY turns back to him with her arms crossed against her chest.*

KITTY: If it's of no interest to you, it's of no interest to me. Either way, it's over now.

Kitty's power to read and absorb Joan's writing appears to reclaim the violations the NDA forestalled. In its own way, Sherlock's NDA was a weapon of infringement: when one protégée challenged the detective's isolation, Sherlock responded with a similar act of penetration into the protégée at hand. The contract successfully limits Kitty's ability to share her own stories; however, it cannot undo the stories Joan has already shared. In reading Joan's work, Kitty would piggyback on her predecessor's penetration and regain power over the mentor character, beyond his boundaries and under his skin in one swift

act. Just as Stotz's continued presence in the N.Y.P.D. haunted Gregson, the *Casebook* remains a vulnerability for Sherlock. The difference between these two situations arises from the trajectory of their power as detectives. Gregson experienced a temporary reversal of power, forfeiting his boundaries in an attempt to please his daughter. The narrative rewards him with Stotz's removal. Sherlock, though, responded by strengthening his boundaries from the start. He maintains his status as a "true" detective—yet he does not destroy the penetrative influence that endangered him.

Gregson's handshake with Stotz illustrates a detective conceding his boundaries, only to be rewarded; Sherlock follows this narrative in affirming the value of Joan's writing, but then complicates it by introducing Joan's privacy. In one light, this moment would seem to rewrite the paternal mentor narrative, as Kitty destroys the manuscript to please Sherlock, whose rights as a detective become secure. However, this perspective equates the *Casebook* with Stotz, as if it were a literary symbol of abuse and control, which ignores the fact that the manuscript was not the source of conflict. Sherlock's anxiety stems from Joan's role as an author and observer. Sherlock says, "you could benefit from absorbing an account of our casework. But Watson did not share the manuscript" ("Rip Off"). In other words, Sherlock concedes his boundaries to the value of the stories, but then flips the relationship by acknowledging that Joan's boundaries deserve respect as well. Until this moment, Sherlock has responded as Joan's victim. Now, he recognizes that to read the manuscript without Joan's permission would make her the victim—Sherlock and Kitty would become the violators. To be clear, reading Joan's *Casebook* without her permission is not equitable to a literal rape, but trespassing

on someone's thoughts recalls the shared violent dynamic of acting without consent. Contextualizing that violence in a metaphor (as opposed to the more literal representation with Hannah and Stotz) has two effects. First, it allows Kitty to interact with a defamiliarized violation narrative so that she can discuss victimhood without returning to the victim position. Second, it serves to empower Joan's character and negate impositions on her own power to decide. Kitty removes the manuscript, as she will Stotz, but this is an act of removing a distraction, not enacting justice. Neither Sherlock nor Kitty can destroy Joan's freedom to write, and so the threat to Sherlock's boundaries remains. If *Elementary's* source material is any indication, Joan's activities as a writer may make a repeat appearance. As it stands, Sherlock's only reward is a freer access to the mystery. Ultimately, Sherlock seems to succeed where Gregson does not, and hybridizes his authority as a detective with more malleable boundaries. The episode's final scene affirms permeability:

SHERLOCK: You weren't entirely wrong about Watson. She does have the right to tell her own stories. I may have felt some mild trepidation about subjecting myself to her full appraisal. Almost imperceptibly mild. Anyway, um, I've decided that this nondisclosure agreement was made in error.

*SHERLOCK rips the NDA in half twice.*

SHERLOCK: I want you to feel free to, um, produce your own memoirs. Should you feel the need.

KITTY: I'm not much of a writer.

SHERLOCK: Well, let me know if that changes. Who knows? If you do write a book, someone might be interested to read it.

Sherlock makes amends by restoring Kitty's ability to write and share stories, even though he risks losing his "razor-sharp cone of silence." This is good news for Kitty, as her ability to write demonstrates an ability to define and cross borders, as Joan's *Casebook* did. Kitty's restored right to authorship frees her potential as a detective—even her mentor must submit to her gaze. Sherlock, meanwhile, demonstrates growth towards an affirming perspective of permeability, not only in destroying the NDA but in suggesting that he would be interested in reading Kitty's interpretation of their adventures together. Sherlock does not end with the same power structure that Gregson does. Gregson's mentorship path diverges but returns to an order where he is an impenetrable paternal mentor for apprentice female detectives. Sherlock considered his boundaries sacred but transitions to a more permeable state to encourage his protégées' power and prowess as detectives. His success as a mentor, in essence, requires him to sacrifice his integrity as a detective. It seems he finds it worth the while.

"Rip Off" offers two separate narratives that portray male mentors negotiating their boundaries with young female detectives. Gregson's relationship with Hannah appears to affirm the young female detective's authority, but only rewards permeability on a superficial level. The "Daddy" trope wins out. Sherlock's narrative, conversely, transitions between a rejection of permeability to an ultimate validation. The detective is not just punctured—he seems to accept perviousness as a meaningful part of mentorship. Hannah's portrayal as a survivor of partner violence and Sherlock's indignation at Joan's

*Casebook* offer concrete and abstract narratives that allow the audience to explore the detective's permeability without returning Kitty to the victim function. Even so, the fact that both Gregson and Sherlock are validated as mentors who find a positive equilibrium with their protégées suggests that "Rip Off" does not undo sexist portrayals of mentorship. Gregson may be an inferior investigator to Sherlock, but he remains an impressive figure of authority and justice who softens the enforcement of patriarchal mentorship on *Elementary*.



CHAPTER THREE:  
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN GENDERED SPACE AND MENTORSHIPS IN  
“TERRA PERICOLOSA”

Like shows such as *Bones*, *Fringe*, *The Mentalist*, and *Castle* (that is, the BFMC cycle), *Elementary* implies Joan Watson and Sherlock Holmes should be read as equals. In theory, this equality should extend to their mentoring practices as well. If *Elementary* followed the reversed gender stereotypes of the other shows, Sherlock would contribute to Kitty’s emotional growth as Joan offered Kitty practical skills in detection, similar to the setup of the graduate lab assistants in *Bones*. However, this is not the case. *Elementary* attempts to navigate a third way where Sherlock and Joan both contribute to Kitty’s professional and emotional growth, which is further complicated by the absence of an obvious workplace. Unlike other shows in the cycle, *Elementary*’s protagonists are not law enforcement officers, resulting in a higher concentration of detective work and private discussion inside domestic spaces. These spaces are not equal. As Joan and Sherlock navigate mentorship in their respective homes, Sherlock’s mentorship can disrupt Joan’s domestic space, but Joan’s mentorship has limited influence within Sherlock’s brownstone. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Joan’s female mentorship fails: Joan cannot sustain a lasting domestic connection with Kitty, instead only maintaining authority in her relationship with Sherlock, her so-called partner.

Joan's futile mentorship is present in "Terra Pericolosa" (3x6). Kitty discovers the body of a guard killed during the theft of a sixteenth-century map, and Joan, Sherlock, and Kitty investigate the map's value and information to solve the case. Joan, recently returned from Copenhagen, finds Kitty enjoying more responsibility in Sherlock's practice, but Joan questions its impact on her social life. Joan informs Sherlock that he is taking too many liberties with Kitty's time; Sherlock, however, feels justified because Kitty is receiving the attentions of a young man, Zachary, who could disrupt the progress they've made together. Joan volunteers to take on some of Kitty's work if it means that Kitty can have more time to herself. Sherlock apologizes to Kitty, and Kitty admits that she gave into the chores because she felt anxious about going out with a friend alone. Sherlock resolves the matter by inviting Zachary on a museum trip with himself and Kitty.

In line with reversed gender stereotypes, the women detectives in the BFMC cycle veer away from domestic space. In *Defining Women*, Julie D'Acci writes,

Throughout most of TV history, male actors and characters have starred in and been the active protagonists of dramas and action-adventure programs involving public-sphere stories and settings... Women, as stars and active narrative subjects, were usually limited to the situation comedy—the site of the family, the domestic, the private sphere, the home manager, and the consumer. (106-7)

When women detectives take an active role in the public sphere, they flip the binary of gendered space. Brennan, Dunham, Lisbon, and Beckett all display this in the

traditionally male professions of scientists, agents, and officers, wherein they become visually linked with their workplaces. The Jeffersonian's lab, for example, is the most distinctive set on *Bones*—Brennan is far more “at home” in her lab sorting through skeletons than in the domestic spaces she inhabits as a lover and mother. Notably, the female mentors on these shows are also portrayed as public-sphere professionals. These characters demonstrate their viability as mentors usually through administrative power: *Bones*'s Saroyan in the lab, *Fringe*'s Sharpe within the corporate walls of Massive Dynamic, and *Castle*'s Gates in the police precinct. Though their domestic lives infringe on the occasional episode, the cycle's female mentors tend to exist only via their professional lives and serve the plot through their administrative powers. Joan collapses the female detective and the mentor into one character. To be in line with the rest of the cycle, Joan's professional identity should dominate her screen presence. It does not. The tensions between Joan's occupation of professional space is complicated by two factors: the domesticity of the male detectives in the cycle and the domesticity of Sherlock Holmes himself.

The male detectives of the BFMC cycle do not fully encompass the spatial reversal between private and public sphere. In her essay “Detecting Fatherhood: The ‘New’ Masculinity in Prime-Time Dramas,” Sarah Kornfield identifies how so-called gender-reversed stereotypes appear in the shows' male detectives. She writes that they “are portrayed as naturally nurturing to the extent that their emotional acumen transfers into their careers, making them consummate detectives” (121). Similarly, the male detectives are more likely to be associated with iconic domestic spaces. *Fringe*'s Peter

Bishop, for example, cares for his father in their beautiful Cambridge home, which is a primary site of their reconciliation and care. Dunham, meanwhile, lives in three or four houses over the course of the series—the houses are stylish and neat, but at no point is Dunham’s house the “domestic center” of the series. Similarly, *Castle* emphasizes the connection tied to Rick Castle’s apartment, where he writes novels and lives with his mother and daughter; Beckett’s home is lonely and empty by comparison. In this cycle, female detectives are portrayed as having neat and pleasant domestic spaces, but it is the spaces owned and inhabited by the male detectives that are the true “site of the family,” where emotional connection and belonging take place. This further perpetuates the shows’ problematic gender reversals. Given that Sherlock owns the primary domestic site on *Elementary*—the brownstone—it would follow that the series is another example of a procedural drama’s male detective taking possession of the traditionally feminine private sphere. However, this series differs from most procedural dramas in that it is an adaptation.

*Elementary* explicitly uses Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes as its inspiration and source material, and that means the series portrays domesticity differently. Despite Holmes’ pervasive influence on mysteries, as procedurals *Bones*, *Fringe*, *The Mentalist*, and *Castle* actually descend from the hard-boiled detective tradition, which branches from the Western (Krutnik 9). These stories focus on a masculine hero whose talents and violence are both directed towards the public sphere, effectively crafting the distinction D’Acci noted above. As a classical detective, Holmes was not immune from an emphasis on masculinity or violence—but nor does he fit neatly

into the distinctions between “public” and “private” spheres. Whatever the stylistic and philosophical differences between procedural and classical detectives, the procedural features detectives in professional workplaces, including lab, precinct, and office. As a consulting detective, Holmes works from home. He has no legal authority; his relationship with the police is beneficial but in no way binding. Holmes’ professional identity, in other words, cannot be separated from his house. It thus becomes difficult to say that Sherlock “takes possession” of the traditional private sphere when Holmes has always possessed domestic space: namely, 221B Baker Street.

Sherlock Holmes’ house is an ever-present part of the detective’s mythology, its relative invisibility in Conan Doyle’s texts supplanted by its vivid depictions in film. Baker Street is a common factor in nearly every Holmes adaptation, so predictably bizarre that *Elementary* poked fun at its hype in the second-season opener. As they enter 221B, Sherlock informs Joan, “I spent the best part of ten years transforming it into a virtual womb of creativity. Stepping inside it isn’t unlike stepping inside my very brain” (“Step Nine”). They enter, only to find that Sherlock’s brother, Mycroft, has removed everything from the apartment and remodeled. It is noteworthy that Sherlock associates 221B with a womb’s feminine space with his own masculine creativity as a detective. Rather than rewriting Sherlock’s brain as a site of femininity, Sherlock’s masculinity instead appropriates the feminine womb for its own, reinforcing the idea that feminine things must be masculinized in order to be effective or legitimate in society. Even so, one wonders if Sherlock’s “womb of creativity” is anything more than a nostalgic memory: 221B was the site of many a solved mystery, but it was also where Sherlock experienced

his downward spiral into heroin addiction. The apartment is the place where Sherlock *stopped* being a good detective. It represents more death than life. In that way, 221B represents appropriative masculine and corrupted feminine space, made even more masculine by Mycroft's possession of the space. Mycroft's infringement on 221B is both disappointing and amusing, but its effect is significant. It destroys the physical space that was always and only Sherlock's.

For all intents, the brownstone in New York is Sherlock's "real" house on *Elementary* and thus his primary workplace. More importantly, Sherlock has shared the brownstone with Joan since the show's first episode, making the reversal the BFMC cycle undertakes unfeasible. For two years, Joan and Sherlock have lived and worked in the same place, and Sherlock can no more usurp a "feminine domestic" than Joan can adopt the "masculine professional." It is true that Sherlock's father owns the house, which gives the entire space a more masculine bent, but in practice Sherlock and Joan share their space alike. The brownstone's private-sphere space consolidates femininity, masculinity, the domestic, and the professional into one location. So long as Joan and Sherlock remain independent of the police force, the domestic and the professional are united in their living space. When Joan and Sherlock separate from each other, however, their living spaces become coded with the occupant's gender.

*Elementary's* third season heralds the first time Joan and Sherlock live apart, the degradation of their cohabitation leading to an unequal validation of their mentoring roles. "Terra Pericolosa" begins in Joan's apartment as Kitty performs the mundane task of delivering to Joan the shared pet tortoise, and then is called to visit a map archive. Joan

expresses concern at Kitty's remark that she views such chores as her "tuition," and encourages Kitty to maintain healthy boundaries with Sherlock:

JOAN: Look, if you want the benefit of my experience, he knows you see it that way and he'll take advantage if you let him. So, once in a while, it's good to make him wait.

KITTY: I almost did last night. I had plans. I've gotten to know this group at the coffeehouse near the brownstone. We were gonna go for drinks... Well, he needed me, so I dropped out.

*JOAN's phone chimes. She reads the text aloud.*

JOAN: "Know Kitty is with you. Please remind that her phone notifies sender when she has received and read a text. As does yours."

KITTY: Enjoy your day, Watson.

In essence, Joan is acting as a mentor to Kitty in her own domestic space, but Sherlock's mentorship penetrates Joan's space and overrides her advice: Kitty leaves immediately. Joan's advice is clearly sincere—in her two years in the brownstone, Joan had plenty of difficulty maintaining boundaries with Sherlock. Joan's announcement that she intends to move out at the end of the second season is the catalyst, in fact, for the detectives' eight-month separation preceding these events. Sherlock has a propensity to overstep, but Kitty does not respond to Joan's point. Though tortoise delivery may seem innocuous, the larger stakes of this exchange are Joan's authority as a mentor. Though Joan's apartment might seem to mirror the stylish emptiness of the other female detectives' houses in the cycle, Joan's house is as much the center of her detective practice as the brownstone is

for Sherlock. In other words, Joan's apartment is her element, and in that feminine space she is meant to have full authority and control.

Sherlock's texts serve to destabilize and suppress Joan's authority in her own house, which contradicts the construction of Joan and Sherlock as equals. When Sherlock proposes mentoring Kitty in "Just a Regular Irregular," he frames in terms of parenting, imagining himself the father and Joan the mother. Joan immediately rejects the metaphor, but ultimately agrees to support Kitty alongside Sherlock. The initial proposal of the mother/father binary would appear to indicate an unequal foundation from the outset: as the stereotypical father figure, Sherlock would have an inherent authority over Joan's motherhood. To some extent, this is inevitable, as Sherlock and Kitty are written with eight months of unseen backstory between them. Joan is second to Sherlock, but the desired deviation from simple motherhood has limited traction. Joan opens this episode as a caretaker, receiving both the tortoise and Kitty as subjects to nurture in the traditional maternal space of her kitchen. Of course, Joan's kitchen and office occupy the same room, and Joan's mentorship of Kitty is able to encompass both the personal and professional. But it gets interrupted. When Sherlock texts, Joan is portrayed as vulnerable to Sherlock's apparent whims, like Kitty—and potentially thoughtless, given that Sherlock's assignment leads Kitty to the discovery of her first hidden body. In addition, Kitty appears unmoved by Joan's concern, which does not speak to Joan's portrayal as a strong mentor. Sherlock's mentorship effortlessly intrudes on Joan's feminine space, leaving Joan bereft of their shared protégée.



Joan's distance from Kitty is physically represented as their next interaction takes place in the hallway outside Joan's apartment, removing Kitty from the feminine space where Joan would otherwise mentor her. Joan protests the errands Kitty is running, saying:

JOAN: ...I thought you were gonna try and meet your friends again tonight.

KITTY: I was, but you know how it is. Duty calls.

JOAN: What does this have to do with detective work?

KITTY: It's just one of tonight's errands...

JOAN: What is Sherlock doing?

KITTY: When I left, he was waxing his singlestick... There'll be other nights for drinks.

Once again, Kitty is portrayed as the apparent victim of Sherlock's whims, now made distant from her female mentor. Joan interprets this situation—like the viewer is meant to—as an imbalance of power in Sherlock's favor. Kitty is locked into mundane errands at all hours of the day; meanwhile, Sherlock stays home, tending to the integrity of his recreational gear, indicating his own spare time. The innuendo reinforces Sherlock's apparent thoughtlessness as well. While the singlestick refers to literal sports equipment, the masturbatory imagery is not inappropriate. Unconcerned for his protégée's plans and wishes, Sherlock's desires become his master, preoccupying himself with sport and play rather than pursuing the mystery. And while Sherlock remains wrapped in his self-absorption, Kitty appears to be a compliant and unquestioning student with whom Joan

cannot build a rapport. Female mentorship, vulnerable to Sherlock's competing mentorship, cannot stand while inside Joan's domestic space.

Sherlock's male power is undoubtedly present in the scene; at the same time, a more insidious blot in Joan's record is building in that exchange: Joan's emotions interfere with her detective skills. Joan understands Sherlock's assignments as "taking advantage" of Kitty, and Kitty responds with an untroubled, naïve acceptance of the chores as a part of her life. Despite these two moments of inexperience, Joan misses an important detail: Kitty is not afraid of Sherlock. Between Joan and Kitty's two exchanges, they investigate a case with Sherlock, and Kitty has no qualms about challenging him in front of an informant. The flippant, even condescending, way in which Kitty publicly says, "Perhaps your smokescreen theory is wrong" lines up with the character's generally charged personality—which one would expect to magnify in private. For Kitty not to speak up for herself is, in fact, out of character. While this would appear to demean Kitty's portrayal as an intelligent and fierce young woman, the larger stakes are Joan's authority as an observant and sensitive detective and mentor. In such roles, Joan should notice something off about Kitty's behavior, yet she does not. She passes over key evidence due to her own emotional damage, still smarting from Sherlock's demanding behavior from the last year. This subtly recalls the notion that women are too emotional to reason well or do their jobs. Though Joan is responsible for solving the episode's A-Plot mystery, these scenes lay the framework for a flightless mentorship. That Joan's feelings undergird her bias against Sherlock results in the expense of learning the feelings beneath Kitty's behavior.

Joan proceeds to address Sherlock directly, but while his male mentorship can enter Joan's walls easily, the reverse is not true. Joan confronts Sherlock in the kitchen, suggesting that he has been overworking Kitty:

JOAN: She's trying to be a little more social lately, so you might want to ease up on her.

SHERLOCK: Get your own protégée, Watson.

JOAN: I'm just saying, it's a good step for her. So, if it means giving her a little more free time, then I'm willing to pick up the slack. ...If you are working on a case and need a second set of eyes and someone to talk to, then you can call me.

SHERLOCK: I couldn't before?

JOAN: Of course you could.

*JOAN gestures in frustration.*

JOAN: You asked me to be a part of her life, to help her learn.

The conflict here is twofold. First, Joan is approaching Sherlock as an extension of her mentorship to Kitty, advocating on the protégée's behalf. At the same time, Joan and Sherlock's relationship remains fractured in the wake of Sherlock's eight-month disappearance, and Joan is taking an unprecedented step in returning to "the way things were." Reclaiming a greater role in Sherlock's detective practice represents a restoration of the pair's former balance, and the scene's location and framing seem to contribute to that effect. The scene begins with Sherlock and Joan on either side of the oven, each about a fourth of the way inside the camera's frame, each retrieving something from a

cupboard. This creates a visual sense that Sherlock and Joan are on equal footing in this kitchen; Joan, in other words, is no interloper.

This sense of balance is compounded by the fact that the kitchen is a common area, which blurs the gendered nature of the space. Traditional gender roles would typically designate the kitchen as feminine, private space, which would make this Joan's domain. The kitchen in Joan's apartment, after all, is a feminine space due to that same stereotype, on top of the fact that Joan lives there. However, Sherlock's kitchen cannot deserve such a simple designation. One of the complicating factors in associating a gender with the kitchen is that it is right next to the guest room, otherwise known as Sherlock's bedroom. Sherlock's character abhors sleep, but the guest room is his designated spot for sleeping and having sex when the occasions arise. Sherlock's dominating use of the guest room, and the potential for awkwardness from his "horizontal recreation" there, could result in a socially-created control over the adjacent room—but it doesn't. Joan appears nonplussed by Sherlock's sex life and even makes to-go cups for his partners before they head out the next morning. Joan's presence and comfort in the kitchen might then create feminine space, but the roommate dynamics of *Elementary*'s first two seasons imply that Sherlock uses the kitchen the most as he prepares breakfast trays to move Joan along in the mornings. Joan, meanwhile, brings home takeout for dinner—a behavior she continues with Sherlock and Kitty. The kitchen is best understood as a space held in common. Joan, Kitty, and Sherlock all have free access to the space, both as a place to eat and a place to solve mysteries. Since the show's inception, Sherlock

Holmes has lived in the brownstone with a woman, and so no gender is ever in sole possession of the kitchen.

With blurred gender lines, one might expect the kitchen would be a place where Sherlock and Joan could find middle ground and a balance of power, but this is not the case. Sherlock rejects Joan out of hand: “Get your own protégée, Watson.” Despite the abundant potential to be a moment of equality or work towards a mutual goal, Sherlock instead asserts his power over Joan and Kitty. Kitty’s mentorship belongs to him, not Joan. In portraying Sherlock this way, the male detective appears both callous and impenetrable because he never has to account for his actions. So far as the audience knows, this character knows the harm he is doing and simply doesn’t care, and beyond that sidesteps Joan’s criticisms. Joan, for her part, takes on the characteristics of a mentor: she identifies a problem, she offers her partnership as a solution, and she justifies her position. Joan’s character thus seems both caring and practical, but it is also true that while Joan is advocating for Kitty, her mentoring behavior is acting on Sherlock. The subtle shift means that while Joan set out to support a female protégée, she is now in the position of cleaning up after a man who would otherwise be her partner—which he actively opposes. At the end of this conversation, Sherlock’s opinion dominates the space, and once again Joan’s work as a mentor is ignored.

The brownstone is the primary site of conflict for the rest of the episode as the Joan’s efforts as a mentor shift to the mentorship between Sherlock and Kitty. Outside the house, Sherlock reveals to Joan that a young man is pursuing Kitty, which is why he has been sending her on so many errands. Back inside the house—the study—Sherlock

decides for Kitty that she will not answer her phone. Kitty accepts this, but once she leaves the room, Joan berates Sherlock:

JOAN: You can't police her like that. You can't tell her who she can and can't talk to.

SHERLOCK: I'm training her.

JOAN: To be what, a shut-in? I know how you feel about romantic entanglements. You think love is stupid. Fine, whatever. But if that is the guy that she likes—

SHERLOCK: Then he'll call again. And again and again!

JOAN: This is exactly the same kind of crap you used to pull with me. I needed my space and so does she.

Once again, Joan calls out Sherlock in his own space, but this time she makes her own stakes in the matter explicit: Sherlock invaded her privacy, too. As a space of confrontation, the study is a far more professional space, housing laptops, desks, and an evidence board; Sherlock tends to be its usual occupant. Setting aside that the brownstone blurs the lines of gendered space, the study tends to be a more masculine space—and it represents the very thing Joan intended to escape by moving out. Joan frames Sherlock's behavior as "policing," which suggests that Sherlock is behaving as though his desires were law. Joan left because she wanted independence from those desires. In addition, Joan aligns Sherlock with the police institution, which is notable given that Captain Gregson's portrayal also reinforces sexist stereotypes. Sherlock's language even suggests male entitlement to control, both in his assertion of authority as Kitty's trainer and his

implication that Kitty's admirer—not Kitty—will determine the path of their relationship. As both a mentoring and mentored figure, Sherlock's character upholds masculine authority in personal relationships.

In response, Joan is portrayed as constructing a resistant feminine authority: space. Joan's dialogue, of course, refers to the literal and figurative space that would create a healthy independence and separation from Sherlock. The underlying priority beneath that space, however, is the maintenance of boundaries. Previously, I have discussed boundaries as a function of the "true" detective's integrity, with Gregson and Sherlock coming to accept penetrations, although Sherlock is the detective who comes to validate his growing permeability. Joan's authority as a detective is likewise affected by the transgressions beyond her boundaries; however, given the primacy of the Holmes-Watson relationship on *Elementary*, threats to Joan and Sherlock's kinship are as great or greater than threats to their detective roles. There is, quite literally, no show without Joan and Sherlock—and the last time Joan asserted boundaries, Sherlock moved to England for eight months. In portraying boundaries as Joan's main concern, *Elementary* shifts her authority from that of a detective to authority as a mentor and friend. Joan's criticism is meant to be read as both genuine and accurate: being a better detective may require more permeability, but this should not come at the cost of one's free time or ability to make decisions. The integrity of the female detective's autonomy, in other words, requires separation.

Joan's value for autonomy conflicts with Sherlock's conception of supporting Kitty, which puts their mentorships at odds. In response to Joan's statement that both she and Kitty need their space, Sherlock responds with a sarcastic critique of Joan's premise:

SHERLOCK: Because you are the same. Your situations are identical.

Yes! You were a virtual hermit when I found you in London—you could barely look me in the eye because I was a man and a man had hurt you so horrifically... You're assuming that I'm interfering for selfish reasons. But I'm just merely trying to—

JOAN: To protect her.

SHERLOCK: She's come a long way, Watson. She's come a very long way. And most of that progress is testament to her great strength, yes. But I dare say that I had a hand. So if some dalliance was to go wrong, if it was to hurt her in some way—

JOAN: It would hurt you too. I understand why you're afraid, but this is progress, too. You get that, right?

They stop as Kitty reenters the room. Though each character comes from a reasonable standpoint, this scene serves to illustrate Joan's misreading of the relationship and Sherlock's flawed care as a mentor. In the first place, Joan observes that Kitty needs her space, but she fails to acknowledge that her introduction to Sherlock was nearly the opposite of Kitty's. Joan and Sherlock were brought together as a sober companion and recovering addict: Sherlock's father paid Joan to facilitate his transition out of rehab, and Joan's apprenticeship spawned from the fraught intimacy that came of Sherlock's



recovery. Joan and Sherlock struggle with boundaries, in other words, because Sherlock has always been dependent on her. Kitty, on the other hand, was selected by Sherlock on her own investigative merit, but she already had boundaries in place when she met Sherlock. Traumatized by her kidnapping and rape, Kitty struggled to drop her boundaries with Sherlock—that she accepts his mentorship now represents massive progress. While Sherlock points out Joan’s need to nuance her perspective, Joan recognizes that his good intentions result only in negative behavior. Opposite to Joan, Sherlock cuts Kitty off from the outside world. His attempts to protect his protégée enforce self-serving, paternalistic boundaries, not unlike the boundaries Gregson seeks to maintain around himself and his daughter. Sherlock and Joan thus have two competing perspectives on mentorships and boundaries, each demanding a separate reaction to Kitty’s space.

In the larger conversation of male-female detectives, gender reversals, and attempts at equality, it is worth considering to what extent stereotypical gender norms are reinforced through this exchange. When compared with a show like *Bones*, and to a lesser extent *Fringe*, *The Mentalist*, and *Castle*, the lead detectives’ conversations would align with gender-stereotype reversals: Brennan’s character almost always takes the “logical” position, while Booth advocates for the more “emotional” side. *Elementary* remains true to its general portrayal of a middle ground. In this instance, both Joan and Sherlock are taking an emotional and even impulsive position. Joan feels hurt; Sherlock feels afraid. Both of those impulses motivate their reactions to Kitty’s relationship with the outside world. While the logic/emotion binary is not explicitly reinforced in this conflict,

Sherlock and Joan are in opposition, and their behavior creates a different gendered dichotomy related to their conceptions of boundaries. Joan's main fear is overattachment, and so she seeks boundaries from within a relationship. Sherlock's main fear is an outsider's potential for careless harm, and so he seeks boundaries from without. While these boundaries are not necessarily stereotypes themselves, their effect on Joan and Sherlock's mentoring behavior would appear to reinforce sexist norms.

Sherlock's "boundaries from without" method has the clearly problematic effect of controlling Kitty's behavior. Sherlock commandeers Kitty's time and labors in a patronizing and infantilizing way, as implicit in his behavior is the idea that the protégée is incapable of making her own decisions and needs a paternal caretaker to make them for her. Sherlock's behavior is not necessarily a regression from his portrayal in "Rip Off," as Kitty has been within Sherlock's emotional boundaries since the season's first episode. "Rip Off" deepens their emotional connection, whereas "Terra Pericolosa" depicts Sherlock reacting to an outside factor. All the same, Sherlock is portrayed as a controlling mentor figure, and this negative behavior makes him, in turn, Joan's student. Joan's "boundaries from within" method is not immediately sexist as Joan encourages Kitty to resist Sherlock's antics. Indeed, it's quite the opposite. When Joan begins to monitor Sherlock's boundaries for him, however, a maternal stereotype arises. Joan's history as Sherlock's sober companion predisposes some audiences to see Joan as her partner's babysitter, and Joan's emotional labor and maintenance of Sherlock's boundaries solidifies the role. Joan teaches Sherlock to be a good mentor himself, reversing the power dynamic that heretofore placed Sherlock in the role of expert mentor and Joan as

novice. It is, also, slightly absurd: Lucy Liu has four years on Jonny Lee Miller but eighteen on Ophelia Lovibond. If anyone could predictably welcome and accept Joan's female solidarity, it would be Kitty, but Joan's obligation to Sherlock overrides that relationship.

Joan's true victory as a mentor thus occurs in her rehabilitation of Sherlock's protective instincts as her encouragement towards Kitty falls from the narrative. In the final act, Sherlock invites Kitty to sit down in the sitting room and discuss his recent behavior.

SHERLOCK: Watson has impressed upon me that I owe you an apology...

I'm aware of the young man at the coffee shop... I was worried, so I kept you otherwise engaged. That was a mistake... I should have trusted you to continue that progression.

KITTY: I knew.

SHERLOCK: You knew what?

KITTY: I could tell that you'd figured out about Zachary. I knew that's why you were keeping me busy. But I was glad of it. I was afraid as well... What you did made me feel very protected and very loved. So just stop moping about.

Sherlock here conforms to Watsons' philosophies of mentorship and Kitty's character rewards him with emotional vulnerability and the truth. Joan is notably absent, despite the return to ambiguous gendered space. The front room, like the kitchen, is mutually inhabited by all three detectives as they solve their cases. This room is, in fact, the place

where Joan and Sherlock will tell Kitty that her attacker has resurfaced—but in this moment, Sherlock and Kitty are within, and Joan is without, and remains so for the rest of the episode. Sherlock thus acts as the sole mentor in this situation, even though he frames his apology with her influence. As a mentor, Sherlock admits his wrong and makes explicit the ways he has trespassed in Kitty’s life. The twist, however, is not in Sherlock’s apology, but rather in Kitty seeming not to accept it. Kitty announces that she knew and instructs Sherlock to “stop moping about,” seeming to indicate that because she was aware of Sherlock’s controlling behavior, his deeds are excused. Or, to put it another way, Sherlock was doing the right thing without Joan’s advice, validating only Sherlock as a mentor.

Sherlock reaps the rewards of Kitty’s confidence while Joan’s role is diminished. It is unclear whether Sherlock knew Kitty was uncomfortable getting to know Zachary when he decided to occupy her time, but he betrays no surprise when she admits her true feelings. At worst, Sherlock took advantage of Kitty in such a way that kept her in her comfort zone, and Joan obviously pressured Kitty out of that zone. In both cases, Sherlock and Joan had the potential to be bad mentors and bad detectives, but Joan is punished by her exclusion as a failed mentor. The narrative, it is worth saying, does not seek to ignore Sherlock’s behavior, as the second part of this scene will demonstrate. However, if Joan and Sherlock’s relationship is an adequate model, the mentor who develops a vulnerable and open relationship with his protégée is the mentor who succeeds. Sherlock achieves that with Kitty; Joan does not. And so it is that Kitty reaps the second-hand benefits of a female mentorship.

Lest the episode end without accounting for Sherlock's bad behavior, "Terra Pericolosa" does seem to end with an example of positive allyship in Kitty's life. After admitting she knew what Sherlock was doing, Kitty leaves the room in tears to put away groceries. Sherlock follows her to the kitchen:

SHERLOCK: Watson's offered to reclaim a greater role in our collaboration so that I might give you some more personal time. I shall be accepting her offer. How you choose to spend that time—that's entirely up to you.

*KITTY nods her understanding.*

SHERLOCK: This Zachary, does he have an aversion to insects?

KITTY: You said you were gonna leave him be.

SHERLOCK, mollifying: There's an entomology exhibit at the Museum of Natural History. I thought you and I should pay a visit there this afternoon. If your friend is free, perhaps he'd like to join us?

KITTY: Yeah, I'll call him and find out.

Sherlock completes his exercise in reconciliation and meeting Kitty's needs in the same space where he previously asserted his power over Joan. The return to the kitchen creates a sense of linear parallelism, as Kitty and Joan begin in Joan's kitchen, Joan and Sherlock talk in Sherlock's kitchen, and Sherlock and Kitty end the matter in Sherlock's kitchen. In one sense, this scene defuses the power Sherlock exercised over Joan earlier in the episode. At the same time, Sherlock remains in control of the kitchen, and as Joan's kitchen doesn't resurface before the dénouement, the episode skews in favor of masculine

space. While the use of gendered domestic space in “Terra Pericolosa” may escape the notice of most audiences, it remains a mechanism that continues to reinforce Sherlock’s actions in masculine space over Joan’s parallel actions in feminine space. Sherlock’s apology is meant to be read in a positive light, and so it is he, not Joan, who ends the hero.

And in all fairness, Sherlock does end something of a hero, integrating Joan’s desire to implement boundaries within a relationship with Kitty’s need to form relationships outside their own. First, Sherlock accepts Joan’s offer, beginning to repair the intimacy in their relationship, even though it also stood in the way of Joan’s relationship with Kitty. More than that, Sherlock proceeds to address Joan’s concerns directly by creating a boundary in his relationship with Kitty: more personal time. This rectifies Sherlock’s past intrusions into Kitty’s time, yet also succeeds in that it does not pressure Kitty into spending her time a certain way, as Joan’s earlier conversation did. Sherlock’s last step is to remove certain professional boundaries from within and without—that is, the boundaries that would prevent Kitty from bringing a friend into her apprenticeship. In allowing Zachary to come inside the relationship, and allowing Kitty to bring a personal friend on a professional field trip, Sherlock creates the space for Kitty to explore a possible relationship away from her friend group but still under the protection of a chaperone. In so doing, Sherlock solidifies a final element of intimacy as a mentor that blurs the lines between instructor and friend.

In “Terra Pericolosa,” the female protégée finds a newfound emotional connection with the male mentor, and the male mentor finds himself connecting with a

female mentor as her student. Sherlock is Kitty's mentor, Joan is Sherlock's mentor, and Joan's relationship with Kitty fails to develop. This is especially disappointing given that while Sherlock can remotely introduce his mentorship into Joan's home, Joan's mentorship with Kitty—despite their physical presence in the brownstone—only finds traction when mediated through Sherlock. Ultimately, Joan's success as a female mentor occurs in her relationship with Sherlock, whom she must teach in a maternal fashion, reinforcing unfortunate stereotypes. Though the engagement with boundaries does seem to empower Kitty to use her own time and to interact with the world at her own speed, Kitty's character seems only to validate the support she finds from a male ally like Sherlock, rather than a female mentor like Joan. That said, "Terra Pericolosa" portrays an empowerment of the female detective that is present but not well-rounded, leaving Joan Watson diminished in the wake of Sherlock's mentoring power.

CHAPTER FOUR:  
GENDERED CONFLICTS BETWEEN HARD-BOILED AND PROCEDURAL  
TRADITIONS IN “THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY”

Throughout this thesis, Sherlock Holmes appears not only as a superior detective, but a superior mentor. In chapter two, I discussed Gregson’s mentorship of Kitty and the gender roles within a police setting. Where Gregson failed, Sherlock succeeded as a mentor. In chapter three, I looked at Joan Watson and her power as a female mentor—but again, her mentorship skills did not live up to Sherlock’s. This final chapter thus has two goals: first, to discuss Sherlock’s quality as a mentor independent of Gregson and Joan, and second to evaluate whether Kitty Winter’s character can be said to end “empowered.” Though Sherlock remains an instrument of sexism in Kitty’s narrative, Sherlock seems to succeed as a dependable male ally who empowers Kitty with a choice over her rapist’s life and the freedom to leave afterward.

The conclusion to Kitty’s arc occurs in the season’s twelfth episode, entitled “The One That Got Away.” This episode is a sequel to the previous episode, “The Illustrious Client,” in which Kitty’s rapist returns, leaving a murdered woman in his wake. Sherlock, Joan, and Kitty hunt the man, and while they uncover a brothel owned by one of the killer’s associates, the killer remains unknown. At the end of the episode, Kitty recognizes her attacker as Adelbert Gruner, head of Leda insurance. “The One That Got Away” takes up a few hours after this realization—Joan and Sherlock also conclude that



Gruner is guilty, but do not have the evidence to condemn him in court. Kitty leaves under a pretense, kidnapping Gruner in secret with the intent to murder him; meanwhile, Joan and Sherlock seek proof that Gruner is a serial killer. Having found compelling evidence, Sherlock confronts Kitty and alerts her to the fact that they can indict Gruner. He leaves her to decide whether she will kill the man or turn him in. Ultimately, Kitty dumps Gruner's face in acid. She calls Sherlock once more before she flees the country, and Sherlock gives her his blessing before they part ways. "The One That Got Away" is also unique in that flashbacks to Sherlock and Kitty's early relationship appear throughout the episode, including their meeting, Kitty's first success as a detective, their falling out, and the reparation of their friendship.

As I discussed in my second chapter, Sherlock appears to conform to the mentoring role of a "dependable male ally," whose hallmark traits are "respect" and "trust" for the female detective's professional work (Mizejewski 110). This is a promising but largely unexplored mentoring role, especially as it pertains to the notion of being "dependable." The root meaning of "depend" means "to hang down, be suspended," but more commonly means "to be a burden upon" or "to be sustained by" (OED). A dependable person, in other words, is someone from whom an associate can secure themselves, for example preceding a metaphorical drop. Though reliability is an important quality in a mentorship, the "dependable male ally" remains an ambiguous role. Furthermore, in the context of the BFMC cycle, there is nothing to distinguish a dependable ally from a dependable love interest—which corresponds with Mizejewski's assertion that Mulder is Scully's dependable ally on *The X-Files*, but is a somewhat

disappointing conflation. Is it really progress when the female detective's main source of support at the office is her boyfriend? There clearly needs to be a more specific definition of a male ally; fortunately, the main tension in "The One that Got Away" is less about being a dependable mentor and more about the impact of mentorship when classical, hard-boiled, and procedural traditions interact. In many ways, it is sufficient to say that Sherlock is an ally because he supports Kitty's decisions as she confronts her rapist. Because of his respect for her, the audience can focus on her behavior as an adapted character and a protégée.

The last two episodes of Kitty's arc recall the story by Arthur Conan Doyle from which she was adapted. "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client," a classical detective story first published in 1924, follows Holmes and Watson as they attempt to find evidence to blacken the name of Adelbert Gruner and convince his fiancée not to marry him (Davies 266). Winter is one of Gruner's previous victims: a fiery, embittered prostitute who assists Holmes with her personal testimony and ultimately helps him find the damning evidence. Winter is most memorable, however, for her bent towards vengeance. At the story's climax, Winter throws a vial of vitriol at Gruner, disfiguring his face and hands for life. In some ways, "The Illustrious Client" is something of an odd story to adapt. As journalist Russell Miller points out in *The Adventures of Arthur Conan Doyle*, this was the last Sherlock Holmes, and "it was abundantly clear that Conan Doyle had lost his touch" (Miller 455). The story has been adapted for television only twice before, once with Douglas Wilmer in 1965 and again with Jeremy Brett in 1991. Indeed, it is a little odd saying that *Elementary* adapted "The Illustrious Client" when the client—

the king of England himself—has been written out of the story. Yet the fact that this story is Kitty Winter's source material sets the stage for the mentorship and gender relations present in *Elementary*.

Despite the fact that "The Illustrious Client" shares a name and primary plot points with Conan Doyle's story, "The One That Got Away" is the more productive comparison because, as in the original story, there is no mystery—the real story is in the hunt for evidence and revenge against Gruner. As adaptation material, there are two reasons that this story matters. First, Conan Doyle's "The Illustrious Client" is a rare story of emotional growth for Holmes. As *The Baker Street Journal's* Patrick Morgan writes in "The Subtle Ways of Watson," "Watson creates a picture of a detective who rediscovers his softer side and comes out all the more understanding and compassionate" (32). In other words, the heightened focus on women's experiences in this story serves to rehabilitate Holmes' own callousness. Given that Holmes' characterization often suggests he stands as the totality of logic, untouched by emotion, the fact that Holmes is moved by Gruner's past and future victims is noteworthy. Given that *Elementary* is also committed to portraying an emotional Holmes, the adaptation of feeling and response contributes to the episode's structure.

In addition, this story is one of the few in which Sherlock turns to a woman for help and she seems to save him. In "Sherlock Holmes and the Liberated Woman," *Canon Fodder's* Nancy Talburt discusses the original Kitty Winter's empowerment in the story and asks, "Who knows whether Holmes would have survived the night and the furious assault of the Baron had not Kitty stepped out from the bushes and flung her acid into the

Baron's face?" (90). Contrary to popular—and possibly his own—belief, Holmes is not invulnerable to the harms of the world. This characterization is very much in line with *Elementary's* construction of Sherlock, who has already tasted his susceptibility to reality via his heroin addiction. Beyond that, however, this allows for a story when Sherlock is on the receiving end of aid, as he, Watson, and Winter all must play their part in order to condemn Gruner. This theme of teamwork is conducive to the crime drama and the relationship shared between the detectives on *Elementary*. On the Holmes side of it, at least, there is enough overlap for a meaningful discussion between the two texts.

Kitty Winter's character, in the second place, represents one of the most volatile and memorable women Conan Doyle brought to life. This stems in large part from her climactic, acid-throwing act, which some consider to be a demonstration of Winter's "empowerment" in her turn-of-the-century society. Returning to "Sherlock Holmes and the Liberated Woman," Talburt suggests that of the active women Holmes interacts with, there are violent and non-violent women. She writes, "It is precisely women of the first category—those who commit violent acts—that seem to be the most liberated" (91). Talburt, in other words, considers Winter a "liberated woman" because she has the power to strike at and disable her rapist. Though I disagree with Talburt's larger assertion that Sherlock Holmes was secretly a feminist who found women to be his true equals, she does highlight one intended reading of characters like Winter. From this perspective, violent women are dangerous, and their dangerousness gives them power. Constructions like these are everywhere, from Conan Doyle's Kitty Winter to *Charlie's Angels*, and they are worth interrogation and analysis. That said, Talburt's enthusiasm for empowered

women characters in the Holmes stories should be taken with a grain of salt. Her analysis equates violence with gaining power, and any power gained with liberation from patriarchal structures, which is not true. In the case of Conan Doyle's Winter, this theory ignores the fact that Winter is portrayed as a bitter, "ruined" woman, that Winter's rape has trapped her into an unwanted life of sex work, and that her violence is rewarded by a (short) prison sentence. Winter's "liberation" is a cardboard façade that does little to hide the patriarchy embedded into "The Illustrious Client."

Knowing, then, that Winter's character ends oppressed by a patriarchal narrative, those same attitudes can also constrain Kitty's adaptation in *Elementary*. In addition, if Kitty's violent revenge is considered a masculine behavior, then "The One That Got Away" falls into the trap of what Phillipa Gates called "parachuting" women characters into men's roles, which is not the same as feminist representation (24). That in mind, does Kitty Winter's behavior stand in for male violence? Winter as Conan Doyle wrote her has two attributes to her credit. First, in *Breaking the Codes*, Ann-Louise Shapiro writes that throwing vitriol—an everyday chemical used for dishwashing—"was considered to be a woman's crime" (76). This means that Winter acted within female gender norms by tossing vitriol into her enemy's face. Second, much of the violence associated with male detectives stems from the 1930s' *noir* genre, which "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client" predates. That said, because *Elementary* is a post-1930s features Kitty taking on more masculine characteristics during her revenge plot, the show is not subject to those same concessions. One might argue that to be a successful adaptation of Holmes' emotional growth and Winter's defiance, by the end of "The One That Got

Away” Sherlock should be saved and Kitty should be avenged. However, if Kitty’s violence is sufficiently masculine, then a key aspect of the character’s gender will be missing from the narrative, and her empowerment as a protégée will be in name only.

In the episode’s first act, Sherlock appears as a good mentor (or, at least, a good friend), but Kitty claims that her emotions stand in the way of her vengeance. The morning after Kitty discovers her rapist’s identity, she comes downstairs to find Sherlock making her breakfast, at which point they talk:

KITTY: Shouldn’t you be with [Joan]?

SHERLOCK: My place is here with you... I’m ashamed of myself... I should’ve been there when you realized who he was.

KITTY: I’m leaving. A few days ago, you recommended that I go back to London, and I should’ve listened to you. I wasn’t ready for this, Sherlock... The captain was right to sack me.

SHERLOCK: You’ve been suspended. There is a difference.

KITTY: I know now that I can’t help you. I’ll just distract.

On the surface, this exchange would seem to reveal that Sherlock’s semi-success as an ally is somewhat lost on someone who is not strong enough to fight the battle ahead of them. Sherlock’s discussion is somewhat more straightforward: he was satisfied that Kitty’s rapist was dead, considered the case closed, and then left her before she discovered Gruner’s identity on her own. While this was a failure on Sherlock’s part, he acknowledges the wrong done and works to repair the relationship. Despite his efforts,

Kitty reports that she is tapping out and returning home. As far as gender relations go, this is not the most impressive empowerment.

However, this scene is complicated by the fact that before the episode's end, the audience knows that Kitty never planned to go to London and Sherlock knew that right away. This scene, in other words, reveals less about Kitty's relationship to violence, and more about the fiction she presents to Sherlock and his reaction to it. The most obvious fiction Kitty peddles is that she can't handle facing her rapist, but she is, in a subtle way, also redefining her relationship to detective work. Kitty's assertion, "The captain was right to sack me," overtly affirms a belief that she made a bad choice and the police were correct to separate themselves from her; however, later events in the episode reveals that Kitty believes the opposite. Rather than believing she deserved to be fired, Kitty instead decides that she is right to leave the police, because only by leaving them can she exact the full force of her vengeance. If we then read Sherlock's reminder, "You've been suspended. There is a difference," knowing that Sherlock hasn't been fooled, his words take on a separate meaning, too. As Kitty decides she must separate from the police, Sherlock points out that she can come back—her separation need not be permanent. Ultimately, Sherlock is upholding his role as a mentor, inviting Kitty back into the fold. Kitty, meanwhile, begins down the problematic path that equates violent power with empowerment.

Accompanying Kitty's shift in purpose comes a generic shift, the images and attitudes Kitty espousing becoming more reminiscent of *noir* over the procedural genre. This is not necessarily an obvious shift—the episode's A-Plot, grounded in Joan and

Sherlock's investigation of Gruner, tracks much like any other episode. Kitty's movement towards hard-boiled themes, however, reveals itself in the last image of the first act: Kitty stands in dark clothing across the street from Gruner's house, watching him come home for the night. She is later shown making nutmeg concoction, used to dissolve bodies and clean crime scenes. Finally, she kidnaps Gruner. While this plotline may not scream "crime *noir*"—the images are in full color; there are no fedoras, gangsters, or guns—the connection becomes more obvious when examining Kitty's station and motives. First, the character is working alone in a genre where teamwork and collective mystery-solving matters most. Second, Kitty's plan is to enact a violent justice against Gruner, which is a hallmark of the hard-boiled detective. Finally, Kitty's vigilantism is certainly illegal, and that descent into criminal behavior sits as a wedge between her and the justice system. Each of these things serves to cast Kitty in the light of a hard-boiled hero.

The hard-boiled *noir* hero, of course, tends to be a highly masculine figure, which complicates Kitty's sense of empowerment. In *Mystery, Violence, and Popular Culture*, John G. Cawelti writes that the detective-hero is "immersed in the world of violence, corruption, and anarchy he inhabits, capable not only of personal survival but of imposing something of his sense of rightness and order on that world" (189). In other words, the hard-boiled hero stands as a moral figure in a corrupt world, justified by his power to enforce that morality. Kitty's association with this trope not only serves to "parachute" her into a masculine role, but these ideologies contradict the moral centers of the classical and procedural detective traditions, to which the Holmes canon and



*Elementary* belong, respectively. In the classical tradition, including the Sherlock Holmes stories, there is no such thing as a “world of violence, corruption, and anarchy.” Instead, the world is an objectively ordered one, brought into disorder by murder but restored to its former glory by a skilled detective. The procedural drama is not quite so aspirational as to suggest there is an inherent order to the world, but the tradition does posit that the unknown can be made known through police procedure, teamwork, and the thorough examination of evidence. There is no “personal survival;” the team wins or loses as a unit. *Elementary* has small brushes with the classical narratives, but Joan and Sherlock’s partnership and their mentorship of Kitty sit firmly within the procedural detective tradition. It’s clear that once Kitty leaves the protection of Sherlock Holmes’ mentorship, her story picks up in a different moral universe.

It might seem that justifiably violent behavior that takes place in all of four scenes may not be enough to constitute “a different moral universe,” especially given that the character in question gets redeemed at the end. To that I say: fair enough. Kitty’s character could never stray so far out of bounds that the heart of the show would be lost. At the same time, the use of mentorship narratives and *noir* episodes on shows like *Elementary* would suggest that we should look at Kitty’s case as a separate moral universe. *Bones* portrays a mentorship gone wrong between its protagonist, Dr. Brennan, and her favorite grad student, whose moral universe is so flawed as to be separate. *Castle* and *Fringe*, meanwhile, both incorporate *noir* narratives as fantasy sequences, creating a literal different universe that has physical and moral separation from the typical procedural drama. Finally, *Psych* (2006–2014), a procedural comedy that sits outside

Kornfield's cycle, incorporates *noir* themes into its plotlines. Each of these shows creates a sense that when characters are either separated from their mentors or separated from procedural norms, the stakes can mean life or death for the characters.

*Bones'* season three finale, "The Pain in the Heart," introduces a plotline which implies that that a protégé's separation from his mentor results in a damning transition into a different moral universe. I have observed that the protégé, Zack Addy, goes through a seven-step separation process from his mentor, Dr. Brennan—a process that Kitty Winter will mirror in *Elementary's* "The One That Got Away." First, the protégé **identifies a problem**. In Zack's case, he believes that secret societies are dangerous, and everyone else must be protected from them. The corruption of this value (i.e. "the many should come before the few") will be Zack's downfall. Second, the protégé **separates from the mentor**. Zack does this by making his work for Dr. Brennan and her team secondary, and instead becomes apprentice to a cannibal serial killer named Gormogon. Third and fourth, the protégé **combats the problem with violence**, to **limited success**. Zack is an accessory to murder and helps Gormogon, but never personally kills a secret society member. Instead, he is injured in a different part of the plan. Finally, the protégé is **caught by his mentor**, and while he **retains his mentor's approval**, he is **legally on the hook** for his crimes. It is in these last three steps that Zack's different moral universe becomes apparent: prioritizing the good of the many matters so much that the character can justify killing people and eating them as a moral act. Brennan points out the flaws in her protégé's logic, which immediately rehabilitates Zack, but his guilt as an accessory to murder means that he is permanently separated from his team in prison. In other words,

the cost of living in another moral universe is a separation from the procedural's primary goal: to seek justice using evidence alongside a team. Though Kitty's narrative in *Elementary* will end with a more effective redemption, the stakes for Zack are the same for her. If she stays separate, she will be cut out of the procedural permanently.

While Zack's narrative in *Bones* reveals something about mentorship, his experiences are discovered after the fact, and so *noir* themes are not overt in "The Pain in the Heart" itself. *Fringe* and *Castle* are two shows in the BFMC cycle that explicitly and intentionally incorporate *noir* into their episodes through the use of fantasy sequences. *Fringe*'s "Brown Betty" and *Castle*'s "The Blue Butterfly" each feature a frame narrative in which a primary detective imagines himself and his colleagues as participants in a 1930's-era crime drama, where the show's main cast double as participants in the fantasy narrative. In "Brown Betty," Walter Bishop narrates a children's story in which Olivia Dunham, a hard-boiled investigator who doesn't believe in love, follows a hot trail to the lab of a renowned inventor—Walter himself—who is credited for building all the good things in the world (i.e. lollipops, rainbows, singing corpses, etc.), where he gives her a new mystery to solve. "Brown Betty" is comedic in that it is a musical sci-fi *noir*, so while the actors are decked out in vintage suits and talk like they're in a Dashiell Hammett novel, they also carry around lasers and rotary phones (to replace cell phones) and sing hits from Tears for Fears and Stevie Wonder. *Castle*'s "The Blue Butterfly" is a more straightforward historical fantasy sequence. As Beckett and Castle investigate the deaths of two star-crossed criminal lovers from the 1930s, Castle imagines himself and Beckett as the doomed pair, who face the fatal wrath of New York's biggest gangster of

the time. “The Blue Butterfly” plays the *noir* straight, so the costuming, dialogue, lighting, and narrative all conform to typical *noir* conventions during the fantasy sequences. It is noteworthy that Castle imagines himself as the hard-boiled detective (in reality he is a civilian consultant) and assigns Detective Beckett the role of a mobster’s beautiful girlfriend—which is just a little patronizing. Though they are two very different episodes, the performance of the hard-boiled style alongside uncharacteristic storylines gives these episodes credence as *noir* episodes.

The most important similarity between “Brown Betty” and “The Blue Butterfly” is the use of storytelling as an avenue to a different moral universe, where the narrator can then obtain a wish fulfillment. Wish fulfillments and related anxieties are quite typical of fantasy sequences in crime dramas; some non-*noir* examples include *Bones*’ “The End in the Beginning,” *Psych*’s “A Nightmare on State Street,” and *Leverage*’s “The Van Gogh Job.” However, it does matter that “Brown Betty” and “The Blue Butterfly” borrow from the *noir* tradition, allowing the characters access to a different detective genre with alternative morals where the protagonists’ longings write over conventional strictures of right and wrong. In *Fringe*, Walter Bishop imagines a world where he can be forgiven for the unforgiveable: kidnapping a son from an alternate universe and condemning both universes to destruction. Castle, meanwhile, imagines a world where he has no family ties and is free to break the law to be with the woman he loves. In both cases, *noir* appears as a function of the imagination, its theatricality lends itself to making the impossible become moral and accepted because it is a different world with different rules. *Elementary* has never done a fantasy sequence episode, but as in

*Fringe* and *Castle*, a *noir* storyline is incompatible with the procedural world unless mediated through a character's imagination. For that reason, *Elementary's* *noir* themes err on the side of subtlety, as the narrative remains stationed in the series' reality.

It is in that reality that *Psych* and *Elementary* align. *Psych* explicitly engages with hard-boiled traditions in the season six and seven episodes "Santabarbaratown" and "Santabarbaratown 2," which reference the neo-*noir* film *Chinatown* (1974). Fake psychic Shawn Spencer experiences a partial separation from his team in "Santabarbaratown 2," which serves to partially disrupt the procedural glue of the series with a somewhat hard-boiled independence. After Shawn's father is shot by a family friend, Shawn becomes hell-bent on revenge, and this vengeance earns him the disapproval of his friends and colleagues as he seeks to take on a group of smugglers single-handedly. However, "Santabarbaratown 2" never fully integrates hard-boiled themes into its narrative for one main reason: Shawn ropes his friends into his shenanigans, and they stand by him. That Shawn has the sanction of Chief Vick, that Detective Lassiter affords Shawn with weapons, that Gus supports Shawn during his raid, and that Juliet, his lover, ultimately rescues Shawn means that the protagonist never faced his battle alone. Despite the fact that *Psych* doesn't accomplish the neo-*noir* that *Chinatown* does, "Santabarbaratown 2" is worth examining alongside *Elementary's* "The One That Got Away" because both episodes represent times when *noir* themes are drawn in as a part of reality, not fantasy. In fact, it matters more that *Psych* failed to accomplish *noir*—the fact that Shawn attempts to take down his father's shooter alone could be indicative of a "different moral universe," and yet that solitude cannot stand. Working

alone is incompatible with the teamwork otherwise central to the show's narrative, and so the *noir* is made to fit the procedural, and not the other way around. In the same way, Kitty's separation from Joan and Sherlock on *Elementary* is antithetical to the central partnerships on the show. Kitty, unlike Shawn, does not have a lover to save her—eventually, that will fall to her mentor.

Before investigating the gendered implications of being “saved,” we must first define what it means to be “saved” at all. If the procedural's values for teamwork and truth win out, then a character like Kitty should be restored to her community and capable of solving mysteries again. If the hard-boiled tradition's tendencies towards isolation and personal survival win out, then the image of a “saved” detective is less clear. In *Detecting Men*, Gates writes,

the hardboiled detective could not restore equilibrium to the urban society to which he belonged because there was no initial equilibrium before the crime was committed: his world was disrupted before the crime and would remain so after it was solved. The equilibrium that the *noir*-detective sought was the unification of his masculine identity. (85)

In other words, the inherent violence and anarchy of the hard-boiled detective's world means that there is no external balance to restore—only an internal harmony. In narrative terms, the internal harmony that Kitty seeks could be characterized as “finding healing” or “feeling whole” after her rape. However, this in itself disrupts the hard-boiled tradition, because the detective hero's hypermasculinity would be incompatible with Kitty's victimization. If Kitty's character is being drawn into a hard-boiled moral

universe, then the equilibrium she seeks may not involve healing so much as replacing feminine vulnerability with the violent power of a “masculine identity.” This construction would be incredibly problematic, implying that women must shed their femininity to be strong, that masculinity is a more desirable trait, and that men and women can only access power through violence. If Kitty’s character were to end fully justifying the hard-boiled tradition, then being saved and being empowered would both require an affirmation of masculine traits alone.

Kitty’s internal equilibrium aside, there is also a question of whether there is an external equilibrium to return to. Kitty’s rape serves as a radical disruption in her backstory—it is an event that makes *her* world, if not *the* world, inherently violent and unstable. An example of this corruption appears in the episode’s first flashback, taking place some eight months before the events of “The One That Got Away” occur. Kitty approaches Inspector Davies at Scotland Yard with an assessment of a case, but her perspective is immediately dismissed. Davies says to her, “You’re a very pretty girl, Ms. Winter, but you’re not police. You mind your business, and we’ll mind ours, all right?” Even when the specter of Kitty’s rape takes the back burner, casual patriarchy appears as the norm in Kitty’s world. In one fell sentence, Davies objectifies Kitty and strips her of the right to investigate, perpetuating the world’s disruptive state of violence. It takes Sherlock Holmes to create an equilibrium in Kitty’s life, and his mentorship certainly creates a balance. As Sherlock’s protégée, Kitty has a standing invitation to snoop and finds legitimacy among police officers. In addition, violence bends beneath the trust Sherlock builds with Kitty. In “Terra Pericolosa,” Sherlock notes that when he first met

Kitty, she “could barely look me in the eye because I was a man and a man had hurt [her] so horrifically.” Eight months later, she trusts him enough to move in with him. Sherlock does create balance in Kitty’s life, and that balance changes everything. At the same time, which is the more powerful—the disruption of the rape, or the equilibrium of mentorship?

“The One That Got Away” develops the tension between disruption and equilibrium by portraying Sherlock’s mentorship and Kitty’s vengeance as disordered, but reparable via the influence of the other person. Sherlock’s mentorship hits an all-time low during a flashback in the episode’s third act: Sherlock is training Kitty to circumvent chained doors, with little success:

KITTY: Well maybe you were just wrong about me—only that can’t be it because you’re never wrong.

SHERLOCK: Watson was much further along at this point. Perhaps you’re right about me being wrong! I was only ever trying to fix you, but you seem to enjoy being broken.

KITTY: Don’t call me again. Ever.

Sherlock clearly is not behaving like a good mentor or male ally to a young female detective—here he is being mean, objectifying Kitty, and demeaning her as a rape survivor. Until this scene, Sherlock has appeared generally as a solid and supportive mentor figure, a staple of the equilibrium Kitty has found in her budding detective career. This vignette, however, displays Sherlock at his worst—not creating equilibrium but in fact a participant in the violence Kitty has faced from her rapist and Inspector Davies.



One could even take this scene as evidence that there has never been an equilibrium at all; every man Kitty interacts with displays violence, and there is no way to get around it. If that is so, then seeing Kitty successfully murder her rapist is the best salvation she can hope for, because there is no stable world to return to. Of course, there is still hope for equilibrium: the audience knows that Kitty and Sherlock *will* resolve their differences, if not *how*. Nonetheless, there is a concrete sense that the impact of mentorship is unraveling in Kitty's narrative.

Kitty's isolation from Joan and Sherlock is further solidified by the fact that, following the flashback with Sherlock's outburst, Sherlock realizes in the present day that Kitty kidnapped Gruner to take her revenge. Kitty then appears in an abandoned warehouse, blowtorching a metal spike to use against Gruner, whom she has secured to a chair. According to the hard-boiled tradition, this should be the opening of Kitty's victory. In *Genre and Television*, Jason Mittell notes that hard-boiled tradition "focuses on an independent male detective solving a crime relying more on his masculinity and physical endurance than deductive skills, ...he solves the crime by working outside social norms rather than following strict procedures" (130). Kitty may be a woman character, but she nonetheless fits the bill. Again, she is independent and isolated from her fellow detectives. Her physical endurance is evident in that she has the strength to kidnap and restrain Gruner. Furthermore, she confirms that Gruner is her rapist, not with hard evidence gathered by detective work, rather by sticking a hot poker in Gruner's face. There is no procedure here: Kitty's character is subscribing to a masculine stereotype and thus gaining her power via violence. Disruption reigns.

Yet even as the equilibrium of mentorship is not in sight, it is not altogether absent from the scene. Even as Kitty faces Gruner for her ultimate revenge, she empathizes with him. She says to him, “You must not like hearing your name in the mouth of the person who’s gonna kill you. I know I didn’t.” Even as this detective is committing violence, she has legitimate cause to say she knows how he’s feeling *as a victim*—but not as a killer. Small as this moment is, it is a crack in Kitty’s otherwise solid armor. Her violence is tempered by emotion, which is not necessarily feminine, but certainly disrupts the hypermasculinity native to the hard-boiled detective. One would assume that empathizing with a victim would only serve to derail her murderous feelings. In one respect this derailment corrupts Kitty’s bid at masculinity, but it also aligns the character with the mentorship progression associated with Zack Addy in *Bones*’ “The Pain in the Heart.” Kitty has identified a problem—there is no way to bring her rapist to justice. She thus separates from her mentors to carry out her murder. Here, at the third and fourth steps, Kitty combats her rapist with violence, managing to kidnap him, make him uncomfortable, and threaten to brand him with a hot poker. However, Kitty’s empathy for Gruner’s feelings—and thus a display of her own—limits her success, making her vulnerable to attack and throwing her ability to hurt the man into doubt. Disruption meets disruption: Kitty’s portrayal as a powerful character threatens to wither.

True to the pattern, however, Kitty is caught by her mentor when Sherlock comes to visit, and his appearance recalls his balancing power and ultimately redeems Sherlock as a good male ally. Assuring Kitty that he’s come to speak with her alone, Sherlock confronts Kitty about the murder she plans to commit:

SHERLOCK: I was here once, you know. Not literally here, but where you are with him.

KITTY: The man you thought killed Irene.

SHERLOCK: I couldn't go through with it.

KITTY: You had the wrong man. I have the right one.

In this moment, Sherlock references the events that take place in the episode “M” (1x12), in which Sherlock kidnaps the serial killer Sebastian Moran and plans to torture him as revenge for murdering Irene Adler. In that scenario, Sherlock’s murderous intent was thrown off by the truth—Moran was not responsible for Irene’s death. Two years later, Kitty has the truth on her side, but being caught by her mentor has two influences on the plot. First, Sherlock’s presence returns an equilibrium to the scenario, in part by a true display of empathy from Sherlock. Moments before, though Kitty could identify with Gruner’s feelings, the reversal between the survivor and her rapist was in direct response to their first meeting. Gruner was a cruel, violent man who raped and intended to kill Kitty, an innocent girl he’d snatched from a club. While Kitty may flinch at her own memories of being kidnapped and tied up, she cannot empathize with Gruner as a killer—she is motivated by her own hurt, and not the depraved, evil urges that Gruner himself harbors. Sherlock, on the other hand, can share an emotional connection with Kitty because he knows exactly where she is coming from as a killer. He, too, lost something dear to him, and he likewise had a desperate need to make the world right in response. While Kitty faces a situation Sherlock didn’t have to, the fact that Sherlock opens with their shared murderous impulses serves to recall Kitty to the bonds of mentorship. In

other words, despite the tendencies towards isolation and violence Kitty has displayed, Sherlock's arrival heralds Kitty's return to the bonds of mentorship and friendship.

If Sherlock's arrival adds some balance to the situation, he does not fully erase the sense that the world is inherently disrupted. Even Sherlock has felt compelled to participate in violence, and, in fact, he even concedes that murdering Gruner was always an endgame on the table:

SHERLOCK: You were right the other day at the morgue. When you said I couldn't possibly know what you're feeling. I thought, perhaps, this was what you needed.

KITTY: It is.

SHERLOCK: I was less certain. So I returned to the business at hand. I thought if Watson and I could bring Gruner to justice before you acted, you'd be spared the decision you have to make regarding his life. If, on the other hand, we could not undo Gruner...

*He gestures at the abandoned warehouse.*

Here Sherlock combines some light paternalism with a few meaningful strides as a mentor and ally. One might argue that Sherlock's biggest act of paternalism was in tracking Kitty on her phone (which is how he arrived at the warehouse for this scene), and normally this would be an accurate assessment. Given that Kitty's purpose in this episode has been to kidnap and murder a man, however, it is also flawed to think that patriarchy would somehow be subverted had Sherlock trusted Kitty to slaughter a man without guidance or oversight. The problem we are wrestling with is that Kitty is violent

at all. Even so, Sherlock also demonstrates a kind of paternalism in that he tried to find evidence that would “spare” Kitty from deciding whether to kill Gruner. To “spare” Kitty would mean “to abstain from destroying, removing, damaging, or injuring” her from something (OED). The intended meaning is that were Kitty to kill Gruner, she would sabotage her own goodness. Yet Sherlock actually says that he hopes to spare Kitty from “the decision” to kill Gruner, a construction that reinforces the notion that women cannot make their own decisions and endanger themselves by doing so. While Sherlock will be the mentor who helps Kitty the most, one cannot get around the paternalistic language the detective uses.

Despite sexism’s disruption, Sherlock does promote an equilibrium, which aids his cause as Kitty’s mentor. In the first place, Sherlock continues to restore their relationship by acknowledging a harm done—assuming Kitty’s feelings—and discussing how that affected his decisions. Framing the narrative in terms of Kitty’s needs certainly demonstrates a level of respect for her feelings, if not the trust that would guarantee his strength as a male ally. However, that trust would have contradicted the equilibrium Sherlock otherwise promotes. Violence against Gruner was always on the table, but the “matter at hand” was attempting to find a route to public justice, effectively cancelling out the problem that had separated protégée from mentor in the first place. Had this bid worked, Kitty would have no need to be independent or violent: she would have a safe and satisfying avenue back into a relationship with Sherlock and Joan and would no longer need violence to find truth. Though Sherlock’s approach is flawed, the larger effect of his behavior would have restored balance to Kitty.

Sherlock's plan fails, in that the police have the evidence to condemn Gruner, but they don't have him. Sherlock's final words to Kitty represent the climactic moment of his mentoring activity, which, again, serve to disrupt and provide balance at the same time. Continuing from the previous scene:

KITTY: So why are you here now?

SHERLOCK: When I returned to London last year, I had certain expectations. Exactly none of them were met. Our crossing paths changed things for me. You, uh, "saved" me. I'd like to return the favor.

KITTY: This is a favor. Interfering.

SHERLOCK: If you decide that killing Gruner is going to make you feel whole again, I won't stop you. But I'd be remiss if I didn't tell you that we had found a way to expose him.

KITTY: What does that have to do with me? With what he did to me?

SHERLOCK: Nothing. Everything. Wish I could tell you. Whatever you decide, you must understand that you will always be special to me. You will always be my friend.

This is a big moment, as Sherlock formally hands Kitty the keys to her rapist's life and assures her that she has secured a place in his life regardless of her choice. Once again, Sherlock strays into paternalistic notions with the word "saving," which, like the word "spared," implies that Sherlock will do something for or instead of Kitty, presumably because she cannot do it herself. Some might take interest in the fact that the saving is

clearly reciprocal, as Kitty “saved” Sherlock once and now he’s “saving” her as payment in kind. However, our discussions of Kitty have largely revolved around representations of empowerment, rather than equality, which makes the mutuality less important. In addition, “to save” means “to rescue, preserve, or protect,” which is appropriate for a protégée under one’s protection, but also recalls a Western canon’s worth of novels and stories in which women have little capacity to display agency or power themselves (OED). It begs the question: can someone be empowered by being saved? Conventional thought would suggest that being saved replaces agency; however, Sherlock’s complicating move is to create safety for Kitty by offering her a free choice.

Of course, it may not seem like a choice—Sherlock clearly favors outcomes in which Kitty does not become a murderer, and it isn’t difficult to imagine that the thing Kitty needs saving from is herself. This would be a problematic construction, but Sherlock’s dialogue seems to indicate different stakes in play. He says, “If you decide that killing Gruner is going to make you feel whole again, I won’t stop you. But I’d be remiss if I didn’t tell you that we had found a way to expose him.” On the surface, Sherlock offers Kitty a choice between murdering Gruner and letting him live. Underneath, though, this is still about justice. Killing Gruner would be a matter of personal vengeance for Kitty, which would in turn uphold the hard-boiled traditions of independence and violence. Letting Gruner live would not be a concession; turning him over to the police would allow for a public justice to take effect. While this might not restore the team aspect of the procedural drama, it would serve to uphold a reasoning procedure to discover truth. While the latter would restore equilibrium, I don’t read this

as the “saving.” The choice is certainly necessary for this climactic moment. The point of a mentorship, after all, is to let the protégée tackle her problems on her own once she is ready—and this murder is one such problem.

Ultimately, it is not so much the choice as Sherlock’s timing and affirmation of that choice that gives it its saving power. While it may seem to descend into un-Holmesian sentimentality, Sherlock’s last words to Kitty are among his most important: “Whatever you decide, you must understand that you will always be special to me. You will always be my friend.” This is the freedom: even if Kitty chooses to kill Gruner—or, perhaps, even if she chooses to spare his life—her relationship with Sherlock remains secure. This moment fits the penultimate step of the mentorship and separation progression first described in *Bones*. Just as Brennan’s character extends her approval to Zack, Sherlock also demonstrates that he approves of Kitty. This does not mean they are the same. Timing is a key difference between Zack and Kitty’s narratives. Brennan reassures Zack that she still cares for him *during* his arrest for his crimes. Zack already helped kill someone, and so Brennan’s mentorship operates more as a consolation before he is shipped to prison—she has no power to influence or change what happens next. Sherlock, meanwhile, approaches Kitty *before* she makes her decision. This matters, for one thing, because it gives Sherlock the opportunity to demonstrate his respect for and trust in Kitty by leaving her to make her own choice. Sherlock’s credibility as an ally solidifies because he steps back from Kitty’s decision-making process.

Sherlock’s friendship with Kitty is the piece that truly “saves” Kitty. Again, Sherlock risks being sentimental or else unhelpful in telling Kitty that their friendship is



secure, but when Kitty is caught between hard-boiled and procedural traditions, friendship means quite a lot. As Gates says of the hard-boiled detective in *Detecting Men*, “The price for the ability to think like a criminal and to commit violence like a criminal is, like a criminal, to be distanced from ‘good’ society and the benefits of that society, including community, marriage, and family” (85). In other words, if Kitty murders Gruner, conforming to hard-boiled values and becoming a criminal, then she risks losing all community ties—which tend to be the foundation of the procedural tradition. Should Kitty lose all ties with the procedural tradition then she, like Zack, will lose her literal and figurative connections to the series. For Sherlock to inform Kitty that she will “always be my friend” is to head off the risks that Kitty undertakes. If she kills Gruner, she will still have the benefits of Sherlock’s society. While Kitty’s soul may be at stake, as it were, the show’s procedural tradition is not. The equilibrium of teamwork remains. Whatever else Sherlock does as a mentor, his declaration of friendship operates as the ultimate expression of his role as a dependable male ally. Sherlock leaves, which means he trusts Kitty to make her own decision, but he also showed up. In showing up, Sherlock managed to validate Kitty’s choice even more, because she now has the freedom to make a choice without the consequences Gates describes—the ultimate fantasy. Despite his faults, this construction of choice is what makes Sherlock a suitable mentor figure.

That said, Sherlock’s mentorship is only as good as the empowerment Kitty receives from it, which begs the question—does she truly end “empowered”? The way in which Kitty handles Gruner and her decision to leave Joan and Sherlock afterwards leads me to believe she does. Sherlock’s speech had quite the effect on Kitty. She returns to the

warehouse with his thoughts in mind, and tells Gruner, “I’m not going to kill you after all. Everything I’ve shown you tonight was a mask, it isn’t really me. You’d know all about masks, wouldn’t you? You’ve worn one your entire life. I’ve taken mine off. Now it’s your turn.” Kitty’s ultimate decision, in other words, is to spare Gruner’s life, but to burn his face off with nutmeg concoction—a nutmeg-scented bleach used for cleaning crime scenes and dissolving bodies. This decision demonstrates empowerment because Kitty was faced with two contradictory options, and she chose both. The hard-boiled tradition would have Kitty kill her rapist to gain private justice; the procedural tradition would have her turn him in to the police for public justice. Kitty, though, twists the narrative. She has the satisfaction of dunking her attacker’s face in bleach, which does not impede upon the satisfaction of seeing him sent to prison forever. That Kitty has the power to bend her narrative constraints and compromise nothing proves that Kitty ultimately ends empowered.

One argument against Kitty’s empowerment is that, while her character ends in control over her rapist’s justice, she still gains her victory through violence, the main tool of the masculine detective-hero. If Kitty still conforms to the detective-hero’s norms, then she is empowered by a hypermasculine stereotype, which does not make for good representation. There is something insurmountable to this argument—the focus on violence and masculinity in *noir* means that nearly all violent detective narratives that came afterward are responding to that tradition. The fact that the procedural tradition is an offshoot of the hard-boiled tradition means that, under ordinary circumstances, Kitty’s violence could only be chalked up to masculine stereotypes, or their reversal. While Kitty

does not work her way outside of a binary violence, her actions here do have a legitimacy from her source material. When Kitty dunks Gruner's face in nutmeg concoction on *Elementary*, it aligns with Winter's conclusion in "The Illustrious Client" as she throws vitriol, or sulphuric acid, into her rapist's face. There are two relevant details that help justify the modern adaptation. One, Conan Doyle first published "The Illustrious Client" in 1924, just as hard-boiled fiction was coming into being, and well before *noir* films entered the scene (Davies 266). Conan Doyle's Winter, in other words, functionally pre-dates the tropes that conflate American masculinity with violence. Two, as noted previously, throwing vitriol was considered a feminine act at the time, due to the acid's use as a household product. While *Elementary*'s nutmeg concoction sits on the other end of the pH spectrum, it is not altogether unlike vitriol. Like the acid, nutmeg connotes kitchens, cooking, and traditionally "feminine" domesticity. While Kitty's final act is not unproblematic, her decision to disfigure Gruner remains sympathetic and gives her power in a modern setting without compromising the character's spirit—now, or in the original story.

Kitty retains her mentor's approval and satisfies her need for justice, so the last piece of her empowerment relates to the final element of separation: leaving, usually due to one's criminal behavior. In *Bones*, Zack goes to jail, but Kitty flees the country. She makes a last phone call to Sherlock from the airport, saying she will go "Somewhere I can use what you taught me. Somewhere I can help people. I might reach out to you with a question every now and again. I hope that's okay." Kitty is leaving, but she is leaving empowered to continue doing detective work on her own. The fact that Kitty is leaving

might seem contradictory to the procedural tradition otherwise upheld by “The One That Got Away.” After all, Kitty is leaving the team that Sherlock meant to keep her a part of. Still, it is not just teamwork that must prevail for the procedural drama to end victorious. Kitty implies that she will find her equilibrium in detective work, and by leaving, she will retain access to mysteries, the search for evidence, and avenues to truth. Unlike Zack, whose entire detective career ends as he is sent to jail, Kitty can continue. Beyond that, she can and does return—her brief reappearance in season five further develops the characters’ intimacy. Leaving, in this sense, is not an altogether bad thing. With the continued survival of Kitty’s mentoring relationship, her detective work, and her agency, it seems fair to conclude that Kitty ends her arc empowered and in control.

The one remaining factor lies in the episode’s adaptation: Sherlock “saves” Kitty, and she still ends empowered, but according to Talburt, it was Holmes who needed saving in “The Illustrious Client.” The final flashback in “The One That Got Away” responds to this, explaining how Kitty saved Sherlock in England and how Sherlock and Kitty repaired their relationship six months previously. Sherlock cries in his cottage when Kitty knocks at the door and tells him, “I’m sorry for leaving last week. It was a mistake. You started something with me and I’d like you to finish it.” Sherlock accepts her proposal and instructs her to return the next day; then, alone again, picks up the previously-unseen packet of heroin from the table and throws it in the fire. Kitty saved Sherlock, in other words, from a destructive relapse. In theory, this moment need not be empowering for Kitty because Sherlock is this scene’s dynamic character; however, the gender constructions remain problematic. To its (small) credit, Kitty is portrayed as being

the initiator, seeking out her own detective identity. She renews Sherlock's ability to mentor and restores his social connection, just as Sherlock does for her six months later. In that way, the procedural drama's values are technically upheld, but it still fails to create positive gender representation.

From a gender studies perspective, ending Kitty's portrayal as a sacrificial friend does more harm than good. Kitty's sacrifice exists in her apology: "I'm sorry for leaving last week." Kitty implies that the fault was hers for walking out, but the insulting, sexist language Sherlock used against her should have been walked out on. Kitty was right to leave a verbally violent situation, and she had nothing to apologize for. This is what makes her a sacrificial friend. Despite the fact that Sherlock has not himself reached out to make amends, Kitty returns and surrenders her righteous absence to further Sherlock's character development, not her own. Yes, there are another six months of mentorship that result in character development, but placing this flashback as the last scene in "The One That Got Away" serves only to restore Sherlock as the main object of interest on *Elementary*. Equating Sherlock's redemption as a friend with his heroin use was also a questionable choice. Sherlock Holmes does get saved in this adaptation, and it does align itself with the procedural drama's traditions. Nonetheless, by prioritizing Sherlock's narrative and using Kitty as a prop in his development, "The One That Got Away" ends on a disappointing note.

It is almost a surprise that the final flashback is the sourest note in "The One That Got Away," given the sheer number of sexist stereotypes this episode stands upon. That this episode brings together Conan Doyle's sexist source material, masculine stereotypes

meant to empower the female detective, the patriarchy implicit in detective mentorships, and the trimmings of a rape narrative, it is slightly miraculous that it didn't turn out worse. In many ways, "The One That Got Away" and *Elementary* as a whole do not escape the sexism of the detective narratives it engages; however, it does manage to do better. Sherlock succeeds at expressing his respect for and trust in Kitty, making him an effective, if problematic, male ally. Kitty, meanwhile, ends empowered as a victim and survivor of violence. Gregson, Joan, and Sherlock all contribute to the detective Kitty ultimately becomes, but it seems that Kitty's best escape from sexism is to strike out on her own, still connected to her friends but forging ahead without the anchors of their own stereotypes to weigh her down.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to close-read three noteworthy episodes from *Elementary*'s third season and examine the gendered nature of the mentorships Kitty Winter shares with Captain Tommy Gregson, Dr. Joan Watson, and Sherlock Holmes. In my second chapter, I identified Gregson as a successful paternal mentor who reinforces images of sexist power structures as they pertain to his daughter and Kitty. In my third chapter, I considered Joan as a female mentor whose authority correlates with the detectives' domestic space. Joan's attempts at emotional connection with Kitty require mediation from Sherlock, who is the character who benefits the most from Joan's mentoring behavior. In my final chapter, I reflect on the influence of Sherlock's mentorship on Kitty, whose narrative pulls between the hard-boiled and procedural detective traditions. Sherlock ultimately succeeds as an ally for Kitty despite his sexism; Kitty likewise ends as a capable and "empowered" detective in her own right. I have demonstrated that *Elementary*'s attempts at empowering gender representation are problematic; however, Kitty Winter's character arc seems to be a success. I wish to end by reflecting on this thesis's significance in a larger context.

This thesis participates in ongoing discussions of representation, in which *Elementary* operates as a cultural artifact that creates and reinforces gendered messages. Especially considered alongside shows like *Bones*, *Fringe*, *The Mentalist*, and *Castle*, *Elementary* attempts to depict and celebrate men's and women's equality in the modern world. Like other scholarship, this thesis confirms that we should be cautious in accepting such portrayals as progress. Just because women are portrayed as exceptional

does not fix patriarchy. This thesis's discussion of *Elementary* matters because it focuses on mentorship as a meaningful way to portray gender equality in crime dramas, which television series and scholars both tend to consider secondary to a show's lead romance. Romances between detective partners remain an open frontier to explore gender portrayals, of course, but they are often prioritized as the relationship type most worthy of study—which isn't true. Friendships and mentorships are subject to gendered portrayals because they are a gendered experience, and they also deserve critical analysis by virtue of being relationships that many viewers enjoy and identify with. Continuing to explore the full range of human relationships on television will uncover ignored or less obvious sexism presented on screen and create opportunities to move forward. With a heightened awareness of mentorships and friendships on television, audiences can hold future crime dramas to a higher standard, just as we do for romantic plotlines.

Though *Elementary* may not be a paragon of feminist representation, the show also matters as an adaptation because it demonstrates that cultural symbols have a plastic meaning that can shift over time. While *Elementary*'s character portrayals can be sexist, it is a different kind of sexism than that which belonged to Arthur Conan Doyle's stories. Sherlock Holmes is a cultural symbol of logic, intelligence, and crime-solving, but that symbol isn't necessarily sexist, or subject to the same sexism each time a writer adapts the character. While it currently seems unlikely that the Holmes character can renounce sexism completely, *Elementary* demonstrates that Holmes can progress along with the people who write about him. In addition, the mysteries Holmes solves can respond to modern conceptions of gender as well. The most Kitty Winter could hope for in Arthur



Conan Doyle's story was an unforgiving description and a prison sentence; *Elementary* takes on her story with compassion and an awareness of how we respond to sexual assault in the modern era. It is my hope that *Elementary* operates as an inspiration and challenge for future Holmes writers as a model of exceeding the standards of Arthur Conan Doyle's time.

In the days before I finished writing this thesis, CBS announced that *Elementary*'s seventh season would be its last. Every Holmes adaptation adds something new to the mix. Producer Robert Hewitt Wolfe tweeted, "Doyle wrote 60 Holmes mysteries, we did 154. Jonny Lee Miller and @LucyLiu have played Holmes and Watson on screen more than any pair in history" (@writergeekrhw). Whatever else *Elementary* has brought to the table, it has spent a lot of time gendering Holmes and Watson (not to mention mystery-solving associates like Kitty Winter). The series has made good use of the screen time: more than the characters, *Elementary* explores the question, "How is detective work a purpose that we share?" Sherlock Holmes shares detective work through mentorship, but that act of sharing can look like a lot of things. It can look like the disruption of binaries, the integrity of female violence, and the elevation of minor characters. Women look different with Sherlock Holmes when they are detectives; women look different when they are his friends. This time, *Elementary* represents a failure on the feminist representation front, but Sherlock Holmes is not doomed to that future the next time he regenerates.



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@writergeekrhw. “Working on #Elementary was a career highlight and I’m insufferably proud of what we’ve achieved. Doyle wrote 60 Holmes mysteries, we did 154. Jonny Lee Miller and @LucyLiu have played Holmes and Watson on screen more than any pair in history.” *Twitter*, 17 Dec 2018, 5:28p.m., <https://twitter.com/writergeekrhw/status/1074823666246901761>.