Cases of Identity

Citizenship, Gender and Ethnicity in French and Scandinavian Engaged Crime Fiction 1965–2015

by

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Abstract

This study of Scandinavian and French crime fictions covers a fifty-year period from 1965 to 2015, during which both Scandinavian and French societies have undergone significant transformations. Crime fictions in the respective contexts have responded in terms of their content and approach to these shifting social realities, which in turn have played a part in transforming the generic codes and conventions of the crime novel. At the centre of the analysis are the two distinctive social models which these crime fiction traditions have as their *points de repère*: the French model of republican universalism and the Scandinavian welfare state, both routinely described as being in a state of crisis around the end of the twentieth century.

The study establishes that early engaged crime fiction approaches these models from a class perspective, whereas at least since the 1990s group identity displaces socioeconomic interests as the critical focus. The thesis, then, adopting a comparative approach, investigates the interplay between contemporary Scandinavian and French crime narratives, considering their engagement with the relationship between the state and the citizen, and notably with identity issues (class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity in particular). An underlying premise for the project is an understanding of crime fiction as a multi-dimensional research object. Accordingly, alongside its literary analyses, the thesis places its twelve textual case studies within a wider interdisciplinary and intertextual framework where crime novels are viewed as socio-historical chronicles, as potential vehicles for social critique and as sites where various forms of identity are negotiated. The comparative analyses undertaken reveal that the discussion of identity issues is of a far more radical and subversive nature in the French crime fiction tradition than in its Scandinavian counterpart, corresponding also to more radical rewritings in France of the generic crime fiction template. Further, the study concludes, whereas the Scandinavian engaged crime novel engages affirmatively with the social consensus, the French variant has — in its dealing with the more rigid social model of French universalism — a transgressive and transformative approach.

INTRODUCTION

It is generally recognised amongst academic critics of European crime fiction that, of all the contemporary European crime fiction traditions, the French and the Scandinavian are ones that stand out. These two variants of the genre have contributed to the shaping of the present conception of the genre, albeit for different reasons. In the case of France, the long-term influence of the *roman noir* (especially in the incarnation of Gallimard's Série noire) is recognised internationally, and, as Andrea Goulet and Susanna Lee write in their introduction to a specialist crime fiction issue of *Yale French Studies* published in 2005, 'France has set the aesthetic tone and template for modern representations of crime' (Goulet and Lee 2005:1). France, moreover, is recognised as being 'perhaps the country where crime fiction […] has met with the most commercial and critical success' (Goulet and Lee 2005: 1). The special status of French crime fiction has in recent years found a competitor in the international publishing phenomenon of the 'Nordic noir' ('polar scandinave'/'Schwedenkrimi'/'giallo scandinavo'/'novela negra escandinava') which since the 1990s — and increasingly in the new millennium — has established itself as a distinctly geographically- and culturally-defined variant of the genre.[1]

The origins of this thesis may be situated in this broad intercultural context, as well as more specifically in my visits during late 2011 and early 2012 to bookshops in Calais, Lille and Paris, where I contemplated displays of *polars scandinaves* with curiosity. Many of the front covers of these translations featured an exoticised vision of the North: the covers showed snow-covered, barren landscapes, sometimes framing the silhouette of a lonesome male character. Upon closer inspection, the dust-jacket texts, alongside further allusions to the Nordic climate, frequently commented on the novels' engagement with the 'côté obscur' of the Scandinavian welfare states. This was at the peak of Scandinavian crime fiction's

[1] The international success of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy (2005–07) is considered as having ignited the boom in Scandinavian crime fiction (see for example Bergman 2014: 11). For a detailed survey of the reception of Nordic noir in the UK see Barry Forshaw's *Death in a Cold Climate* (2012). An analysis of the French reception can be found in Thierry Maricourt's *Dictionnaire du roman policier nordique* (2010).

commercial success — in France and elsewhere. Initially, my doctoral project aimed to capitalise on this *phénomène d'édition* and the historically unprecedented explosion of Scandinavian literature translated into French.[2] The uniform marketing template and the French media's preoccupation with the *polars polaires*, it became apparent, was part of a more wider-ranging French construction of the North which manifested itself historically as well as across other genres and fields.

In its original form, my research project set out to investigate the extent to and the ways in which the French reception of Scandinavian crime fiction was culturally specific, and whether, in fact, it had as much to with ideological and cultural debates within France as with the nature and content of the translated fiction. The central research question, which had its point of departure in the treatment of the *polar scandinave* in media and academic criticism, was, then, whether this variant of the crime novel could, once transposed to France, provide something, by way of social critique, that the *polar domestique* could not. My assumption was that this was the case particularly in relation to issues that are inherently problematic within the secular and ostensibly egalitarian framework of the modern French polity, such as religion, gender, ethnicity and other arenas where questions of identity are foregrounded.

It soon became apparent, however, that there was a much more complex picture, which was critically more urgent. The socially critical dimension of the *polar scandinave* concerned with the relationship between the citizen and the welfare state — which was continuously emphasised by French media and academic criticism — does, in fact, have a parallel in French crime fiction, but in the form of a much more fundamental critical engagement with the relationship between citizen and polity. Rather than the postwar welfare state *per se*, which is nevertheless an important feature of crime fiction's engagement with French society during 'les trente glorieuses' and their aftermath, it is in fact primarily the

[2] Early research for the thesis resulted in an article entitled 'Manufactured Exoticism and the Retelling *The Story of a Crime*: The Case of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's Reception in France', to be published in *Retold, Resold, Transformed: Crime Fiction in the Contemporary Era* (Gregoriou, Platten and Sulis (eds); Palgrave, forthcoming 2016).

republican state and the egalitarian philosophical ideals underpinning it that are interrogated in the French variant of the genre. Moreover, as in the case of its Scandinavian counterpart, the state with which the French *polar* engages is one that is decidedly in crisis.

This thesis, then, explores how contemporary French and Scandinavian crime fictions have responded to the sense of crisis of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. It covers a fifty-year period from 1965 to 2015, during which both Scandinavian and French societies have undergone significant transformations. The crime fictions of the respective contexts have responded to these shifting social realities, which in turn have played a part in transforming the codes and conventions of the crime novel. At the centre of the analysis are the two distinctive social models which these crime traditions have as their *points de repère*: the French model of republican universalism and the Scandinavian welfare state, routinely referred to as the 'Nordic model'.

French crime fiction: the Republic in conflict

The modern French republic is secular, and the relationship between state and citizen is based on a national civic identity informed by the concept of universalism and anchored in the idea of a sharp distinction between the public and the private spheres (Schor 2001; Scott 2004 and 2005). By law, political recognition of religious, ethnic, gender identities within the public framework is strictly illegal.[3]

The two main strands of ongoing debate in French political life regarding questions of identity may be summarised briefly. On the one hand, we see arguments for the effectiveness of political and social integration within the idea of republican universalism. On the other hand, this social model is challenged by immigration, globalisation, the reality of a multi-cultural society and increased demands from various marginalised groups in French society, all contesting the national discourse which 'for centuries [has] claimed that France is the

[3] The article 8.1. of the French data protection law [Loi 78-17 du 6 janvier 1978 modifiée] reads: 'Il est interdit de collecter ou de traiter des données à caractère personnel qui font apparaître, directement ou indirectement, les origines raciales ou ethniques, les opinions politiques, philosophiques ou religieuses ou l'appartenance syndicale des personnes, ou qui sont relatives à la santé ou à la vie sexuelle de celles-ci' (https://www.cnil.fr/fr/loi-78-17-du-6-janvier-1978-modifiee [accessed 11 July 2016]).

capital of universalism' (Schor 2001: 43). Within official political debate, there is a strong reluctance to accept critical discussion about identity issues and minority rights because such claims are perceived as threats to the stability, integrity and coherence of the Republic.

Because crime fiction so frequently features representatives of the state in the form of the police and investigating magistrates (*fonctionnaires*, in fact), it offers an ideal platform for critical engagement with the state and the premises underpinning it. Since these premises are precisely those of a republican social order, they are open to critique and indeed subversion. Seen from the perspective of genre history, the classic French detective novel — in the form of the *roman à énigme* — has traditionally dealt with re-establishing the social order. However, in the words of Claire Gorrara, there has been a shift to crime fiction having a 'subversive potential, an ability to confront and challenge the status quo' (2007: 213).[4] This shift occurring in the postwar era is reinforced with the introduction of the more politicised crime novel in the 1970s, which is considered to be one of the catalysts for a cultural legitimation of the genre (Evans 2002).

How does the 'subversive potential' that Gorrara identifies manifest itself in French and Scandinavian crime fictions? How does crime fiction as a rapidly and widely consumed popular cultural product contribute to the construction of a collective self-understanding? In which ways are Scandinavian and French crime narratives relevant to the discussion of identity issues or minority rights? How does crime fiction, as an alternative voice in public political and social debate, intervene in and make demands about social transformation? Do fictions from the two settings display clearly discernable differences in approach?

One of the key questions this thesis will explore is whether in fact French crime fictions offer a much more radically subversive potential than their Scandinavian counterparts. If they do, it is precisely because of the constraints imposed by pervasive

[4] Schematically viewed, two imprints in France — the Librairie des Champs-Élysées's Le Masque and Gallimard's Série noire —represent these different ideological strands of crime fiction. Le Masque, predominantly publishing translations of English golden–age whodunit novels in the vein of Agatha Christie and French equivalents, embody a conservative pre-war variant of the genre, referred to as *roman à énigme*. Conversely, the Série noire emerges in the postwar period with translations of American novels in the hard-boiled tradition and introduce the *roman noir* as a socially engaged variant of crime fiction. The cultural battle between these two imprints has to a large extent influenced how crime fiction is perceived in France (see Hamilton 2000: 228–232; Gorrara 2003: 12–17).

Republican universalist discourse. At the same time, the thesis will investigate the ways in which the social critique offered by Scandinavian crime fictions can be situated within a consensus formed around the 'Nordic model'. Subsequently, it will explore how the Scandinavian variant of the crime fiction genre is primarily concerned with that social model's erosion rather than with — as it is the case with French critical crime fiction — its very philosophical and ideological premises.

Scandinavian crime fiction: the People's Home on the market

Whereas postwar Scandinavia enjoyed a constant and peaceful political evolution, economic prosperity and high living standards with social democratic governments protecting and nurturing the individual, the Nordic welfare state has, since the 1980s, embraced globalisation and increasingly been tied by the imperatives of neoliberalism. The ability of the Scandinavian countries to maintain welfare states with their previous levels of services is impeded by external forces. As sociologist Pekka Kosonen puts it in the context of a study of globalisation and its impact on the Nordic welfare states, 'deregulated capital markets, internationalization of enterprises and Europeanisation set tighter limitations upon economic and social policies' (Kosonen 2001: 171). In welfare state research, history, politics and social sciences generally, there has been a significant focus on the 'substantial reorientation' that 'the Nordic welfare states have undergone' in this period (Kosonen 2001: 171). The erosion of the welfare state is also connected with changes in the preconditions for policy-making: the social democratic parties in all three Scandinavian countries have shifted towards the centre during the 1990s, and anti-immigrant, populist parties have promoted a more and more polarised discussion on immigration and integration. It has, however, also been argued that this crisis is part of a process that in fact was initiated much earlier, as the Norwegian historian Francis Sejersted argues in his influential study of twentieth-century Norway and Sweden: '[t]he Social Democratic order reached its zenith in the 1960s; thereafter it declined' (Sejersted 2011 [2005]: 3).

In more recent Scandinavian crime fiction research, there is a general consensus that '[t]he construction of the welfare state and its transformation […] are a crucial part of the background picture to an understanding of Scandinavian crime fiction' (Nestingen and Arvas 2011: 8; see also Bergman 2014). Indeed, as we will see in more detail in the thesis, a central and explicit thematic focus of the socially critical crime novel has been a critique of the welfare state and its development, an expression of anxiety over its transformation, or feelings of nostalgia or melancholy caused by the feeling of a 'paradise lost'. Swedish writer Leif G.W. Persson, for example, employs the collective title *Välfärstatens fall* ([*The Fall of the Welfare State*] (2002, 2003, 2007), for his crime fiction trilogy, whereas Henning Mankell subtitles his crime series featuring investigator Kurt Wallander as 'Novels about the Swedish Anxiety' (Mankell 2008 [1999]: 1).[5] It is noticeable that the emergence of the socially engaged Scandinavian crime novel occurs in the mid-1960s at the moment when the welfare state reaches its 'zenith', that it develops significantly during the 1980s and 1990s, and that it explodes in the 2000s as an international publishing phenomenon at the point at which the crisis of the welfare state becomes irrevocable.

Scandinavia is here defined according to the common use of the term within the region as comprising the three countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden.[6] Besides the geographic and linguistic closeness of the Scandinavian countries, they also share a number of common traits in terms of social organisation, institutions and their socio-historical and cultural development. However, perceiving these countries as one unity is clearly problematic. While the present study does not have the scope to prioritise an inter-Scandinavian comparison, it is worth keeping in mind that the notion of a unified Scandinavia fosters a reductive perspective of a region with complex, multifaceted and often

[5] On the themes of nostalgia and melancholy in Scandinavian crime fiction, see Arvas and Nestingen 2011: 9; McCorrestine 2011: 82–84; Meyhoff 2011: 64; Mrozewicz 2013.

[6] Arvas and Nestingen include Iceland and Finland in their *Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (2011). However, the reason for not including these Nordic countries in the current study finds its argument in the fact that they have a more peripheral association (geographically, linguistically, historically as well as culturally) with the Scandinavian countries. In the case of Finland, the country's geopolitical position as a country bordering Russia is a significant thematic concern in Finnish crime fiction (see Arvas 2011: 115). Also, the fact that speakers of Scandinavian languages cannot immediately understand Finnish (a Uralic language) makes the country's literature less accessible. In the case of Iceland, their crime fiction tradition is of much more recent date and has been less dominant (see Jakobsdóttir 2011: 47).

divergent internal histories and cultures. [7] The same can be said of the idea of an integrated 'Scandinavian crime novel' (see also Nestingen and Arvas 2011: 9; Åström, Gregorsdotter, and Horeck 2013: 2) — or a French one for that matter.

Employing a broad-brush approach to Scandinavian crime fiction does, however, facilitate an analysis of the relationship between the welfare state and the engaged crime novel. In international welfare studies the Scandinavian countries are amalgamated in the same category with the argument that 'they share some basic characteristics representing similar internal welfare state logics' (Kildal and Kuhnle 2005a: 1; see also Esping-Andersen 1990). As the shortcomings of the welfare state and its institutions have been a common thematic concern in Scandinavian crime fiction, and one that will be at the centre of the present study, it is productive to consider these countries' crime fictions under the same umbrella. In testimony to this, the contemporary Scandinavian crime novel is in Denmark often referred to as 'velfærdskrimien' [welfare crime fiction] (Sørensen 2008; Stougaard-Nielsen 2013).

Another reason to consider Scandinavia as a whole is the fact that the region has been considered a utopian enclave in post-industrial society inasmuch as these countries represent 'an island of national distinctiveness and social democratic success in an increasingly neo-liberal economic ocean' (Geyer, Ingebritsen and Moses 2000: 2). Part of the critically engaged Scandinavian crime fiction's transnational agenda — especially in its early stages in the 1960s — has been to challenge the outside world's often idealised and exoticised perception of the region.[8] Therefore, while there are localised particularities and concerns in the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish variants of the genre, there is also a thematic common

[7] In terms of recent history, one only needs to think of the different situations for these countries during the Second World War (when Norway and Denmark were occupied by Germany, and Sweden maintained its politics of neutrality) or the fact that Denmark joined the EU (the then EEC) in 1973, while Sweden did not join until after the end of the Cold War in 1995, and the fact that Norway remains a non-member of the EU.

[8] Challenging the international perception of Sweden is a prevalent theme in Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö's ten-novel series (1965–1975), which constitute part of the textual material for Chapter 1 below. An example is from the penultimate novel *Cop Killer* (1974), in which Bertil Mård, a Swedish captain who has sailed the Seven Seas, finds that his home country does not live up to the expectations: 'The welfare state. […] I heard about it all over the world and then when you see this shit country you wonder how the hell they've managed to spread all those lies and propaganda' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2007g: 167).

ground, which places an emphasis on a pan-Scandinavian interrogation of the welfare state at large.

Crime Fiction as counter-narrative

In relation to French crime fiction, a dominant focus of criticism has been the genre's marginalised status in the public and academic imagination. During the period that the thesis covers, the genre in France has benefitted from a significant repositioning from being a 'genre mineur' to becoming acknowledged as part of the 'patrimoine culturel' (Gorrara 2007). This shift in the cultural landscape has been attributed in part to the emergence of the *néo-polar* in the 1970s, which contributed 'non pas à sortir le roman policier de son ghetto culturel […], mais à l'installer sur une marche plus haute qui allait lui permettre de rayonner plus fort et plus loin' (Evans 2002: 87).[9]

Despite this well-documented move beginning in the 1970s and consolidating itself in the 1990s (Schweighaueser 1984; Evans 2002; Gorrara 2003) towards a cultural legitimation of crime fiction — and of popular culture more widely — the distinction between high and low culture is still considered 'particularly powerful in France' (Platten and Holmes 2013: 2).[10] It is indeed difficult to find French criticism addressing crime fiction which does not in some way or another comment on the marginalised position of the *polar* within the hierarchical organisation of French culture. Crime fiction, classified under the amorphous conglomeration of 'para-littérature' is, according to Marc Angenot writing in 1974, 'en dehors de la *clôture* littéraire, comme une production taboue, interdite, scotomisée, dégradée peut-être, tenue en respect, mais aussi riche de thèmes et d'obsessions qui, dans la haute culture, sont refoulés' (Angenot 1974: 10–11). For Yves Reuter, the very fact of working academically in France on 'paralittératures' automatically has a dimension of anti-hegemony:

9 See also Jean-Paul Schweighaeuser's detailed account of what he refers to as 'l'explosion de 1979' when the press and publishing houses in France begin to show an unprecedented interest in the genre and, especially, the *néo-polar* (1984: 71–90).

10 This distinction between high and low culture can also be seen in the academic field of French studies in the UK, where the recent overview report Research Excellent Framework 2014 concluded that there is 'relatively little emphasis on popular or mainstream as opposed to "high" culture' ('Research Excellence Framework 2014: Overview report by Main Panel D and Sub-panels 27 to 36' January 2015: 38).

‘La force des préjugés — y compris dans le champ théorique — demeure telle que travailler sur les paralittératures implique presque irrémédiablement de contester et de déconstruire l’ethnocentrisme’ (1992: 42–43). A similar argument is proposed in 1997 by Patrick Raynal, then editor of Gallimard’s Série noire: ‘Le XXe siècle, en matière de roman, a subi très longtemps une forme d’impérialisme académique’ (Raynal 1997: 91). For Raynal, the low status of ‘la Noire’ is caused by the genre’s choice of characters: ‘Il y avait donc, face à la littérature noble, une littérature ignoble, au plein sens du terme, parce qu’elle parlait de gens dont on ne devait pas parler: les criminels, les putes, les maquereaux, les assassins, les pauvres, les chômeurs, etc.’ (Raynal 1997: 91). Frequently, this cultural binarism is expressed in terms of an opposition between ‘la littérature blanche’ and ‘la littérature noire’ (see for example Rohrbach 2007: 22–23).[11] It is also reflected in the preoccupations of academic criticism, notably in contrast with English-speaking contexts. Holmes and Platten observe that ‘in France more than in Anglophone cultures, where the impact of Cultural Studies has been much greater, the hegemonic attitude to “mass” literature in general and story in particular has been one of disdain for the “easy” pleasures provided by popular fictions’ (Holmes and Platten 2013: 1). Conversely, it might also be argued that the impact of Cultural Studies in France has been less pronounced precisely because of ‘disdain’ for popular culture. Part of the explanation can perhaps be found in the conservatism of the French academic establishment, open to accusations of cultural elitism and of being unwilling to include ‘new’ study areas such as Postcolonial Studies (Moura 2008) or Queer Theory (Bourcier 2011). These are academic fields explicitly concerned with identity issues. As such, they can be seen as challenging republican universalist assumptions in fundamental ways.

Methodology

The present study builds on existing research in crime fiction studies, which has investigated the genre’s narratives as socio-historical chronicles of their time and setting. In the

[11] As a comment on this binary construction of culture, Gallimard launched in 1992 ‘La Noire’ under the editorship of Patrick Raynal. This imprint, which was taken down in 2005, was presented with a front cover explicitly evoking Gallimard’s iconic imprint ‘La Blanche’.

Scandinavian context, the thesis acknowledges in particular the contributions to the field by Andrew Nestingen, whose methodology for looking at the transformation of the Nordic region since the 1980s through the lens of popular culture has provided a basis for understanding popular culture — in this case crime fiction — as 'a site where answers to the crisis of legitimacy [of the welfare state] in the Nordic countries are produced, circulated and contested' (Nestingen 2008: 10). A fundamental proposition in Nestingen's analysis — and also of this thesis — is that genre literature negotiates the crisis brought about by the 'contradiction between neoliberalism and welfare-state corporatism' (2008: 10).[12] Attempts to grapple with this crisis are particularly privileged in crime fiction (as distinct at least from the literary mainstream), doubtless at least in part because of the genre's inherent preoccupation with hierarchical societal structures and divides, which are frequently the cause of a criminal act, and because of its common character gallery of state representatives (the police and the judiciary).

In relation to French crime fiction, the thesis draws (predominantly) on Anglophone research which since the beginning of the 2000s has seen an increased interest in the field. Claire Gorrara's *The Roman Noir in Post-War French Culture* (2003), an early contribution, seeks to explore how *noir* narratives 'intersect with wider social and historical forces' (Gorrara 2003: 2) and offers close readings of texts from Léo Malet's *120, rue de la gare* (1943) to Maud Tabachnik's *Un été pourri* (1994). While both Gorrara and Nestingen place their examination of the genre within a broader socio-historical analysis, both scholars also value textual analysis. This goes against a critical trend in crime fiction studies, which according to Gill Plain, writing in 2001, has been characterised by 'either an uncritical celebration of the history of detection or an analysis of readership patterns more concerned with *why* people read genre fiction than with the fiction itself' (Plain 2001: 7). The current study prioritises textual analysis rather than a taxonomic survey of the chosen texts, and

[12] In addition to Nestingen's far-reaching analysis of popular culture's insight in and contribution to the transformation of the welfare state in *Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia: Fiction, Film, and Social Change* (2008), he has also contributed as editor to the collected volume *Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (2011), in which the focus is more specifically on the crime fiction genre.

regards them, to use Plain's formulation, as being 'as available for close reading and as open to literary theoretical interrogation as their more "respectable" counterparts' (Plain 2001: 9).

The past two decades have also seen a growing critical interest in the relationship between crime fiction and identity, focused on the genre's successful exploration and discussion of identity issues relating to nationality, class, race, gender, sexuality, disability and other such categories.[13] Indeed, central to the texts investigated in the present study is their protagonists' search for identity or affirmative self-understanding. This search is entangled with and frequently reflected in the search for a solution to the crime committed. The thesis aligns itself with this identity-political strand of crime-fiction research, in which a common trope is the detective figure (or main protagonist) with a non-normative identity who serves the purpose of challenging hegemonic structures through a genre that traditionally has marginalised them: 'all of these characters [female, lesbian, black, etc.] serve to expose the dominant ideology of white heterosexual masculinity through a textual hijacking of one of its principal vehicles: crime fiction' (Scaggs 2005: 104).

The present study, then, recognises crime fictions as multidimensional research objects, which appear not only as literary texts or socio-historical chronicles, but also as sites for the negotiation of various identities. It considers these dimensions as integrated and enquires what the content and structures of crime fiction narratives in the two culturally-defined contexts have in common with the structures of the world. Going a step further, it investigates the ways in which crime fictions in these two settings challenge the status quo of political domination and throw light on the ideological underpinnings of the external public

[13] See in chronological order: Hamilton, *The French Detective Novel 1920's to 1990's: Gendering a Genre* (1994); Soitos, *The Blues Detective: A Study of African American Detective Fiction* (1996); Gosselin (ed.), *Multicultural Detective Fiction: Murder from the 'Other' Side* (1999); Hamilton, 'The *roman noir* and the Reconstruction of National Identity in France' (2000); Christian, *The Post-colonial Detective* (2001); Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction: Gender, Sexuality and the Body* (2001); Reddy, *Traces, Codes and Clues: Reading Race in Crime Fiction* (2003); Jordan, *Contemporary French Women's Writing: Women's Visions, Women's Voices, Women's Lives* (2004); Kim (ed.), *Race and Religion in the Postcolonial British Detective Story* (2005); Matzke and Mühleisen (eds), *Postcolonial Postmortems: Crime Fiction from a Transcultural Perspective* (2006); Pearson and Singer, *Detective Fiction in a Postcolonial and Transnational World* (2009); Desnain, 'Gender and Genre: Women in French Crime Writing' (2009b); Anderson, Miranda and Pezzotti (eds), *The Foreign in International Crime Fiction* (2010); Compard, *Immigrés et romans noirs* (2010); Miller and Oakley (eds), *Cross-Cultural Connections in Crime Fictions* (2012); Kim (ed.), *Class and Culture: Essays on Works in English since the 1970s* (2014).

discourse that surrounds them. Aiming to position crime fictions in this broad discursive framework, the readings correspondingly embrace an intertextual and interdisciplinary methodological matrix drawing on the knowledge and applying texts from a wide range of disciplines (sociology, anthropology, international relations studies, postcolonial studies, gender studies, queer theory, philosophy, history, politics, law, welfare state studies, political philosophy, comparative literature, literary theory).

Whereas the period that the thesis covers has been marked by conceptual keywords such as 'globalisation', 'transnationalism', 'hybridity', 'multiculturalism' — and the texts themselves are indeed characterised by a high degree of cultural mixing — crime fiction studies often take a nation-centred approach to the texts, and only a few studies directly compare crime fictions from different cultural settings.[14] However, the focus on national traditions within crime fiction studies might also, it can be argued, mirror the fact that questions about national identity have become an increasingly debated issue in the current political climate and social circumstances. The main objective of the thesis's comparative approach therefore is not to identify 'French crime fiction' or 'Scandinavian crime fiction' as typologies under which distinctive features and recognisable patterns can be found in order to reinforce the notion of the nation. Rather, the literary case studies are perceived as examples — without the claim of their being wholly representative — which contribute to, accentuate and contest the wider discursive configurations underpinning their respective settings. The study does therefore not pretend to be comprehensive. Rather, the texts constituting the corpus of the project have been chosen because they in some way or another are concerned with themes of social struggle, and they have, in particular, been selected for their outspokenness on identity issues. They thus represent the more critically engaged strands of Scandinavian and French crime fiction.

[14] One example of the former is the *European Crime Fictions* series published by University of Wales Press which has dedicated volumes to for example *French Crime Fiction* (Gorrara 2009), *Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (Nestingen and Arvas 2011), *Italian Crime Fiction* (Pieri 2011), *Crime Fiction in German: Der Krimi* (Hall 2016), *Iberian Crime Fiction* (Vosburg 2011). Besides collected volumes which juxtapose articles from different national traditions but without imposing a comparative analysis (see previous footnote), studies such as Nicola Barfoot's *Frauenkrimi/Polar féminin: Generic Expectations and the Reception of Recent French and German Crime Novels by Women* (2007) are rare.

Structure and content

The thesis is divided into three thematically organised sections, each consisting of two separate chapters. Part I addresses the critical potential of crime fiction, tracing it from its early form emerging in Sweden and France in the 1960s and 1970s up to the present day, focusing in particular on how individual and collective identities are negotiated in relation to normative state discourse. The focus of Part II is on how crime fiction has been employed to discuss and negotiate questions of gender and sexuality. Finally, Part III considers identity issues relating to ethnicity, investigating representations in French and Scandinavian crime novels that employ the genre as a site for critical engagement with identity issues relating to immigration and multiculturalism.

Chapter 1 focuses on the relationships between the development of socially engaged crime fiction in France and Scandinavia, and the French Fifth Republic and the Scandinavian welfare state which constitute the respective backdrops for these narratives. In both contexts, as the introduction to the chapter establishes, crime fiction deals with crises undermining the foundation of the state, resulting in the sense of collapse of values and universal ideologies. Through an analysis of texts by Jean-Patrick Manchette (*Nada*, 1972) and the Swedish couple Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö (*Roseanna*, 1965, *The Abominable Man* 1973), the crime fiction template as a vehicle for political opposition in its early stages is investigated. Key elements in this analysis include a comparison of the ways in which these novelists employ the genre as a means of transgressive revolt at various levels: against political systems and their institutions, against previous crime fiction traditions, and against the literary establishment in the two geographical settings respectively.

While it is evident that Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette write their crime novels within national literary traditions and with a culturally-specific affiliation, the radical politicised crime novel generally has a transgressive generic and thematic agenda. The crime narrative is no longer a self-contained story which ends with a resolved crime and re-established order. Rather, the crime, for both Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette, is something that exists outside of the narrative; the victims are everybody — including the reader — and

the resolution is not within sight. The individual fictional works are thus only contributions to a narrative on a greater scale, which tells the story of consumer society, globalisation, political-economic networks, and shifts in forms of social life under late modernity. Because both variants of crime fiction (whether French *polar* or Scandinavian *noir*) from this early stage of the period covered by the thesis have a more explicit transnational point of critique in their dealing with issues universal to the Western world under advanced capitalism, it seems less valid to discuss the early politicised crime novel specifically within the parameters of national boundaries. This relates in turn to another important observation in the first chapter: in the first instance and in both settings, crime fiction addresses the welfare state crises predominantly in class terms. The Marxist-leaning social critique performed by early engaged crime fiction later gives way to one centred on ethnic and gender identity issues. There is, to borrow terms coined by the political philosopher Nancy Fraser, a shift from a 'paradigm of redistribution' to a 'paradigm of recognition' (Fraser 1996; 1997). These paradigms are essential to the readings performed in this chapter and elsewhere in the thesis.

In **Chapter 2**, we turn towards novels that are more recent in order to investigate the ways in which the Scandinavian welfare state and the French Fifth Republic still occupy a central role in crime fiction in the twenty-first century. Corruption of the universal state however takes on different forms in societies increasingly undergoing the effects of globalisation. In *Europa Blues* (2001) by Swedish writer Arne Dahl, Europeanisation is the thematic centre of the narrative. Dominique Manotti's *Bien connu des services de police* (2010) discusses perceived realities of exclusion, inclusion and life on the margins of society (specifically, in terms of location, in the *banlieue*) as they relate to the image of reality presented by the official discourse of the French Republic. The conclusion of this chapter endorses the applicability and usefulness of Fraser's categories and identifies essential features of the two settings and their representations.

The analysis of **Chapter 3** centres on two variants — respectively Scandinavian and French — of crime fiction's engagement with gender issues: the *femikrimi* and the *polar au féminin*. The parallels and divergences in the reception (theory, literary criticism and media

commentary) of these two categories demonstrate that there are distinct national discourses which surround novels addressing questions related to gender and identity. The chapter then turns to close readings of texts categorised as *femikrimis* or *polars au féminin* aiming to demonstrate how these texts by crime writers from France and Scandinavia employ the genre as a vehicle to discuss gender and sexuality issues, and how these more generally relate to a search for identity for the main protagonist. Two novels by Norwegian author Anne Holt, *Blessed Are Those Who Thirst* (1994) and *The Final Murder* (2004), are approached through thematic readings alongside *Un été pourri* (1994) by French author Maud Tabachnik.

Chapter 4 pushes further into an examination of gender and sexuality by considering the figure of the prostitute, which conventionally in crime fiction has been the ultimate example of female victimhood. The chapter's readings of Virginie Despentes's *Baise-moi* (1994) and Swedish author Katarina Wennstam's *Smuts* ['Dirt'] (2007) consider how both texts utilise the prostitute as a way of formulating a critique of male dominance, but in rather divergent ways. The prostitute in Despentes's novel is a radical, transgressive figure who actively rebels against injustice and male violence. Despentes's female protagonists further exhibit an awareness that gender identity (and other identities) is something that is performed. Wennstam's discussion, on the other hand, does not move beyond considering the prostitute as victim, who is further othered by the fact that she is a foreigner (unable to communicate in a nuanced manner) and stereotyped (unable to perform outside her prescribed role).

The conclusion to the two chapters in Part II compares the representation of transgressive female figures in French crime fiction to the fictional female representatives from the Scandinavian tradition, who are either much more mainstream (Holt) or victimised (Wennstam). Whereas the *femikrimi* approaches gender and sexual differences in non-confrontational and consensus-seeking ways, the *polar au féminin* promotes a conscious and transformative critique of patriarchal structures and gender inequalities in French society.

Chapter 5 begins by exploring the socio-historical circumstances of immigration in the two different settings and the different critical responses to multicultural tensions within

society. In crime fiction — as in the public domain generally — themes of ethnic diversity and cultural cohabitation have become privileged in both cultural settings since the 1980s and 1990s and relate — especially in France — to the history of colonialism and its legacy. The chapter then turns to readings of two recent French crime novels and is concerned in particular with problematic aspects of the combination of the Fifth Republic's unyielding assimilation politics in the post-colonial context with the complex reality of a *de facto* multicultural society. Roger Fodjo's novel *Les Poubelles du palais* (2010) addresses issues of postcoloniality, collective and individual memory, the investigation and correction of the historical record, and posthumous justice. Whereas Fodjo's novel interrogates the relationship between France and its former colonies, Rachid Santaki's 'polar urbain' *Les Anges s'habillent en caillera* (2011) is set in the critical metropolitan locus of the *banlieue*, among marginalised communities seen by some elements of society and the political establishment as 'racaille'. It articulates the tensions between centre and periphery in its representation of marginalised protagonists in their outlying suburban habitat, and in so doing critiques the exclusivity of republican universalism.

Chapter 6, still concerned with identity issues related to ethnicity, parallels Chapter 5's reading of French novels by examining how Scandinavian crime fiction has approached questions of cultural cohabitation. This is done through readings of Norwegian author Roy Jacobsen's novel *Marions slør* ['Marion's Veil'] (2007) and Paul Smith's Danish novel *Mordet på imamen* ['The Murder of the Imam'] (2008). The analysis identifies in the first of these the privileging of an idealised and perfectible assimilation, presented as attainable and indeed desirable. Racism and discord are presented as resulting from individual personal failures to realise that assimilation is working. Ultimately, the text seeks a consensus rooted in an appeal to common humanity and Norwegian solidarity which transcends difference. This brings the novel's representation of otherness firmly within Fraser's 'paradigm of recognition'. Smith's novel, in similar vein, offers a didactic narrative featuring a 'hybrid' protagonist whose competence, wisdom and essential humanity come to the fore in spite of her otherness, as if to provide an example to those who might prejudge her on account of her

origins and gender. While certainly well-intentioned, then, these novels do not fundamentally engage with the underlying historical conditions of possibility for ethnic tensions in Western multicultural societies in the way that the French examples in the previous chapter do.

The conclusion to the thesis's two final chapters, then, builds on observations from Part II by further establishing that the Scandinavian crime narratives have an affirmative agenda — that is, they are somewhat superficial in their representation of the problematics of ethnicity and otherness in a multicultural context. Whereas these narratives are effectively asserting that any problems are restricted to individuals, their French counterparts tend by contrast to be transformative, offering a critique of structural issues and ideological presuppositions underpinning such problematics.

Coda

Indeed, what the comparative approach of the present study will, it is hoped, show is that while the enthusiasm with which the *polar scandinave* has been met in France perhaps has proven to be more revelatory of the problematics and concern of the home-grown *polar*, there are strong reasons for examining the transcultural interplay between the two traditions.

Embracing its twelve literary case studies from a comparatist perspective, the thesis explores the French and Scandinavian crime novel in terms of points of commonality as well as points of difference. While there are global concerns for the critically engaged crime novel pertinent to both settings (advanced capitalist society, globalisation, immigration, economic crises, etc.), there are also divergent, culturally specific targets of critique and textual ways of approaching them. The cultural specificities and common sense assumptions persistently reveal themselves in the comparative analysis and become especially visible in the novels' approach to and discussion of identity issues.

Of particular import is an exploration of the connection between conventions of the crime narrative and the society that it represents, that is, of how form and content are interdependent and develop in conjunction with each other. This relationship is not fixed, but rather subject to change both over time and in accordance with the narratives' cultural

habitats. While in a classic whodunnit, *à la* Agatha Christie, the resolution was about the restoration of order, the novels examined in the present study are either preoccupied with presenting, documenting and exposing social order, or — in the more postmodern exemplars — are directly concerned with destabilising the existing order and the assumptions underpinning it, as well as with destabilising the conventions of the genre. An essential part of the study is, therefore, to establish — in both the French and in the Scandinavian cultural settings — what precisely are viewed as constituting the privileged *enjeux* within the social contract. Ultimately, the study affirms that the formal variations and deviations of the French *polar* and the Scandinavian police procedural are rooted in — but also creatively exploited in order to challenge — their two distinct social and ideological settings.

PART I

The Structure of Crime Fiction Revolutions

CHAPTER 1

Social and Literary Models in Crisis: 'La crise des récits' and 'la littérature de la crise'[15]

> Vi svenskar lever ju i en så oändligt mycket lyckligare lottad situation. Vårt lands befolkning är homogen, inte bara i fråga om rasen utan också i många andra avseenden.[16]
>
> [We Swedes obviously live in an infinitely more happy condition [than do the Americans]. The population of our country is homogenous, not only in terms of race, but also in many other aspects] (my translation)
>
> Sweden's prime minister, Tage Erlander, 1965

Introduction

In 1967 Swedish journalist and writer Per Wahlöö (1926–75) explained in an essay the aim of the crime fiction novels he was at the time in the process of writing with his wife Maj Sjöwall (1935–):

> *We […] had this special idea together: to use the crime novel in its pure form* as a scalpel to slit open the belly of the ideologically pauperized and morally debatable so-called welfare state of the bourgeois type, […] to simply find out where the responsibility was for what and if there was, indeed, anything to be responsible for. (Wahlöö 1967: 176; my translation)

The use of the crime novel as a means of dissecting society and formulating social critique is not new, but it is in fact unprecedented — at the time when Wahlöö was writing — within the postwar Swedish context. Sjöwall and Wahlöö's critical engagement with the Swedish welfare state as presented in their police procedurals not only challenges the contemporary political consensus, but is intertwined with a rewriting of the generic conventions of crime fiction. This rewriting advances questions about literature's role in society.

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15 'La crise des récits' (Lyotard 1979: 7); 'La littérature de la crise' (Manchette 1996: 48).
16 Erlander is quoted in Wickström (2015: 11–12). The quotation is from a speech delivered at the Swedish national assembly 'Riksdagen' on 23 March 1965.

A parallel literary movement of politicised leftist crime writing sees the light in France with the post-May 1968 *néo-polar*. Its founder, Jean-Patrick Manchette (1942–95), likewise establishes 'une écriture au scalpel' (Frommer 2003: 44) which sets forth concerns about advanced capitalism, consumer society and political organisation within the French Republic while simultaneously contesting the formulaic structures and para-literary position of the genre.

In this chapter, I investigate the emergence of the socially and politically engaged crime novel in Scandinavia and France in the 1960s and early 1970s through readings of novels by Sjöwall/Wahlöö and by Manchette. The chapter considers these novels as a response to, or an articulation of, particular socio-political paradigms in their respective national contexts. One of the unifying themes dominating these writings is the turn from viewing crime as an expression of an individual aberration to understanding crime as a manifestation of a societal malaise. Rather than staging the detective in the role of protector of a social order that is disturbed by the individual and aberrant malefactor, the *néo-polar* and its Swedish counterpart set out to investigate the constellations and dynamics of power and to problematize the political status quo. This implies a persistent interrogation of the prevailing polity and its institutions — the Fifth Republic in the case of Manchette, and the postwar social democratic welfare state in the case of Sjöwall/Wahlöö. Ideally, the state should be untainted by vested interests. In reality, this is not the case. The novels in question therefore scrutinise the question of how capable the state is of providing for the individual citizen. This evolves in the fictional narratives into investigations of the state as an inherently criminal institution offering protection only to those who fully comply with its rationale. Thematically, the writers focus on processes within state institutions, predominantly the legal system, the police and the political establishment, as well as on the ways in which the press often colludes with the police and political interests.

However, before the analysis turns towards the fictional texts themselves, the status of these almost simultaneous literary occurrences will be contextualised within the history of modern crime fiction narratives. After a brief discussion of how the genre has shifted and

developed to embrace different socio-cultural stages of modernity, this section thus situates the writings of Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette as pivotal literary events — and generic turning points — in their respective contexts. These writings announce the advent of a new category of crime fiction that is in every sense critically engaged.

The crime fiction genre as modern form

Detective fiction emerges in the mid-nineteenth century and develops in close relationship with industrialisation, technological progress, colonialism, urbanisation, capitalism, and the *bourgeoisie* as the ruling class. In other words, it develops alongside modernity itself. As well as accompanying (and reflecting and charting) societal changes, detective fiction also, as Ernest Mandel remarks, surfaces at 'a particular stage of the evolution of literature' (1984: 10). If Charles Baudelaire is celebrated for his radical conceptualisation of 'modernité' (Baudelaire 2010 [1863]) and for his characterisation of it as a condition rooted in the constantly shifting individual temperament's relationship to the similarly mobile environment, that is, as a *social* condition, it is unsurprising that he should also be the translator and advocate of Edgar Allan Poe's detective stories for a French audience. Poe's short stories 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' (1841), 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' (1842) and 'The Purloined Letter' (1844), are published in Baudelaire's translation in 1856. They are generally considered as the texts establishing the genre of modern crime fiction (see for example Messac 1975: 567; Mandel 1984: 19; Thompson 1993: 43; Lits: 1999: 20, Scaggs 2005: 33) and can be viewed as a transitional literary manifestation at the crossroads between the pre-modern and the modern. As Kim Toft Hansen notes, '"The Murders in the Rue Morgue" materialises a condensed format of the Western rational modern detective story' (2012b: 150). Hansen further characterises Poe in the following terms:

> Directionally, Poe builds a literary bridge between past and future, between a metaphysical sensibility [Romanticism] and a rational frame of mind [modernity] which does not unerringly make him the father of crime fiction, but a hub of attention passing on erstwhile historical roots. (2012b: 151)

The association between modernity and the emergence of the crime fiction genre is also comprehensively analysed by Jacques Dubois. In *Le roman policier ou la modernité* (1992), Dubois emphasises capitalism and the rule of the *bourgeoisie* as the condition upon which the genre establishes itself. Dubois also highlights the three colonial powers France, England and the United States as the genre's birthplaces: 'Le genre prend naissance en trois pays au moment où le capitalisme libéral ébranle l'ancien monde et crée les conditions d'émergence d'une culture neuve, qui trouve d'emblée sa cohérence et est encore la nôtre' (2005 [1992]: 7).[17]

Linking the surfacing of the *roman policier* to the paradigmatic shift from 'l'ancien monde' to modernity suggests that other and later significant shifts from one era to another might also have an impact upon the genre's essential features. Therefore, it is productive to investigate the modern crime fiction narrative as a transitional, pivotal literary form in relation to later mutations of the genre, which frequently appear at historically critical moments when societies are in rapid transformation.

Accordingly, Ernest Mandel points to another significant socio-cultural shift in America in the 1920s and 1930s, coinciding with the emergence of the hard-boiled novel. He argues in *Delightful Murder* (1984) that whereas crime fiction in its early nineteenth-century manifestations mirrored 'the rising need of the bourgeoisie to defend rather than attack the social order' (1984: 10), the genre in the interwar period 'represented a typical transitional phenomenon' (1984: 120), signalling a shift in focus from a systemic defence to a systemic critique:

> This evolution of the crime story, of course, means that it can no longer function as a literary genre helping to persuade its readers to accept the legitimacy of bourgeois society. Its integrative function has declined, and it has actually become disintegrative with respect to that society (Mandel 1984: 124).

This shift from an 'integrative' function for the crime story — that is, one supportive of the social order and of its restoration — to a 'disintegrative' function — one of critique — is a

[17] Many critics echo Dubois's view of this shift occurring in the nineteenth century (see for example Platten 2011: 23–25 or Thompson 1993: 9).

significant marker for crime fiction in the twentieth century, and one that coincides, moreover, with radical shifts in the economic and cultural bases of society.

The present chapter's rationale (as well as being part of the premise for the thesis itself), then, is that certain crime fiction narratives in the 1960s and 1970s — in this case, Sjöwall/Wahlöö's and Manchette's — represent yet another turning point in the genre, linked in turn to a shifting of socio-historical tectonic plates moving at the moment when these authors are producing their texts. In the same manner that detective fiction materialises as 'a literary and socio-historical result of modernity in the first half of the nineteenth century' (Hansen 2012b: 150), these crime fictions, it will be argued, surface as a response to the paradigm of postmodernity in its early manifestation. Likewise, rather as postmodernity is both continuous and discontinuous with earlier phases of modernity, the rewriting of the genre that begins during the mid-1960s and early 1970s offers form and content that are both analogous to and disparate from previous variants of the genre. From its inception in the nineteenth century, the crime fiction genre is anchored to modernity, and it develops in close connection with modernity through the twentieth century, as industrialisation, capitalism, colonialism, nationalism, socialism, along with modernity itself, become increasingly associated with the 'post-' prefix.

The title of this part of the thesis alludes to Thomas S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), which argues against viewing history in terms of a 'development-by-accumulation' (Kuhn 1970 [1962]: 2) or a 'process of accretion' (3). Instead Kuhn argues for viewing the development of science as the result of scientific revolutions, which he describes as 'the tradition-shattering complements to the tradition-bound activity of normal science' (1970: 6).[18] The development of the crime fiction genre is here considered from a similar perspective, from which new generic occurrences are viewed as expressions of paradigm shifts linked to contingent literary and socio-historical turning

[18] Foucault's concept of *épistémè*, developed in *Les Mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (1966), parallels the Kuhnian paradigm: 'c'est le champ épistémologique, l'épistémè où les connaissances, envisagées hors de tout critère se référant à leur valeur rationelle ou à leurs formes objectives, enfoncent leur positivité et manifestent ainsi une histoire qui n'est pas celle de leur perfection croissante, mais plutôt celle de leurs conditions de possibilité. […] Plutôt que d'une histoire au sens traditionnel du mot, il s'agit d'une "archéologie"' (Foucault 1966: 13).

points. This evolution of the crime fiction genre as one which undergoes periodic yet 'non-accumulative' revolutions thus takes account of the genre's emergence in the mid-nineteenth century, the appearance of the hardboiled detective fiction in 1920–30s' America, Sjōwall/Wahlöö's welfare crime fiction and Manchette's *néo-polar* in the 1960s/1970s, and also of the historical contingency of these developments. These literary turning points can be viewed as generic revolutions bound to socio-historical critical moments where the genre's predilection for dealing with societal transformation is particularly accentuated.

The theme of social transformation is reinforced by the genre's particular thematic preoccupation with topographical/territorial infrastructure. Paris in the 1840s–50s, Los Angeles in the 1930s–40s and European metropoles (including Paris and Stockholm) in the 1960s–70s are all characterised by radically new infrastructural environments, and these are central to crime fiction's engagement with the respective societies in which they are produced. The changing metropolis as a site of existential alienation found in Baudelaire's and Poe's Parisian boulevards and in the 'mean streets' of the Chandleresque *noir* are paralleled in Sjöwall and Wahlöö's depiction of Stockholm, where 'urban spaces […] represent the disintegrating Swedish welfare state, and the changes that the city is going through, physical reconstruction as well as social degradation, are presented as the result of capitalism, corruption and greed' (Bergman 2013: 68; see also Geherin 2008: 161–7). New architectural features and a changing cityscape resulting from urban planning executed to the benefit of business interests expose the degeneration of Swedish society, where the sense of community found in the old residential neighbourhoods disappears to make room for new dehumanising concrete buildings erected for big corporations 'to achieve the fullest possible exploitation of valuable land' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2007e: 45). The reshaping of the city is directly linked to social degradation: 'Behind its spectacular topographical façade and under its polished, semi-fashionable surface, Stockholm had become an asphalt jungle where drug addiction and sexual perversion ran more rampant than ever' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2007d: 93). In contrast, the immediate postwar city is frequently throughout the series described in nostalgic terms: 'Stockholm had been a different city then. The Old City had been an idyllic

little town […] before they had cleared out the slums and restored the buildings and raised the rents so the old tenants could no longer afford to stay' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2007e: 14). The city's appearance thus mirrors the transition between old and new, between past and present, and is a physical testimony to a society in transformation, to a process which is at the centre of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's critique. In Manchette's novels the focus is often on another aspect of urbanism, the peripheral *banlieue*, which in its progressive infrastructural degradation and alienation from the rest of French society provides an apt setting for depicting a period when the economic and social environment changes at the end of 'les Trente Glorieuses' and becomes marked by unemployment, the oil crisis and the sequels to decolonisation.

Postmodernity and the emergence of the engaged crime novel

In 'Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' (1984), Jameson characterises postmodernism loosely as 'the end of this and that' and more specifically as 'the end of ideology, art, or social class; the "crisis" of Leninism, social democracy, or the welfare state, etc., etc.' (Jameson 1984: 59). According to Jameson, the ideological and cultural crises of postmodernism begin in the early 1980s (1984: 59: 2015: 104), but '[t]he case for its existence depends on the hypothesis of some radical break or *coupure*' taking place in the late 1950s early 1960s (1984: 59).[19] Postmodernism, or postmodernity (as Jameson renames it later to distinguish the historical period from the style (2015: 104)), is characterised by the fact that 'all kinds of things, from economics to politics, from the arts to technology, from daily life to international relations, had changed for good' (2015: 104). While the crime fiction narratives studied in chapter 2–6 of the thesis all deal with the 'postmodern' period after 1980, the engaged crime novel which emerges in the 1960s can be said to be characterised by a notion of pre-'postness' in various forms, or what, in paraphrasing Jameson, could be characterised as the beginning of the end of this and that.

[19] In *La Condition postmoderne* (1979), Jean-François Lyotard likewise defines the period where 'les sociétés entrent dans l'âge dit post-industriel et les cultures dans l'âge dit postmoderne' to be 'au moins la fin des années 50, qui pour l'Europe marque la fin de sa reconstruction' (1979: 11).

'Postmodern crime fiction' as a literary subgenre is generally associated with more literary writers such as Paul Auster, Thomas Pynchon, Jorge Luis Borges, Umberto Eco, Gabriel García Marquez and Don DeLillo (Thompson 1993, Scaggs 2005, Knight 2010 [2004]). The present study, however, prefers a broader understanding of postmodern crime fiction, situating a wider range of crime novels — including those of more popular stature within the mainstream of the genre — within the paradigmatic constellations of postmodernity. This view of postmodernity corresponds with Frederic Jameson's conception of postmodernism which aims 'to grasp it as the cultural dominant of the logic of late capitalism' rather than to present 'a view for which the postmodern is one (optional) style among many others available' (1991: 46). As will be seen throughout the rest of the thesis, the texts studied — without falling into the category of literary postmodern crime fiction — still use postmodern modes when adapting and redeploying a classic modern genre. The adjective 'postmodern' is thus here taken as referring to postmodernity as a historical if not in fact socio-historical category, rather than to 'postmodernism' as an artistic or aesthetic category.

Early politicised crime fiction in Sweden and France

Both Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette explicitly place their writings within a paradigm of crisis or decline, and their crime fiction narratives can generally be understood in terms of an experience of the collapse of ideologies. 'L'incredulité à l'égard des métarécits', to employ Lyotard's conception of the postmodern condition (1979: 7), translates in the case of Sjöwall and Wahlöö into a pronounced disbelief in the social democratic version of the welfare state, which since the 1930s had constituted (and to some extent still constitutes) an essential part of the national 'metanarrative' in Scandinavia. Their crime fictions, as pointed out by Charlotte Beyer, 'reflect a postmodernist scepticism in authority and a mistrust in organisations' (2012: 146). Cracks are beginning to show in the system of the social democratic welfare project, and Sjöwall and Wahlöö's critique of the postwar consensus is (retrospectively) connected here by Beyer to the beginning of post-welfarism.

On the French side, as an almost chiastic response to what Lyotard calls 'la crise des récits' (1979: 7), Manchette characterises the *polar* as 'la littérature de la crise' and as a genre '[qui] voit le mal dans l'organisation sociale transitoire' (1996: 48). Correspondingly, he lets Henri Buton, the principal character of his first crime novel, *L'Affaire N'Gustro* (2005 [1971]), pronounce the following axioms: 'Dieu n'existe pas et le marxisme est une duperie' (Manchette 2005: 130). In similar vein, when considering 'la culture', he asserts: 'Elle est morte!' (2005: 172).[20] These programmatic and sceptical statements are emblematic of the methodical dismantling of religion, ideology and culture which takes place throughout Manchette's texts.

The novels of Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette express uncertainty and instability and are themselves generically uncertain and unstable; the medium thus resembles the message. This contrasts with the underlying ideological premises for the classic whodunnit from the British tradition, and for the French *roman policier* or the conventional Swedish mystery novel conceived in the whodunnit's image. The subversive aspect of the writings offers at least in part a critique of generic conventions, operating within the parameters of the history of the crime fiction genre as such, and aligns itself with the writers' overall leftist political agenda.[21] As Pearson and Singer argue in their introduction to *Detective Fiction in a Postcolonial and Transnational World*, criticism with reference to the traditional mystery novel has seen 'detective fiction as a paradigm and an implement of the hegemonic processes of the Western nation-state, tantalizing readers with aberrant, irrational criminality while assuring them that society ultimately coheres through a shared commitment to reason and law' (2009: 1). Any opposition voiced by crime fiction to a bourgeois belief system, therefore, necessarily entails a revolt against the conventional mystery novel which, according to Sjöwall and Wahlöö, is

[20] *L'Affaire N'Gustro* was published in April 1971. *Laissez bronzer les cadavres!*, co-written with Jean-Pierre Bastid, had been published earlier (in February) the same year.

[21] In addition to their fictional writings, the authors are equally engaged in theoretical and critical production in which they comment on their use of the genre. Manchette writes articles devoted to the crime fiction genre for various newspapers and journals and continued to develop his critical views in his journal (Manchette 1996 and 2008); Sjöwall, and especially Wahlöö, write essays and newspaper articles explaining how they deploy the genre to form a critique of the Swedish welfare state (see for example Sjöwall and Wahlöö 1971 or Wahlöö 1967).

characterised by its 'reactionary and conservative hallmark' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 1971). Sjöwall and Wahlöö categorise what they refer to as 'the Golden age detective novel' as 'bourgeois entertainment' written by writers who consciously operate in an unreal world (1971). What they propose in its place is the realist 'crime novel' or the 'procedural novel' based on a strong sense of contemporaneity. This new version of the crime novel can bring the genre out of the 'entertainment industry' where it has been read by 'blinkered readers', and into the sphere of engaged literature (1971). For Manchette, such opposition is expressed as the fundamental epistemological difference between the nature of the *roman à énigme* and the *polar*:

> Je décrète que polar ne signifie aucunement 'roman policier'. Polar signifie roman noir violent. Tandis que le roman policier à énigme de l'école anglaise voit le mal dans la nature humaine, le polar voit le mal dans l'organisation sociale transitoire. [...] [L]e polar est la littérature de la crise. (Manchette 1996: 48)

Having rejected the socially and politically conservative model of the whodunnit, the common point of reference for Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette is instead the American hard-boiled novel. Manchette makes the link between the emergence of the hard-boiled *roman noir* and widespread political disillusion in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. Facing a rapidly expanding and corrupt capitalism in the 'période de contre-révolution triomphante', which he defines as the period from 1920 to 1950, the hard-boiled novelists used the genre as a means of expressing such disenchantment (Manchette 1996: 21). Manchette implicitly draws a parallel with the situation experienced in France after the events of May 1968 and the need for the *néo-polar* as a way of articulating political concern. A similar expression of crisis after a moment of elevation is to be found in Sjöwall and Wahlöö's depiction of the postwar social democratic welfare state. This social construction was supposed to be based on universal rights and opportunities, but the reality is for Sjöwall in fact a capitalist state described as a 'cold and inhuman society where the rich got richer and the poor got poorer' (Shephard 2006: 10). A general ideological attitude in the novels by Manchette and

Sjöwall/Wahlöö is on the one hand social critique, and on the other a sentiment of disillusionment which ends in violence, despair or nihilism.

The engaged crime novel evolves alongside a new type of readership both in France and Sweden. The popularity of the novels can be viewed as a consequence of the fact that the writers are, so to speak, writing the right things at the right time:

> Ce que ces écrivains auront permis […], c'est sans doute d'accélérer et d'élargir la reconnaissance intellectuelle du genre, en tout cas sur le territoire français. Pourquoi? Parce qu'en même temps qu'ils émergeaient, des générations successives de lecteurs et de lectrices ayant suivi des trajectoires socio-culturelles proches (études supérieures plus ou moins longues, engagement politique, intérêt pour la contre-culture) émergeaient à leur tour. (Evans 2002: 112)

Evans's argument is based on the influence of the *néo-polar*, but a similar account can be found in Sjöwall and Wahlöö's own analysis of their readers, who they claim are different from the readers of the mystery novel seduced by its 'bourgeois entertainment'; their readers 'want something other than charades, they are informed and want informed literature' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 1971; my translation). Retrospectively in an interview, Sjöwall explains the renewal of the genre, its use of realism and its political content as the factors that bring the crime novel out of its previous cultural ghetto: '[w]e were the first crime writers who were considered to be serious reading. You did not have to hide Sjöwall/Wahlöö inside Kafka when you were on the train' (Eklund 2010, my translation). This statement reveals a presumed tension or barrier between genre and literary fiction, the breakdown of which is a significant feature of a postmodern sensibility.

In the cases of both Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette, the writers actively use the dynamics found in their fictional projects' position between literature and para-literature as an active and creative force. Making reinvigorations and innovative reforms of the genre to resurrect it in new forms, the works of these authors include a conscious intertextual dialogue with the genre's conventions and previous traditions. The focus of the following readings is on how the novels studied — by aid of the interplay of form and content — problematize the political underpinning of the postwar welfare state; how they participate as an alternative

voice in political, cultural and social debate in France and in Scandinavia; and how they, as a rapidly and widely consumed popular cultural product, contribute to the construction of a collective self-understanding.

Jean-Patrick Manchette: 'La forme du polar est bien la forme de son contenu'[22]

Jean-Patrick Manchette published nine crime novels between 1971 and 1981, most of which appeared in Gallimard's Série noire. As an emblematic representative of a generation of writers who took a political position during the Algerian conflict and in May 1968, Manchette in his crime narratives offers a clear left-wing critique of advanced capitalism, political conservatism and the morality of the French state; at the same time, this critique is subtended by the disillusion experienced in the aftermath of 'l'esprit de mai'. *La Position du tireur couché*, published in 1981, concludes Manchette's career, in the year that François Mitterrand forms a government that will later cause disillusionment among many on the left in France.

Manchette invents the term *néo-polar*, which has become a sub-categorical expression used to define the French literary movement of politically engaged crime fiction. He links the emergence of this genre directly to the upheavals of May 1968: 'l'apparition d'un "nouveau polar" français (que nous nommerons néo-polar […]) fait écho à la réapparition éclatante de l'Histoire sur les chaussées dépavées de Paris et d'ailleurs' (Manchette 1996: 80–81).[23] Contrary to the later usage of the term as a designator for politically engaged crime fiction, Manchette employs it rather ambiguously, emphasising that the term does not introduce a new school of French *polars*:

> J'ai formé […] le mot 'néopolar' sur le modèle de mots de 'néopain', 'néovin' ou même 'néoprésident', par quoi la critique radicale désigne les ersatz qui, sous un nom illustre, ont partout remplacé la même chose. Une partie des journalistes et des fans a repris l'étiquette apologétiquement, sans y voir malice, c'est amusant. (Manchette 1996: 200)

[22] See Manchette 1996: 76.
[23] For an analysis of the May 1968 events and their impact on French cultural life, see Margaret Atack's *May in French Fiction and Film: Rethinking Society, Rethinking Representation*, in which she also argues for the events' role in the renewal of the crime fiction genre (1999: 123).

The idea of the *néo-polar* being an *ersatz* — a copy of inferior quality to the original — corresponds with Manchette's ambivalent affiliation with the genre at large which he theorises in numerous contributions to newspapers and magazines.[24] As well as being the creator of the *néo-polar*, he is simultaneously one of its fiercest critics. His critique associates the crime fiction genre in the twentieth century with the development of different socio-historical contexts which he categorises in terms of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements. In the context of France, he offers a brief genealogy of the genre and focuses here predominantly on the development associated with Gallimard's Série noire.

The launching of the Série noire by Marcel Duhamel in 1945 had marked a turning point in history of the French crime novel. The proclaimed aim of the series was to promote translations of 1920s and 1930s novels from the American hard-boiled school to a French readership increasingly fascinated by American consumer goods and cultural products after the Second World War. As emphasised by Duhamel in his famous presentation of the series, the translated novels were controversial and non-conformist and broke away from the French tradition of the *roman à énigme*'s locked room mysteries and ratiocinative sleuth.[25] Where the *néo-polar* breaks radically with the contemporary French crime novel, Manchette demonstrates a conscious preference for the American inter-war crime novel, relating his own writing especially to that of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler: 'Comme j'étais totalement nourri des polars américains, pas du tout d'auteurs français, il me paraissait tout naturel, automatique, de suivre la voie des "réalistes-critiques". Le polar, pour moi, c'était — c'est toujours — le roman d'intervention sociale très violente' (Manchette 1996: 12). He places the emergence and popularity of the critical hard-boiled novel — 'la grande littérature morale de notre époque' (Manchette 1996: 31) — within the socio-historical conditions in the United States 1920–50. This period is defined by counter-revolutionary, if not fascist, tendencies (Manchette 1996: 29–30). Also inscribed in Manchette's project is, however, the knowledge of the fact that the era of the *roman noir* is definitively over:

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[24] Manchette's articles, appearing between 1976 and 1995 in *Charlie Mensuel, Polar, Le Magazine littéraire, Le Matin* and *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, are collected in the Rivage publication *Chroniques* (1996).
[25] Marcel Duhamel's introduction to the Série noire can be found on Gallimard's website: http://www.gallimard.fr/Divers/Plus-sur-la-collection/Serie-noire [accessed 20 October 2013].

> Écrire en 1970, c'était tenir compte d'une nouvelle réalité sociale, mais c'était tenir compte aussi du fait que la forme-polar est dépassée parce que son époque est passée: réutiliser une forme dépassée, c'est l'utiliser référentiellement, c'est l'honorer en la critiquant, en l'exagérant, c'est la déformant par tous les bouts. (Manchette 1996: 16)

By using the form in this way — and by being what Gérault refers to as 'un écrivain référentiel' (2000: 38) — Manchette contributes to the genre's own self-destruction. This chimes with Manchette's wider view on culture in contemporary society, which is inspired by Herbert Marcuse's theorisation of consumer society's ways of pleasing and preventing any veritable opposition.[26] Another inspiration for Manchette is Guy Debord and the *Internationale Situationniste'*s proclamation of the power of commercial commodities over the individual and of modern life as mediatised spectacle.[27] Not only is Manchette using mass-produced genre literature to critique consumer society, but he also employs the hard-boiled novel — an exponent of all things American — as a vehicle for the political rejection of the hegemonic nature of Western capitalism:

> Le premier problème qui se pose au polar français est qu'il n'est pas américain. [...]. Quand l'art est devenu une marchandise (nommée culture), l'hégémonie économique et politique est aussi hégémonie culturelle. Face à l'hégémonie américaine, des formes anciennes peuvent survivre en se figeant [...], mais ce qui se crée de nouveau se définit nécessairement par son rapport aux formes américaines. Rapport d'imitation et de négation. (Manchette 1996: 77–78)

This bitter-sweet relationship can be situated within a process defined by Robert Deleuse as the 'amer-ricanement' of French culture (1997b: 61), a theme which Manchette develops throughout his novels.

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[26] David Platten employs Marcuse's concept of the 'one-dimensional man' to analyse the main character in Manchette's *Le petit bleu de la côte ouest* (1976), Gerfaut, 'whose life and thought are conditioned by material existence' (Platten 2011: 95).

[27] Manchette makes numerous references to Marcuse's writings and Guy Debord's *La Société du spectacle* both in *Chroniques* (1996) and *Journal* (2008).

Nada

Manchette's novel *Nada* (1972) is published in Gallimard's Série noire in November 1972, only four years after the events of May 1968. The publication of the novel thus happens in a climate where the feeling still exists that, in Benoît Mouchart's words, 'les mouvements sociaux pouvaient encore potentiellement modifier l'ordre des choses en France, et, plus généralement en Occident' (2006: 109).

Nada tells the story of a group of left-wing militants who organise and execute the plan of kidnapping the American ambassador to France, Richard Poindexter. Manchette himself categorises the novel as 'un commentaire sur le terrorisme' (Loupien 1998), understood as a *gauchiste* terrorism in line with that of contemporary far-left organisations such as the German Red Army Faction or the Italian Red Brigades. The immediate contemporary real-life frame of reference for the novel is the *Gauche Prolétarienne*'s kidnapping of the chief of labour relations at the Renault factories, Robert Nogrette, in March 1972. The action was a direct response to the killing of the Maoist activist, Pierre Overney, by a security guard during a protest in front of Renault plant, an incident which was followed by mass demonstrations across Paris.[28] Manchette follows the events closely and makes multiple entries in his diary about how they evolve (see Manchette 2008: 442–456), before he starts writing *Nada* under the provisional title *Le Consul* in April 1972. He refers to this work in progress as '[le] travail sur mes anarchistes' in his diary (Manchette 2008: 457).

The first third of the novel is devoted to the introduction of the six individual members of the Nada group and their planning and execution of the kidnapping (chapters 2–12). This is followed by the police investigation while the group keep the ambassador hostage at a remote farm outside Paris. This section ends with the brutal execution of the activists, mostly performed in person by the chief commissioner, Goémond (chapters 13–32). The last part of the novel theorises upon the event (chapters 33–42) by providing the retrospective perspectives of Buenaventura, the only member of the group to escape the

[28] The documentary *Mort pour la cause du peuple* (Anne Argouse and Hugues Peyret, 2011) analyses the historical background for the Gauche Prolétarienne and the context for the assassination of Pierre Overney.

massacre at the farm; Goémond, who gets suspended as part of the political and media cover-up following the scene of carnage at the farm; and Treuffais, who left the group before the kidnapping.

The novel is set in Paris. Sparse in detailed descriptions of the city itself, the narration is structured upon the grid of streets and boulevards which connects the apartments and rooms that the members of the Nada group occupy. The routes navigated to get from one place to another are delineated so as the reader can reconstruct the itinerary with complete cartographic accuracy. The type of vehicles used to reach a destination are similarly emphasised: Épaulard drives a Cadillac, Treuffais owns a 2CV, Cash uses a Dauphine, and the ambassador is taken to the farm in a stolen green Jaguar. The focus on the mapping of the capital and the vehicles mirrors the narrative organisation of the text itself: the textual arrival point is revealed first, then the narrator describes the route leading to this point. Following this principle, the novel's first chapter, consisting of a letter written by one of the policemen who takes part in the shooting of the terrorists, sets the frame for the novel. Here, the gendarme gives his account of the events at the farm, and essentially of the novel's plot, before the story begins: 'En effet, les Anarchistes qui ont kidnappé l'ambassadeur des États-Unis, c'est nous qui les avons eus' (Manchette 2005: 341).[29] The revelation of the novel's 'story' in narratological terms, which in detective fiction traditionally concludes the narration of events, is in *Nada* disclosed in the second sentence of the text. As pointed out by Margaret Atack, the name of the gendarme who makes this revelation, Georges Poustacrouille, evokes that of Gaston Leroux's journalist-detective, Rouletabille, in *Le Mystère de la chambre rouge* (Atack 1999: 132). Starting the novel with an intertextual reference to one of the classic novels in the history of French detective fiction, but in the same instance breaking the generic conventions by revealing the criminal act and ironically also pointing out the culprit, sets the tone for the meta-literary comment on the genre which continues throughout the novel. The obliteration of classic detective fiction's drive to divulge the actual story calls for a more elaborated use of point of view as a means of triggering suspense. The novel's *récit*, in the

29 This edition is hereinafter referred to by page number in the text.

form of a polyphonic representation of various narrative paths which subsequently lead to Poustacrouille's *histoire*, reinforces this aspect. The same technique is found again in the second part of the novel, where Cash and Épaulard attempt to make love — with a not entirely satisfactory outcome. Cash reassures Épaulard that things will work out better the next day, but is corrected by the omniscient and, indeed, prescient narrator who knows that the police is about to storm the house: 'Cash se trompait, cela n'irait pas mieux demain. Demain, ils seraient morts' (407).

The dynamics of the organisation of the text lie in the narrator's revelations about what is going to happen in the future. This is reinforced by the shift of focus from chapter to chapter between the police and the anarchists. By constantly alternating the perspective, the narrator plays with an ironic double sense of sympathy: the narrative structure of the text with its initial focus on the activities of the Nada group invites the reader to take an empathetic position favouring the group's position, whereas the story's polyphonic nature makes the 'true' story interpretable from various points.

The realism of Manchette, referred to by Gérault (2000: 69) as 'hyperréalisme', is in *Nada* characterised by an abundance of details and specifications of brand names, not only of cars (Ford Mustang, 2CV, Dauphine, Jaguar, Cadillac, Ford Consul, Peugeuot 203), but also of guns (Manurhin, Sten), alcohol, (Johnny [*sic*] Walker, Martini), cigarettes (Gauloises, Françaises) and so on. In this setting, the characters themselves are also essentialised as 'brands' and referred to by categorical descriptions rather than by their names. Thus D'Arcy is 'l'alcoolique', Buenaventura 'le Catalan' and Épaulard 'le quinquagénaire', or in the case of Cash, her position (as quasi-prostitute) is suggested by her surname. This accumulation of consumer objects functions as a constant reminder of 'la totale invasion de la vie moderne par le commerce tenu par le grand capital' (Gérault 2000: 69). This appears as a recurrent theme in Manchette's fiction. The kidnapped ambassador is likewise reduced to being a commodity among other commodities, as Épaulard points out to him at the farm: 'tu es un serviteur de l'État, au plus haut niveau. Tu n'es plus rien, une chose' (401). Cash herself is also aware of the objectification that she is subject to: '[j]e ne suis pas grand-chose de plus

qu'une petite putain (366). The terrorists, appearing without any clearly expressed political motive, also feed off the same system. In the end, money seems to be what drives the action. When Épaulard contemplates the future it is not the political message which is in focus: 'Il ne parvenait pas à envisager l'avenir. Il ne croyait pas la rançon serait versée, qu'il serait riche la semaine prochaine' (412).

Manchette's writing style, which he attributes to Dashiell Hammett, is referred to by the writer himself as behaviorist: a matter-of-fact representation of environment and characters from an external viewpoint (Manchette 1996: 76). The narrator in general takes the position behind the camera and ususally leaves the reader to deduce underlying motivations from the description of appearances. The text, naked and purged of any extra-artistic decorations — like the map of Paris outlined in *Nada* — thematises the in-between, the *non-dit*, by not mentioning it. Manchette consciously uses the manner of written expression which for him is intricately linked with the overall function of the *polar*:

> C'est aussi de style et d'écriture que je vous parle. Ce moment où, de nouveau, les intentions des hommes comptent pour rien, où leurs actes seuls peuvent être décrits par l'écriture behavioriste triomphante, c'est bien cette restauration de l'ordre sous laquelle *il résulte des actions des hommes autre chose que ce qu'ils projettent et accomplissent, autre chose que ce qu'ils savent et veulent immédiatement. Ils réalisent leurs intérêts, mais il se produit avec cela quelque chose d'autre qui y est caché à l'intérieur, dont leur conscience ne se rendait pas compte et qui n'entrait pas dans leurs vues.* Le behaviorisme comme style est le mode d'expression d'une conscience échaudée qui craint désormais la ruse de la raison. Et la forme du polar est bien la forme de son contenu. (Manchette 1996: 76, Manchette's own italics)

The narrative strategy defined here corresponds with the description of the anarchists in *Nada.* Their actions are described, but their intentions, the underlying purposes, remain unknown to the reader and, perhaps by extension, also to themselves. Just as the behaviourist style's focus on external factors creates a desire for what is 'caché à l'intérieur', the text generates a craving for what is unrevealed, the unknown, but which cannot be comprehended rationally.

At the centre of *Nada,* one finds an ostensible opposition to the repressive power of the bourgeoisie as the dominant class feeding on the global economic order of capitalism.

The kidnapping, which involuntarily ends with the killing of the US ambassador — the metaphorical figurehead for Western capitalist hegemony — seems to be the only apparent unifying goal for the group of radical activists. Despite the symbolic nature of the action, the actual political *raison d'être* for the kidnapping remains obscure. The content of the manifesto, written by the group and posted to various national newspapers to be printed as part of the group's demands for the release of the ambassador, is never made available to the reader. As the title of the novel suggests, an inherent nihilism reigns within the group and its mission, and ideological purposes seem muffled by a general absorption by a system where diffuse violence becomes the only way of critiquing, and despair seems to be the ultimate sentiment.

Self-destruction of the fictional project

The final sentence of *Nada* turns the text back to the starting point leaving the reader with other potential post-textual versions of the story. Treuffais, about to be captured by the police in his apartment, where Buenaventura and Goémond have just shot each other dead, calls up a foreign news agency: 'Écoutez, mon vieux, et notez vivement, dit Treuffais en regardant les cadavres. Je vais vous raconter l'histoire brève et complète du groupe "Nada"...' (449). The immanent possibility of Treuffais's version of the events being covered in an article by a foreign journalist contributes to the polyphonic nature of the novel. The ellipsis further emphasises the novel's iterative narrative circularity, an open-endedness where the story can be reproduced continuously from various sources, through different channels and consequently in different renditions. The death of the members of the group is not a full stop to the story, which continues to live its own life. The presumed recycling of the story by the mass media, feeding off the terrorists' dead bodies, evokes the first thesis of Guy Debord's *La Société du spectacle* (1967): 'Toute la vie des sociétés dans lesquelles règnent les conditions modernes de production s'annonce comme une immense accumulation de spectacles. Tout ce qui était directement vécu s'est éloigné dans une représentation' (Debord 1992: 15). The mediated image of the massacre on the farm is thus what is left, and given

that the reader knows already how this image can be manipulated from the previous representations of the events by the press in the novel, the ellipsis only brings about further alienation. Manchette summarises in his *Journal* a discussion he has had with his wife, Mélissa, about the terrorists in *Nada* whom she has interpreted as 'des héros positifs': '[j]'ai tâché de la détromper en exposant qu'ils représentent politiquement un danger public, une véritable catastrophe pour le mouvement révolutionnaire. J'ai exposé que le naufrage du gauchisme dans le terrorisme est le naufrage de la révolution dans le spectacle' (Manchette 2008: 470). What in *Nada* can seem an altruistically motivated statement (the kidnapping of Poindexter to get a political message through to the press after which he would be released) turns into a spectacle (the massacring of the terrorists and the killing of the ambassador) with substituted images mediated by the press. This situation, in which the press operates within a capitalist consumer society as an instrument of the state, is summed up by Buenaventura in his retrospective analysis of the terrorist action:

> Le régime se défend évidemment contre le terrorisme. Mais le système ne s'en défend pas, il l'encourage, il en fait la publicité. Le desperado est une marchandise, une valeur d'échange, un modèle de comportement comme le flic ou la sainte. L'État rêve d'une fin horrible et triomphale dans la mort. […] C'est le piège tendu aux révoltés et je suis tombé dedans. (438)

The major components of the regime — law, school, police, church and the political class — are called upon in justification for the massacre of the terrorists. It is against these institutional and ideological centres of power that the Nada group is introduced merely as desperados without a codified agenda. The educational system, represented in chapter 8 by Lamour, the head teacher at the school where Treuffais teaches philosophy, is in cahoots with the state apparatus in which Treuffais is deemed worthless, as Lamour explains during a conversation with another colleague: 'Ce garçon ne vaut pas tripette. C'est un zéro' (358). The unbreakable alliance between the different components of the state is reinforced later during the investigation when Lamour is questioned by the police in relation to the kidnapping: 'La police française pourra toujours compter sur moi, déclara le chef d'établissement d'enseignement' (410). Above the institutional power grid with its internal

hierarchical structures floats the *République* as the ideological denominator and point of reference for all decisions. The over-shadowing mission for the state apparatus personified by the 'ministre de l'Intérieur' is that 'l'ordre républicain sera maintenu' (390). The state as a mechanism operating independently of individual concerns is a theme found throughout Manchette's novels. In the 1971 novel *L'Affaire N'Gustro*, the character of Goémond is introduced and the philosophy behind his work as commissioner is explained in his own words:

> Le fait que la société doit fonctionner bien. Que les individus doivent coopérer. Si l'un d'eux ne coopère pas, il n'avait rien contre personnellement, lui, Goémond. Mais la société par un automatisme logique, frappait. Heureusement que des gens comme lui, Goémond, étaient chargés d'huiler le fonctionnement de l'automatisme logique en question. (Manchette 2005: 133)

The automatic logical reflex that society uses to reconstitute itself after attacks on its integrity is the real force that the terrorists in *Nada* are up against. Their project is doomed because they themselves are part of the same system against which they are fighting. The parallel narration throughout the novel with its shift in perspective from the terrorists to the investigators accentuates this. The impossibility of revolting against a system you are part of is summarised in Buenaventura's conclusion which he records in a house where he seeks shelter after he has escaped the farm: 'le terrorisme gauchiste et le terrorisme étatique, quioque leurs mobiles soient incomparables, sont les deux mâchoires du […] même piège à cons' (438). Alluding to a slogan employed by anarchists during demonstrations in May 1968, 'Élections — piège à cons', Manchette takes the expression further: political hegemony cannot be defeated by way of democratic elections, but nor is violent struggle an option if you want to change the system.[30] As an alternative route to opposition, Manchette brings in the intellectual. The violent campaign of the group is opposed by Treuffais, the philosophy teacher who leaves the group before the actual kidnapping takes place. His position is commented on by D'Arcy: '[c]'est un intellectuel. Il continuera toute sa vie à

[30] The slogan is later taken up again by Jean-Paul Sartre in an editorial in *Les Temps Modernes* where he describes voting as the dissolution of the people's power ('Élections — piège à cons', in *Les Temps Modernes,* 318, January 1973).

manger de la merde et à dire merci et à voter blanc aux élections. Mais l'histoire moderne n'a que faire des bouffeurs de merde' (406). D'Arcy concludes his analysis of modern civilization by stating: 'J'aime mieux finir dans le sang que dans le caca' (406). The choice between the oppositional symbolic notions of 'blood' and 'shit' echoes the underlying premise for Manchette's fictional project, which operates towards the same doomed finality as the characters in *Nada*. Writing engaged crime novels with a political message is not so much a proactive answer as another part of the problematics of culture in modern society, as Manchette concludes in an interview in 1980: '[l]es uns et les autres, nous continuons notre artisanat, bien que nous soyons traqués par le marché, la critique, et deux mille ans de culture empilés sur nos têtes. On en meurt ou on en reste idiot (Manchette 1996: 17).

Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö: critique of the welfare state

Desparate violence as the only option against a system which neglects its population can also be found in Sjöwall and Wahlöö's crime novels. This is notably the case in *The Abominable Man* [*Den vederhäftige man från Säffle* (1971)], published in the same year as Manchette's *L'Affaire N'Gustro.* Before turning towards this novel and in particular towards its scrutiny of the police's role in augmenting violence, it will be useful to contextualise Sjöwall and Wahlöö's contribution to the genre and their own theorisation of the role of the left-wing engaged writer.

There are a number of clear similarities in terms of content between the corpora of Manchette and Sjöwall/Wahlöö. However, the employment by the latter of the police procedural as form in order to formulate a critique of the political underpinning of the Swedish welfare state in the 1960s and 1970s proposes a more integrative mode of analysis to that of Manchette's *néo-polar*. Critical of bourgeois life and culture, their political critique takes the form of a literary revolt against previous versions of the crime fiction genre which they deem to be complicit in bourgeois cultural, social and economic hegemony.

Swedish crime fiction before Sjöwall and Wahlöö drew on the classic British whodunnit tradition of closed-room mysteries with a recognisable detective type. Maria Lang

(pen name of Dagmar Lange, 1914–1991) was the best-selling exponent — nationally and internationally — of this variant of crime fiction in the Scandinavian countries. Her work consists largely of puzzle stories, often centred on a murder to be solved within bourgeois social circles. Set in non-specific regions (in 'the North' or 'the South' or in the fictive town of 'Skoga') with minimal geographical description, the narratives constituting Lang's mystery universe — often compared to that of Agatha Christie (Forshaw 2012; Maricourt 2010; Ballu 1996) — tend to follow an orthodox tripartite structure: crime, investigation, resolution. A classic 'modern' detective like Christie's Miss Marple or Hercule Poirot, Christer Wijk, Lang's police investigator in her later novels, is rationally able to solve the cases by analysing and putting the pieces of evidence together. The novels thus remain closely associated with a tradition that emphasises their belonging to a conservative, pro-establishment trend aiming to restore the consensus that has temporarily, due to an individual's being led into a criminal act, broken down.

It is against this national tradition that Sjöwall and Wahlöö write when, with their first novel, *Roseanna*, they introduce the police procedural to a Swedish readership in 1965. During the following decade, they produce another nine novels featuring a collective of police investigators in the Swedish National Homicide Squad led by Martin Beck. The series ends with the publication of *Terroristerna* [*The Terrorists*] in 1975. In their 1971 article 'Kriminalromanens fornyelse' ['The Renewal of the Crime Novel'], published in the Danish newspaper *Politiken*, Sjöwall and Wahlöö offer a manifesto for the genre with a clear message as to the importance of breaking away from golden age detective stories.[31] This tradition, represented by Lang and her British predecessors Conan Doyle, Dorothy Sayers and Agatha Christie, is deemed 'artificial', 'abstract' and 'bourgeois' with 'charade- and rebus-like entertainment' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 1971).[32] These authors, according to Sjöwall and Wahlöö, display a lack of realism with which they 'consciously distance themselves from reality'. By comparison, the *raison d'être* of their version of the crime novel is its ability to

[31] The article was published in the first issue of the Swedish journal *Jury* the following year (1972) in Swedish translation as 'Kriminalromanens förnyelse' (*Jury*, 1: 9–11).
[32] The quotations in the following until otherwise stated are all from Sjöwall and Wahlöö's article 'Kriminalromanens fornyelse' as it was published in *Politiken* (1971) and in my translation.

hold a mirror up to contemporary society in a 'fairly comfortable and easily accessible form'. Accessibility plays a key role in the argumentation: the crime novel can make complex analysis of a psychological or sociological nature available to readers who would otherwise not have consulted or been able to digest the specialist texts in which this type of knowledge is usually presented. By extension, the crime novelist as analyst of society and facilitator of interpreted information to the reading audience serves a didactic function: 'In the modern alienated society, the crime novel constitutes one of the very few channels through which the average reader can be in contact with the data-controlled and strictly shielded system within which he is forced to operate'.

Alongside the notion of the crime novelist as a teacher whose responsibility it is to educate a less capable public, Sjöwall and Wahlöö also identify a new type of crime fiction reader characterised by valorisation of literary quality, realism and social awareness. Further, this new type of reader 'belong[s] to the category of literature consumers who previously have turned their nose up at the detective novel, judging it to be a kind of pseudo-literature'. This observation made in the early days of the Swedish engaged novel's history is consistent with what is later acknowledged in critical studies of the crime novel's repositioning in the literary landscape as a result of the generic changes it undergoes in this period (see for example Evans 2002: 87; Bergman 2014: 22). It is also consistent with the more general postmodern trend characterised by the collapse of traditional categories of high and low culture.[33]

[33] Thompson notes about postwar popular culture that 'this period or mode of representation [postmodernity] accords the artefact of mass culture a more significant and positive role in the constitution of culture than high modernism' (1993: 10). Jameson likewise argues that 'the effacement […] of the older (essentially high-modernist) frontier between high culture and so-called mass or commercial culture, and the emergence of new kinds of texts infused with the forms, categories and contents of that very Culture' is the 'fundamental feature of all postmodernism' (1984: 54).

Story of a Crime: the state of Sweden under the surface

The decalogue of novels which Sjöwall and Wahlöö put together under the title *Roman om ett brott* [*Story of a Crime*] was a meticulously planned project.[34] From the outset, the synopsis was laid for ten novels each containing 30 chapters (with the exception of *Mannen som gick upp i rök* [*The Man Who Went Up in Smoke*], which has 26 chapters). The purpose of the decalogue was to use the popular crime fiction genre as a vehicle for the author-couple's political message:

> Our aim with the Martin Beck series is to bring to life an analysis of a welfare society of the bourgeois type — an analysis in which we try to view its criminality in relation to its political and ideological doctrines. This is the fundamental idea in a long novel of about 3,000 pages broken into ten individual parts or, indeed, chapters, to analyse crime as a social function, its relation to contemporary society and to the moralistic life forms of various kinds surrounding this society. (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 1971)

The writers' emphasis on viewing each novel of the series as constituting a part of one coherent narrative enables them to pan in and out from the specific to the general or from the example to the broader analysis of the contemporary society. Each of the ten novels focuses on an individual type of crime and at the same time considers this as an element of a general, overarching crime: successive Swedish social democratic governments' flirting with capitalism and their failure to maintain the ideals of the welfare state. More specifically the aim was to show how the Social Democrats had broken away from Socialism and let the Swedish working class down.[35] The subtitle *roman om ett brott* where 'brott' simultaneously means 'crime' and 'break'/'rupture' illustrates this ideological substratum and its 'criminal' nature. The theme that society in its current guise is a breeding ground for criminality is a recurrent one throughout the series. This is stated bluntly in *Polis, polis, potatismos* [*Murder*

[34] The ten novels constituting the series are *Roseanna* (1965, [2006a]), *Mannen som gick upp i rök* [*The Man Who Went Up in Smoke*] (1966, [2006b]), *Mannen på balkongen* [*The Man on the Balcony*] (1967, [2007a]), *Den skrattande polisen* [*The Laughing Policeman*] (1968, [2007b), *Brandbilen som försvann* [*The Fire Engine That Disappeared*] (1969, [2007c]), *Polis, polis, potatismos* [*Murder at the Savoy*] (1970, [2007d]), *Den vedervärdige mannen från Säffle*, [*The Abominable Man*] (1971, [2007e]), *Det slutna rummet* [*The Locked Room*] (1972, [2007f]), *Polismördaren*, [*Cop Killer*] (1974, [2007g]), *Terroristerna*, [*The Terrorists*] (1975, [2007h]).

[35] See Kalle Lind's interview with Maj Sjöwall in which she discusses the two social democratic governments — led by Tage Erlander (Prime Minister 1946–1969) and Olof Palme (two-term Prime Minister 1969–1976 and 1982–86) — during the time when *Roman om ett brott* was written (Lind 2012).

at the Savoy]: 'all varieties of crime flourished better than ever in the fertile topsoil provided by the welfare state' (2007d: 93).

The critique of the national political project is inserted into a broader global perspective. From the beginning of *The Story of a Crime*, Sjöwall and Wahlöö thematise a discrepancy between internal and external awareness of various aspects of a national imagery. When American librarian Roseanna's dead body is fished out of the water in the incipit of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's first Martin Beck novel, *Roseanna* (1965), the scene is being observed by onlookers; the *mise en scène* unfolds 'as the neighbouring children and a Vietnamese tourist looked on' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2006a: 2). The plot begins at a time when international media were reporting the aerial bombing campaign in North Vietnam and the arrival of the first US troops in the spring of 1965. In the relatively unknown provincial Swedish setting of Borenshult, the atypical presence in the mid-1960s of a south-east Asian tourist serves the function of a subverting gaze. What does the Vietnamese tourist see and, perhaps more importantly, what does the Vietnamese tourist understand of the events taking place? Implicitly in the scene, there is a notion of the sight having to be explained both to the tourist, who because of linguistic and cultural barriers has restricted access to understanding the event, and to the children, who are unlikely to comprehend the intrusion of a dead body into their childhood universe in small-town mid-Sweden. While the Martin Beck series calls for self-analysis and introspection, there is also an open invitation to the outside world. This is also an implied comment on the crime fiction genre's ability to generate intercultural awareness by accentuating aspects of the Swedish nation other than the version that official promotional discourse tends to reveal for an international audience. The Borenshult scene takes place during a postcard-idyllic Swedish summer, where the discovery of the murdered Roseanna metaphorically becomes synonymous with the disturbing reality concealed in the mud under the surface. With this image, Sjöwall and Wahlöö use crime fiction as an alternative mechanism for the production of a national image both for internal and external observers. What is later to be conceived of as the first Nordic noir novel thus already touches upon questions about the national and the global, which are to constitute key features of the

Nordic variant of the crime fiction genre and its reception in the twenty-first century (see for example McCorristine 2011; Rees 2011; Nestingen and Arvas 2011, Bergman 2014).

The historical context for Sjöwall and Wahlöö's crime fiction project is a Sweden which — according to the official image nourished by politicians and the media — after the Second World War had enjoyed a constant and peaceful political evolution, high living standards, low unemployment, social reforms and reduction of class differences. Under the guidance of social democratic governments during postwar economic growth, the Swedish welfare state became responsible for sustaining the individual and groups. Notably, it introduced universal health care, free education, retirement benefits and child support.[36] Codifying the idea that the state is a benign institution which can protect and nurture the nation, the notion of *folkehemmet* (the People's home) implied an egalitarian ideology within the institutional framework.[37] Sjöwall and Wahlöö's critique of what they clearly regard as an embellished picture of the Swedish paradise is harsh. It is aimed directly at the top of the political hierarchy, which in *The Terrorists* is personified in the caricatured portrait of the unnamed prime minister who is murdered in the novel. Sjöwall makes it clear in later interviews that the character in the novel's resemblance to Olof Palme, the then prime minister of Sweden, was intentional:

> We have never had such a talented PR man in Sweden. It is still hopeless when you go to the old Eastern Block and they talk about the fantastic 'Swedish model' that Palme created. He did this extremely well, to make people believe that Sweden was a successful capitalist-socialist society (Lind 2012, my translation).

Charting main protagonist Martin Beck's ten-year career progression from First Detective Inspector to chief of the national homicide squad, the long 'novel' offers — to use Mikhail Bakhtin's term — a chronotope of Swedish society in the decade from 1965 to 1975.[38] Each

[36] The Swedish Social-Democratic party uninterruptedly dominated cabinets from 1932 to 1976.
[37] A detailed account of the development of postwar Scandinavia and its relationship with popular culture can be found in the first chapter of Andrew Nestingen's *Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia: Fiction, Film and Social Change* (2008).
[38] Bahktin defines the concept of the chronotope in 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics'as follows: 'In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on the flesh, becomes

individual segment takes place the same year as it is written and provides an instantaneous picture of Sweden at that particular time, taking into account contemporary events (the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the situation in Eastern Europe) and contemporary topics of debate (unemployment, pollution, the pornography industry, sexuality, dissolution of traditional family structures).

As noted by Dawn Keetley (2012), critical commentary on Sjöwall and Wahlöö's writing uniformly agrees that the first three novels, *Roseanna* (1965), *The Man Who Went Up in Smoke* (1966) and *The Man on the Balcony* (1967) seem distinctly apolitical in relation to the rest of the series. Their focus on the pathological nature of sexual crimes as an expression of individual violence does indeed contrast with the strident and confrontational analysis of the welfare state to be found in the later novels, culminating with *The Terrorists*, the last novel, in which the country's prime minister — the national icon of the failed social democratic project — is symbolically murdered. In her analysis of the Martin Beck series, Keetley argues for the fact that 'sexual crimes can be political, although the political conditions that shape what is manifest as individual pathology are deeply buried within the text' (2012: 55). However, the seemingly apolitical ambiance in the first three novels of the decalogue is also part of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's strategic employment of the crime fiction genre to lure their readers into participating through their reading in an engaged critical analysis of the Swedish state. They explain this in an interview after the publication of *The Cop Killer*:

> It was entirely consciously that we in 1963 decided to write books aimed at readers of crime fiction, and that we in the first three novels described the crimes and their investigation as being as good as apolitical. From the beginning, we had planned that the mask was going to fall with the fourth or fifth book. It did, and the sales figures did indeed decrease. But they have come back up to their previous levels. (Hertel 1973: 14, my translation)

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artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope' (Bakhtin 1990: 84) The term 'chronotope' is in the example of Sjöwall and Wahlöö understood as the fusion of temporal and spatial markers (1965–75 and the specific Swedish settings of the novels) into a single image.

There was, then, a clear and conscious political agenda underpinning the series of novels, even if it was not a discernible element — as far as the authors' explicit statements are concerned — of its early constituent parts. It is important however to situate these early texts within the overall political thrust of the whole, and within the notion of a critique of the postwar social compact, as the following reading will attempt to do.

Roseanna: the first novel in *Roman om ett brott*

On 8 July 1964 the naked body of American librarian Roseanna McGown is found in the canal lock at Borenshult outside the small town of Motala in mid-central Sweden. *Roseanna,* the first novel in *Roman om ett brott*, follows the investigation of Martin Beck and his team in the homicide squad over six months as it leads to the arrest of the perpetrator. Following conventional principles of organisation, the opening of *Roseanna* is comparable to that of a classic *roman à énigme* inasmuch as it is based on a double narrative characterized by Todorov as 'l'histoire du crime' et 'l'histoire de l'enquête' (Todorov 1971: 11). The finding of the body, which in the classic detective story disturbs the prevailing (and naturally ordained) order, is however inserted into a scene emblematic of an already dysfunctional society:

> When the canal opened for traffic that spring, the channel had begun to clog up. The boats had a hard time manoeuvring and their propellers churned up thick clouds of yellowish mud from the bottom. It wasn't hard to see that something had to be done. As early as May, the Canal Company requisitioned a dredging machine from the Civil Engineering Board. The papers were passed from one perplexed civil servant to another and finally remitted to the Swedish National Shipping and Navigation Administration. (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2006a: 1–2)

Things turn out to be more complicated than this. The ensuing long paragraph — which, both in content and style, seemingly contrasts with the rest of the narration in *Roseanna* — is a Kafkaesque passage with chiastic structuring and repetitions of the various names of the official bodies involved in the operation of getting the dredging machine in place (the Canal Company, the Civil Engineering Board, the Swedish National Shipping and Navigation

Administration, the Harbour Commission in Norrköping). However, this passage from the opening of the novel functions as a metaphorical construction, the interpretation of which may function at various different levels: it is relevant both for interpretation of the first novel in itself, and of the decalogue in its totality. It is also relevant as a commentary on the usefulness of the crime fiction genre as a medium for social critique. The operation of unclogging the canal and dredging up the body mimics the police work of bringing evidence to the surface and getting to the bottom of the case, a process in which the mere establishment of the fact that a criminal act has taken place is being made difficult by the amount of irrelevant paper work and bureaucracy facing the investigator: 'the records of the inquiry and reports had already begun to accumulate on Ahlberg's desk. They could be summed up in one sentence: a dead woman had been found in the lock chamber at Borenshult' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2006a: 7). The metaphor is additionally reinforced by the fact that the vessel's name is 'Grisen' [The Pig] alluding simultaneously to the pig's wallowing in water and mud and to the pejorative use of the term which in Swedish colloquial speech denotes 'police officer'.[39]

In his essay 'Grisen är ett gåtfullt djur' [The Pig Is a Mysterious Animal] (1967), written two years after the publication of *Roseanna*, Wahlöö answers a question from a foreign journalist on what the complex social and political message of the series might be. (Wahlöö 1967: 177–181). Wahlöö's commentary on the police force as an institution is implicitly linked with the use of the term 'pig' in the essay title, but he refuses to answer the journalist's question explicitly: 'I cannot answer any questions in a way which would confirm the purpose of my books, either as a whole or in the details. If I had been able to answer such questions, I should naturally not have written any novels' (Wahlöö 1967: 181;

[39] In the sentence where the dredging machine is introduced, both the English and the French translation omits the vessel's official name which adds further to the image: 'Det hette egentligen Gripen men kallades givetvis Grisen och råkade just då ligga i fiskehamnen i Gravarne' [It was in fact named 'Gripen' but was naturally called the Pig and happened just then to be lying in the fishing harbour at Gravarne]. (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 1968: 5). 'Gripen' is in Swedish both the definite form of the gryphon and the past participle of the verb 'to catch'/'to arrest'. Metaphorically the quotation situates the police in a position between the symbol of the divine, powerful creature, which in mythology is protecting treasures and precious possessions, and the derogatory use of the term pig to signify a police officer.

my translation). Originally functioning as a metaphor for the investigator, the dredging machine subsequently acquires the attributes of the impenetrable administrative procedures surrounding it and becomes part of a metonymic constellation where the machine itself becomes what is slowing down and hindering the investigation. Ahlberg's nightmarish frustrations later in the novel over the slowness of the police investigation relate to the double-sided image of the dredger which can reveal and conceal at the same time: 'We have almost no chance there, and maybe not even in Boren if the dredger has buried everything there by now. Sometimes I dream about that damned apparatus and wake up in the middle of the night swearing' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2006a: 72). The juxtaposition of the police and the dredging machine reveals a theme which becomes predominant throughout Sjöwall and Wahlöö's series: the police as a bureaucratic and problematic institution. By using the police procedural as a vehicle for their literary and political project, Sjöwall and Wahlöö engage in a process similar to that of the dredging machine. Under the surface, the police procedural is employed to reveal what is hidden in the deep behind the powerful ideologies of an institutionalised organization.

Sjöwall and Wahlöö's introduction of the police procedural to a Swedish readership coincides with a radical restructuring of the Swedish police force. The reform, implemented on 1st January 1965, comprises a significant reduction in the number of police districts and centralisation to a unitary national body. *Roman om ett brott* follows this development and its consequences closely, with the writers basing the narrative on thorough journalistic investigation into the procedures of the police. The realist description of the police profession, which Sjöwall in an interview explains as 'the key to [their] true subject' (Shephard 2006: 9) of describing the development of Swedish society, becomes a parallel narrative running alongside the individual crime stories in the series. The depiction of life within the police station has a progressive narrative structure beginning with a rather positive picture of the police corps in the first three novels. Here there is a sense of mutual dependency, cooperation and an understanding of the police and the public working together for the benefit of society in general; when it comes to solving the case in *Roseanna*, the

'great detective', i.e. the public (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2006a: 29), is called in for support. This picture however changes through the middle part of the decalogue which contains detailed descriptions of the processes leading to the police becoming an autonomous 'state within the state despised by the individual citizen' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 1974: 120; my translation). With constant references to the reform, the alienation of the police officer from the public, corruption, police brutality and violence, the politicisation of the police as a result of the centralisation, and the aim for personal power and profit for those at the top of the hierarchy, the police narrative evolves into a fierce institutional critique.[40] It culminates with the carnivalesque scene in the series's penultimate novel, *Cop Killer* [*Polismördaren*] where roles are turned around, and policeman Elofsson is shot and on the ground:

> How could this have happened? For twenty years he'd been driving around shouting and swearing, pushing, kicking, hitting people with his truncheon, or slapping them with the flat side of his sabre. He had always been the stronger, had always had the advantage of arms and might and justice against people who were weaponless and powerless and had no rights. And now here he lay on the pavement. (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2007g: 182)

The ambiguity created by the use of *style indirect libre* is a distinct feature throughout the long novel. The bivocal projection of narrator and character in the same passage provides, using the same voice, an explanation for the situation and for Elofsson's questioning of it. What can also be seen here is an indication of continuity over the course of the series, the latter stages of which are characterised by expression of concerns about policing similar to those existing at the outset of the decalogue; these concerns are over policing as institution, rather than merely as practice, as the mention of 'rights' suggests.

The Abominable Man

In *The Abominable Man*, the seventh instalment in *Roman om ett brott*, Sjöwall and Wahlöö explicitly deal with declining police legitimacy as their thematic focus. This central theme is

[40] See for instance Chapter 10 in *The Abominable Man* which is mostly dedicated to an analysis of the development of the police force in the wake of the reform (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2007e: 50–57), or a long paragraph in *Cop Killer* where some of the same points are repeated (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2007g: 118).

interwoven with descriptions, analysis and critique of dramatic changes in the Stockholm cityscape and fundamental shifts in the social infrastructure of the welfare state.

The opening lines of the novel provide the image of a man sitting in front of a newspaper crossword puzzle. An implicit analogy between an empty crossword column and an unsolved crime, where the clues in both cases are there to be interpreted for a solution to be found, sets the narration up within a classic detective paradigm. This is supported by the neatly sequential establishment of the crime mystery's important actantial roles in the novel's introductory chapters, which systematically present the perpetrator (first chapter), the victim (second chapter) and the main investigator in guise of Martin Beck (third chapter). This seemingly orderly structure, in which the participants are positioned in their appropriate places and set up to operate according to a clear set of narratological rules, is however disturbed as it becomes apparent that both perpetrator and victim are also members of the police force.[41]

The story unfolds as follows: on 3 April 1971, Chief Inspector Stig Nyman is brutally murdered in his sickbed at Sabbatsberg Hospital in Stockholm, his throat and abdomen slit open with a bayonet.[42] In the ensuing pursuit of the killer, Martin Beck and his colleagues dig into Nyman's career, first in the army and then in the police, and discover he is behind a series of ruthless and corrupt instances of maltreatment. The reports of complaints filed against him, however, have all passed unnoticed through the system and been closed and stamped 'no action'. The killer, Åke Eriksson, himself a police officer, is one of the victims of Nyman's brutality, his diabetic wife having died in a cell at the police station due to neglect under Nyman's watch.

[41] The crossword puzzle is also used as an overarching framework for the decalogue's critique of the present state of the Swedish welfare state: in the very last passage of *Terroristerna* [*The Terrorists*] (1975) Kollberg, Beck's colleague, picks up a piece with a letter providing the solution to a Scrabble-like crossword game and concludes the entire *Roman om ett brott* with the sentence: 'X – X as in Marx' (2007h: 324).
[42] The hospital's Swedish name 'Sabbatsberg Sjukhus' is translated as 'Mount Sabbath' in the English translation (Sjowall and Wahlöö 2007e).

The police: partners in crime

Nyman's true identity as a brutal human being and corrupt professional is revealed in chapter 12, in which Beck's colleague Kollberg narrates his experiences of having been trained by Nyman in the army during the war. When Beck asks Kollberg to specify the nature of Nyman's behaviour, he gives the following example: 'Like how to cut off a pig's penis without its squealing. Like how to cut the legs off the same pig also without its squealing. Like how to gouge its eyes out. And finally how to cut it to pieces and flay it, still without a sound'. Beck not knowing how this is done is enlightened by Kollberg: 'It's easy. You start by cutting out its tongue' (71). This image of the pig evokes Nyman's own mutilated body with its 'gaping wound in the throat, the blood, the entrails welling out of the belly' (104). Subtly establishing the connection between the policeman and the pig, the image joins the general equivalence between the profession and the animal which is present throughout the series.

The mutilation of the pig is just one of many examples of Nyman's cruelty and violent conduct. People who have worked with him describe him as 'one *hell* of a bad policeman' (68), 'a barbaric son of a bitch of the very worst sort' (68), a 'sadist […] in the highest degree' (72), 'certainly abominable' (75), 'one of the most sadistic men I've ever met' (75), 'one of the most glorious assholes ever to have graced this department' (100). Beck's long interrogation of Harold Hunt, Nyman's colleague and long-time 'faithful sidekick' (76) contains a list of accusations of what Nyman has taught Hunt: 'to commit perjury', 'to copy each other's reports so everything'll [fit together]', 'to rough up people in their cells', to 'cut down strikers [with sabres]', to 'ride down student protesters', to 'club unarmed schoolchildren at demonstrations', to 'drive into crowds [on motorcycles] to break them up' (80–1). The omniscient narrator does not treat Nyman as a unique exemplar of the police force. Indeed, the narrator launches a direct criticism of the prevalence of police violence: 'The number of injured policemen was negligible when compared with the number of people annually mistreated by the police' (51).

Nyman is the incarnation of the new type of policeman (Nyman = Newman) that the police corps consists of after the nationalisation. The reason why he has never been discredited is linked to institutional power, corruption and an internal code of protection within the police. However, it becomes apparent that the police are an institutional setup operating in an ideological and ethical vacuum with no external points of reference. While the police force might be 'impregnated with esprit de corps' (69), this sense of collective identification resides on empty premises; it cannot be measured against anything. As Kollberg notes: 'The police stick together. That's axiomatic' (69). However, he has to ask, '[b]ut stick together against whom?' (69). The meaninglessness of axioms is further expressed by another policeman, Hult, in terms of the collapse of the entire value system around them: 'Forty years in uniform in this city […] and now there's hardly anything left to protect anymore' (82–3).

The disintegration of the investigator's position in the crime story is of a pathological nature. Not only is Nyman malfunctioning as a policeman, he is also, before he is killed, symbolically sick and in hospital, an association which links a bodily pathology to a professional one. As a comment on this association, the extradiegetic narrator lets Nyman, before he is murdered, reflect on his treatment at the hospital and 'the [medical] examinations — which the doctors ironically referred to as the "investigation"' (6). While Nyman is an extreme case which hyperbolically symbolises the unstable and problematic nature of the police force and the society they are protecting, the pathology of the profession runs as an underlying theme of the series. This textual take on the police procedural is quite contrary to the view of genre expressed by Charlotte Beyer in her analysis of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's novels:

> The police procedural […] serves an important symbolic function, in that it seeks to restore a sense of balance as well as to reassure the reader that authority and truth will prevail and that the social organizations which oversee the processes behind the scene are fit for their purpose. (Beyer 2012: 146)

This statement follows a tradition in crime fiction criticism that seeks to establish that the genre is a way of reaffirming the existing ideology and resolving public anxieties by

reassuring that order will triumph over social disorder. However, Sjöwall and Wahlöö's project has quite the opposite aim; their novels highlight the inherent flaws within the existing order, which will inexorably degenerate into chaos, and of which crimes are primarily a symptom rather than a cause. As a symptom of the failing universal 'authority and truth', Martin Beck and the other members of Sweden's national homicide squad are often unwell, suffering from colds, unsettled stomachs and nausea which makes them tired and defeatist. The investigators' physical condition is intrinsically connected to their work situation from the beginning of the series: '[i]t had been an uneventful and dreary day, full of sneezing and spitting and dull routine' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2006a: 50). Their illness functions as metaphors for the societal malaise which they, as part of the police, help maintain.

The disturbance of the classic triangle of perpetrator–victim–detective is further linked to an ethical questioning of the righteousness of the legal system and society in general. As Martin Beck's colleague Einar Rönn comments: 'as it was often these days […], he felt sorrier for the criminal than for the victim' (17). Disputing the very moral code by which deviance is defined within society, the narrative transfers the sympathy to the killer, who within the novel's textual logic is the real victim. The killer is moreover not only a victim of society, but also of the physical infrastructure of society, specifically, of the urban restructuring of Stockholm.

Infrastructural changes

The investigation is woven into the city. The personification of Stockholm as a 'large city in its anxious sleep' (1) during the night when the murder of Nyman takes place parallels the state that Beck is in when he receives the phone call from the crime scene while in his bed. The city at night, characterised by its 'meaningless, mechanical monotony' (3) is also metonymically mirrored by the (at this stage of the story) nameless killer who is described as a 'sleepwalker' (2) and who in similarly mechanical movements travels through the capital to the hospital, following the monotonous changing of traffic lights and speed limits. This

synchronised existence expands into a more complex interdependent relationship between the urban space and its dwellers who have experienced, and become victims of, the same circumstances. The physical appearance of the Swedish capital has been undergoing considerable transformations. This process is described in terms of a violent, anti-social destruction in the name of capitalist imperatives which have devastating human consequences:

> The centre of Stockholm had been subjected to sweeping and violent changes in the course of the last ten years. Entire districts had been levelled and new ones constructed. The structure of the city had been altered: streets had been broadened and motorways built. What was behind all this activity was hardly an ambition to create a humane social environment but rather a desire to achieve the fullest possible exploitation of valuable land. (45)

The juxtaposition of the anthropomorphised city and its inhabitants compares the '[v]iolence [which] had been visited on the natural topography itself' (45) with the devastation of the social environment characterised by 'more and more violence and blood' (83). This change in the fabric of Stockholm coincides with an infiltration of capitalism, which creates new class divisions, commented on here by the narrator: 'In the course of the preceding five years, restaurant prices had as good as doubled, and very few ordinary wage-earners could afford to treat themselves to even one night out a month' (11). Instead, the restaurants survive on 'the increasing number of businessmen with credit cards and expense accounts who preferred to conduct their transactions across a laden table' (11).

Significantly, as it becomes apparent later in the novel, Åke Eriksson has also been a victim of urban planning, which has forced him out of his old residence, demolished to give way for new profitable constructions. Not unlike the ending of Manchette's *Nada*, the novel closes in a climactic carnage when the desperate Eriksson barricades himself in his new penthouse flat at the top of an apartment building from which he shoots and kills multiple police officers. Symbolically, his new apartment is the culmination of the injustices put on him by the system: the death of his wife while wrongfully in police custody, the dismissal from his job, the tearing down of his old apartment building, which has forced him to move into the new one which he cannot afford, and, as a consequence, the removal of his little

daughter by the Child Welfare services. When the police finally move in on Eriksson to put an end to the shooting, Gunvald Larsson, one of Beck's colleagues, describes him as a 'poor damned lunatic' (209), and then implicitly explains the individual's psychological state and criminal acts as a symptom of larger societal malaise: 'This is an insane city in a country that's mentally deranged' (209).

In strong ideological terms, Sjöwall and Wahlöö's novels point to economic liberalism's powerful intervention in welfare state politics, using the portrayal of working-class or underprivileged citizens driven into desperation to show how the welfare state has failed in its project. *The Abominable Man* (and other novels in the series) also questions notions of justice within a system where the police are corrupt and official channels no longer function optimally. Sjöwall and Wahlöö's employment of the police procedural as a vehicle for their Marxist critique is a rewriting — in support of the proletariat — of the syntax of the classic golden age detective story which previously had confirmed and supported the dominant bourgeois ideology. While not all successive Scandinavian crime novels express a critique as sharply formulated as Sjöwall and Wahlöö's, 'their novels have proved deeply influential on crime fiction since the 1980s' (Nestingen 2008: 217). Bergman rates this influence in similarly strong terms by arguing that 'a typical Swedish crime novel [in 2014] is that of a police novel presenting some degree of criticism of the disintegration of the national, Swedish welfare society — in explicit as well as implicit and allegorical form' (2014: 20).

Conclusion: comments to Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette

The early politicised crime novel represented by the writings of Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette emerges in France and Scandinavia at around the same historical moment as an expression of politically leftist and formally rebellious contributions to the crime fiction genre. The comparable purpose in the novels from these two traditions is the transgressive revolt. They are anti-establishment, resistant, counter-hegemonic and operate against the political system in power. They explicitly engage critically with previous crime fiction

traditions, and mount opposition against literary institutions. Inasmuch as these novels are written at a time of general political and aesthetic protest in the 1960s and 1970s, they are a product of their time. However, these exponents of the genre function as catalysts in various ways; the combination of aesthetic innovation and political agitation has implications for the genre's cultural legitimisation, the development of the genre itself and for critical engagement with crime fiction.

In both contexts, the critique is directed at the police as a corrupt institution, but the texts also investigate the roots of this corruption, which are seen as being inherent to the organisation and foundation of the state. Both Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette engage in discussions about how collective identities are constructed and not least about how they find expressions within the national state. A point of commonality is their general left-wing critique of consumerism, capitalism and the ways in which class differences are accentuated by the state's endorsement of capitalism. However, the parallel readings also reveal differences in the approaches to the state from two distinct historical, national and socio-political contexts, which are reflected in the writers' use of and engagement with the crime genre and its conventions.

Manchette and Sjöwall/Wahlöö have been trendsetters for crime fiction which challenges the status quo in their respective national genre traditions. References to Sjöwall and Wahlöö as 'founders of the modern Swedish crime novel' (Bergman 2014: 33) or indeed as the starting point for the Nordic Noir wave are a staple in both academic research and journalistic articles about the publishing phenomenon (see for example Nestingen and Arvas 2011: 2; Söderlind 2011: 159; Keetley 2012: 54; Beyer 2012: 146). Manchette is similarly regarded as inspirational, and seen as 'le symbole d'une nouvelle génération d'écrivains de policiers noirs' (Gérault 2000: 92). These writers, considered prime movers of a crime fiction genre employed as medium for social critique, are however in two different positions in terms of their place in genre history. Manchette writes his novel within a relatively long and well-established tradition of crime fiction which since the establishment of Gallimard's Série noire in 1945 has been influenced by American hardboiled writers and their themes of

inequity and corruption within the police and society at large. Sjöwall and Wahlöö's starting point is a Swedish version of golden age detective fiction which up until their arrival on the scene has not taken this international development of the genre into account. This might be part of the explanation of why Manchette makes more radical revisions of the genre than his Swedish colleagues. Modelling his *néo-polar* on the hardboiled tradition, Manchette frequently changes the perspective from the detective to that of the perpetrator or in other ways blurs the traditional roles of detectives, victims, suspects and perpetrators. Sjöwall and Wahlöö employ a more orthodox template. While their police procedurals expand the perspective from the individual to the collective investigator, their tripartite narrative structure (crime—investigation—resolution) maintains the traditional point of view of the investigatory body, and the authors form their critique from within this perspective. This noticeable difference in perspectival orientation between the French marginal protagonists who operate outside of the institutionalised power structure and the Scandinavian protagonists who are part of the power structure is significant. This is especially true in the light of the genre's history: where the Swedish police procedural with Sjöwall and Wahlöö as its founders becomes the preferred Scandinavian subgenre *par excellence*, the *roman noir/polar* establishes itself as the favourite of French writers with a socio-critical agenda. Interesting, also, is the fact that the pronounced distinction between the *roman policier* and the *roman noir/polar* in France, which Manchette ardently argues for, is continuously and frequently evoked by French writers of *noir* (see for example Manotti 2007: 107).

Seen in this perspective, it is notable that Scandinavian crime fiction in critical writing and in the international media has become synonymous with social commentary and critique, whereas the French *polar engagé* has been viewed as an enclave in a broader crime fiction category which also includes more conformist and traditional approaches to the genre.[43] In this perspective Sjöwall and Wahlöö have had a considerable renaissance in recent years — in particular after the boom in Scandinavian crime fiction publications and

[43] While this is the dominant picture, Bergman points to a tendency of 'neo-romantic, apolitical [Swedish] police novels' from the early 2000s which are 'set in almost timeless countryside characterized by a small-town bourgeoisie [*sic*] mentality' (2014: 50; see also Bergman 2011).

translations after the success of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy — as founders of the contemporary Scandinavian crime novel. In contrast, as Gorrara notes, 'by the mid-1980s, the radical political protest of the néo-polar had run its course' (2003: 16). This is commonly commented on in French criticism as well, where the *néo-polar* has been accused of being 'un feu de paille, une mode, un phénomène médiatique qui serait maintenant totalement dépassé et sans influence' (Gérault 2000: 12–13).[44] However, these comments notwithstanding, the current French *polar engagé* might still be more radical in its critique of contemporary society and its policies than its Scandinavian counterpart.

One of the main points of this chapter has been to demonstrate that at the start of the thesis's period of examination (the 1960s and 1970s), the French and Scandinavian crime fiction traditions are engaged in similar projects, which are responding to particular conditions of citizenship and social models that prevail in the respective settings during these decades. As crime fiction is anchored to and develops in conjunction with modernity, the genre deals with places that are undergoing rapid transformations related to both physical and social infrastructures. Written towards the end of a period generally described in terms of economic prosperity, high consumption, urbanisation, higher standards of living and a developed system of welfare benefits — the 'Trente Glorieuses' (Fourastié 1979) in France and the 'golden age of Social Democracy' in Scandinavia' (Sejersted 2011 [2005]) — the works of Manchette and Sjöwall/Wahlöö are situated within a paradigm of decline, and they point to the fact that fault lines are beginning to show in the system.[45] At the early stage of the period that the thesis covers, both crime fiction traditions engage critically with the fact that the postwar settlement is compromised by its predication on bourgeois values, and their criteria for reproach are in particular connected to class issues and the individual's

[44] See also Jean-Paul Schweighaeuser's detailed description in *Le roman noir français* (1984) of the *néo-polar* as publishing phenomenon within the context of what he refers to as 'l'explosion de 1979' and the subsequent establishment of new series by French publishing houses, considerable media attention etc. (1984: 71–90). This leads on the one hand, Schweighaeuser argues, to literary innovation and renewal of the *néo-polar* by already-established writers, but, on the other hand, it also brings about profit-seeking writers '[qui] ne sont que des machines à reproduire des stéréotypes' (82) and who contribute to a 'banalisation' and 'standardisation' of the genre (84).

[45] Fourastié delineates the period of postwar prosperity to the 30 years between 1946 and 1975, whereas Sejersted in his elaborate analysis of the period temporally defines the 'golden age of Social Democracy' in Scandinavia from 1940 to 1970 (Sejersted 2011).

relationship with the state. From this starting point at the end of an era of social cohesion showing signs of stagnation and crisis, the next chapter leaps forward to the twenty-first century and will examine how individual and collective identities are negotiated in crime fiction within a paradigm increasingly defined by its post-ness in various forms: post-industrial, post-modern, post-colonial, post-socialist, post-national, post-welfarist, post-golden age.

CHAPTER 2

The State: Individual and Collective Identities in the Twenty-First Century

> C'est la force légale de la République, ou la force brutale des bandes
>
> —— Nicolas Sarkozy, 8 November 2005[46]

> What was happening? An underground fissure had suddenly surfaced in Swedish society. Radical seismographers registred it. But where had it come from?
>
> —— Henning Mankell[47]

From the era of general political and cultural contestation in the 1960s and 1970s, the present chapter turns towards more recent discussions of social transformations and their expression within the crime fiction genre. The explicit theme of (radical) left-wing protest and the omnipresence of class struggle in the writings of Manchette and Sjöwall/Wahlöö have, in the respective contexts of both French and Scandinavian crime fiction, become subdued. However, popular crime narratives in the twenty-first century still foreground social concerns, and especially those of justice relating to identity issues more globally. In the first section of this chapter, this change in orientation within the genre is first contextualised within the framework of identity politics and social theories, and then the specificities of identity debates are investigated in the respective national and regional contexts of France and Scandinavia.

The texts which will be discussed in the second section of the chapter, Dominique Manotti's *Bien connu des service de police* (2010) and Arne Dahl's *Europa Blues* (2001) are novels which are rooted in — and make explicit allusion to — the generic traditions

[46] Sarkozy is cited in Dufresne (2007: 154).
[47] Mankell (2008 [1999]: 146)

established by Manchette and Sjöwall/Wahlöö in their respective national settings. The French *polar* and the Swedish police procedural, however, have since the establishment of these traditions been thematically and aesthetically reshaped. Manotti's and Dahl's engagements with notions of national identity intersect with concerns about multiform other identities presenting challenges to the concept of the homogeneous nation state at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Accordingly, this chapter will read their works from the perspectives of nationality and citizenship within the context of the transformation of these societies and will set the scene for more in-depth discussions of identity issues relating to gender and sexuality (Part II), and race and ethnicity (Part III).

The age of identity politics

In discussions of the 'postmodern turn' in the social sciences, a key focus is the weakening of the nation state and a move from universalism to particularism. Sociologist Krishan Kumar argues, accordingly, in *From Post-industrial to Post-modern Society* (1995) that postmodernity promotes a shift away from traditional class-based practices of the nation state and encourages a 'politics of difference'. He specifies that under postmodernity '[t]he "collective identities" of class and shared work experience dissolve into more pluralized and privatized forms of identity' and that 'the idea of a national culture and national identity is assailed in the name of "minority" cultures' (2005 [1995]: 143). Also from the perspective of sociology, John Carter remarks on a similar shift which he argues is taking place: '[a]gainst traditional notions of academic "coherence" stand ambivalence, eclecticism and diversity — postmodernity's Holy Trinity' (Carter 1998: 2).

Questions of identity have come to be at the centre of debates in the social sciences and cultural studies. The 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of new disciplinary fields such as postcolonial studies, gender studies, queer theory, among others. Previously well-defined, stable identities of race, class, nationality, gender and sexuality have been contested and, increasingly, alternative practices for identification have been rehearsed both at grass-roots

level and in academia. From a cultural studies perspective, Stuart Hall comments on this phenomenon:

> [I]dentities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices, and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation. (Hall 1996: 17)

Echoing (and referring to) Hall's article, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman comments in 'Identity in the Globalising World' (2001) on the 'spectacular rise in the "identity discourse"' occurring in the 1990s within both popular and academic discourses (121). This upsurge, according to Bauman, takes place in all areas of justice, culture and politics, where '[e]stablished issues of social analysis are being rehashed and refurbished to fit the discourse now rotating around the "identity" axis' (2001: 121). Bauman concludes by identifying the contemporary 'avalanche' of identity discourse as 'the side-effect and by-product of the combination of globalising and individualising pressures and the tensions they spawn' (2001: 129).

From a political science perspective, Bauman's observation is joined by the political philosopher Nancy Fraser's reflections on how justice is — and used to be — imagined. In Fraser's understanding there has been a shift 'away from a socialist political imaginary, in which the central problem of justice is redistribution, to a "post-socialist" political imaginary, in which the central problem is recognition' (Fraser 1997: 2). Fraser further specifies:

> With this shift, the most salient social movements are no longer economically defined 'classes' who are struggling to defend their 'interests', end 'exploitation', and win 'redistribution'. Instead, they are culturally defined 'groups' or communities of 'value' who are struggling to defend their 'identities', end 'cultural domination', and win 'recognition'. (Fraser 1997: 2)

Linking literature to socio-political climates and discursive configurations, the development of the crime fiction genre during the period studied in this thesis vividly illustrates this shift in the socio-political imaginary. Furthermore, as crime fiction inherently deals with notions of justice and injustice, the genre is perhaps a site where this paradigmatic shift becomes

particularly visible. Whereas Manchette and Sjöwall/Wahlöö write firmly within the 'paradigm of redistribution', dealing with unbalanced power relationships stemming from rich/poor divides and political or cultural hegemony conditioned by the flow of capital, crime fiction writers in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have increasingly put emphasis on exploring and discussing various forms of individual or collective identities within the 'paradigm of recognition'.

The problematics of this shift are arguably acutely present in recent discussions in France and Scandinavia, respectively of the universalism held to underpin the French republican social contract, and of the decline of the homogenous society with which the Nordic welfare state was supposedly associated. Before turning to readings of what might with this contextualisation in mind be designated 'post-socialist' or 'postmodern' novels by Dominique Manotti and Arne Dahl, it will be useful to examine the particularities of the nature of identity discourse in the French and Scandinavian settings respectively.

The French Republic: universalism and its critique

Debates in France have in fact centred on a so-called 'crisis of universalism', which according to American gender historian Joan Wallach Scott is 'a crisis defined through the rhetoric of universalism taken to be uniquely French and therefore a defining trait of the system of republican democracy, its most enduring value, its most precious political asset' (2005: 1). While Scott focuses on how women's rights in particular have been sidelined by the parameters of French republicanism, this crisis is closely linked to issues of identity more generally and how they are legally and publicly expressed in French society.[48]

Scholarship from the last three decades has commented on this crisis of French identity, nationhood and citizenship and described it in terms of the difficulty within France of operating between two non-compatible ideologies, which Nathalie Debrauwere-Miller

[48] Joan Wallach Scott's monograph *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (1996) focuses on the nineteenth century and the exclusion of women as consistent with the rationale of French republicanism. In *Parité! Sexual Equality and the Crisis of French Universalism* (2007), she analyses the crisis of French universalism through the case study of the debates on political parity in the 1990s.

accurately summarizes in a 2014 article as 'l'éternel débat qui divise la société française entre la rhétorique de l'universalisme républicain […] et la reconnaissance du particularisme identitaire' (2014: 23). Schematically described, there exists on one hand an overpowering consensus which evokes the republican model based on universalist principles and which categorises all ethnic, gender, sexual or religious sub-identities under the umbrella concept of *le citoyen*, within a legal framework which moreover prohibits the collection or publication of statistics relating to ethnicity or any other particularlity of identity. This official unifying identity of an abstract individual is persistently referred to and nourished in public discourse whether from the political left or right: 'Whether one reads *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro*, *Le débat* or *Esprit*, one is constantly reminded of France's identification with universalism' (Schor 2001: 48). On the other hand, demands have been arising from an increasingly pluralistic and multi-cultural French society where individuals and groups negotiate for a different view on the reality of a complex France. Literary scholar and theorist Naomi Schor describes the debate between these oppositional ideologies as the 'French culture wars', which she defines as 'wars that oppose the upholders of the Republic and the advocates of a French multiculturalism and democracy' (2001: 48). While the universalist idea stemming from the Revolution of 1789 'stubbornly remains a key phrase in France's discourse of national self-representation and identity' (Schor 2001: 48), there is — as Schor argues with well-documented references to research from the 1980s and 1990s — a consensus among scholars that France experiences what she refers to as a 'spectral universalism' (48). She defines this as 'the shadow of a formerly vigorous and dynamic ideology that once functioned as a powerful force that ensured social cohesion, now reduced to an empty rhetoric in whose cosy and familiar terms present-day ideological battles are fought' (48).

In France, the problematics of the 'rhetoric of universalism' became wholly apparent at the beginning of the 1980s and crystallised increasingly in the 1990s in debates about rights of identity groups whether relating to gender, sexuality, religion or race/ethnicity. The period simultaneously saw a political recodification of the principles of republicanism designed to meet challenges such as increased globalisation, immigration and France's status

in the European context (Lépinard 2007: 389–90). A further issue to consider, intertwined with the conception of *le citoyen*, is the sharp separation between public and private spheres in France which is often highlighted in debates about minority rights, as well as the vigorous insistence on *laïcité*, evoked when religious and cultural issues are on the agenda. The fundamental issues in these debates warrant some attention as they constitute an important backdrop for the French crime novels studied in the remaining part of the present study.

One context in which the republican discursive framework was highly visible was that of the debates leading up to the 'loi de la parité' passed on 6 June 2000, requiring all political parties to list an equal number of male and female candidates. The feminist movement contesting the existing gender hierarchy in French politics in the 1990s did so precisely on the basis of a rigorous argument about the universal rights of the citizen, while at the same time aiming to renegotiate key republican values, or, as Lépinard puts it, simultaneously to 'subvert and endorse core Republican doctrines'. (Lépinard 2007: 376; see also Schor 1995, Scott 2005, Bereni 2007). The conservative strand of the criticism of the 'loi de la parité' argues that the special treatment of women and division of *citoyens* into different categories was a threat to republican universalism. While perhaps marking a shift in the political culture from universalism to a more pluralistic culture recognising differences and inequalities, the parity law simultaneously accentuated the arguments in France entailed by the abstract construction of the universal subject proscribed by the Republic.

Another point of criticism of the concept of the universalist rights of the French citizen is what Pierre Bourdieu in his intervention in the debate about gay rights refers to as 'la force de l'orthodoxie' which he describes as a codex of white, male, heterosexual, bourgeois hegemonic values:

> Elle [la force de l'orthodoxie] donne ainsi une base objective, et une efficacité redoutable, à toutes les stratégies de l'hypocrisie universaliste qui, renversant les responsabilités, dénonce comme rupture particulariste ou 'communautariste' du contrat universaliste toute revendication de l'accès des dominés au droit et au sort commun. (Bourdieu 1998: 47)

Similarly, sociologist and queer activist Marie-Hélène Bourcier contends that the ideology of French universalism has been at the heart of what has made it difficult for different identity groups to have a voice in French society: 'subaltern minorities cannot really speak or achieve any form of social transformation in the French public space' (Bourcier 2011: 99). In an article about the introduction of queer studies to France, Bourcier shows how this problematic historical interpretation of French universalism pervades all areas of public life, in academia, in culture and in the public sphere in general, and, for example, makes it challenging for scholars in France to introduce new academic study areas concerned with identity issues such as queer and postcolonial studies. She then argues that an important key to an understanding of queer politics in France 'is the fact that "French queer" took up the tool of identity politics in order to fight a form of republicanism and universalism which, while supposedly inclusive, egalitarian and neutral, effectively excludes minorities' (Bourcier 2011: 96). Therefore the attempts to 'queer' France in the late 1990s are linked with activism and highly associated with a 'critique of the dominant epistemological regimes of knowledge and power in the (social) sciences' (Bourcier 2011: 97).

In political and public debates, multiculturalism as political approach has been precluded in France for being 'out of hand as at odds with the principles of republicanism' (Phillips and Saharso 2008: 291) and for being incompatible with the principle of cultural and civic assimilation which is at the centre of French integration politics (Schor 2001: 52–55). A premise for civic universalism is the relegation of difference to the private sphere, whereas under the philosophy and politics of multiculturalism 'diverse ways of being in the world are recognized as legitimate, and the qualities of 'out-group' members […] reconstitute the notion of civil competence *within* the public sphere' (Mitchell 2004: 642).

The separation of the state and the church in 1905 and the principle of *laïcité* have been evoked as measures aimed at securing equal treatment of different religions in the name of universalism. However, the same universalist principles have also accused of being a means to discriminate against the Muslim part of the French population, notably in the heated debates leading up to the 2004 legislation prohibiting the wearing of the full-face veil in

public spaces. Most recently, in an intervention after the attacks on the cartoonists at *Charlie Hebdo* and the siege at the kosher supermarket at the Porte de Vincennes in January 2015, Jacques Rancière adds to the critique by pointing to the way universalism has become a stick with which to beat the Muslim population. He argues that the 'droitisation de la pensée française' feeds on universalist values which have been monopolised and manipulated into a justification for xenophobia and racism by the Front National. In relation to the ongoing debate on the principle of freedom of speech after the terrorist attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, he argues:

> [O]n […] utilise les grandes valeurs universelles pour mieux disqualifier une partie de la population, en opposant les 'bons Français', partisans de la République, de la laïcité ou de la liberté d'expression, aux immigrés, forcément communautaristes, islamistes, intolérants, sexistes et arriérés. (Rancière 2015)

The above examples from public and academics debates in France demonstrate how the notion of republican universalism continues to play a dominant role as a backdrop for understanding French society and cultural life. Whereas the particularism–universalism paradigm permeates any debate on identity issues in France, the discursive context for discussing identity in Scandinavia is strongly associated with the idea of the welfare state.

The Scandinavian welfare state in crisis

The welfare state put in place in the 1930s and maintained by Scandinavian social democratic governments in the postwar period is comparable in legacy to the French Republic inasmuch as it represents a dominant force in national self-understanding, self-image and self-representation. Simultaneously, the 'Nordic model' has been an internationally acclaimed social model, and Sweden especially has been regarded as a 'paragon welfare state in its realisation of universalist principles and an institutional welfare model' (Sunesson et al. 1998: 19). However, since the early 1990s, the Scandinavian welfare state has been undergoing profound transformation and in the outside world the 'recognition of the "Nordic brand" is being undermined [and] losing its marketability' (Browning 2007: 88). For the

present study, it is of significance that the welfare state and the attributes of the welfare state — whether at its peak or in its declining form — are the points of reference in relation to identity issues, most distinguishably in discussions of immigration, diversity, national identity and citizenship. These issues have taken centre stage in public and political discussions in the Nordic countries since the 1990s, that is, since the moment when debates on various identity issues began in a similar manner to intensify in France.

From an international perspective, the social and political construct of the postwar Nordic welfare state has been seen as a successful model to strive after, or as 'a region having something to teach the rest of the world' (Browning and Joenniemi 2010: 4). There is an abundance of academic publications, especially from the social sciences, dealing with the phenomenon of the Nordic model, which has, according to an argument advanced by historian Peter Baldwin in the aftermath of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, 'commonly been regarded as the embodiment of the highest stage of the welfare state's evolution' (1990: 43). The Nordic welfare model has hence warranted adjectives such as 'universalistic and decommodifying' (Timonen 2001: 29; Esping-Andersen 1990: 28), 'peace-loving and rational' (Browning 2007: 27), 'different, progressive, egalitarian, solidaristic […], compassionate and charitable' (Kuisma 2007: 9–10), 'extraordinarily stable' (Sipilä 1997: 5), 'distinctly modern' and 'highly efficient' (Trägårdh 2002: 131); it has also frequently been described with 'an image of the nation as a family' (Eriksen 2013: 3).

From an internal perspective, it is significant too that there exists in addition to a national identity a pronounced understanding of a supranational regional identity. As Ole Wæver puts it in his analysis of debates about European integration in the Nordic countries: '[i]n the case of "smaller" countries like the Nordic, a sub-regional category like Scandinavia/Norden enters between state/nation and Europe' (2002: 25). The construction of Danish, Norwegian or Swedish national identity is thus cushioned by a relationship with what is frequently phrased in terms of a Scandinavian 'brotherhood' or fraternity. [49] For

[49] A Google search using 'skandinaviske brødre' (DK and NO) or 'skandinaviska brödra' (SE) [Scandinavian brothers] as search terms reveals how the sense of family relationship between the Scandinavian countries pervades media and public discourse. The significance of this regional Nordic/Scandinavian identity could be

France, on the contrary, there is no bolstering identity interface; the collective above the state/nation is Europe.

Characteristically, issues of modern Scandinavian national identity are expressed in politico-economic terms and are closely related to the Scandinavian models for social policy.[50] In his much-quoted (and also criticised) publication *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990), political economist Gøsta Esping-Andersen identifies three western welfare regimes: the 'liberal', the 'cooperatist' and the 'social democratic', where the latter category is exemplified exactly by the Scandinavian countries. Typical of the form of Scandinavian welfare statism, Esping-Andersen contends, is a high degree of fair economic distribution: '[r]ather than tolerate a dualism between state and market, between working class and middle class, the social democrats pursued a welfare state that would promote an equality of the highest standards, not an equality of minimal needs as was pursued elsewhere' (Esping-Andersen 1990: 27). Under this regime, a homogenous society was secured by moderating the gap between rich and poor by means of income regulation and proportionate taxation. The crisis of the Scandinavian welfare state is thus often expressed in terms of a change in market conditions and an intrusion of neoliberal tendencies destabilising the (relative) economic egalitarianism prevalent in Scandinavia (see for example Kosonen 2001: 160; Kautto and others 2001: 263), and in terms of the effects of globalisation and Europeanisation (Kautto and others 2001, Hansen and Wæver 2002). Corresponding to what

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the subject of a more nuanced study within the realm of crime fiction from the region, where frequently the Scandinavian (br)other appears and inter-Scandinavian relationships are explored. Hans Rosenfeldt's Danish-Swedish TV series *Broen/Bron* [*The Bridge*] (2011, 2013, 2015) is an obvious example, as is Baltasar Kormákur's recent Icelandic TV production *Ófærð* [*Trapped*] (2015) where the (post)-colonial connection between Denmark and Iceland is a sub-theme; in almost all of the novels examined in the present study, there are other-Nordic appearances, or cooperation between investigators from the region is required.

[50] What follows is a brief, summarising account of the characteristics of the Nordic model which focuses on postwar issues that are of importance for the present study. A longer and more detailed account would seek the historical roots of contemporary Scandinavian national identities. This would necessarily include a historical contextualisation dating at least back to the nineteenth century's nationalist movements, in addition to a comparison of internal differences between Sweden, Norway and Denmark (see for example Kildal and Kuhnle 2005). A thorough analysis of the development of the Nordic welfare state in the twentieth century is proposed in Christiansen et al. (2005). For a comprehensive analysis and overview of the development of the Danish nation state and its relationship with its Nordic neighbours, see for example Østergård (2002). See Sipilä (1997) for a nuanced discussion of the historical basis for the Scandinavian social care model. A thorough historical contextualisation of the high level of gender equality as one of the trademarks of the Scandinavian welfare model can be found in Kjeldstad (2001) or Melby, Ravn and Carlsson Wetterberg (2008).

might be termed a social democratic ideology, historically 'diversity in Scandinavia has primarily been seen as a question of social class' (Bay, Strömblad and Bengtsson 2014: 1).

In addition to the economic equality promoted by the social democratic governments, the state Church has had a homogenising effect on the Scandinavian region. The dominant status of the Lutheran variant of Christianity has thus been highlighted as 'perhaps the most important explanation of the similarities among the Nordic states and, in particular, of the Nordic type(s) of welfare' (Christiansen and Markkola 2005: 10). Kildal and Kuhnle further point to 'the early fusion of the Church and state bureaucracies' as a factor which 'made for a more unified and stronger public interest in and responsibility for welfare matters in general' (2005b: 25). Often this type of connection is made between the welfare state and Lutheranism, which 'has contributed to a certain understanding of work ethics and equality' (Christiansen and Markkola 2005: 10). Others go as far as suggesting that 'Protestantism, more than social democracy, shaped universalism and the Nordic model of welfare' (Melby, Ravn and Carlsson Wetterberg 2008: 4). However, processes of secularisation taking place in Scandinavia in the twenty-first century — most significantly illustrated with the (much-debated) separation of the Lutheran church and state in Sweden (in 2000) and in Norway (in 2012) — have been seen as necessary in order to accommodate multicultural and multi-faith societies (see for example Jänterä-Jareborg 2010).

Another key factor which is often highlighted as an important and unique aspect of the Scandinavian welfare state model is the high level of equality between genders. This aspect of the welfare state is frequently expressed in absolute terms as an essential hallmark of the 'Nordic brand': '[t]he ambition of gender equality has been more explicitly expressed and applied in the Scandinavian countries than in other countries in Europe' (Melby, Ravn and Wetterberg 2009: 2). The social democratic welfare states are foreshadowed earlier in the twentieth century by initiatives to acknowledge and secure equal rights for women. Scandinavian women were among the first in the world to obtain suffrage (for Norwegians this happened in 1913, for Danes in 1915 and for Swedes in 1921), a record which compares favourably to that of France, where women had to wait until 1944 for the vote, and until the

late 1960s for the right to open a bank account in their own name. The successful claims of feminist grassroots organisations in the 1970s and 1980s led to what Norwegian political scientist (and feminist activist) Helga Hernes has called 'the women-friendly welfare state' and 'state feminism' (1987: 9–29).

The relationship between the Scandinavian welfare state and gender equality seems evident: social services, such as provision of child care, extended possibilities for parental leave, and care for the elderly, have played an essential role in creating the necessary conditions for women's participation in the labour market and thus also in opening up possibilities for female input in political decision-making. The modern gender relationship based on the 'dual breadwinner model' (Melby, Ravn and Wetterberg 2001: 6) is however being contested. This is frequently expressed in terms of challenges to the welfare state's social policies as a condition for gender equality. Borchorst and Siim thus point to several areas in which the Scandinavian countries have not managed to secure equality between the genders: the gender pay gap conditioned upon a private–public gender division of the labour market, old age pensions and the tackling of immigration (2008: 221). Additionally, Diana Mulinari's study of immigrant women in Sweden, based on an intersectional analysis, determines that the Swedish welfare state constitutes a case of 'gendered racism' (2008: 167). She demonstrates how the dominant Swedish discourse places all immigrant women in the same category as being '"different", "passive", "traditional", lacking democratic traditions and with backgrounds in "patriarchal" cultures', and that ultimately 'the specificities of the Swedish race formation [constitute] a regime [which] produces discourses of belonging and boundaries against the other through a narrative where national pride is symbolised in the welfare system' (2008: 167; 179). The introduction of market-oriented solutions in place of public regulation has equally had an impact on gender equality in Scandinavia: 'the picture of woman-friendly policies as simultaneously inclusive and competitive has been challenged by neo-liberal discourses about the need for welfare reforms during an era of globalisation' (Borchorst 2008: 40).

The Nordic model as a successful and desirable construction is beginning to fall apart with symptoms appearing in various areas. This also affects the Scandinavian sense of place in the world and self-esteem. Somewhat analogous to the concept of *l'exception française*, which captures the sense of both political and cultural exceptionalism in the French national imaginary, there exists a similar notion of uniqueness associated with the Nordic model, which functions both as a reference for a Scandinavian self-understanding and for the outside world's view of the region. Christopher Browning contends that '[c]entral to the Nordic brand have been ideas of Nordic 'exceptionalism' — of the Nordics as being different from or better than the norm — and of the Nordic experience, norms and values as a model to be copied by others' (2007: 27). Browning further defines the 'Nordic brand' in political terms referring to the Nordic countries' image during the Cold-war era as 'peaceful societies and bridge-builders' (32) valued for their 'internationalist solidarism' (33) and 'egalitarian social democracy' (35). The brand is wholly reliant on a well-functioning Scandinavian welfare state which begins to disintegrate in the early 1990s as a result of the international transformations brought about by the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War (Aylott 1999: 2; see also Wæver 1992; Browning 2007). The banking crisis of the early 1990s and subsequent high rates of unemployment is also mentioned as having had an effect on the early stages of the shift in welfare policies (Kosonen 2001: 164). Financial and demographic globalisation however remains perhaps the most commonly employed explanation for the crisis of the Scandinavian societal model (Kosonen 2001; Taylor-Gooby 2001; Timonen 2001, Kuisma 2007). Mikko Kuisma further argues from an International Relations perspective that '[t]he "Nordic model" is not well equipped to deal with the blurring of the boundaries between internal and external — domestic and foreign' and is 'rather ill-suited to facing the challenges of multiculturalism' (2007: 9; 17).

Within this new political climate, public and private discourses have changed. Accordingly, the influence of neoliberal tendencies has had an effect on how notions of national identity and cultural diversity are expressed and how the Other is represented. As the Norwegian social anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen has argued in relation to the shift

in politico-economical ideology and correspondingly to the way minorities and their rights are discussed: 'it is no wonder that immigrants were praised in the 1970s, when the collectivist ideology of social democracy still held sway in Scandinavia, for their strong family solidarity; while in the new century, they are criticised for it since it impedes personal freedom' (Eriksen 2006: 34).

Swedish anti-racism scholars and activists Tobias Hübinette and Catrin Lundström express the national identity crisis of the post-welfare state in considerably more radical terms in their articles about Swedish 'white melancholy', a notion which they expand in application to the neighboring Scandinavian countries as well (2011a and 2011b). In the context of the Swedish 2010 general election which secured the anti-immigrant, right-wing populist *Sverigedemokratana* [Sweden Democrats] 20 seats (out of 349) in parliament, Hübinette and Lundström describe the presence and manifestation in Swedish national discourse of a general mourning for the loss of what they refer to as the 'Swedish whiteness' or 'the master signifier for Swedishness' (2011a: 44). Significantly, they argue, this mourning is double-sided, consisting of a longing for either the 'good Scandinavia' or the 'old Scandinavia'. They continue:

> [I]t is […] as much about the humiliating loss of Sweden as the most progressive, humanitarian, and anti-racist country in the world as about the mourning of the passing of the Swedish population as being the most homogeneous and whitest of all white peoples. (Hübinette and Lundström 2011b: 50)

While Hübinette and Lundström represent a certain political activist branch of Swedish academia, notions of loss, mourning or lament are frequently expressed sentiments which echo in much research on Scandinavian welfare models and national identities, whether from social sciences or humanities. Steffan Marklund thus already in 1988 describes the Nordic welfare states in terms of a 'Paradise lost' (Marklund 1988). At the beginning of the 1990s, when the golden age of the welfare state is definitively over, the effects on the Scandinavian *folkesjæl* [People's soul] are clear: 'Nordic identity is in crisis', as Ole Wæver spells it out in the first sentence of an article commenting on 'Nordic nostalgia' (Wæver 1992: 77).

Browning and Joenniemi express this national identity crisis in psychological and existential terms: the Scandinavian welfare state is 'under attack and sharply criticised', 'a source of shame', and its current condition provokes 'existential anxiety' and 'ontological insecurity' (2010: 4). This mourning of the loss of the protecting and nurturing welfare state and the subsequent existential rootlessness of the Scandinavians has become an integrated feature of the socially aware Scandinavian crime novel from the 1990s, and is perhaps most manifestly expressed in Henning Mankell's Wallander figure, described as an 'incarnation of Swedish melancholy' (Tapper 2011: 465), or seen as an 'anxious, burnt-out, ambivalent policeman entangled in a transnational web' (Nestingen 2008: 252). The fact that 'Mankell's novels are haunted by the lack of secure orientation in contemporary Sweden' (McCorristine 2011: 77) is further illustrated in the collective title which Mankell gives his Wallander texts, 'Novels about the Swedish Anxiety' (2008: 1), consolidating the sense of neuroticism related to Wallander's existential attempts to navigate an incomprehensible and complex reality.

The core of the Nordic model relies on some of the same principles as the French Republic, but whereas French universalism from the outset was an essential foundation stone of the building of the nation, the Scandinavian conception was formed through practical political exercises. Kildal and Kuhnle argue in relation to this that 'one can claim that [in Scandinavia] universalism has come about more through pragmatic, reformist consensus-building policy-making than through a historically embedded, clear visionary programme' (2005: 6). The lack of historical foundation might have an effect on the ways in which the so-called 'crisis of universalism' is experienced in Scandinavia. Additionally, it might also give an explanation to the low level of critical engagement with the ideological basis of the welfare state. In contrast to the (relative) absence of reflection on core ideological principles of the welfare state, which, it can be argued, is symptomatic of welfare policies and institutional adjustments taking place in the Nordic countries in the 1990s, there exists in France an ardent and continuous debate on the ideological foundation and governing values of the French Fifth Republic during the same period.

This apparent absence of engagement with the ideological underpinnings of the Scandinavian welfare states within political discourse, however, finds a counterweight in popular culture where these debates have flourished more freely. This is one of the key foci of *Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia* (2008), in which Andrew Nestingen conducts an analysis of changing Nordic societies through the prism of popular culture from the region. As the basis for this analysis, he reiterates observations from the social sciences, ascribing the crisis of the welfare state to a transition from a sense of 'transparency' to one of 'opacity' caused by a number of significant changes taking place in the Scandinavian countries since the 1980s, including a political change in a neoliberal direction, the Scandinavian Social Democrats' shift towards the centre of the political spectrum, Europeanisation, strengthening of anti-immigrant parties and their influence on immigration politics and easy movements of capital and culture via new technologies such as the Internet (2008: 5–8). In short, the Scandinavian crisis is, Nestingen explicates, 'a contradiction between neoliberalism and welfare-state corporatism' (2008: 10). As part of Scandinavian popular culture, the crime fiction genre has become perhaps the most influential site for an engagement with and discussion of the societal effects of the decline of the social democratic welfare state, not least when measured in sales statistics. In this context, it is noteworthy that the Scandinavian variant of the genre sees a substantial upsurge in the early 1990s — when Mankell's crime novels are among the first to receive international recognition — at the same time as the Scandinavian welfare state begins to crumble.

We might provisionally summarise here by saying that French identity is based on an ideological contract grounded in the powerful notion of republican universalism, which is criticised for not being capable at a foundational level of embracing a new diversified society, whereas in Scandinavian countries there is a solidarity contract based on a Lutheran, social democratic understanding of society, which is suffering from an incapability to accommodate contemporary complexities. In both cases, there is a sense of crisis and undermining. In France, this civic conception of the nation has, significantly, been the subject of recent debate in the public sphere; this is less the case in the Scandinavian settings.

However, questions are being asked: 'Are important changes of ideas and principles taking place, or are the ideational motives that once inspired the development of the Nordic welfare state institutions still active?' (Kildal and Kuhnle 2005a: 4).

The following readings centre on the ways in which more recent crime narratives in the French and Scandinavian settings deal with the experience of national identity crises. Further, they explore how the texts problematize normative and homogenising notions of national cohesion in contemporary multicultural realities.

Introduction to Dahl and Manotti

Whereas Manchette and Sjöwall/Wahlöö write in a period that can be characterised as the 'beginning of the end of this and that', to paraphrase Frederic Jameson (1984: 59), the French writer Dominique Manotti (alias Marie-Noëlle Thibault, 1942–) and Swedish writer Arne Dahl (alias Jan Arnald, 1963–) both deal with a period during which France and Scandinavia have undergone significant socioeconomic and sociocultural changes under late capitalism. These changes have necessitated explicit and also more implicit redefinitions of national identity in both settings.

The parallel reading of Dahl's *Europa Blues* (1999) and Manotti's *Bien connu des services de police* (2010) marks a rather significant jump in time from the 1960s and 1970s to a different contemporary reality characterised by neoliberalism and globalisation. Ideologically and thematically, however, these two authors, in order to express concerns about the organisation of society, explicitly draw upon the critical left-wing literary crime fiction traditions established by Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette respectively.

In both textual universes there is critical commentary on the state and its underpinnings: Manotti engages explicitly with republican universalism, whereas Dahl — while critiquing certain points of Swedish statism — offers a commentary on how the points of reference for a Swedish national identity, having abandoned the sense of Nordic exceptionalism, have shifted in the post-Cold War period towards a 'more positive reading of Europe' to employ Browning's characterisation (2007: 46). Furthermore, both novelists write

firmly within a 'post-socialist' perspective in Fraser's terms, and these readings thus mark the shift from the 'paradigm of redistribution' to the 'paradigm of recognition', where the pronounced focus is identity.

Dominique Manotti*:* discussing identities within the framework of the French Republic

Dominique Manotti, formerly a lecturer (until 2002) in modern economic history at Paris VIII-Vincennes-Saint-Denis, publishes her first roman noir, *Sombre Sentier*, in 1995, the year of Manchette's death. The two writers' fictional universes, however, overlap historically around the symbolic year of 1981. The election of the Fifth Republic's first Socialist president, François Mitterrand, coincides with the publication of Manchette's final (non-posthumous) crime novel, *La Position du tireur couché* (1981), set in the years immediately preceding Mitterrand's election (1979–1981).[51] Manotti's first crime novel is similarly set in Paris in 1980. It depicts the working and living conditions of undocumented Turkish immigrants in the Sentier district of Paris, during a time marked by pre-election hopefulness on the left. Indeed, Manotti evokes this mood in an interview, describing her first novel as 'un livre très optimiste parce qu'il était encore porté par les espoirs des années soixante-dix', adding that '[l]es autres romans sont beaucoup plus sombres car ils correspondent aux "années Mitterrand"' (Frommer and Oberti 2002: 46).

If Manchette's body of works can be defined as 'post-soixante-huitard' (Müller and Ruoff 2007: 38), Manotti's *romans noirs* can then be seen as articulating the climate of growing disaffection on the political left following Mitterrand's election and shift in economic direction towards a market-oriented approach, the so-called 'tournant de la rigueur'. *Sombre Sentier*, which according to Manotti represents 'la dernière grande lutte sociale à la veille du mitterrandisme' (Frommer and Oberti 2002: 45) is followed by *À nos cheveux* (1997) and *Kop* (1998) to form a trilogy featuring commissaire Théo Daquin.[52] This

[51] Manchette's unfinished novel *La Princesse du sang* was published in 1996.
[52] A 27-year-old Daquin returns in Manotti's latest novel, *Or noir* (2015), which is set in Nice and Marseille in 1973 and tells the story of the impenetrable world of the fuel industry during the time of the international oil crisis.

cycle and the following novel, *Nos fantastiques années fric* (2001), engage retrospectively with the 1980s and, as the last title suggests, with the decade's fixation on money as the dominant societal value. At a personal level, for Manotti — who was a member of the Parti communiste français and a political activist during the 1960s and 70s — embarking on a career as a writer of *romans noirs* is intrinsically connected with the sense of the collapse of social alternatives to capitalism: 'Le choix de la fiction s'est imposé de lui-même, sans doute parce qu'on est dans le registre du désenchantement. […] En fait la littérature a marqué ma rupture avec le combat politique' (Frommer and Oberti 2001: 43).[53]

Manotti's conception of the *roman noir* is close to that of Manchette; it is something radically different from the traditional *roman policier* concerned with the psychology of the individual:

> Le roman noir, lui, enracine les crimes dans les circonstances sociales dans lesquelles ils sont commis. Ce n'est plus l'individu seul qui est criminel, c'est le monde de souffrance, de misère, de violence et de corruption dans lequel nous vivons qui produit les individus criminels, ce monde que la loi et la justice recouvrent, sans l'organiser. (Manotti 2007: 107)

This evidently also influences the nature of the narration and has an impact on how characters are constructed and displayed, as Manotti points out: 'dans mes personnages, la part de la psychologie est mince mais la part des relations sociales est grande' (Desnain 2009a: 164). Within the post-1980s paradigm of disintegration of ideological alternatives to capitalism, the crime fiction genre however also needs to undergo a revision, according to Manotti: 'il faut réinventer le "noir". [Il faut] écrire le roman noir de la mondialisation, du capitalisme triomphant sans adversaire structuré, sans limites' (Manotti 2007: 109). The precise nature and full implications of this reinvention are not entirely clear, but what can be stated unambiguously is that Manotti's novels engage overwhelmingly with key themes of postmodern capitalism: globalisation, financial crime, political corruption and corporate exploitation.

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53 For a comprehensive examination of the relationship between Manotti's biographical existence and the political themes of her fictional universe, see Donald Reid (2015). Zancarini-Fournel's interview with Manotti under her real name of Marie-Noëlle Thibault covers a number of the same biographical details about her political activism (Zancarini-Fournel 1996).

Manotti is not only an author of *romans noirs*. Her academic articles as historian, her polemical blog interventions on her website (www.dominiquemanotti.com), interviews given either in her role as academic, public intellectual or crime writer and her frequently published journalistic articles are all part of her textual production. In many cases, it is a question of texts covering the same topic from different angles; the crime fiction approach only constitutes one approach to a certain theme. A 1995 interview with the historian Marie-Noëlle Thibault (Manotti's real-life identity) thus contextualises 'la grève de régularisation du Sentier' (Zancarini-Fournel 1996: 218–222) which she writes about fictionally under her pseudonym in *Sombre Sentier*, published the same year. Another example is her continued engagement with themes of police violence in confrontations between young *banlieusards* and the police, and of the framing of innocents within the legal system, which she deals with in the novel *Bien connu des services de police*. Her website's outspoken 'rubrique' beginning with 'Bien connu… 1' written in March 2015 and currently (July 2016) counting seven short texts is a non-fiction polemic centring on court cases where the police escape legal prosecution. Manotti makes this connection between her work of fiction and reality in the introduction to her 'rubrique':

> L'actualité fournit trop régulièrement des situations proches de celles que j'avais racontées dans mon roman *Bien connu des services de police*. Un roman que des policiers et des juges rencontrés dans divers débats avaient déclaré bien trop forcé, caricatural même. Or les mêmes mécanismes se répètent, à intervalles plus ou moins réguliers.[54]

Manotti comments on the role of fiction as a supplement to the work of the historian. In this light, revisiting historical periods and events of the past in crime fiction is not 'une critique du travail d'historien parce qu'on ne pourrait pas le faire sans les historiens' (Desnain 2009a: 164). However, she states that 'le roman fait que cela devient un élément intégré à la réflexion' (Desnain 2009a: 164). The *roman noir*'s ability to create a space for reflection happens in a different register to that of the journalistic article or the academic paper, which are unable to answer, or even properly discuss questions such as that, for example, expressing

[54] www.dominiquemanotti.com [accessed 20 January 2016].

Manotti's political disillusionment: 'Comment la gauche française s'est elle convertie en culte d'argent?' (Manotti 2014: 476). Crime fiction cannot necessarily answer such questions satisfactorily, but it can engage with them and problematise them: 'si j'ai perdu l'espoir d'agir, j'écris encore pour comprendre' (Manotti 2014: 476). The following reading will aim to highlight precisely Manotti's problematisation of political questions through crime fiction — here, specifically the question of police misconduct vis-à-vis marginalised groups within the Republic.

Bien connu des services de police: corruption from the centre to the margins

The *banlieue* is the setting for Manotti's 2010 novel *Bien connu des services de police*, in which marginalised identities — including those of women, and sexual and ethnic minorities — are read through the prism of French republican norms. The novel problematizes these in a critique which focuses on the police as an institution which interprets these norms in ways that suit its own expedient purposes. Manotti's novel is only one of her critical interventions on the subject of the impunity of police forces in France. Later, in her blog, in public appearances and in newspaper articles, she employs *Bien connu des services de police* as a fictional point of reference when she comments on real-life cases of police brutality and misconduct. Ultimately the novel, like her subsequent writings, can be said to reflect on the question which she highlights herself in an article entitled 'BAC de Marseille: l'omertà' in *Libération*: 'comment la société française a-t-elle fait pour éviter pendant aussi longtemps de voir, de regarder, de reconnaître les problèmes moraux, sociaux, politiques que lui posait le fonctionnement de sa police? (Manotti 2012).

Bien connu des services de police does not take the form of a traditional detective narrative; there is no identifiable crime to be solved, no distinguishable detective figure, and no real resolution at the end. Rather, the story — as an archetypically realist *démontage* — simply follows life at the police station in the fictional *banlieue* setting of Panteuil, which Manotti more precisely describes as referring to 'une ville du 9-3' (Manotti 2012), i.e. in the department of Seine-Saint-Denis north of Paris. The name of Panteuil can also easily be read,

as has been suggested, as the combination of Pantin and Montreuil, both in the departmental arrondissement of Bobigny (Binet 2010). The author furthermore emphasises the documentary aspect by labelling the novel as 'une chronique de la vie quotidienne d'un commissariat' (Manotti 2012). The novel is set in the summer of 2005, but written five years later and thus can be read as a novel offering an interpretation of the circumstances leading up to the riots in the *banlieues* during October and November of that year. The photograph on the front cover of Gallimard's *Folio* edition of the novel depicting a police officer in front of a burning car further stresses this link.

The two newly-appointed officers at 'le commissariat de Panteuil', Sébastian Doche and Isabelle Lefèvre, find themselves exposed to the inconsistencies, brutality and corruption of their police colleagues. The violence is directed both outwards at the young *Maghrébin* population of the *banlieue*, but it exists also within the police force itself, where Lefèvre is sexually harassed on her first day at work by a superior male colleague. The incident evokes memories of her being sexually assaulted as a little girl, which originally prompted her wanting to become a police officer: 'être flic, c'était aussi se mettre à l'abri de cette violence-là' (Manotti 2010: 31). The violence that Lefèvre meets in the photocopying room at the 'commissariat' immediately defies the image of the police as a sheltering protector from violence.

Doche and Lefèvre's role as observers functions in a double motion where they operate both as outsiders, idealistic new police officers, and as insiders who themselves become part of the system they are observing. The overpowering feeling of being unable to escape the operation to which Doche and Lefèvre contribute manifests itself as a physical malaise. This becomes symptomatic of a more existential, even quasi-Sartrean, 'nausée' which again becomes representative of societal malaise: 'Doche se sent mal, très mal entre envie de vomir et envie de pleurer. [...] Être flic pour retrouver une place à soi dans un groupe solidaire et dans un monde ordonné. Et en une seule journée, il se retrouve de nouveau seul, en plein désordre' (Manotti 2010: 47). The paradigmatic axis of order, group

solidarity and well-being is thus rapidly replaced by disorder, solitude and ill-being at both a personal and a societal level.

The condition experienced by Doche is also reflected in the physical surroundings. The novel's first chapter, Balzac-like, telescopically zooms in, first on the *quartier*, then on the exterior of the police station, before the third-person narrator enters the building itself. From the outside, the 'commissariat' appears strikingly non-accommodating and unfriendly: 'Verres de sécurité teintés, aucune fenêtre, une protection grillagée au rez-au-chaussée, il ressemble plus à une forteresse qu'à une maison commune' (24). It is easy to establish a metonymical analogy between the appearance of the building and the police profession; when Doche and Lefèvre are guided through the station, they express their surprise at seeing the decrepit and dirty interior: 'Pourquoi tout est si sale? À l'extérieur, ça avait l'air presque neuf…', to which their guide replies that 'c'est sale parce que c'est un sale métier, comme ça on se sent chez nous' (27). Subsequently, the two newcomers are symbolically shown to the 'vestiaires' with the remark 'mettez-vous en uniforme' (27), implying that Doche and Lefèvre have ultimately no option but to adopt the collective identity of the police. Even a very slight step away from the norm is promptly corrected, as Lefèvre comes to experience when they re-emerge from the cloakroom: 'Votre tenue n'est pas réglementaire. Coiffez-vous, attachez vos cheveux, pas de mèches qui dépassent. Et demain, portez des chaussures réglementaires' (28). Important also, however, is the fact that the acquisition of this collective identity denotes a growing contradiction between exterior and interior.

Manotti spotlights a national identity crisis in contemporary France by thematically treating aspects of what Naomi Schor has called 'spectral universalism' (2001: 48). In the novel, a particularly conservative strain of republican discourse is represented by the views of the majority of the police officers in the novel, but especially by 'la commissaire' Le Muir, who, having inherited a 'nostalgie coloniale' (Manotti 2010: 34) from a father who fought as a colonel in the Algerian War, not only refuses to recognize, but directly opposes, the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic reality of the *banlieue* constituting her police district. Le Muir's driver, Pasquini, performing the role of her sidekick (or perhaps accomplice), is a *pied-noir*

who shares both her nostalgia for French Algeria and her attitudes towards the problems in the *banlieue*. Whereas they are united by a colonial nostalgia figured as being nourishing ('l'héritage de la nostalgie coloniale est le terreau qui soude Le Muir et son chauffeur' (34)), their idea of the *banlieue* community is clearly based on French superiority and segregation, a vision also reflected in the nickname given to the commissioner: 'La Muraille' (62). Echoing a past colonial agenda predicated upon financial gain, their agreed proposition to counter the current situation in their district is 'le nettoyage de la zone', 'l'expulsion' and 'la destruction des immeubles' (36). This has to be executed, not because of the safety hazard the buildings impose, but in order to make room for 'les projets de rénovation urbaine' and 'les investisseurs potentiels' (36).

The juxtaposition of the colonial past and the postcolonial present of the *banlieue* is further reinforced by Le Muir's ironic use of biblical imagery, which inverts perceived notions of good and bad. She is conscious of the radical aspect of her suggestion when she invokes a divine force to solve the problems of the *banlieue*:

> Alors, j'attends, une intervention divine, un miracle, une catastrophe, au choix. Un incendie, un tremblement de terre, une éruption volcanique, le départ en masse des Africains qui décident de rejoindre leurs terres en traversant la Méditerranée à pied comme Moïse la mer Rouge. (37)

The imagined exodus in which a series of fantasized instances of divine intervention culminates represents a desirable outcome for Le Muir while at the same time echoing — in reverse — the actual transmediterranean exodus towards France in the wake of the Algerian war of the *pieds-noirs*. But the first in this litany of acts of God finds an echo in the targeting the following week by arsonists of a building accommodating Malian families, leaving 17 people (including six children) dead — an incident recalling similar acts in which Pasquini has been murkily involved in the past. There is thus seemingly a continuity between the macroscopic historical imaginary of the colonial legacy and its localised symptoms.

Stéphanie Binet argues in her review of *Bien connu des services de police* in *Libération* that 'toute ressemblance avec la réalité n'est pas fortuite' (Binet 2010). Rather than assessing the novel's content, stylistic features and merit, the article, descriptively

entitled 'Panteuil, faux bourg, vraies bavures', focuses on the fictional *banlieue*'s similarity to precise geographic locations in Seine-Saint-Denis and on Manotti's use of real-life occurrences as the basis for her novel (cases of police corruption and misconduct from the 2000s). Manotti's use of various media and different voices to express concerns and raise a political critique has been mentioned above. The blurring of the boundaries between fictional construct and reality by way of inserting true (and recognisable as such for readers of French newspapers) details into the narrative adds another dimension to the polyphonic nature of Manotti's critical work. To this extent, a significant addition to Binet's examples is the fact that the political rhetoric of Le Muir unambiguously points to that of Nicolas Sarkozy during 2005 when the novel is set. Le Muir's 'nettoyage de la zone' is a rearticulation of the controversial remark made in June 2005 by Sarkozy who was then Minister of the Interior in Dominique de Villepin's government: 'Dès demain, on va nettoyer au Kärcher la cité des 4000. On y mettra les effectifs nécessaires et le temps qu'il faudra, mais ça sera nettoyé'.[55]

The Le Muir/Sarkozy association is further established through the fact that Le Muir has close connections with the unnamed 'ministre de l'intérieur' in the novel, and that she is an essential part of 'le groupe de réflexion informel mis en place [par lui] pour élaborer le programme sécurité dont il entend faire un des leviers de sa candidature à l'élection présidentielle' (71–72). In her speech to this group (72–74), Le Muir again recalls Sarkozy by making a version of his 'politique de sécurité' a significant part of her agenda. This is not least the case when she insists on the word 'insécurité', which became a trademark of *Sarkozyste* rhetoric, from Sarkozy's appointment as Minister of the Interior in 2002 to the time of his presidency (Mauger 2010, Moran 2011): 'ne nous y trompons pas, aujourd'hui, c'est la peur de l'insécurité, fortement corrélée à la peur de l'étranger, la hantise du ghetto, à la fois hyper réel et fantasmé, qui sont les ferments de la cohésion sociale' (Manotti 2010: 73).

[55] Sarkozy made the statement in the apartment of the parents of an 11-year-old boy who was shot dead in crossfire between rivalling gangs in 'la cité des 4000', a housing estate in La Courneuve. For an analysis of the event and of Sarkozy's rhetoric in general see Dufresne 2007.

Le Muir's answer to this imagined sense of insecurity also alludes to Sarkozy's. One of her pronouncements — also clearly reverberating with the statement by Sarkozy used as an epigraph for the present chapter — engages with the *question sécuritaire*: 'dans les ghettos, le pouvoir ne repose pas sur le droit, mais sur la force' (72). The perception of security and of the exclusive right of the police to enforce it, is, moreover, as important as security itself: 'Notre police doit être perçue, avant tout, comme la détentrice légale de la force' (72). The actual implementation of the politics of (in)security in Panteuil happens in the form of groups of 'Bacmen' (i.e. from the 'Brigade anti-criminalité') patrolling the *quartier*, frequent 'contrôles d'identité systematiques des Beurs et des Blacks' (81) and increased surveillance in general.

Manotti, rewriting Sarkozy's enunciations into the words of Le Muir, engages critically with the political discourse of the Sarkozy *mandat*, expressed here in a speech made in November 2007:

> La sécurité est une préoccupation forte de nos concitoyens. Elle procède des valeurs de la République. Policiers et gendarmes, vous êtes garants du respect des principes républicains, vous êtes garants de la liberté de chacun d'aller et venir et vous êtes garants de la paix sociale (Nicolas Sarkozy, 29 November 2007).[56]

Taken to its logical — or perhaps rhetorical — extremity, the novel's establishment of a subtle but powerful link between Sarkozy's rhetoric and political ambition and that of Le Muir creates a hyperbolic association between seemingly 'innocent' oratory and the image of immigrant children dying in a fire. Indeed, the symbolic context of 'nettoyage' shifts from that of political tough-guy bravado invoking high-pressure cleaning to one of purification through fire in the concrete end result of such rhetoric in the arson attack.

As a benevolent counterpart to Le Muir, the novel introduces the character of Noria Ghozali.[57] The mirroring of these two strong female personalities is supported by their

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[56] Both of Sarkozy's statements cited here were later quoted by Front National leader Marine Le Pen in leaflets for her 2012 presidential campaign. See www.marinelepen2012.fr [Accessed 1 April 2016].

[57] Ghozali is one of Manotti's recurring characters and was first introduced in *Nos fantastiques années fric* (2001) where she appears as a 20-year old investigator. In the film adaptation of *Nos fantastiques années fric* entitled *Une Affaire d'État* (2009), director Éric Valette transforms the young Ghozali into the character of

wearing identical clothes: 'Le Muir [est] en tailleur-pantalon beige' (33) and '[Ghozali] porte avec une certaine élégance un tailleur-pantalon en lin beige' (55). The reflection is further reinforced by the fact that Ghozali has a male partner, the retired Macquart, who supports her work and shares her ideological standpoints, in the same way as Pasquini assists Le Muir. The Manichaeism of this mirroring is an essential part of the novel's narrative argumentation and runs through much of its imagery; Ghozali stands in contrast to the police environment's (physical and symbolic) dirty aspect in being described as 'une pure fleur de banlieue' (55). Ghozali's appearance moreover adds another layer to the novel's multiple interpretations of the relationship between investigator/investigated when she starts looking into irregularities within the police station of Panteuil. In her capacity as investigator within the police intelligence service (RGPP), Ghozali is in the first instance leading an inquiry into a case of police misconduct performed by officers pimping Eastern European 'sans papiers' in a multi-storey car park. Her investigation however gradually moves upwards within the hierarchy, where she firmly challenges the abuse, personified by Le Muir, of political power and corruption within high society.

Ghozali's Algerian Arabic background — and the fact that her French identity is expressly a product of her ancestry's colonialised existence — gives counterweight to Le Muir's 'héritage colonial'. Investigating the *banlieue* from the outside according to her professional role, Ghozali has however an insider perspective on life in the suburban *quartier* as a 'Beurette' who has grown up in a similar environment herself. Whereas Isabelle Lefèvre perhaps assumes the role of a female victim and is being exploited because of both her age and her gender, Ghozali's confidence and determination become a prism through which attitudes towards gender, class and race are challenged, as in the following interior monologue channelled by the novel's narrator: 'Elle se souvient d'avoir lentement pris conscience que le flic raciste, machiste et violent était bien mieux accepté par tous ses

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Rashida Brakni who is twice her literary original's age. Manotti explains the return of Ghozali in *Bien connu des services de police* as a reaction to the cinematographic interpretation of her character: 'J'avais envie de voir ce qu'elle [Ghozali] était devenue à l'âge de Rachida Brakni, justement. Je me suis donc un peu inspirée du film pour écrire ce livre' (Osganian, Perriaux and Florey 2011: 37).

collègues, de façon plus spontanée et naturelle, qu'elle ne l'était elle-même, la femme, arabe, trop jeune, trop ambitieuse' (92).

The image of the police as the barrier protecting society has a problematically symbolic texture in *Bien connu des services de police*. Doche and Lefèvre's situation as both insiders and outsiders is mirrored by the novel's preoccupation with thematic constellations concerning inclusion and exclusion in relation to the French nation state and the question — frequently raised during Nicolas Sarkozy's 2007 election campaign and throughout his presidency — 'what does it mean to be French?'[58] In Panteuil, we meet a cross-dresser, abused women, Arab women, Romanians, and Malians. All of these representatives of minorities provide us with a microcosmic image of a France made up by a multitude of diverse cultural, ethnic, gendered and sexual identities. The 'clients' at the 'commissariat de Panteuil' also reflect a heterogeneous population, as Doche notices on his first day at work where he meets '[d]es hommes, des femmes, de toutes conditions, de toutes couleurs' (29). The police, on the other hand, become a force defending a society based on a uniform, hetero-normative, white and male-centered identity. In the courtroom, we follow the thoughts of police officer Ivan who escapes a prison sentence by wrongfully blaming a young Arab for his own crime of having kicked and disfigured a female colleague. Ivan captures this image of privilege during the court case: 'tous ces hommes qui lui ressemblent, la même solidité physique, la même façon de marcher, de parler, un mélange de connivence avec l'autorité et d'amertume de se sentir mal aimés par "ceux du dehors"' (Manotti 2010: 172).

Inclusion and exclusion, the feeling of being on the inside or the outside, are linked to concepts of homogeneity and heterogeneity. The diversity of 'ceux du dehors' opposed to the uniformity of those on the inside mirrors France's difficulty of maintaining a male-centred, heteronormative and ethnically homogenous republican universalism in a society with increased cultural diversity, where advocacy for particularism is increasingly amplified. The

[58] *Bien connu des services de police* is published at a time when Nicolas Sarkozy's preoccupation with the question of national identity is the centre of his political agenda. The creation after Sarkozy's election in 2007 of the 'Ministère de l'immigration, de l'intégration, de l'identité nationale et du développement solidaire' and the ensuing launch by its minister, Eric Besson, of the official debate on national identity at the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010 are testimony to the emphasis that the French president put on the theme of 'qu'est-ce qu'être Français aujourd'hui?'.

police force, forming the impenetrable membrane between these two ideals of community, performs in the novel a function opposite of what is expected. This is emphatically demonstrated in the prologue where a group of men collects protection money from illegal Eastern European prostitutes and sodomizes them brutally in a multi-storey car park. At the end of the prologue we learn that the men are in fact police officers from 'La Brigade anti-criminalité'. The distinction between 'criminal' and 'anti-criminal' no longer exists. The same can be said about the quotation in the novel's epigraph from the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*: 'La garantie des droits de l'homme et du citoyen nécessite une force publique: cette force est donc instituée pour l'avantage de tous, et non pas pour l'utilité particulière de ceux auquel elle est confiée' (9). Through its ironic employment of the quotation, Manotti's novel implicitly argues that the ground on which present-day France is built bears no meaning; the statements from the declaration are traduced in the everyday activities of those who represent the institutions of the Republic. The last line of the citation could therefore implicitly be inverted: 'une force publique est donc instituée *pour l'avantage de l'unité particulière de ceux auxquels elle est confiée, et non pour tous*'. Le Muir in her capacity as 'commissaire' explicitly confirms this manipulation in her circumstantial rejection of the declaration: 'Quand vous serez sur le terrain, souvenez-vous qu'on ne fait pas et qu'on n'a jamais fait de la police avec les droits de l'homme' (74).

The 1789 declaration as the novel's thematic gatekeeper is not only associated with the role of a corrupted police force, but accentuates the novel's focus on and critique of the French republican model founded on long-standing if unquestioned ideals and iconic expressions deriving from the French Revolution and the Third Republic. Within the critical optic of Manotti's novel, the past has from the outset been troublesome in that the major historical point of reference — the 1789 Revolution and the social contract ultimately resulting from it — has had constitutional, discursive and social consequences privileging certain segments of society over others. Ultimately, the novel's title reveals an ambiguity which follows from the novel's thematic preoccupation with interior/exterior contradictions;

'bien connu des services de police', as well as being a standard designation for the usual suspects, could equally be interpreted as what might well be expected from the police.

Bien connu des services de police is, then, an(other) example of how the French *polar* plays an essential role in discussing matters that are difficult to engage with in other genres and in the public sphere in France. Articulating an explicit critique of the dysfunctionality of the French police institution and not least of the 'omertà mafieuse' (Manotti 2012) with which it protects itself, the novel highlights and engages with an issue that the author explains as follows in a *Libération* polemic: 'Tous ceux qui prennent part au fonctionnement de l'institution policière (hiérarchie policière, juges) en connaissent la réalité, mais l'ensemble de ces dysfonctionnements explique que l'information n'intrigue pas, comme le devait, la société "civile"' (Manotti 2012). Manotti herself raises the point of the crime fiction genre's ability to counter a general silence over matters such as police misconduct and concludes her article in the following terms: 'Les auteurs de romans noirs ont encore de beaux jours devant eux' (Manotti 2012).

More generally, we can see how formal and informal understandings of the relationship between a state and its citizens impact upon crime fiction's critique of society. As well as in the French setting, this can be seen in the Scandinavian context, as the following reading of Arne Dahl's police procedural indicates. However, an important initial observation can here be made: Manotti's rewriting of the *roman noir* is one which manifestly breaks away from the *roman policier*. As the author has pointed out in an interview: '[l]a leçon du roman policier est […]: "Dormez en paix braves gens, nous veillons à l'ordre' (Osganian, Perriaux and Florey 2001: 35). *Bien connu des services de police* is demonstratively not a *roman policier*, but a novel which explicitly accuses the forces of order of being racist, sexist, chauvinistic and violent in the name of a republican universalism past its sell-by date. While Dahl's novels certainly contain a social critique and treat issues of marginalised identities, the police remain for the most part a compassionate and inclusive institution working for the benefit of the general public and the individual. Dahl's novels

therefore to a certain extent conform to Manotti's definition of the *roman policier* as a genre which endorses the police and reassures the public.

Arne Dahl: rewritings of genre, history and identity in the age of globalisation

Swedish author Arne Dahl has to date written two crime fiction series. The first of these (1999–2008), known in English as the *Intercrime* series, is for the most part set in Stockholm where it follows the investigations of the 'National Police Special Unit for International Violent Crimes' or in short 'the A-Unit'. This group of seven investigators is constituted by both old and young people, of both genders, some Swedish, a Finno-Swede, a Chilean refugee, and a gay man, thus presenting a microscopic version of a multicultural society. The four-novel *Opcop* series (2011–2015), in which a pan-European team of investigators operate out of Holland, supplements the first series by including a further aspect of well-functioning cooperation grounded in cultural diversity. Structurally, methodologically and ideologically, Dahl's first series can be viewed as a palimpsestuous rewriting of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's *The Story of a Crime*, insofar as it employs the writer-couple's template and allows parts of their original text to appear via continuous intertextual references. Danish crime fiction scholar Peter Kirkegaard thus assertively refers to Arne Dahl as the 'true heir' of Sjöwall and Wahlöö, justifying this label by the author's use of the police procedural subgenre and the collective police team as protagonist, in addition to the novels' realism and humour and their social engagement in their analysis of the Swedish *folkhemmet* [the 'People's home'] (Kirkegaard 2010). Dahl's own comments on Sjöwall and Wahlöö as the 'biological parents' of his fictional style (Dahl 2007: 5) are bolstered by explicit allusions to Sjöwall and Wahlöö's decalogue, *The Story of a Crime*, in his crime novels. Dahl thus for example adopts a ten-novel structure for his first series which follows Sweden over a decade from 1997 to 2007, and humorously concludes it with the appendix novel entitled *Elva* ['Eleven'] (2008). Echoing Sjöwall and Wahlöö's declared intention with their series, Dahl furthermore comments that '[t]he theoretical objective was extremely clear. 10 books in 10 years, pick up everything you can about our age, about a humanity that has chosen a neo-liberal route after

the breakdown of social democracy' (interview with Dahl in Kirkegaard 2013: 179, my translation). Dahl thus borrows the methodological framework from Sjöwall and Wahlöö and follows their ideological path. However, he adjusts the content of the writing to a contemporary reality three and a half decades after the source template.

In her reading of Dahl's first Opcop novel *Viskleken* ['Chinese Whispers'] (2011), Kerstin Bergman discusses in detail 'a transition from a national to a transnational European perspective' from Dahl's first to his second series (2014a: 21).[59] While this shift is apparent — not least with the symbolic change from the Stockholm-based national crime unit to the inter-European Opcop unit located in The Hague — this latter transnational perspective is however already prominent in the first series. This is particularly true of the fourth *Intercrime* novel, *Europa Blues* (2001), a novel which offers an insight into various issues relating to a particular Swedish self-image in the European context and draws lines from Sweden's involvement (as neutral party) in the Second World War to present-day internationally-organised crime. In the novel's rewriting of a national past, *Europa Blues* joins other Scandinavian crime novels preoccupied, as Karsten Wind Meyhoff formulates it, with 'digging into the secrets of history in order to expose the complex reality behind the official, homogeneous version of Scandinavian history from the 1940s until today' (2010: 62–63).

Prevalent in *Europa Blues* is the theme of the (de-)construction of a national Swedish identity, which was also the subject of investigation in Sjöwall and Wahlöö's crime fiction cycle. However, while Dahl's predecessors viewed this as a part of the dismantling of an all-inclusive national welfare state from an internal perspective, Dahl's novels offer a further enquiry into Swedish identity, which includes international history and cultural, financial and demographic globalisation. Dahl thus joins other authors like Henning Mankell, whose Wallander novels (1991–2009) chart the processes of globalisation and their effect on Swedish society (See Nestingen 2008: 223–254; McCorristine 2010: 77–81; Bergman 2014b: 51–68).

[59] Kerstin Bergman has in an earlier article about Henning Mankell pointed to Europeanisation as a general tendency in Swedish crime fiction, in which the 'new "European" crime novels further explore the concept of European identity, and envision a common Europe beyond its division into nation states' (2012: 71).

If, categorically put, Sjöwall and Wahlöö point to the dangers of the Swedish welfare state's flirtation with capitalism, and Mankell expresses 'the melancholic lamentation for the loss of a Golden Age, the post-war welfare state and its promises' (Tapper 2014: 3; see also Gregersdotter 2013), Dahl's crime novels can be said to represent conscious, post-nostalgic attempts to navigate a new neoliberal reality. The following reading of *Europa Blues* focuses on the text's preoccupation with identity constructions — be they national, cultural or genre-related. Remappings of European cartography and rewritings of the historical past play a role in these constructions, which are linked to the novel's explicit insistence on generic and cultural reconfigurations.

Doppelgängers and identity theft

Europa Blues weaves together (at least) four different cases which the A-Unit are charged with solving in Stockholm: the remains of a Greek gangster are found in the cave of the wolverines at the city's Zoo; a 10-year-old girl is shot in the arm while on a walk with her father; a distinguished near-nonagenarian Jewish neuroscientist is murdered at the Jewish cemetery; and eight Eastern European girls disappear from a refugee station. The already international nature of the crimes, as indicated by the victims' origins, further expands temporally and spatially when it becomes apparent that they are linked both to atrocities committed during the Second World War and to a contemporary inter-European network of criminals. The many-layered contents of the cases then also become entangled with the personal stories of the investigators, and most importantly with that of detective inspector Arto Söderstedt, who after having inherited a large sum of money from a distant uncle is enjoying a sabbatical with his family in Tuscany. As it becomes clear that the family gap year is in fact financed by blood money derived from the uncle's time as an SS officer in Buchenwald, the essential question in the investigation becomes related not only to the archetypal pursuit of revealing the identity of the criminal ('who are you?'), but also to an introspective question ('who am I?).

Söderstedt's discovery of his own genealogical identity (which does not correspond with his politico-ethical identity) is only one of the novel's many affirmations of the non-fixity of identity. The investigation in *Europa Blues* centres on the exposure of a complex system of false identities, of people who are not who they pretend to be, and of people who are mistaken for being someone else. The Doppelgänger — a literary figure that is a staple of detective fiction[60] — is central to this, as is identity-related crime in the form of identity theft. The novel's most striking example of the latter is the respected public persona of the Jewish Professor Emeritus Leonard Sheinkman under which hides the true identity of an anti-Semitic Swedish doctor who operated (with Söderstedt's uncle) as an SS officer in Buchenwald, where he experimented on, tortured and executed prisoners. Having stolen and been living under the identity of one of his Jewish victims, the old professor is murdered with the same method as he used when torturing captives in the concentration camp. In Sheinkman's case the perpetrator takes on the role of the victim; in Söderstedt's case the investigator becomes the investigated (through his family history), and, as is often the case in crime fiction, the decoding of identities interlinks with the action of detection.

The text's employment of pathetic fallacies further consolidates the themes of pretence and deceptiveness. Metonymically mirroring the characters' false appearances, the surrounding environment participates in similar games of disguise. The description of the first days of May when the investigation begins thus alludes to the characters' concealment of their true identities: 'Such days which appear inviting from the window, but which turn out to be insidiously disguised winter days' (23).

The motifs of the Doppelgänger and concealed identities link to a more fundamental doubleness relating to the Swedish nation and its alleged neutral position during the Second World War. As such the novel forms part of a tendency of rewriting the national past — and especially that of the Second World War — which can be observed in crime fiction from all of the Scandinavian countries after the Fall of the Berlin Wall. Karsten Wind Meyhoof argues in an analysis of contemporary Scandinavian crime novels that 'the opposition between East

[60] See for example Ilana Shiloh's account and interpretation of the figure of the double in crime fiction in *The Double, the Labyrinth and the Locked Room* (2011), pp. 25–86.

and West [during the Cold War] gave all the nation states a strong and convenient identity between the two blocks' and continues that after 1989 'a strong need for understanding the fabric of the national societies and for investigating […] cultural myths […] emerged' (2010: 62). In the case of Sweden, the post-1989 collapse of the nation state's stable geopolitical identity and what the historian Dan Stone has called the 'return of memories' (2014: 288) is further complicated by the scrutiny of the official image of Sweden's acclaimed wartime neutrality. This takes place a few years before the publication of *Europa Blues* in 2001.[61]

Dahl's novel engages explicitly with these issues in the first instance by letting the A-Unit's Paul Hjelm critique an official national discourse of solemn distance from wartime sufferings:

> The Holocaust is an abstraction, which you talk about using big words from a podium but will never approach directly. We were not part of it, we will never be able to understand, we do not have anything to do with it, that is for you to take care of. Swedish ahistoricity and false neutrality in unholy unity. We *were* most definitely part of it. We *had* most definitely something to do with it. We *can* most definitely understand it. And there *is* no way around it. (133)

The repetitive structure of the passage — first with the negation in a comma-separated list, and then with the confirmatory and punctuated list with italicised emphasis — questions the nature of statist discursive control ('from the podium') and the rights to the use of the pronominal 'we'. Hjelm's reconfiguration of the official stance becomes particularly forceful because he reemploys the rhetorical mode of the political speech by imitation and ironisation in his own version of the speech in the second part of the passage. The creative rewriting of state discourse applies by extension also to the entire fictional text. *Europa Blues* then as a crime novel constitutes a different mode of rewriting and opposing the imposed inclusive 'we' of the first part of the cited passage.

It is however important that Dahl's text is written and published at a time when Sweden is witness to a significant political will to investigate and actively publicise the less-

[61] This includes the exposure of pro-Nazi sentiments among influential elements of Swedish society (including King Gustav V), of the country's export of iron ore to Germany during the war, of the acquisition of gold from Nazi Germany by Sweden's central bank, and of the fact that German troops were allowed passage through the country from occupied Norway to Finland (see for example Wahlbäck 1998).

polished truth about the country's involvement with Nazi Germany.[62] As such, the text can also be seen as a timely fictional contribution capable of supplementing and further nuancing contemporary debates contesting previous dominating master narratives. In the closing lines of *Europa Blues*, Söderstedt finds himself personally entangled in both history and place after learning the truth about his uncle: 'Everything was wonderful. And everything was false. He was standing on top of corpses in order to see Paradise. And he was not only himself. He was a continent' (2011: 382). The individual is nested, *matryoshka*-like, within the collective, just as the local (national, regional, European) nests within the global. The novel's prevailing idea of recursion also works in the dimension of historical time, where the novel's present-day network of organised crime nests within a network of National Socialists dating back to Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 40s. Evidently, this necessitates the question of how the next historical layer will look:

> Fascism would return, he [Hjelm] did not doubt that, but probably in a much more creeping, indirect way — it would sneak up on us from behind while we were being blinded by its more obvious, primitive manifestations, until we would be there in front of our neighbour viewing him or her as an object, a possible source of profit. He was convinced that fundamentalist economic thinking was the precursor of the new fascism. (138)

It is more than a case of containedness, however: it is useful also to see the relationship between individual and collective as a dynamic network of mutually interdependent components. As the individual human subject is linked dynamically to the collective, so the individual story or case history is linked intertextually to a much larger narrative.

[62] In 1997 a major nation-wide information campaign about the Holocaust titled 'Levande historia' [Living History] was initiated in Swedish schools, and in January 2000 the country hosted the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust with prominent state participants from 46 countries. These initiatives form part of a new official policy to engage with a previously tabooed past launched by Prime Minister Göran Persson, who also in a statement to government in 2000 officially admits to the Swedish state's wrongdoings during the war (*Riksdagens snabbprotokoll*, 'Protokoll 1999/2000: 52, Onsdagen den 19 januari, anförande 36, Göran Persson' <www.riksdagen.se> [accessed 20 March 2016]).

Individual and collective voices

The collective protagonists in Dahl's novels — the team of investigators in the A-Unit and later in the Opcop group — take turns having the narrative point of view. As has been demonstrated, Paul Hjelm frequently expresses anti-authoritarian attitudes towards both statism and neoliberal tendencies; another example is the character of Sara Svenhagen who engages in a longer critical questioning of Swedish asylum and immigration politics in an interior monologue (47–48). The political identity of the members of the A-Unit seemingly fits the profile of a left-wing agency. This suggests an equivalence between capitalism and crime.[63] Arne Dahl describes in an interview the 'almost metaphysical' relationship between the members of the A-Unit (Kirkegaard 2013: 188, my translation). The organic nature of the police procedural's collective protagonist however does not equate to a univocally homogenous critical voice in the novel. Rather, the novel's narrative *forte* is precisely its multiplicity of voices and dialogicality where discourse takes the form of an ongoing interaction.

The voicing of criticism in *Europa Blues*, then, is not confined to the individual characters of the A-Unit but rather emerges from the interaction between the characters and the third-person omniscient narrator, an interaction rendered more complex by the use of irony. An example from the beginning of the novel in which a 'dialogue' takes place between the narrator and — in this case not so socially conscious — Paul Hjelm illustrates this. Walking up to the zoo, Paul Hjelm engages in a line of thoughts about the most linguistically elegant expression in Swedish to designate 'the year 2000' and summarises in a long rambling interior monologue the different positions in the debate ('tjugohundra' [twenty hundred] versus 'tvåtusen' [two thousand]). His thoughts are however interrupted by the omniscient narrator who critically comments on the irrelevance of Hjelm's thoughts:

63 This equivalence is made even more explicit in later Dahl novels. For example in *Viskleken* (2011), Arto Söderstedt questions the banking world and 'thinks that what has happened the last couple of years, the financial bubble which had been blown up and exploded, in a striking manner resembles the actions of a criminal. Profit maximisation without thinking about the consequences.' (Dahl 2011: 9)

> This, then, was what inspector Paul Hjelm was thinking about in the year of the Lord where Amnesty criticised the Swedish nation for the increasing police violence, where police officers frequently turned around their batons to hit with the hard end of them, and where Kosovar-Albanians were sent back home with 5,000 SKr in their pockets. (28)

Hjelm picks up his internal monologue again after the interference. Seemingly as a reaction to the narrator's problematisation of his linguistic musings at a time where more ethically pressing matters ought to be on his mind, he wonders: 'for a short moment it seemed to him as if *somebody* had occupied all of his thoughts' (28). What in the first instance appears to be Hjelm's realisation of the critical state of his profession and country as prompted by the narrator's intervention is nevertheless turned around one more time in Hjelm's own conclusion to the paragraph. Here it becomes apparent that the critique has not reached its target within the novel's parameters; instead of engaging with the concerns of the narrator, 'he [Hjelm] was wondering what had happened to all the good old sexual fantasies, those that should, according to the latest research, be given into at least 15 times a day' (28).

While the police investigators in *Europa Blues* regularly offer their critical interpretations of current affairs and political matters, they are complex figures, not merely used as vehicles for the novel's critical agenda. The sequence demonstrates the way in which the narrator functions as a transcendent manifestation which provides a strong critical voice, but which ultimately does not control the individual. This dialogical structure is fundamental for the novel's stance not only at the level of utterances, but also in its understanding of interhuman relationships more generally.

The struggle over and negotiation of meaning at speech level is complemented by the fact that various languages and the interpretation of these play an important role in the novel's plot. Adding thematically to the polyphonic narrative structure of *Europa Blues*, multiple explicit references are made to the etiological myth of the Tower of Babel. Likewise, multiple signifiers from different languages with similar connotations appear. For example, the respectively Swedish, English, German and Italian nouns *järv*, *wolverine*, *Vielfrass* and *ghiottone* appear in different contexts in the novel, but in all these contexts have the symbolic rapacity of the animal as common reference. Ultimately these terms allude to

the same connoted concept of human evil in all languages. Translation and interpretation, moreover, play significant roles in the investigation, and the resolution is only found when connections between words and expressions from different languages (Ukrainian, Yiddish, German, Italian, English and Greek) become apparent. Vocal and bodily metaphors merge when Paul Hjelm begins to realise how linguistic riddles fit together: 'Something called out for him. Something started to pull together. The scar tissue was slowly healing. All the languages that had rolled through the case… It was like the Tower of Babel.' (198). Realisation of the investigation's enigmatic resemblance to the Babel legend prompts him to seek the solution in the 'European wealth of languages' (198) underpinning the case.

The linguistic perspective is further widened to include culture more broadly when the wolverine leitmotif is subtly established by literary clues in the form of frequent references to James Ellroy's *The Big Nowhere* (1988). Paul Hjelm appears culturally illiterate in the world of crime fiction and does not understand the allusions to the American novel in which wolverines play a significant role. He is thus left wondering on multiple occasions: 'Ellroy?' (37) 'Who the fuck is Ellroy?' (82). Solving the cases also makes his own narration fall into place in an intertextual grid: 'He took a book out of the bookcase. It was called *The Big Nowhere*, and the author was called Ellroy' (323).

Resolution is found, then, through the unlocking of a code rooted in a lack of fixity of meaning. And just as there is no one definitive monolithic (or monologic) language for expressing the reality underneath the apparent mystery, there is no one single representational form at play in the narrative. Dahl's series is in fact characterised by generic hybridity, and flags this explicitly through the recurrent motif of other aesthetic forms within the prose narrative. A key example is jazz.

Jazz in *Europa Blues*

There has been a longstanding association between jazz and crime fiction, not least because many of the genre's tropes stem from the American hardboiled tradition which was contemporaneous with the pre-eminence of jazz as popular musical form. In his well-

illustrated monograph, *Jazz et polar* (2007), Bob Garcia analyses the relationship between jazz and the *roman noir*, focusing on the subversive nature of these two artistic expressions. Citing a large corpus of both Anglophone and French crime novels, Garcia establishes that whereas allusions to jazz are very rare in the *roman à énigme*, this musical genre is a significant reference point in the *roman noir* in which 'le jazz souligne le côté malsain et souvent sordide de l'histoire' (2007: 13).[64] The function of jazz in its original American form as 'une musique de révolte, le symbole et l'hymne d'une population déracinée et déclassée' (11) compares with that of the *roman noir* '[qui] va à contre courant de l'ordre établi et en dénonce les dysfonctionnements' (13). Furthermore, both expressions are considered 'mauvais genre' by the cultural establishment (18). Garcia designates as 'polar-jazz' the crime fictions that both concretely and symbolically employ jazz as background music for the narration. Most of Arne Dahl's crime novels can be said to fall into this category with their frequent references to well-known jazz compositions.[65]

Dahl's use of jazz as supplement to his textual universe has received considerable attention from scholars, albeit with different emphases. Kerstin Bergman comments that the Swedish jazz trio e.s.t.'s composition 'Promonition' (2008), the musical accompaniment to Dahl's novel *Viskleken*, 'primarily [works] as a relaxing transition phase, constituting a break of sorts for the novel's characters between fast-paced events' (2014a: 28). In a long article on the use of jazz in *Europa Blues*, Peter Kirkegaard and Tore Mortensen emphasise the comparable syntactical relationship between musical and linguistic form (2008). Rather than merely being a narratological feature, the use of jazz in Dahl's novels in the first instance relates, it shall be argued here, to a more profound metafictional questioning concerned with the identity of a Swedish crime fictional novel as part of a complex global (or at least occidental) network of texts and genres.

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[64] The cultural link between the two art forms have been exploited thematically and allegorically not only in the Anglophone and French traditions which are the focus of Garcia's analysis, but also in Scandinavian crime fiction. Other than Arne Dahl, a number of writers from the Scandinavian countries have employed jazz or blues as structuring principle or background accompaniment to their novels. In Sweden, Åke Edwardson's investigator Erik Winter for example listens to John Coltrane, and in Norway Gunnar Staalesen's Varg Veum is a performing jazz enthusiast.

[65] Examples include references to Thelonious Monk's *Misterioso* (1958) in the first *Intercrime* novel from 1999 of the same name, and to Miles Davis's recording *Kind of Blue* (1959) in *Europa Blues*.

The novel's title, *Europa Blues*, emphasises the theme of cultural corruption or productive hybridity. Striking some of the same chords as the title of James Ellroy's novel, *White Jazz* (1992), Dahl's title plays with the introduction of the black American blues genre into the European setting and thus with both generic and geographical transgression. Just as black American writers have employed detective fiction — a predominantly white Euro-American popular form with its origins in the imperial nineteenth century — to explore black identity and convey a social message about societal injustices, the articulation of the jazz/crime fiction confluence in Dahl's novels brings another layer of complexity to perceptions of cultural identity.[66]

The generic relationship between jazz and the type of crime fiction that Dahl is concerned with is explicitly commented on when Hjelm reflects on the high culture/low culture opposition and on his own musical preferences: '[a]fter an excursion to the world of opera as a slightly depraved Inspector Morse, he had returned to jazz music' (24). The (ironic) employment of the adjectival past participle 'depraved' to describe Hjelm in a comparison with Colin Dexter's detective figure draws attention to a supposed hierarchical structure not only in the realm of musical genres, but also in that of crime fiction. It is however unclear from the passage whether depravity comes from the interference of a low-cultural musical form into the realm of classical high culture, or whether the invocation of Morse suggests that Hjelm is a contaminated and hybrid protagonist, less generically pure than his classic British counterpart.

The above example occurs in the third chapter of *Europa Blues*, in which Paul Hjelm is on his way from the Astrid Lindgren Children's Hospital, where he has visited the girl who was shot, to the Zoo where the body eaten by the wolverines is being examined. Stuck in a traffic jam, Hjelm listens to the Miles Davis album *Kind of Blue* in its entirety, and as he passes 'Dramaten', Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre, he has a vision of Ingmar Bergman entering the building. Notions of temporal and spatial dimensionality intermingle here with

[66] See Stephen F. Soitos's monograph *The Blues Detective* (1996) which focuses on the ways in which black American writers have subverted the detective fiction template in order to review society and reflect political concerns.

questions of cultural identity: '[t]he journey from Astrid Lindgren via Ingmar Bergman to 'Skansen' — as a journey through the heart of Sweden — was exactly as long as *Kind of Blue* by Miles Davis. End of discussion. Three quarters of an hour precisely.' (27). The juxtaposition of the jazz album and twentieth-century Swedish iconic cultural figures offers a comment on the flexibility of culture as something that can easily move between different geographical contexts, and contract and expand in time (from minutes to centuries) and space (from the confined extent of the car to the Western world). Just as textual identity within the optic of *Europa Blues* is an intertextual identity, cultural identity must also be understood as an intercultural identity. Intrinsically, transnational exchanges and encounters of aesthetic forms and cultures in the novel promote a benign and productive counterpart to monetary and criminal exchanges across borders.

The police and the societal body

As discussed in the first chapter, the malfunctioning human body constitutes a recurring trope in Sjöwall and Wahlöö's *Story of a Crime* where it functions as a metaphor for the corruption and disintegration of the social body of the Swedish welfare state. This correspondence between body and state established by Martin Beck and his colleagues continues to find its expression in the typical middle-aged, depressed male protagonist which has become a staple of the Swedish crime novel (Henning Mankell's Wallander, Åke Edwardson's Erik Winter and Håkon Nesser's Van Veeteren are three prominent examples). However, the physically and mentally suffering hero seems, as Kerstin Bergman points out, 'almost to have died with the last Wallander novel [*The Pyramid* (1999)], as there are very few traces of him in the Swedish police procedurals in the 2000s' (2011: 35). Nevertheless, Dahl establishes another type of metaphorical analogy where, inversely, anthropomorphic bodily characteristics are transferred onto society. This is made explicit in the writer's first novel from 1999, *Misterioso* [*The Blinded Man* (2012)], in which Paul Hjelm's superior in a conversation with his colleague makes this overt analogy between the human body and society:

> [T]he skin holding society's fragile body together is the forces of order. We are the outliers closest to the sources of anxiety, and therefore we are also the most exposed of all. If the skin tears open in a critical place, the innards of the social body will spill out. (Dahl 2010 [1999]: 33, my translation from Danish)

In their membrane-like position — as part of both the inside and the outside — the police are in a precarious position. In *Mistorioso* there is a sense of the police performing the role as barricade against external forces. This image shifts in the *Opcop* series, where the use of the societal body metaphor expands into a European body of nations whose psychological and physical state is defined by internal instability and deterioration. At the end of *Viskleken*, the European investigation team is wrapping up the case and examining the traces on the digital wall. What they contemplate on the whiteboard is described by the narrator as '[a] completely mad and completely logical map of a continent in mental shambles. An unlikely constellation of connections between dying body parts. A nervous system drugged by money. A horrifying diagram of spiritual decay and cultural varnish' (translated and quoted by Bergman 2014a: 28). It is significant that this alternative map of Europe appears on the Opcop group's new digital whiteboard which Paul Hjelm's German colleague suggests should replace his old, printed atlas. The globalised world image can no longer be captured in traditional maps with fixed borders, but is better represented as a flexible flow map which can encapsulate the constantly changing complex geographies of international networks and migration. The mini-narrative of *Viskleken* thus describes a post-Westphalian and post-1989 Europe characterised by a large degree of transnational interference and exchanges in all areas.

The narrative allegory of the psychologically unstable and intoxicated European societal body, which does not bode well for the continent's future, is however countered by the existence of the Opcop group. In a world where the state economy has become deregulated and is partly in the hands of international criminal networks, there is a sense of solidarity and optimism embodied by the pan-European police unit. While the novel deals with the 'post-national' and with the destabilisation of old national categories of understanding, the overarching sentiment expressed in the conclusion to *Viskleken* pinpoints

the inclusive and post-nostalgic creed voiced by Dahl's texts: 'we have saved a small but important European country [Latvia]. Most of all, we have shown that we as Europeans are able to work together without too much trouble. That is what points forward in all of this' (Dahl 2011: 487).

In the first instance, *Europa Blues* represents a timely fictional contribution to the revisions of historical memory taking place in Sweden around the time of the novel's publication. Re-examining and revealing elements of 'neutral' Sweden's participation in crimes committed by Nazi Germany is, however, not the novel's only critical function. Emphatically insisting on a postmodern reality, the novel creates a universe characterised by nation states which can no longer be treated as distinctive organic wholes, and where the social democratic Swedish self-understanding is in the process of being transformed by neoliberalism and economic globalisation. The ideology of the text then sets up parallels between neoliberalism's commodification of interhuman relationships and the objectification of the Other which took place in the concentration camps during the Second World War.

At the level of the plot, the different cases in *Europa Blues* are linked to the Tower of Babel as the symbolic representation of human hubris, narcissism and madness. Mimicking the biblical myth's confusion of languages, the novel includes a multitude of different voices, perspectives and modes all contributing to the creation of a polyphonic text, which through its ambiguity at different levels reflects the doubleness on which the novel thematically centres. Generically, the text situates itself in a field of intertextual conversation by explicitly drawing on and engaging with other crime fictional texts (Sjöwall and Wahlöö, and Ellroy). The dialogical interrelationship is more than textual as it comes to represent the novel's fundamental idea of connectivity between texts, genres, cultures, nations, peoples and histories. The text's stylistic expression of a transgressive hybrid genre thus resembles the transgressive hybridity of identity that it represents.

Solving the cases is dependent on Hjelm's skills as translator and interpreter, in the same way that his own complex social identity is reliant on his skills in navigating different generic connections and cultural references. For Hjelm, for Söderstedt, and even for

Sheinkman, it might not even be relevant to talk about 'identity' as indicator of their respective modes of individual being within society, as these are expressions of non-static processes of constant negotiations and renegotiations. Rather, as Zygmunt Bauman has suggested, '[p]erhaps […] it would be more in keeping with the realities of the globalising world to speak of *identification*, a never-ending, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended activity in which we all, by necessity or by choice, are engaged' (2001: 129).

Chapter conclusion: globalised identities, localised narratives

Manotti and Dahl's texts deal with changing spaces and notions of national identity and citizenship in an increasingly globalised world. In *Bien connu des services de police* the spatial transformation is internal and consists of the alteration of the cityscape in terms of both infrastructure and demography, whereas *Europa Blues* has an extrovert perspective, focusing on how Swedish identity is informed by a broader European and global transformation. The respective internal and external foci of Manotti and Dahl's novels mirror to a certain extent how debates on identity issues are shaped in the two national contexts. Whereas French debates on nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc. centre on inherent interior problematics of the socio-political model of the French Republic, the crisis of the Scandinavian welfare state is explained by way of heterogenising external forces (internationalisation, Europeanisation, technological development, geopolitical transformations, global culture, neoliberalism etc.) disturbing the fundamentally 'good old' ways of the Scandinavian welfare state.

The parallel reading also highlights different ways of viewing the police's role in society and its position in relation to the national culture's dominant ideology. In Dahl's crime novels, the power of the collective is emphasised by the A-Unit — and the Opcop group in the second series — as a collaborative entity that protects humanitarian values and accommodates diversity. The police procedural, as the typical Swedish crime fiction template, serves the purpose of showcasing some form of stability by reflecting a microcosmic ideal of communal Scandinavian integrity, in spite of the failures and moral

corruption of some individuals and of elements within the state. In Manotti's novel there is no nostalgia; the grounds on which the current French state is built are shown to be fundamentally corrupt and to have been flawed from the outset; the country's institutions are corrupt at all levels of the hierarchy to the extent that any positive development of society is reliant on the good nature of individuals regardless of their position within the state's administrative apparatus.

A key issue which emerges here concerns the relationship between form and content: the question arises of why crime fiction should be a suitable medium for discussing identity issues. In relation to this, the observation might be made that crime narratives symbolically imitate in their very form the concepts of universalism and particularism. On the one hand, the genre's global and rigid form, a normative model, demands that the writer conform to a set of universal rules in order not to break the contract with the reader; on the other, the individual work of crime fiction is singular in that it contains both national or sometimes very local specificities, often reflecting also a particular approach to the genre.

As for the specific manner in which recent crime fiction has engaged with such issues, we have seen that both Manotti and Dahl are clearly representatives of a shift in crime fiction from an emphasis on 'redistribution' (social politics) to a focus on 'recognition' (cultural/identity politics). It would appear that questions of class and redistribution have been more or less abandoned to make room for discussions of hierarchies and segregationist tendencies related variously to identities of ethnicity, gender and sexuality. While ethnicity will be central to the third and final part of the thesis (Part III), issues of gender and sexuality will be the focus of the next part (Part II).

PART II

Gender and Genre

CHAPTER 3

Representations of Gender and Sexuality in the *femikrimi* and the *polar au féminin*

The *roman noir* seems an obvious genre in which to discuss issues concerning gender and sexuality, because of its history of essentialising women — and men — in static stereotypes. A new generation of female writers have used it precisely to engage with such stereotypes. Criticism analysing this phenomenon has been particularly occupied with the masculine dominance of the *noir* genre and the contestation of this universe by female writers. Véronique Desnain, commenting on the emergence of the *polar au féminin*, observes for example that 'fixed rules offer great potential for deconstruction and parody. It is therefore no surprise that female authors should have homed in on a genre [*noir*] which has until recently been fraught with macho clichés and androcentric preoccupations' (2009b: 90). Feminist theory and feminist readings of crime fiction have also engaged in this critique.[67] But, as this chapter will argue, feminist perspectives can also be of particular utility in the critical analysis of crime fiction's engagement with wider issues of identity. Methodologically, the criticism in this chapter is aligned with issues of concern to identity politics. It investigates the ways in which questions of female identity are approached by texts employing conventions of the *noir* genre.

National traditions have pigeon-holed female writers concerned with contesting a previously male-dominated genre in categories accentuating a gender opposition to the genre's conservatism: the *Frauenkrimi* (Germany), *Women's detective fiction* (US and Britain), the *femikrimi* (Scandinavia) and the *polar au féminin* or *polar féminin* (France).

[67] In America, there has been a strong movement of feminist criticism engaging with crime fiction since the 1980s, some of which include Kathleen Gregory Klein's *The Women Detective: Gender and Genre* (1995 [1988]), Maureen T. Reddy's *Sisters in Crime: Feminism and the Crime Novel* (1988) and Glenwood Irons's *Feminism in Women's Detective Fiction* (ed.) (1995). In Britain, feminist critic Sally Munt, for example, examines contemporary Anglophone crime novels in *Murder by the Book: Feminism and the Crime Novel* (1994). Gill Plain also explicitly proclaims a 'feminist […] and materialist' critical approach in *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction: Gender, Sexuality and the Body* (2001: 9).

Characteristically, but not unproblematically, these are categories formulated by the media in the individual national contexts — perhaps under transnational influence — to describe the sensational novelty of a new publishing phenomenon. Actual definitions of these localised categorisations, however, prove harder to find, and both critical academic discussion and media representation have, in order to designate a work as 'female' or 'feminine', variously focused on the gender of the writer, the investigating protagonist or that of the perceived readership, frequently mixing these three entities into a jumbled pell-mell where the fictional texts get the least attention.

The first part of this chapter investigates this tradition by examining how the *polar au féminin* and the *femikrimi* have been analysed and represented in their respective national contexts. It seeks to demonstrate parallels and divergences in the reception by including theory, literary criticism and media commentary to establish if there is a distinct national discourse which surrounds novels addressing questions related to gender and identity. The chapter can be seen as a development of the research of Nicola Barfoot (2007). One of the conclusions Barfoot draws from her extensive analysis of the reception of recent French and German crime novels by women is that French literary criticism tends to avoid dealing with a 'discourse of subversive intentions' in relation to crime fiction by women writers (Barfoot 2007: 200). Importantly also, however, this chapter offers a critique of the paradigm through which gender-focused criticism, specifically feminist criticism, approaches crime fiction, arguing that the categories it employs — female author, female writer, female reader — are problematic (notably in their exclusivity) and frequently reductive.

The second part of the chapter then aims to demonstrate how texts by crime writers from France and Scandinavia employ the genre as a vehicle to discuss gender and sexuality issues, and how these more generally relate to a search for identity for the main protagonist. Novels by Norwegian Anne Holt are approached through thematic readings alongside the work of French author Maud Tabachnik in order to answer the following questions: how are questions of gender issues addressed in the texts? How is diversity in terms of sexuality discussed? How are normative gender perceptions approached in the novels? What

constitutes gender socially and culturally in the Nordic and in the French context, and in which ways are identity formulations present in the texts?

French critical engagement with the *polar au féminin*

Gill Plain, identifying a shift in late twentieth-century crime fiction away from a focus on security and stability, both when it comes to narrative resolution and in terms of the characteristics of the detective figure, reasons: 'we might argue that feminist and lesbian crime fiction's refusal of androcentric bourgeois methodologies was instrumental in bringing about this change' (2001: 204). Despite a seemingly global movement which has revolted against generic rigidity and employed crime fiction to explore identity issues, these changes to the genre do not necessarily occur simultaneously in different national contexts; they have moreover taken varied forms. Likewise, national criticism examining this development is informed by both international trends and specific national discursive configurations.

In the American tradition of criticism involved with 'women's detective fiction', which takes form in the early 1980s particularly in relation to the works of Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton, the categorisation is frequently associated with destabilising activism and gender politics as two (if not indeed three…) sides of the same coin. As Maureen Reddy remarks, 'feminist literary theory, feminism as a social movement and feminist crime novels have grown up together' (1990: 174). The feminist readings that have dominated American criticism of female crime writings have in turn been linked with analysis of these works' contestation of male-dominated generic conventions — often with a political agenda of 'unwrit[ing] the idea of Woman in order to challenge it and make a brand-new genre' (Irons 2006: xxi–ii). However, research on the female subject — whether author or protagonist — in crime fiction has not developed within the field of feminist studies in France to the same extent as it has in the United States. By contrast, as Deborah Hamilton argues, 'in France, it is for the most part male critics who have politicized the *roman policier,* creating an explicit, self-conscious identity for the genre as progressive, based on its association to a universalistic, liberal republican model' (Hamilton n.d.: 18). Perhaps as a result of this, French writers adhering to the generic conventions of the French postwar *roman noir*,

inspired by the American hardboiled novel, remained, as Hamilton points out in a later article, for some time oblivious to the changes in traditional gender roles in the real world: 'the passivity of the female characters and the reductive polarisation of traditional female stereotypes as vamps or virgins […] contrasted sharply with a growing diversity of women's roles and the blurring of boundaries that traditionally defined male-female relationships' (Hamilton 2000: 231).

One of the first studies in French of female representation in the crime novel is Anne Lemonde's *Les Femmes et le roman policier* from 1984. This early examination considers the absence of well-defined female characters in twentieth-century crime fiction:

> Que l'on s'attarde au public de lectrices, aux auteurs féminins ou aux personnages de femmes exploitées (et c'est le cas de le dire) dans le roman policier, une sensation de malaise se dissipe mal […]. Les rôles féminins sont curieusement distribués, disséminés ici et là, difficiles à retracer, à schématiser, sans caractère vraiment convaincants. (1984: 25)

Lemonde's intervention can be seen as a starting point for critical engagement with a problematics of gender in French crime fiction. It might be seen as symptomatic of subsequent French criticism in that several critical categories which could productively be considered separately are discussed as constituting one unitary phenomenon.

Another factor that criticism has identified as having played a role in preventing serious critical discussion of gender issues is constituted by conditions within the publishing industry. The French publishing landscape's two major crime fiction 'collections', Librairie des Champs Elysées's Le Masque and Gallimard's Série noire — launched respectively in 1927 and 1945 — have symbolically divided writers and reading audiences based on subgenre and gender. Le Masque, which published the first French translations of Agatha Christie, has, as Barfoot argues, 'had a somewhat ladylike image, highly susceptible to ridicule' (2007: 28).[68] Desnain notes that this imprint, having published women writers since the 1930s, 'was seen as specializing in more "gentle" non-violent whodunnit narratives and

[68] In the 1960s and 1970s, Le Masque also published 18 novels in French translation by Swedish author Maria Lang (whose work is briefly discussed in Chapter 1 of the current study), marketing her work as that of the 'Agatha Christie suédoise'.

therefore ideally suited to female writers' (2009b: 88–89). By contrast the Série noire's publications of French translations of American hardboiled novels have been regarded as more prestigious by French criticism and media — perhaps not least because prominent literary figures such as Queneau and Sartre have praised this collection.[69] A lack of critical interest in novels by female writers is explained precisely by the fact that they are writing in a less respected sub-genre and that 'elles sont bannies d'un genre policier précis: le roman noir' (Levet 2008: 1). The masculine *noir* universe, as opposed to the supposedly more feminine one found in the *roman à énigme*, symbolised respectively by the two iconic French crime fiction collections, is therefore reflective of an oppositional division based on gender (of both writers and readers). This hierarchical order has immanently informed critical discussion of the emergence of the *polar au féminin* in France. In her analysis of the influence of the Série noire in her — much-quoted but rarely referenced — 1994 PhD thesis, *The French Detective Fiction Novel 1920's to 1990's: Gendering a Genre*, Hamilton demonstrates precisely how the politics of French detective fiction aesthetics has been predominantly masculine, and how — through imagery and textual description in marketing material from other publishing houses — women's roles and women writers have been marginalised. Although separate from the actual fictional articulation of questions of gender, this underscores the importance of the publishing industry in shaping representation of gender and other identities.

From a publisher's point of view, Patrick Raynal argues that the change in the crime fiction landscape comes from a new editorial openness toward female writers previously ignored by the publishing business. Raynal, who was was editor-in-chief of Gallimard's Série noire from 1991–2004, explains: 'J'ai ouvert les pages de la Série noire à une dizaine de femmes', with a view to 'changer l'image macho qui colle à la peau du roman noir'. The shift in the industry, however, has — according to Raynal in 1996 — not been enough to

[69] Queneau, who was a friend of Marcel Duhamel, the creator of the Série noire, expressed admiration for the imprint (Gallimard highlight this admiration on the website for the Série noire: http://www.gallimard.fr/Divers/Plus-sur-la-collection/Serie-noire) [accessed 20 May 2015]. Sartre mentions the 'collection' in *Les Mots*, where he states: 'Aujourd'hui encore, je lis plus volontiers les "Série Noire" que Wittgenstein' (1972: 64).

encourage female writers of crime fiction: 'elles m'envoient encore très peu de manuscrits. […] [J]'espère que ça va changer' (Anon. 1996 [*Femme Actuelle*]). Raynal's statement bears witness to the shifting landscape in the mid-1990s of the French publishing business's attitudes towards the gender of writers. The boom in the *polar au féminin* and the media attention that it attracts occur simultaneously with the novel interest given to foreign literatures in French translation, for example, crime fiction from the Nordic countries. These changes in attitude in the 'champ littéraire' are furthermore emphasised in the multitude of new publishing houses — and new 'collections' within existing publishing houses — created in the 1990s and 2000s accommodating specialised niche crime fiction genres.[70]

A number of critics have been concerned with writing the history of female crime writers in France, concurring that critical discussion in the 1980s and 1990s focuses on the sudden appearance of female writers and has largely ignored earlier female writers of the genre (Hamilton 1994, Barfoot 2007, Desnain 2009b). Despite earlier crime fiction publications by women, it seems, however, that the gender/genre dichotomy between the *noir* and the *roman à énigme* had to be broken in order for female writers to be acknowledged as serious contenders on the market. Michel Abescat, journalist for *Le Monde*, acknowledges that even though there have been women writing crime novels in French literary history, 'la grande nouveauté c'est l'arrivée des femmes dans l'univers du roman noir' (Abescat 1997). The hierarchical gendered division is discontinued when female writers start writing *noir*. This is frequently stressed in the media's engagement with the new 'phénomène d'édition', as this quotation from an article in *Lire* implicitly suggests: 'Pas question d'élucider un mystère de salon, elles [female authors] marchent sur les sentiers boueux, au cœur du noir' (Argand, Ferniot and Frey 1997: 38).

In French media coverage, the *polar au féminin* is treated as a publishing phenomenon like the *noir nordique*, and new female authors' considerable impact on the literary market in terms of sales figures is frequently commented on: 'les filles du polar

[70] The imprint 'Chemins noirs', which was launched in 1994 by the publishing house Viviane Hamy and publishes mainly female authors; the publishing house Gaia (created in 1991), which focuses entirely on Scandinavian authors in French translation; Baleine (created in 1995) and Florent Masson (created 1989), which publishes books with 'sujets underground', are but a few examples.

bousculent la tradition, gagnent du terrain sur les listes des meilleures ventes […], envahissent le marché' (Ferniot in Argand, Ferniot and Frey 1997: 38). There is also here a universal template which is applied to the 'sensational' emergence of the subgenre. When French media in the early 1990s start commenting on the *polar au féminin*, the approach is centred on the occurrence of female authors and not on the way in which the texts themselves discuss gender identity issues. In the first instance, the emphasis is mainly on the influence and superiority in terms of numbers of female writers from the Anglophone world: 'Si les "écrivaines" ont toujours été minoritaires dans le roman policier de la langue française, il n'en va pas de même en Angleterre et aux États-Unis où on ne les compte plus' (Rolland 1990: 25). The media treatment of the emergence of a 'polar féminin français' then focuses almost solely on the female intrusion into a market traditionally dominated by male writers, and often there is a presumed equivalence of the female writer with the female detective. The vocabulary surrounding the representation of the 'new' female authors reutilises tropes from the *noir* genre's depiction of women, evoking the possibly dangerous potential behind female beauty. Journalistic headlines such as 'Détectives en talons aiguilles' (Amelin 1991), 'De quelques femmes à la plume meurtrière' (Rolland 1990), 'Polar, les femmes renouvellent le genre en beauté: Cérises noires, la relève' (Peras 2002), reinvest associations of the *femme fatale* in the image of the female author of crime fiction. The dominant metaphor employed by the press to describe the feminine renewal of the genre is consequently that of a violent (armed) attack on the genre: 'Les filles à l'assaut du polar' (Argand, Ferniot and Frey et al. 1997), 'Polars: les femmes attaquent' (Amette 2000), 'Les nouvelles armes du polar se dégainent au féminin' (Zbinden 1996), 'Polars — sale temps pour les durs à cuire!: La mort des machos' (Saint-André 1996) or 'Polar: ces dames dégainent' (Peras 1999). This lexical field, which appears to situate the woman author as a mirror image of the hardboiled detective, is also repeated in titles for articles about individual writers: 'Avec Maud Tabachnik, chaque mot est une balle' (Argand 1997a).

Indeed, Maud Tabachnik (1938–) is an interesting case in point: she is emblematic of female crime writers who use the genre as a vehicle for militant feminist activism.[71] Tabachnik, who lets some of her female characters enact vengeful mutilation and murder of men as a way of contesting patriarchal societal structures, has — like many other socially critical crime fiction writers — also entered public debate and produced a considerable amount of non-fictional commentary. In a gender-political article from 1997, entitled 'Remarques sur la non-place des femmes dans le roman noir', Tabachnik takes as her starting point the expression 'cherchez la femme' in order to determine that the role of the female fictional character in crime fiction is a figure who 'par définition' and 'par détermination' is guilty (1997: 122). The author then, in the same article, categorises female characters found in crime fiction in a number of classes: the 'femme fatale' as the immediate adversary of the principal masculine character; the 'oie blanche' described as 'la jeune fille, blonde naturelle, amourouse et niaise'; the 'femme-mère'; 'la secrétaire'; and the 'femme-victime' (often because she has 'asked for it') (1997: 124–25). Her analysis of the tropes in crime fiction extends into a depiction of French society, where language itself articulates a consensus whereby women are considered victims and it is unthinkable to conceive of women as persecutors: 'les hommes sont misogynes, pourquoi les femmes ne seraient-elles pas misandres? Voulez-vous que je vous dise, ce mot n'existe pas dans le Petit Robert' (1997: 126). Highly aware of the identity issues at stake in crime fiction, Tabachnik thus situates her own crime writing as a female response to male dominance by problematizing and transcending the fixed female typology.

Tabachnik's engagement, both in her fictional writings and in her polemical journalism, provides an example of how some French female crime writers intentionally employ the genre, and the critical potential of its conventions and typologies, as a platform for a subversive feminist writing with a pronounced political agenda. Some mainstream

[71] It is important to stress here that Tabachnik is by no means representative of all female writers of crime fiction. As Claire Gorrara has pointed out in relation to writers from the 1990s: 'Not all crime fiction written by women is feminist in intention and it would be misleading to believe that debates around gender inflect the work of every woman writer' (Gorrara 2003: 114).

media commentary may stress the femininity rather than the feminism of contemporary French crime fiction written by women, but even where this is the case, metaphors of combat and struggle are used. It is noticeable that this subgenre — which clearly assumes that the *polar* as mimetic fiction has the potential through its own conventions and typologies to provide critical insight into those of the society it represents — is one that is engaged in a combative critical struggle, and, as we will see below in a closer reading of Tabachnik's fiction, it engages through its subject matter and themes in a transgressive critique of a society seen as repressively patriarchal, and of conventions of genre and gender which reinforce patriarchal norms.

Scandinavian critical engagement with the *femikrimi*

While French critical engagement with the emergence of the *polar au féminin* is particularly concerned with the contestation of patriarchal structures immanent in the *noir* genre, critical discussion of the *femikrimi* adopts a different perspective. This can in part be understood as an effect of the generic development in the Nordic countries, where the mystery novel dominated the market until the politically engaged police procedural took over in the mid-1960s (as discussed in Chapter 1). Arguably, the general absence of the *roman noir* in the postwar Scandinavian tradition has generated a less pronounced experience of a gendered paradigmatic shift in the genre compared with the French tradition.

In Scandinavia, the media's attention is drawn towards female crime writers later than in France. It is not until the late 1990s that categorizations such as the Danish 'femikrimi' or the Swedish 'deckardronningar' [queens of crime] start appearing in the press. This, however, does not mean that crime novels concerned with representation of women and gender identity issues were not published before then. This was especially the case in Norway, where female writers — Kim Småge in the early 1980s followed by her compatriots Karin Fossum and Anne Holt in the early 1990s — start publishing novels with thematic insistence on gender issues. Following the success of Liza Marklund (1962–) and later Camilla Läckberg (1974–) in Sweden, women writers have had a strong influence on the market, as Kerstin Bergman

asserts: ‘There are many strong trends in Swedish crime fiction from the past decade, but *the* most notable trend is unquestionably the influx and presence of so many women crime writers’ (2014b: 86).

Scandinavian female authors generally write within the police procedural tradition with a female criminal investigator as the recurring protagonist: in Norway, Kim Småge’s Anne-Kin Halvorsen and Anne Holt’s Hanne Wilhelmsen; Swedish authors Åsa Nilsonne’s Monika Pedersen and Helene Tursten’s Irene Huss; and Danish author Sara Blædel’s Louise Rick to name but a few. Another popular profession for the protagonist is journalism (examples are Gretelise Holm’s Karen Sommer, Liza Marklund’s Annika Bengtzon or Elsebeth Egholm’s Dicte Svendsen). These writers could be said, as Bergman argues with reference to Marklund, to ‘use the procedural genre in a tabloid newspaper environment, portraying a team of investigative journalists working at the crime desk’ (2014b: 73–74). As a contrast, it is interesting to note that not many female protagonists in the *polar au féminin* function within the framework of the police institution. As Desnain concludes: ‘[French female writers] present women who are at once victims, survivors and avengers. Few of the characters written by women are professional investigators’ (2009b: 93). Desnain further gives an explanation to the choice of the *noir* genre by French women writers: ‘the lone wolf of American fiction is not dissimilar to the disenfranchised women who must resort to cunning rather than official challenge in their search for justice and who are constantly confronted with obstacles put in their way by a male-centered society’ (Desnain 2009b: 94). Perhaps because Scandinavian writers remain more faithful to a subgeneric template (the police procedural) that does not have quite the same masculine characteristics as the *noir* genre, they produce texts that are less overtly challenging and controversial.

If there is in Scandinavian criticism an interpretation of the *femikrimi* as a contestation of male hegemony, the position is usually argued in literary historical terms with reference to the American feminist crime novel functioning as an intermediary between the hardboiled tradition and the Scandinavian *femikrimi*:

> The Anglo-American hardboiled feminist crime fiction is historically a prerequisite for the new Nordic *femikrimis* […], but they [the American female detectives] preserve the identification with the male detective, the lone wolf, who […] lets his identity and sexuality merge with the detective function (Egholm Andersen 2008: 24, my translation).

The accentuation of the femininity of the Scandinavian female detectives in comparison with the masculinity of the protagonists of Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton is comprised in the lexis itself; the prefix 'femi-' can both be read as 'feminine' and 'feminist': 'In a femi-krimi the detective's gender forms part of the genre convention, because a femi-krimi in brief can be determined as a crime narrative created by a female author with a female protagonist and a gender-political agenda' (Hejlsted 2008: 232, my translation). The genre's typology defined here by Hejlsted can seem reductive.[72] Nevertheless, as we will see later, the three ingredients in Hejlsted's definition are the main focus points for the Scandinavian media's engagement with the *femikrimi*.

In academic criticism, the welfare state with its general equal opportunities for men and women is often highlighted as one of the reasons for the emergence of the *femikrimi*. Nestingen and Arvas, for example, read the phenomenon within 'the context of the broad egalitarianism of the Scandinavian states' — the culmination of a socio-political movement which gave Scandinavian women voting rights early in the 20th century, was developed under the social democratic governments in the postwar period and was further reinforced by 'strong feminist movements and state-feminist policies since the 1970s' (2011: 5).[73] Interesting, also, is the line the two authors draw back to the literary and theoretical movement, *Det moderne gennembrud* ['The Modern Breakthrough'], in the 1870s and 1880s, where gender politics was a prominent theme, discussed openly through the medium of fiction. The concerns of this naturalist and realist movement, the authors argue, 'have been

[72] In an earlier article, Hejlsted goes as far as defining the *femikrimi* according to ten commandments of the genre in line with early 20th century's formulated rules for detective fiction (for example S.S. Van Dine's 'Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories', 1946 [1928]). The first two commandments state for example that 'femikrimis are written by women' and that '[a] femikrimi always has a female detective as the main character' (Hejlsted 2003: 49–50, my translation). Hejlsted thus reduces the discussion to a set of restrictive and prescriptive formulas, which exclude the possibility of critical engagement with gender issues by any work which does not fulfil these criteria.

[73] Women obtained the right to vote in public elections in Finland (1906), Norway (1913), Denmark and Iceland (1915), and Sweden (1921).

taken in new directions through revisions of the socially critical crime novel's gender politics' (2011: 5). Kerstin Bergman discusses in similar terms the Swedish wave of works by women crime writers featuring women detectives within the setting of an egalitarian Swedish state: 'Internationally, Sweden is often perceived as a country of gender equality, and it is true that the situation for women is better in Sweden than in many other countries' (2014b: 69). While the emergence of the French *polar au féminin* is frequently discussed within a paradigm of *limitations* for women (masculine genre conventions, essentialising and stereotypical roles attributed to women in the *noir* genre, lack of publishing possibilities and so on), the critical discussion surrounding the emergence of the Scandinavian *femikrimi* is contrastingly often developed in terms of *opportunities* provided historically by the egalitarian nature of the welfare state. Perhaps because of this socio-political background understanding of the emergence in the late 1990s of the *femikrimi*, academic engagement with the genre has been particularly occupied with writing the early history of female crime writers and with pointing out that there has been a strong presence of a female authorship dating back to the 19th century (Wopenka 2010, Hejlsted 2008 and 2009).

While Bergman in her analysis of the increasing success and proliferation of Swedish female writers also makes a note of the fact that 'Sweden is still a patriarchal society' (2014b: 70), the factors that constitute the most important threat to the country's gender egalitarianism are also what threatens the welfare state more broadly: 'The last decades have also witnessed intensifying privatization of the public sector (education, health care, care of the elderly, infrastructure), a development that brings with it not only growing class differences, but also increased gender inequalities' (2014b: 70). Nestingen and Arvas, in similar terms, interpret the development of the Scandinavian crime novel as countering the transition from the welfare state to neoliberalism. This development is seen as something imposed from the outside world and which has an impact on the Scandinavian countries' literatures: 'with the European Union adhering to neoliberal policies in key areas, the Scandinavian welfare states continued to alter old policies for new market-based and consumer-oriented thinking during the first decade of the twenty-first century' (2011: 9).

Despite there being a clear political context for its engagement with gender issues, the *femikrimi* did not — at least in Sweden — emerge from grassroots awakening of feminist consciousness. In fact, the Swedish *femikrimi* was brought to life somewhat artificially by intervention on the part of the Swedish crime fiction journal *Jury*. Having looked with envy on the success of Norwegian female writers and recognised, given the popularity of translated female crime writers, that there was an obvious market, the journal set out to identify and cultivate home-grown talent. *Jury* established in 1997 the Poloni Prize to be given to 'promising female crime fiction writers', and Liza Marklund was the first winner awarded for her novel *Sprängaren* [*The Bomber*] in 1998.[74] This year marks the ignition of the phenomenon: *Sprängaren* becomes a huge sale success, *Jury* launches a creative writing course for female crime writers in co-operation with the publishing house Ordfront, and a further twelve Swedish female crime writers are published the same year.[75] The new 'genre' is marketed as being 'by women, about women and for women', a categorisation which reveals not only a concern with promoting female writers, but also with finding its audience among female readers.[76] Commercial imperatives might thus be said to have played a role in the emergence of the *femikrimi* as a consumer-marketed cultural product with a specific targeted readership, as, to take one example, they appear to have done in the sending out of Liza Marklund's novels as supplements to the Danish women's magazine *Søndag*.[77]

It is clear then that to some extent the *femikrimi* is subject to a form of industry-sponsored mediatization, as might be expected in the case of any literary product, irrespective of genre. In this case, the mediatization process exploits the novelty of the woman writer, but also associates her with a supposed feminist agenda. So on the one hand,

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74 Norwegian Kim Småge's debut novel *Nattdykk* ['Night Diving'] (1983) has been claimed as the first *femikrimi* (Hejlsted 2003: 48, Egholm Andersen 2008: 30). Småge's compatriots, Anne Holt and Karin Fossum, become established writers in 1993 and 1995 respectively with the publication or their first crime novels.

75 For a more detailed description of the Poloni Prize and other initiatives launched to establish female Swedish novelists on the book market, see Wopenka 2009 and 2010, Kärrholm 2010 and 2011, and Bergman 2014b, where sales statistics can also be found.

76 This prescription is included in the title of a guide published by *Jury* in 2000: *Kvinnor och deckare: en läsebok från jury, Poloniprisjuryn presenterar nya och gamla deckare av, om och för kvinnor* ['Women and Crime Fiction: A *Jury* Reader. The Poloni Prize Jury Presents New and Old Crime Novels By, About and For Women'] (Trenter, Matz and Lundin 2000).

77 *Søndag* has between 2006 and 2010 sent out five Liza Marklund titles with the magazine.

press articles focus on the gender of writers and their success stories, a tendency summarized by Kärrholm in an article where she dubs Camilla Läckberg and Liza Marklund 'two contemporary Cinderellas' (2011: 133), their Prince Charming — in the form of a readership — having finally arrived. Elsewhere, there is much reference to Danish, Norwegian or Swedish 'queens of crime', a label generally applied to any successful female crime writer from the individual Nordic countries. At the crasser end of this spectrum, this new wave of crime novels received primarily as *feminine* rather than feminist is categorised as 'chick-lit', as when Egholm Andersen uses the term 'lipstick literature' (2008) (this echoes Amelin's characterisation of French female-authored crime fiction as 'Détectives en talons aiguilles', as mentioned previously in this chapter). On the other hand, the phenomenon has been received in some quarters as more properly feminist, but at the same time its feminist agenda is still understood to be part of a marketing ploy. For example, Kärrholm states that 'Liza Marklund's feminist position has from the beginning been a considerable part of her trademark' (2010: 477, my translation). Even more explicitly, Christine Sarrimo asserts that 'the mediatized feminist position is a possible way of establishing oneself as an author' (2010: 90, my translation). With specific reference to Marklund and what she names 'the feminist literature factory', Sarrimo argues that 'the contour [has] been drawn by a media logic which creates an intensification of intimacy often with commercial incentives. The personal face and the personal experience are important ingredients in this process of increasing intimacy' (2010: 90, my translation). A feminist agenda, then, is just one aspect of a self-marketing agenda, which, in the case of Marklund, can even be seen in a conscious linkage of her authorial identity with that of her protagonist Annika Bengtzon, who shares the 'z' of Marklund's forename. As feminism becomes subsumed within femininity, the political becomes subsumed within the personal, which is the essential component of the appeal to the market.

At the very least, then, it is problematic to claim that the Scandinavian *femikrimi* has a feminist agenda without contextualising any such agenda within the commercial promotion of the genre. In France, by contrast, despite some media focus on the femininity of authors

and protagonists, the French models examined seem to indicate a much more conscious and considered feminist critique of gender norms in society, particularly with regard to the blind spot in the attitude of universalist republican discourse towards gender issues. These French examples in turn relate the question of gender to wider issues of identity. Perhaps most significantly, as we shall now see, where the Scandinavian *femikrimi* endorses a late-twentieth-century liberal consensus on gender, whereby difference is unproblematic, and individuals previously considered 'other' in terms of gender or sexual identities are integrated uncontroversially within society, the French *polar féminin* offer a much more radical reading of contemporary society, in which gender becomes a means of transgression.

Anne Holt's Women: Private and Public Identities

Anne Holt commenced her career as a crime fiction writer in 1993 with the novel *Blind Gudinne* (1993) [*Blind Goddess* (2012b)] featuring the Oslo-based police investigator Hanne Wilhelmsen as the main protagonist. The novels about Wilhelmsen constitute one of two different series by Holt, the other of which presents another female character, the psychologist and profiler Inger Johanne Vik. Holt situates her fictional discussion of gender roles in these two series within an egalitarian understanding of feminism. In response to a French journalist's question, 'Quelle définition donnez-vous du féminisme?', she answers: 'Très simple: le féminisme, c'est croire que la valeur des hommes et des femmes est exactement la même. Les valeurs de leurs personnes, de leurs travaux, de leurs contributions. Par conséquent: leurs droits doivent être les mêmes' (Morizot 2010). This is, in fact, representative of the kind of feminism that is to be found in the Scandinavian *femikrimi*, that is, a feminism based firmly on equality and rights, which can be seen as being broadly consistent with the Scandinavian social model.

The following reading concentrates on one novel from each of these cycles: *Det som aldri skjer* (2004) [*The Final Murder* (2007)] — the second novel of five about Vik — and *Salige er de som tørster* (1994) [*Blessed Are Those Who Thirst* (2012a)] — the second novel

in the Wilhelmsen series, which currently counts eight volumes.[78] The analysis examines how these two novels, each with a different type of female main protagonist, explore aspects of public and private identities created as both social and personal constructs.

In the same way as Sjöwall and Wahlöö's female characters develop through the *Story of a Crime* series in the 1960s and 1970s, each of Anne Holt's recurring female investigators (Wilhelmsen and Vik) undergoes a personal development which mirrors conditions within Norwegian society during a period of social change and globalisation from 1993 to the present day. Anne Holt's novels are all set in contemporary Norway, a country which in international indexes ranks highest alongside the other Nordic countries when it comes to gender equality.[79] Generous political interventions focusing on creating increasingly better conditions for parenthood, employment of women (including mothers), child care and managing the work/life balance have been a priority for the Scandinavian welfare state since the 1970s.[80] Anne Holt's novels have indeed been described as '[expressing] renewed faith in Norwegian society and its inherent "goodness", as well as in its ability to become more inclusive' (Rees 2011: 111). However, as my analysis will argue, this positive take comes up against counter-arguments not only in the themes accentuated in many of Holt's novels (of violence against women, rape, injustice toward immigrant women and so on), but also in the way questions of identity intermingle with the structure of the crime narrative.

Anne Holt's novel *The Final Murder* showcases the investigation of a killer on a deadly search for high-profile, good-looking celebrities. The narrative explores and comments on the media-saturated public sphere and is interspersed with sensationalist press coverage of what becomes known as the 'Celebrity Killer'. The celebrity culture is strikingly contrasted with the narration of the everyday minutiae in the lives of the recurring

[78] The following quotations are from the English translations.
[79] The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index places Iceland first, Finland second and Norway and Sweden on a shared third place of countries with the narrowest gender gap in the world (WEF 2013). In the United Nations' Human Development Report, the Nordic countries similarly rank in high positions on the Gender Inequality Index (Sweden as number 2, Denmark as 3, Norway as 5 and Finland as 6) (Human Development Report 2013: 156).
[80] For a detailed survey of the political interventions in these areas and a comparison between the Scandinavian welfare states' initiatives and those of the rest of the Western world, see Ellingsæter and Leira (2006).

investigators Adam Stubø and Inger Johanne Vik, who both work and live together. In the novel's opening chapter, the couple have just had a daughter, and Stubø gets himself and Vik's daughter from a previous marriage ready to go the hospital to pick up the new-born baby and her mother. The birth coincides with that of Norway's new princess, and in the mind of the 10-year old Kristiane the two events meld together: 'Princess Mette-Marit is so pretty […]. She is on TV. Leonard's mummy said a princess had been born. My sister.' (6). The child's comment sets out the novel's theme of a mediatised public space and its intersection with a domestic, private life. The narration conveys this theme by having alternating chapters set in the domestic sphere — where focus is on family activities (nappy changing, breast-feeding, care for the older daughter and food preparation) — and in a public sphere dominated by social and professional activities. In *The Final Murder,* the private/public divide is blurred when Vik — as mother on maternity leave — gets personally and professionally involved in the murder cases.

Blessed Are Those Who Thirst discusses other aspects of private and public identities through the prism of the Hanne Wilhelmsen character. Her investigation of two cases — the brutal rape of a young woman and the serial murders of female asylum seekers — is interposed with the parallel narration of Wilhelmsen's relationship with Cecilie, her lesbian partner. Over the course of the series, her lesbian identity undergoes a progressive transition from strictly private taboo subject to essential feature of her public and professional persona.

The professional female identities of the respective investigators in both novels intersect with private female identities (as mother, partner, lover, neighbour…). Two female victim figures furthermore highlight the blurring of the public/private divide in *The Final Murder*: the celebrity and the prostitute. These are two figures who are interconnected by the fact that they are both *femmes publiques*, i.e public property. It becomes apparent that once a woman has taken on either public identity, that identity becomes a case of professional performance, which excludes the possibility of having a private self. The celebrity's media prostitution is symbolically also an act of undressing and sharing a stylised intimacy with a public audience; when the first murder victim, Vibeke Heinerback, has just been elected

Norway's youngest party leader, she gives an interview from her bathtub: 'The papers and magazines were all in raptures about her evening bath. Vibeke raised a glass of champagne to the readers from a sea of pink bubbles, with her smooth, beautifully shaped leg hanging over the edge of the bath' (36). Both female figures have to accept what is coming to them, which ultimately within the novel's optic is death. Display of intimate parts of life and body continues even after death for public observation and consumption, literally on the police station's notice board (where 'a poster-sized picture of a bare-breasted, open-legged Fiona Helle screamed at them' (27)) and figuratively in the multiple references in the text to the tabloid press's scrutiny of the lives of the murdered celebrities. What separates the prostitute and the celebrity is a hierarchical order based on society's judgement. Whereas there is an immense media coverage of the murder of TV talk-show star Fiona Helle and Vibeke Heinerback — a beautiful politician and 'the ultimate example of young Scandinavian success' (35) — the death of a drug-addicted prostitute found in a multi-storey car park gets little attention either from the press, or from the police:

> Katrina Olsson was cremated three days later, and no one bothered to erect a stone to mark the remains of the late thirty-something prostitute. The four children she had brought into life before she was thirty would never know that their biological mother carried baby pictures of them in her otherwise empty wallet. (35)

The circumstances of women — whether empowered or powerless — effectively exercise control over the advancement of the plot: the first three murders are committed against women, the murderer is a woman, and Vik, despite the fact that she is on maternity leave, becomes the investigator who by knowledge and intuition 'solves' the murder case. However, the case is dominated by men with Stubø and Siegmund Berli as the active investigators. All of the main suspects are men and the general assumption is that the murderer is a man, as implied by the insistence on the use of the personal pronoun *he* during the investigation. Vik struggles from the beginning to contest the common way of thinking when asked to give a first intuitive profiling of the murderer: '"it would be a woman," she said slowly. "Simply because we always imagine it to be a man"' (Holt 2007: 79).

The subtly subversive tone of the narrative challenges the way the police institution works. When the head of the National Criminal Investigation Service, referred to as 'the boss', belittles Johanne Vik, it is with reference to the fact that female qualities in ways of thinking do not suit the way the police operate:

> No one knows better than we do that hard work and the systematic processing of all new evidence is the only way to go. We are a modern organization, but not so modern that we would throw weeks of intensive, good police work out the window because some woman feels and thinks and believes that maybe she knows. (Holt 2007: 314)

The fact is that Vik does have vital evidence, which she is able to analyse on the basis of previous professional experience. It is clearly not the case that she merely 'feels and thinks' that she knows what the true circumstances of the crime are; the narrative subtly and implicitly undermines the senior colleague's claim.

Boredom

In her postscript to *The Final Murder*, Anne Holt acknowledges Lars Svendsen's philosophical essay *Kjedsomhetens filosofi* (1999) [*A Philosophy of Boredom* (2005)] which she describes as 'a great source of inspiration and help in writing *The Final Murder*' (343). Boredom is indeed one of the prevailing themes in the novel and operates not only as the motive behind Wencke Bencke's serial killings, but is also more generally employed to describe contemporary Norwegian society:

> Where there is a lack of personal meaning, all sorts of diversions have to create a substitute — an ersatz-meaning. Or the cult of celebrities, where one gets completely engrossed in the lives of others because one's own life lacks meaning. Is our fascination with the bizarre, fed daily by the mass media, not a result of our awareness of the boring? (Svendsen 2005: 26–27)

This collapse of 'personal meaning' is expressed by Johanne Vik's daughter Kristiane, whom her mother catches one evening in her room with a knife in her hand:

> Johanne sat down on the bed and carefully loosened her daughter's hand and took the knife. 'You musn't… It's dangerous…' Only then she noticed the

> dolls' heads. The Barbies had been decapitated. Their hair had been cut off and lay like old golden Christmas decorations on the duvet. (259)

To her mother's question of why she has ruined her dolls, Kristiane answers 'Don't know Mummy. I was bored […]. I was so bored' (259). The Barbie doll — with the toy's heavily-loaded symbolism connected to materialism, celebrity and gendered stereotypes — metaphorically becomes a pendant to the four murders that Bencke has committed. Little girls are supposed to identify with the gendered values symbolised by the doll, and Kristiane rebelliously acts out her boredom by 'killing' the flawed identification objects representing a cultural 'ersatz-meaning'. Similar expectations are placed on Bencke who repeatedly talks about her boredom with life as a celebrity crime writer and the existential emptiness she experiences, to which the only remedy is going for the extreme.

Svendsen asserts that '[i]f boredom increases, it means that there is a serious fault in society or culture as a conveyor of meaning' (2005: 22). The analysis of boredom and how it relates to a Western societal malaise is put into the thoughts of the two main female characters (the murderer and the investigator), who both seem to have an analytical understanding of this modern condition. While the male investigators are looking for clues and evidence in the murder cases, the more profound psycho-societal interpretation of the killings is located within the minds of the female characters. Bencke as the writer of popular crime novels also affirms that she is writing her own story: 'I'm writing a crime novel about a crime writer who starts killing people because she is bored' (320). The *mise en abyme* of a fictional 'autofiction' encompasses both *The Final Murder*'s narrator as a projection of Bencke, and a supposed real reader, who finds him or herself mirrored in the novel's fictional readers of Bencke's crime stories. The consumption of the crime novel offers the intradiegetic reader a thrill that is a literary reproduction of Bencke's own thrill deriving from the 'extreme sport' of killing another person and getting away with it. *The Final Murder* thus provides a meta-commentary on crime fiction as a means of entertainment consumed to escape the meaninglessness of modern life. Projection of reality into fiction and vice versa is made explicit when toward the end of the novel in a climactic finale Bencke appears in a TV

talkshow and the interviewer asks her with reference to her crime novel career: 'how many people have *you* killed over the years?' (300).

The missing piece

The polyphonic nature of both novels gives voice to all actants in the cases (investigators, victims, criminals, witnesses and their relatives). The diversity of voice not only creates a dramatic suspense in the novel by making the knowledge of the narrator and the reader larger than that of the investigator's, it also raises important questions about truth and the legal system's capability of exposing it and seeing justice done. These novels' transgression of generic conventions thus goes beyond the mere fact of having a crime with no resolution; it directly challenges the legal framework understood as representational code offering security and the certainty that the criminal will be held responsible. The crime narrative, which Todorov describes as the coupling of 'histoire du crime' and 'histoire de l'enquête' (Todorov 1971: 11), thus finds in Anne Holt's novels a third *histoire*, which we could name 'histoire publique' — the story as it appears (or does not appear) as a story within the legal system and/or the media — and which is constantly in conflict with the narrative of the investigation. Although the reader and the investigators are aware of who the culprit is, there is no legal or public resolution and the killer either goes free (*The Final Murder*), or justice is seen to be done outside of the legal system (*Blessed Are Those Who Thirst*). At the end the reader has been provided with the information necessary to reconstruct the 'histoire du crime', but the public story does not find a resolution. This narrative breakdown is, as we shall see, closely linked to implicit allegations against social inequalities.

The missing clue in Stubø and Berli's investigation is the dead prostitute. When her body is discovered the police draw a rapid conclusion rendered in free indirect discourse: 'she died of an overdose and no [one] would ever ask after her' (35). The novel makes use of generic expectations according to which prostitutes commonly appear as (female) victims (Ertuna-Howison 2014: 109). However, what appears to be an insignificant sideplot — the death of an insignificant character — is the important textual *déclencheur*, which remains

unrevealed to the investigators, but not to the reader. Before killing the prostitute, Bencke has let her use her credit card for a day to create for herself an alibi for the murder of the second celebrity. The investigating team are incapable of proving that Bencke is the murderer precisely because the dead prostitute does not get the same degree of attention from the police as do the murdered celebrities. Plot and societal representation thus become intermingled. The resolution of the traditional crime narrative (through legal retribution) is ultimately hindered by entrenched class division.

In *The Final Murder* the death of the prostitute and the lack of significance placed on this constitute the missing piece; in *Blessed are Those Who Thirst* it is another minority group at the fringe of society which is not given a voice. The first potential witness Wilhelmsen interviews after the rape is an 89-year old man, who is the neighbour of the victim in the apartment block. After a cup of coffee and inedible stale cake in his living room occupied by bird cages, Wilhelmsen classifies the hunch-backed old man in an interior monologue as 'waste of time' (Holt 1994: 37) and draws the conversation to a quick close. However, when the narrative perspective shifts to the man after Wilhelmsen has left the apartment, it becomes apparent that he holds important information and also provides an overview of social change in Norway:

> He had lived in the same apartment all his life, watching as horses and carts were replaced by noisy motorcars, gas lamps disappeared as they were overtaken by the advantages of electric lights, and cobblestones were covered over by dark-gray asphalt. He knew his neighbourhood well, at least as far as he could see from his window on the first floor. He knew which cars belonged here and who owned them. The red car was one he hadn't seen before. Neither had he known the tall, well-built young man who had driven off in the early hours either. It must have been him. (38)

By failing to apply equal significance to all clues — or to all bearers of information — the investigator becomes representative of a society where all inhabitants are not treated with the same respect and acknowledgement. Again, the police's refusal to listen or incapability of listening to a vulnerable population group becomes detrimental to the solving of the case.

As a contrast to this investigative discrimination, subtle textual clues appear embedded in the narrative, challenging the *modus operandi* of an inhuman, faceless police apparatus. Public dissatisfaction with the police's lack of progress in solving the cases is countered with a metonymic description of the Oslo police headquarters: 'The elongated, curved building sat there at Grønlandsleiret 44, grey and unshakable, seemingly unmoved by all the merciless criticism. […]. [T]he awnings were pulled down […] making it appear both blind and deaf' (7–8). The revolt against the non-engagement and impenetrability symbolised by the grey construction comes from the inside: Wilhelmsen, in this case representing a contrast to the police institution's emotionless taciturnity, alters the appearance of the building's eyes to the world. This change is noticed by her colleague Håkon Sand when he comes into her office: 'It struck him as soon as he entered. She had new curtains. They weren't exactly police regulation. Periwinkle blue with meadow flowers' (29). The symbolic subversive action carried out against these 'state-issued rags' identifies the character of Wilhelmsen as a rebel within the police institution. An attempt to extend her insubordination to her closest colleague fails however: '"Sewed some for you as well." […] Police Attorney Håkon Sand accepted the pile of material with enthusiasm, immediately spilling his entire cup of coffee over it' (29).

The overt reaction against conformity and normativity, which takes the form of a personal domestication of the public space, does not, however, extend to Wilhelmsen's own private life in *Blessed Are Those Who Thirst*. The fact that she has for a long time been living in a lesbian relationship is something that she does not share even with her closest colleagues. The sexual orientation of the main protagonist and her fear of its exposure to her co-workers is of major concern to Wilhelmsen, while Cecilie, her partner, frequently challenges this closeted existence to the extent that it becomes a source of conflict in their relationship. Throughout the series, Wilhelmsen develops a more and more relaxed attitude to public knowledge of her gay identity. This, however, has more to do with personal development and increased maturity than with the attitudes of her professional environment, where her colleagues generally exhibit open-mindedness and approval of diversity.

Wilhelmsen's sexuality is, as Rees argues, in many ways portrayed 'as part of the mainstream in contemporary Norway' to the extent that she can be labelled 'straight queer' (2011:106). It becomes apparent that identity is both a private and a public construct. Wilhelmsen exhibits protean identities in different contexts, and her lesbian identity is not the only one which jeopardises the work/private life balance; admitting her profession as police officer to her neighbours in the apartment block where she lives also poses difficulties for her. Constructing different roles to fit the circumstances is a characteristic of the Wilhelmsen figure. Personal integrity becomes a central theme as Wilhelmsen's development is intertwined with her interaction with her surroundings.

Democratic negotiation

What will have been clear from the above is that a mode of representation of women that is sensitive to gender politics is essential to Anne Holt's fictional work. Holt's protagonists are typically complex, multifaceted female characters who juggle private and public identities and who do not fall into a conventional typology of repressed womanhood. While the representation engages with gender issues, it is, in fact, not premised on gender or sexuality *per se*, but rather on individual characteristics and qualities.

A further feature of Holt's fiction is a noticeable focus on family life and relationships. The individual is firmly contextualised within both intimate and more wide-ranging social networks. These networks, moreover, notably in the case of victims, facilitate an intersectionality of identities; there is frequently an overlap between categories such as: immigrant woman, violated woman, lesbian woman and professional woman. A related and important theme is marginalisation, which along with social inequalities is articulated through exposition within the crime fiction template. As well as the alienation of the marginalised, Holt's fiction — in its focus on boredom and celebrity culture — also expresses the alienation of the supposedly contented (and privileged) mainstream.

If Johanne Vik and Hanne Wilhelmsen in relation to all these themes become pivots for psycho-social understanding, it is significant that the female protagonists' individual and

often alternative views (on the investigation, on the police institution, on relationships) do not stand alone. Conclusions are not solely drawn on the basis of the female characters' own observations and interpretations but are continuously negotiated through dialogues with their surrounding environment. Negotiation of meaning is an in-built characteristic of the police procedural where the criminal investigator functions as part of a team, and Holt's choice of genre — in keeping with that of the Scandinavian *femikrimi* generally — emphasises dialogue and democratic processes also when it comes to discussing gender issues.

Maud Tabachnik's *Un été pourri*: rewriting/regendering the hardboiled novel

If Anne Holt's work is in some sense representative of an engaged crime fiction which is non-confrontational and consensus-seeking and in which non-normative gender identities are presented as banal and non-threatening, a radically different approach can be found in France in the work of Maud Tabachnik (1938–), which proposes an uncompromising and destabilising critique of heteronormative discourse on genre, gender, sexuality and identity. Tabachnik's work is, as Gorrara notes, 'always articulated in feminist terms' (2003: 115) and expressed through a 'revisionist imagery' (2003: 123). In Tabachnik's novels, this feminist revision of the genre is proposed both through an inversion of masculine–feminine taxonomy and through a textual investigation of various forms of sexuality, and in particular female homosexuality. Using this double approach, then, Tabachnik challenges a heteronormative consensus.

The following reading of Tabachnik's crime novel, *Un été pourri* — published in the same year (1994) as Anne Holt's *Blessed Are Those Who Thirst* — considers how perceived notions of gender, sexualities and power relationships between men and women are refracted through a rewriting of the hardboiled novel. Significantly, this generic modification of this subgenre takes place within an American setting, the United States being the birthplace of the hardboiled novel. This dislocation places the text within a specific generic tradition and evidently implies a commentary on transcultural transfer in the history of the genre. However, and perhaps more importantly, it also — by way of the conspicuous and unspoken

absence of the French context — offers a reflection on how difficult it is to engage with debates on identity issues within the ideological context of French republicanism. As creator of the reporter Sandra Khan, the 'first serial French lesbian investigator' (Barfoot 2007: 39), Tabachnik employs a manipulated form of the hardboiled novel to raise a critique of gendered and sexual hierarchies otherwise commonly honoured by the generic template. Accordingly, the ways in which location, genre, gender and sexuality play together in the text will be given special attention in the following exegesis of *Un été pourri*.

Male dominance: cutting it off at the root

During a very hot and humid summer in Boston, four murders take place. All the victims are male and found 'égorgés' and 'émasculés' in alleyways or parks in the city. While the reader is made aware from the beginning that the murders are committed as revenge acts by two separate women, the plot follows the police's misguided and erratic investigation. As counterparts to the 'Boston Strangler', who during the early 1960s murdered 13 women in Massachusetts and to whom the novel makes numerous explicit allusions, the female killers of male victims reverse the habitual notion of female victimhood and male perpetration. Crime fiction in its more traditional forms has been defined as being about 'confronting and taming the monstrous' (Plain 2001: 3). In more than one sense, *Un été pourri* goes against the traditional, by radically letting the monstrous-feminine loose and — with the reader's intradiagetically implicit 'consent' — making a point of allowing female forces of monstrosity to operate in uncontrollable ways.[81]

The murders and their investigation are acted out within a rather limited character gallery spread out over the professions of the press, the judiciary and the police. Various connections between the characters, mostly of a non-professional and sexual nature, interlock with each other to produce a close, almost theatrical, grid between perpetrators, victims and

[81] I am here borrowing the term coined by Barbara Creed in her monograph *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993). Creed argues against the use of the term '"female monster" [as it] implies a simple reversal of "male monster"' and continues that 'the phrase "monstrous-feminine" emphasizes the importance of gender in the construction of her monstrosity' (1993: 3). My employment of the term is based on these considerations.

investigators: Sandra Khan, the murderer of the second victim, is the journalist colleague of Thomas Herman; the public prosecutor Augusta Magnusson and her husband Ron are Thomas's best friends; Augusta is having an affair with police detective Sam Goodman, who also becomes Thomas's close friend;[82] Fanny Mitchell, who is responsible for the first murder, works as a secretary at the attorney's office with Augusta; Thomas is pursuing a liaison with Fanny, whom he has met at the attorney's garden party; and in the novel's very open-ended ending, Ron and Augusta are exposed as (potentially) having killed the third and fourth victim.

Sandra Khan and Fanny Mitchell are not inherently predisposed to murder; rather, their actions are provoked by an extreme male brutality against people whom they love. In Fanny's case, her becoming a retributive killer is a result of her childhood experience of seeing her mother being raped by her stepfather, while her mother afterwards is forced to watch the sexual brutalisation of her daughter (Fanny herself) by the stepfather and his drunken friend. Fanny's experience of the legal system's failure to imprison the rapists is further reinforced by the fact that her mother never recovers sanity after the assault, and in a reversal of justice her mother is the one who is 'sentenced' to imprisonment: 'La malheureuse était enfermée dans un asile. À cause de "l'amour" d'un homme' (140). As for Sandra, she turns into an avenging angel after her lover Joan has been found killed, raped and mutilated. Joan's murderer, Frederick Latimer, whom Sandra kills, has recently also raped the ten-year-old Carmen Sanchez (who is hospitalised and not recovering from her post-sexual assault trauma), but is about to escape legal punishment due to lack of evidence. There thus exists a clear distinction between the situational and circumstantial male violence against women, which only finds its motivation in primal sexual urges, and female violence against men, which is motivated by extra-situational considerations, long-time suffering and the incentive to prevent further crimes. The monstrous-feminine is in these cases therefore

[82] Lieutenant Sam Goodman and journalist Sandra Khan are to become the recurring investigative couple in (some of) Tabachnik's subsequent crime novels (the Goodman/Khan series to date (May 2016) comprises eight novels published between 1994 and 2011). However, in *Un éte pourri* these roles are not yet established.

closely associated with feelings of grief and loss, and its mode of persuasion relies predominantly on pathos.

The novel's first chapter is a thematic *mise en abyme* which introduces one of the text's key textual mechanisms for subverting perceived notions of male perpetration and female victimhood: Mort Newman spots a woman (Fanny) in a bar, follows after her in an attempt to rape her, but is himself killed by the woman. The shifting of otherwise firmly established roles is executed very swiftly during Mort's attack after a suspense-filled opening scene: '— La salope! ragea-t-il. Je vais la tuer! Soudain il ne pensa plus. Quelque chose venait de se passer dans sa gorge' (Tabachnik 1994: 13). The murderer thus becomes the murdered, and the penetrator becomes the penetrated, by way of analogy between the male sexual organ and the murderous blade. The fact that this opening scene functions as an embedded narrative within the novel is reinforced by the victim's name, implying that he is just another 'mort', another 'dead man', albeit having set out with the intention of being 'death' personified.

The novel's second chapter introduces an alternative man, Sam Goodman, who investigates the murder of Mort Newman who has been found dead, testicles cut off and placed in his pocket. The killer, referred to by Goodman as the 'découpeur de virilité' (15), is metaphorically paralleled in this initial chapter by Goodman's Jewish mother who exercises a controlling ('castrating') power over her adult son (asked in the boiling heat during the investigation if he wants a cold Coke, Goodman answers 'ma mère me l'interdit' (16)). His mother's attentions result in his becoming less conventionally masculine; he is unable to act unthinkingly on his urges due to this domineering feminine presence and is thus not classifiable as the kind of man referred to by Ron Magnusson as 'ce genre d'hommes qui pensent avec leur bite' (121). Rather, he is incapable of being anything other than 'le gentil garcon à sa maman' (180), a man who is 'good'.

The *femme castrastrice* thus in her various forms imposes herself on the species 'Man'. The text in fact applies a nomenclatural system to the species 'Man' through the use of a post-nominal suffix: this can be seen in the names Mort New*man*, Thomas Her*man*, Sam

Good*man*. There is a typology of men — readable as a response to male heteronormative discourse's categorisation of women — in which the sign is far from arbitrary. Herman, accordingly, who already after his first encounter with Fanny 'était pratiquement décidé à l'épouser' (24), decides to become his name, 'her man'. Goodman, similarly, is addressed by Augusta in the following terms: 'Toi tu es *clean*, honnête, raisonnable…' (182). Fanny's first kill within the time span of the novel, Mort Newman, is presumably in her view just a 'new' man in a line of other men who share the same attributes as her stepfather.

When Fanny exacts retribution for her stepfather's crime against her and her mother, she acts according to an unwritten penal code which demands that female victims of male sexual violence be avenged: 'Pour elle, ce n'était pas un meurtre, mais plutôt une éxécution' (175). Sandra Khan also takes on the role of executioner in response to the rape, murder and mutilation of her lover Joan, but in her case it is a role she actively appropriates from an executioner expressly defined as being male: 'J'ai cru être apaisée par la mort de son bourreau, mais je me trompais. Parce qu'il y a autant de bourreaux que d'hommes, ou presque' (107). An equivalence is thus established between 'bourreaux' and 'hommes' — all men are guilty and must be punished.

Because this association between murder and masculinity predisposes the investigators to think in certain ways, the idea of a female murderer is unimaginable, and, as is the case in Holt's *The Final Murder*, the investigation in *Un été pourri* moves in circles. Goodman assumes immediately that they are looking for a male killer because 'ce n'est pas un crime de femme' (63). Female agency is unthinkable, and for Goodman this stance is linked to an incomplete evolution of gender equality: 'Alors un Rambo femelle poursuivant les violeurs et les satyres? Excusez-moi, mais malgré la libération des femmes nous n'en sommes pas encore là!' (63). Goodman's analysis is somewhat misplaced, however, as it is not a matter of liberation or equality, but of gender inversion. The novel exhibits a universe where men and women have switched places. The gender-inverted tropes are highlighted multiple times as a direct consequence of the serial killings, as Thomas Herman expresses in a confidential conversation with Sam Goodman: 'Je ne sors plus seul le soir […]. D'habitude,

c'est elles [les femmes] qui ont ce genre de problème' (113). Sam Goodman's elderly mother, when told about the castration of the male victims, articulates a similar opinion of the inverted situation with an added element of corrective comeuppance: 'C'est bien fait pour leurs pieds! […] C'est toujours les femmes jusqu'ici qui se faisaient assassiner par des fous' (158). The fear imposed on the male part of the Bostonian population inverts the habitual situation for women: 'Les femmes ont moins peur des hommes à présent […] surtout depuis que ce sont eux qui se font agresser et violer' (140). This inversion is furthermore accompanied by a lexicon associated with battle or war. The castration of the male victims is thus alluded to by Fanny Mitchell when she is commenting on the case to Goodman as 'le même genre de mutilation qu'on trouve en temps de guerre. Vietnam, Afghanistan…' (61). This conflict theme is also played out in terms of how the generic template is manipulated.

No more 'private dick': challenging the female–male dichotomy

About a quarter of the way into the novel, there is an abrupt change of narrator (73). The omniscient third person narrator who until now has conducted the advancement of the plot is replaced by a first person narrator who is introduced in a classic Chandleresque bar scene, resembling (for example) the incipit of *The Long Goodbye* (1953). The Philip Marlowe allusion is, however, unexpectedly disturbed by the grammatical female gender of the past participles when the bar becomes the setting for the first encounter between the narrator, Sandra Khan, and the character who is to become her female lover, Joan Shimutz. This encounter, evolving into a passionate love scene between the two women, a description of their 'sept cent cinquante jours' together (74), and concluding with the announcement to Sandra by the police that Joan has been found raped and murdered, exhibits a rather condensed version of the well-known tripartite structure (beginning—middle—end) of their relationship. The chapter introducing Sandra Khan and Joan Shimutz (73–5) stands out, in the midst of the novel's many otherwise complicated, harmful or violent relationships, as it contains the only trouble-free and joyous sexual liaison in which the two persons involved are mutually satisfied. The implications of framing Khan as both woman and homosexual in

the narrative position of the hardboiled detective is given further layers of complexity later in the novel when it becomes clear that she in a retributive act has killed Joan's murderer and thus also assumes the role as perpetrator. Contesting the prescribed roles within the hardboiled template, Khan comments knowingly to Sam Goodman later regarding the gridlock of the (male-centred) investigation founded on a presumed normativity: 'Vous n'avez jamais pensé que vous pourriez tomber une fois sur quelqu'un d'un peu différent?' (194). As protagonist Khan actively rejects categorisation herself and makes a point of it: 'Si je devais me caractériser je dirais plutôt que je suis une provocatrice. Je déteste les étiquettes' (196).

The introduction of this ambiguous, non-classifiable female ('private') 'I' in the chapter is a prominent example of what Gill Plain has described as the 'death of the detective', which is brought about by the narrative mode of contemporary crime fiction 'that embraces exactly that which it initially sought to exclude' (2001: 247). The Sandra Khan character represents all that which under the conventional paradigm of detection, in Plain's words, would be considered the 'monstrous' and 'deviant' female other (2001: 246). Khan can accordingly be said to be a precursor for twenty-first century paradigmatic constellations of gender representation, which according to Plain can be described in the following terms: '"Woman"' has returned not only as the other, but as the self of the detective, and has exploded this self with her contradictory and multiple desires — with her refusal to adhere to the patriarchal codes of rationality, explicability and order' (2001: 246). It is notable that the position of female subjectivity through the first person narrator in *Un été pourri* is only effectuated in the form of momentary intermezzos scattered spartanly throughout the text (73–75, 106–7, 144–49, 189–96, 228–32, 238–45 and 275–79). The 'explosion' of the detective self in these textual passages — and the associated transgression of boundaries between the masculine and the feminine, between perpetrator and investigator, between the heterosexual and the homosexual — is also conveyed in terms of a (narrative) struggle which from time to time is 'won' by the female protagonist emerging from an object position to become subject.

Khan does not merely operate as a conventional *femme castratrice* within a rape-revenge crime narrative. The way in which she mutilates the male body from her position as lesbian protagonist takes on a further symbolic function which at various levels encompasses gender, sexuality and genre. The fact that her male victim is not only 'émasculé' but also 'égorgé' and thus symbolically deprived of both his manhood and vocal capacity suggests that the act of mutilation — effectively an attack on the power of masculine heteronormative sexuality and discourse that is oral, present and thus privileged — is an anti-phallogocentric one, echoing a more generalised critique of phallogocentrism underpinning the text (Derrida 1972: xvii). The alteration of the generic template is additionally, and significantly, complemented by a change in the way the story is told and by whom. The traditional dominating masculine voice in the hardboiled tradition is after the 'emasculation'/'égorgement' replaced by a feminine logos, powerful enough to interrupt the narration in the position of the first person.

The fact that Khan is the only character in the novel to be given a narrative voice and in this manner takes control does, however, not imply a subsequent objectification of the genre's traditional male subject. The female–male inversion upon which the novel is otherwise conditioned is ultimately annulled by the insertion of the female lover as the object of Khan's desire. The definitive symbolic 'emasculation' of the classic hardboiled detective narrator is thus combined with a dissolution of the imposed binary structure under which the other characters seem to operate. Here lies the novel's use of lesbianism as potential critical tool. This conforms to the idea that Plain puts forward: 'It is the lesbian detective who has pushed the genre to its limits, and who has finally destabilised a formula that otherwise seemed capable of absorbing it all' (2001: 247). To sum up, the novel's subversion and destabilising of patriarchal mythologies happen in two modes: the initial inversion of the traditional pattern of masculine violence and feminised victimhood is subsequently challenged by the breaking down of gender dichotomisation in the female same-sex relationship. Such a break with a feminist revolt solely based on an inversed replication of

male supremacy also forms part of Tabachnik's own personal position, as she explains in an interview:

> L'anti-judaïsme, le racisme et l'oppression des femmes relèvent du même mouvement de peur, de mépris et de haine. Pourquoi piétiner l'homme à terre ? Est-ce que le féminisme […] doit être le pendant du machisme ? Quant à considérer la femme comme l'égale de l'homme, j'aimerais pour elle d'autres points de repère. (Maugendre 1998)

Tabachnik's position, like that of her texts, appears then to advocate subversion and transcendence rather than mere inversion of traditional gender roles. While the novel clearly exploits a male–female inversion as a tool for its feminist critique, it also makes a point of deconstructing the binary structure upon which the inversion is conditioned.

France as *non-lieu*

The employment of Boston as the backdrop for *Un été pourri* deserves some comment related to the discussion above. While there has been considerable academic focus on Anglo-American creations of French detectives and the appropriation of French settings for crime fiction plots by American or British writers, there has been little discussion of the converse.[83] However, French crime novelists do adopt American *loci* for their narratives, as in the case of both Tabachnik and her contemporary Andrea H. Japp (1957–), who set most of their novels in the United States. In the first instance, the fictional displacement of a French crime novel to the American setting inverts, intentionally or not, some of the staples in the history of the French *noir* genre, which has been marked by Edgar Allan Poe's early and emblematic use of Paris as the setting for his Dupin stories and later by the influence of the American hardboiled novel on the French *roman noir* (as discussed in Chapter 1). Moreover, returning the hardboiled crime novel to its original *father*land and blatantly manipulating its generic masculine features is a powerful symbolic manoeuvre. Tabachnik's work thus takes its critique of the conventions of hardboiled crime narrative back to the genre's place of origin,

[83] See for example Verdaguer (2005) who analyses the occurrences of Frenchness in Anglo-American crime novels, tracing this phenomenon back to the mid-nineteenth century and 'the founder of modern detective fiction' Edgar Allan Poe's detective Auguste Dupin.

so that its masculine heteronormative inclinations may be so to speak cut off at the root. This latent meta-textual commentary on literary influences contributes to the novel's general mode of inversion and dislocation.

The actual inversion of cross-cultural transfer across the Atlantic however only takes the form of a brief, momentary parody of cultural stereotypes, as in the example from a garden party where Thomas Herman meets Fanny Mitchell for the first time and invites her out to 'LE restaurant français [à Boston] où il faut être allé une fois pour savoir ce que manger veut dire' (20). Thomas's evocation of the stereotypical gastronomic superiority of France is, however, quickly turned around by Fanny who rejects his invitation by use of another cultural food cliché: 'je ne suis pas vraiment amateur de cuisses de grenouille' (20). Significantly, this a unique incident in the novel, which — apart from the fact that the text is written in French — is conspicuously bare of allusions to France or French culture of any kind. The brief mocking of and then explicit annulation of the French subject are associated with a sense of liberation from cultural constraints. Accordingly, Tabachnik explains in an interview the employment of the American setting in the following terms: 'Il y a aussi une dimension géographique qui me permet d'avoir un souffle que je n'aurais pas ici' (Dabitch 1997: 54). It might, then, be a case of being able to engage with issues (of e.g. sexual identity) within the American context which are not as easily approached in a French setting. The choice of moving the narration away from France also contains an element of display, inasmuch as 'dislocation and disorientation expose the limits of discursive social practices and give individuals the freedom to form new identities' (Goodbody, Dochartaigh and Tate 2009: x).[84] As such, the prominently absent France generates a sense of it being a case of *non-lieu*, in a metaphorical understanding of the legal term. However, as we know from the fictional female characters' own way of addressing notions of justice, there are methods which can be used to circumnavigate the system's failures. Rewriting the generic template of

[84] Goodbody, Dochartaigh and Tate (2009) discuss the notions of dislocation and reorientation as key experiences in twentieth-century German history and how these experiences have been expressed in the cultural production. Referring to postmodern social and cultural theorists, they investigate the link between 'cultural displacement and the (re-)construction of cultural identity' (2009: x).

the hardboiled novel is therefore also linked with a subversive rewriting of the French cultural template.

Blurring of binaries

The transgressive dissolution of male hegemony is in *Un été pourri* executed through an unsettling of the genre's female stereotypes, and from the simple fact, in Tabachnik's own words, that 'ce sont des hommes qui subissent ce que l'on réserve habituellement aux femmes' (Tabachnik 1997: 125). As continuously highlighted by criticism, the hardboiled novel is a particularly suited medium within which to form a feminist critique of masculine dominance because of its accentuated clichés and stereotypes concerning the female gender. This generic characteristic is wholly exploited in *Un été pourri* where a manipulated form of the genre's gender ideology is acted out. The gender binarism, which the hardboiled crime narrative in its conventional form subscribes to and reinforces, is challenged and transcended by the introduction of a protagonist who is not only female, but who also demonstratively subverts the original genre's notion that 'les rôles dévolus aux personnages féminins n'étaient que ceux de garces ou de victimes' (Tabachnik 1997:129).

In the first instance, the novel can be said to operate within the same male–female dichotomy as the one it sets out to critique by merely recasting the genders in an inversion of the genre's stable oppositions. However, a further manipulation of this gender-generic tautology takes place through the insertion of the lesbian subject as first-person narrator, which disables the mere reversal of roles and brings about a blurring not only of the masculine and the feminine, but also of the heterosexual and the homosexual. The violence executed by Sandra Khan and Fanny Mitchell destabilises the classic paradigm of the feminine as monster by situating their female 'monstrosity' in radical opposition to a privileged phallogocentric discourse. Foregrounding the symbolic structure of castration is therefore a way of placing Woman in logos/language.

Conclusion: French and Scandinavian gender constructions in crime fiction

The categories *polar au féminin* and *femikrimi* — coined in their respective national contexts to signal female authors' entrance into a literary market traditionally dominated by male writers — are in part media-constructed entities. These categories draw attention to a distinct new subgenre of women's writing which frequently addresses gender issues through the subjectivity of a female protagonist. However, these categories foreground such writing's supposed feminine characteristics and appeal to a feminine readership, rather than its critical engagement with gender problematics from feminist perspectives. The mediatisation process does, however, display some interesting nuances: in Scandinavia, feminist stances are occasionally mentioned in media coverage, but primarily as part of marketing. In France, feminine qualities are emphasised, but often in a way which stresses conflict and transgression implicitly in response to supposedly universal but in fact patriarchal norms. French media commentary also stresses the implication of these norms in the generic conventions and structures of crime fiction, which are there to be critiqued and undermined by an ostensibly feminine if not in fact feminist reworking of conventions of genre and gender through the inclusion of female protagonists. The more openly displayed attack on male (generic and societal) hegemony in French media commentary on the *polar au féminin* corresponds to the way in which the works of fiction themselves raise discussion of gender issues.

Turning to the novels discussed in this chapter, the confrontational and combative approach of Tabachnik's text noticeably contrasts with the more conversational and only subtly problematising stance of Holt's fiction. The female murderers in Holt's *The Final Murder* (Wencke Bencke) and Tabachnik's *Un été pourri* (Sandra Khan and Fanny Mitchell) provide illustrative examples of this contrast. Whereas Bencke's motives for becoming a serial killer lie in a personal crisis related to boredom and a revolt against a mediatised world which has made 'fame and fortune' the existential human goals, the revenge acts of Khan and Mitchell represent an overtly critical response to male violence and dominance.

Holt's female protagonists generally represent non-confrontational individuals who are well-integrated and able to operate on an equal footing with men both professionally and domestically. If there exists a discussion of gender issues it is predominantly done within the inconspicuous setting of the home, where societal norms and values are renegotiated in an unproblematic manner from the comfort of the sofa or over the dinner table. The 'unproblematic' approach could in fact be said to be the organising principle of Holt's textual universe. Holt's texts thus reflect the general Scandinavian state discourse on gender inequality as something belonging to the past when it comes to sharing both work and domestic responsibilities. Therefore, when there is no apparent and immediate need for transgression of male dominance and traditional gender codes, the Norwegian texts can turn to other considerations when discussing gender issues, as for example the representation of women by the media, intersecting social identities or the difficulty of managing public and private roles. The unproblematic approach also extends to other forms of identities inasmuch as the 'straightening of the queer', to paraphrase Rees (2011: 106), that Holt's homosexual Wilhelmsen represents, explicitly promotes a mainstreaming of non-normative sexual identities.

If Holt's texts foreground a domestication of identity issues, Tabachnik's fiction radically de-domesticates its subject matter. *Un été pourri* draws attention to female stigmatisation and essentialisation by employing dislocation as a means of problematising the conventions of the genre around the question of gender. Removal of the text from its cultural 'home' to America operates in concert with removal of the first-person male protagonist. Removal, absence and replacement thus function as organisational and thematic principles informing the subversion of norms of genre and gender. Constructed around an inversion of the male–female dichotomy, which is then wholly deconstructed, the novel rewrites the definition of the woman as 'other', 'deviant' or 'monstrous'. Female monstrosity is contextualised and thereby also validated within the paradigm of masculine violence.

The fact that Holt and Tabachnik display fundamentally different concerns in their treatment of issues relating to gender and sexuality is reflective of different discursive

constructions of female identity in the two different cultural settings. This collides with generic perceptions of femininity. Here it is noteworthy that Norwegian and French constructions of gender constellations are mediated through the authors' choice of two different subgeneric variants of the crime narrative: the police procedural and the hardboiled crime narrative respectively. Where Holt's texts are mainly concerned with personal integrity, Tabachnik's critique is directed at a fundamental societal issue. However, the comparison is more complex when we consider the authors' works in terms of content and form. While the content of Holt's work indeed addresses personal concerns and that of Tabachnik's collective ones, it is a somewhat different matter when it comes to form: in an effective reversal, the form of Holt's work is evocative of collective concerns (the police procedural with its team of investigators), whereas the form of Tabachnik's work stresses personal ones (the hardboiled crime narrative characterised by its first-person narrator).

CHAPTER 4

Submission or Subversion: The Figure of the Prostitute

> Prostitution hör inte hemma i vort land
>
> [Prostitution does not belong in our country]
>
> —— Ulrika Messing, Swedish minister for Gender Equality[85]

Chapter 3 set out the geo-culturally specific terms upon which the so-called *polar au féminin* and the *femi-krimi* are conditioned by examining the different ways in which the crime fiction genre is employed to counter and transgress gender roles in the two settings of Scandinavia and France through the incorporation of female protagonists. The analysis considered the investigator's position in Holt's and Tabachnik's writings in relation to a professional role (in the police or in the press) and a genre (the police procedural or the hardboiled novel), both previously defined by their masculine dominance. The present chapter investigates constructions of gender and sexuality through a reading of a figure which in the crime fiction genre has usually been conveyed as the ultimate example of female victimhood, namely the prostitute. The genre has employed the figure of the prostitute since its emergence in mid-nineteenth century urban Europe (as discussed in Chapter 1), and representations of prostitutes continue — not least through the figure's association with urbanisation, immigration, consumer society and globalisation — to mirror social values and practices in contemporary crime fiction.

From this follows the idea that a culture's notion of prostitution 'can function as a kind of microscopic lens through which we gain a detailed magnification of a society's organization of class and gender' (Rosen 1982: vii). In addition to being a tool for description

[85] Messing is quoted in Kulick (2003: 199).

and understanding of identity issues related to gender and class, the prostitute has the potential — because of her liminal position — to engage critically with the social consensus, not least when she is presented within a discourse of criminality. As Christine Schönfeld points out in her examination of the prostitute within the context of modern German literature: 'she is the perfect image for writers who seek to question existing hierarchies, moral codes, or social norms' (2000: 24). Accordingly, the literary projection of the prostitute can assume different positions in this questioning, as we shall see in the present chapter. The prostitute can for instance be employed as a powerful trope through which a critique of heteronormative constellations of sexual relationships and interactions can be channelled. At the same time, from a more traditional, conservative perspective, the prostitute can be seen as a threat to monogamous heterosexuality and the institution of marriage, or, alternatively, as a symptom of increasing sexual equality within the traditional relationship.

The prostitute also moves beyond national confinements. Since the nineteenth century, the circulation of money, people and cultural products has evidently attained different levels, and in the contemporary globalised environment, prostitution is no longer bound to a local market, but moves across both physical and virtual borders. Organised human trafficking and the use of online and/or virtual technology to deliver sexual services are examples which have international dimensions and place the prostitute in a global economy. Consequently, thematic emphasis has in the crime fiction genre been placed on the transnational dimension of prostitution, frequently framed within a structure of oppositional pairs masculine/feminine, black/white, Western European/Eastern European, rich Europe/poor Africa.

The ambiguity of the prostitute's position as either a devalued female figure or a figure of protest is linked furthermore to the binary structures of modernity — a discourse, which, in Shannon Bell's words, 'dichotomizes the female into the "good" and "bad" woman in all her manifestations' (1994: 2). In crime fiction, the prostitute figure is frequently represented in this Manichaean way. However, crime fiction also has the potential, in its

more consciously postmodern manifestations, to counter and deconstruct such binary structures.

The productive critical potential of discourses surrounding prostitution is at the centre of the following readings of Katrina Wennstam's *Smuts* ['Dirt'] (2007) and Virginie Despentes's *Baise-moi* (1994), each of which allows moreover an investigation of the prostitute as a literary figure appearing in the respective contexts of Sweden and France. Significantly, these two countries have in the period under discussion in the present study witnessed a concerted political focus on the issue of prostitution, and, as the current chapter is being written, France has just (6 April 2016) introduced a law modelled on the Swedish client-only-criminalisation model of 1999. While Wennstam's text engages directly with the Swedish anti-prostitution law and its consequences, it is obviously too premature to see how French crime fiction will react to the French version of the law (but it is surely highly likely that it will engage with it in due course).

In the readings of Wennstam and Despentes's novels, the investigation of the prostitute collides with themes of globalisation, market economics, immigration, notions of class and gender, traditional family structures and alternative sexualities. However, while both texts employ the prostitute to form a critique of male-centred hegemony, their representations of this figure are radically different, and the readings will seek to highlight and contextualise these divergences. Additionally, it is noteworthy that Wennstam and Despentes in their respective cultural contexts share the status of engaged public figures and that they are both considered to be in the more polemical and radical end of the engaged crime fiction spectrum.

Katarina Wennstam's *Smuts*: The European Whore or how Sweden lost her Swedishness

Swedish author Katarina Wennstam (1973–), who has to date (May 2016) published seven crime novels, employs the genre to approach and discuss topical issues relating to violence against women and attitudes towards the female gender within Swedish society. Considering

Wennstam's ways of exploring these issues, Kerstin Bergman points to the fact that the author has 'even stronger feminist ambitions' than the other authors in the 'second generation of Swedish women crime writers', namely the ones following Liza Marklund's generation (2014b: 84). These ambitions are also prominent when Wennstam appears in debate programmes on TV and in her journalistic texts, such as her often controversial and critical articles in the national newspaper *Svenske dagbladet* (2005–present), in which she continues to question how women are treated within Swedish society.

Before becoming a full-time crime novelist, Wennstam produced two contentious book-length works of reportage: *Flickan och skulden* ['The Girl and the Guilt'] (2002) and *En riktig våldtäktsman* ['A Real Rapist'] (2004), which both include the subtitle *en bok om samhällets syn på våldtäkt* ['a book about society's view on rape'].[86] These reports have the explicitly polemical agenda of shedding light on profound inconsistencies within the criminal justice system, which the author criticises for having a backward, conservative, male-centred view of abused women and their own 'role' in the crimes. In particular *Flickan och skulden* generated media debate in Sweden in 2003 by arguing that 'the status of gender equality in [Sweden] is 30 years behind the times compared with what most people believe' (Rydell 2002, my translation) and by '[exposing] a view of women that society will not openly acknowledge, but one which can be extracted from court records and which often leads to the victim being punished more severely than the perpetrator'.[87] One of the central points in *Flickan och skulden* is that, despite a reform of the Swedish rape legislation in 1984 (according to which the victim's actions could no longer be counted as relevant for the case), the rape victim's behaviour is still taken into account. If she is deemed as having dressed

[86] *Flickan och skulden*, comprising interviews with rape victims, statistics and detailed accounts from court cases, investigates the status of the sexually abused victim as she is viewed by the Swedish legal system and broader society, while *En riktig våldtäktsman* analyses the crime from the perspective of the convicted rapist or sexual assailant.

[87] The last quotation (in my translation) is from the statement of the August book prize jury. *Flickan och skulden* was awarded the August prize for best non-fiction book in 2002: http://www.augustpriset.se/bidrag/flickan-och-skulden-en-bok-om-samhallets-syn-pa-valdtakt [accessed 19 April 2016].

inappropriately, as having flirted or been drunk, as having a dubious reputation, etc., she is still — both in court and by the media — accused of having 'asked for it' herself.[88]

Wennstam's crime fiction trilogy, consisting of *Smuts* ['Dirt'] (2007), *Dödergök* ['Death Omen'] (2008) and *Alfahannen* ['The Alpha Male'] (2010), dealing with prostitution/trafficking, domestic violence and sexual harassment at the work place respectively, is in accordance with the author's journalistic polemics and their critique of the Swedish judiciary:

> My authorship has a clear stance whether I write non-fiction or novels. I am not dissembling about where I stand, and, also, I think that certain of those in power, especially within the judiciary, are aggrieved by the fact that again and again I put the criminal justice system in the spotlight. (Wennstam 2007: 406; my translation)

At the centre of the following reading is the Wennstam's first crime novel, *Smuts*, which employs the recently introduced Swedish law on prostitution and its implications as the backdrop for the plot. This so-called *kvinnofrid* law, prohibiting the purchase of sexual services (and thus criminalising the client rather than the seller) came into effect on 1 January 1999.[89] As described by Gunilla Ekberg, the initiative is a 'groundbreaking law' and 'a cornerstone of Swedish efforts to create a contemporary, democratic society where women and girls can live lives free of all forms of male violence' (Ekberg 2004: 1187).[90] The 'Swedish model' for prostitution, however, comes under scrutiny in *Smuts*, which exposes a conflicting image of Sweden being controlled by sexist and sometimes misogynistic men in powerful institutional positions.

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[88] A comprehensive account in English of Swedish legislation and implementation of public policies in relation to 'the treatment of battered, raped, and sexually harassed women' can be found in Amy Elman's study (1996), in which she compares American and Swedish approaches to state intervention in these matters.

[89] The Danish government took an opposite measure the same year when it decriminalised prostitution with the argument that it was easier to regulate if it was legal.

[90] The Swedish-Canadian lawyer Gunilla Ekberg was employed as a roving advocate for the Swedish approach to prostitution by the country's government (2002–2006).

Underneath the New Man, the Neanderthal

Set in Stockholm, Wennstam's novel *Smuts* follows the successful lawyer Jonas Wahl and his wife Rebecca, a TV producer for the national broadcaster, who live a perfect and peaceful family life in a wealthy suburban neighbourhood, surrounded by designer furniture and tasteful art. In the first instance, Jonas appears as the incarnation of the modern Swedish man who advocates gender equality, who is a model father (to the envy of many of Rebecca's girlfriends, he participates on even terms in nappy changing and household chores), and who as representative of the Swedish legal system defends vulnerable, abused women in court. The narrative is framed by his appearance on national TV in the first chapter where he comments on the new prostitution law and its implications: 'The entire Swedish rule of law rests on the fact that our principles are so transparent' (Wennstam 2007: 11).[91]

Transparency, however, does not apply to Jonas himself. From the beginning, it becomes clear that the lawyer leads a secret existence in which he, driven by an uncontrollable sexual need, visits prostitutes provided by the criminal underground milieu of the capital. His double life and the exposure of it constitute one part of the novel's plot. A court case, in which three Estonian brothel owners involved in trafficking are on trial, makes up the other part. The two plots, however, are intrinsically linked, as Jonas works as a professional TV commentator on the court case, while at the same time fearing exposure as one of the brothel's customers.

Despite the fact that Jonas Wahl is portrayed as the criminal wrongdoer (by visiting prostitutes, but also perhaps by being male and belonging to the ruling class) in *Smuts*, it can be argued that the double-sided nature of his personality serves as a hyperbolic magnification of a known configuration of male characters in Swedish crime fiction. The iconic originator of this recurrent archetype is Henning Mankell's Wallander figure who, as an advocate for vulnerable individuals and groups in society, will, at the same time, when removed from his usual professional context (and from Sweden), engage in activities contradicting his ethical

[91] The translations of this and all subsequent quotations from *Smuts* are my own.

standpoints.[92] This character trait, referred to by Andrew Nestingen as Wallander's 'ambivalence and double vision' (2008: 243), is in Wennstam's novel expanded to become the main thematic focus; under the polished surface of well-meaning moral principles for the common good lies an abyss of unsettling and destructive personal desires. Whereas Wallander's contradictory behaviour in Mankell's novels is considered in terms of momentary lapses in his personality during periods of distress, the oscillation between public advocacy of a moral high ground and private engagement in conflicting shadowy activities is an immanent and constant part of Jonas's existence. Wennstam's novel furthermore establishes parallels between Jonas Wahl, his circle of male colleagues and Swedish masculinity more generally.

The Madonna and the Whore

An essential part of Jonas's view of women is the categorisation of the female gender according to a traditional stereotyped dichotomy between the Madonna and the whore, defined in his own words via the omniscient narrator as 'the ones you fuck, and the ones you marry' (61). His wife Rebecca on the one hand, and the prostitutes he visits clandestinely on the other, represent the two types of women that he cannot reconcile.

In her non-fictional text, *Flickan och skulden*, Wennstam has already contested this binary opposition, which she regards as an integrated part of Western thought. After having considered it in a historical perspective, she argues that '[t]he view of women as either Madonna or whore […] is so commonly accepted that most of us do not react against the two roles that a woman can choose between. That is just the way it is' (2012: 37, my translation). In *Smuts*, the binary view of women is not merely an attribute of the male imagination; female sexuality is also acted out within this paradigm. The Madonna and the whore are juxtaposed in two scenes, which comment on the ways in which women are limited to either

[92] An example of this can be seen in Mankell's fourth crime novel *Mannen som log* (1994) [*The Man who Smiled*, 2005] in which Wallander, while on sick leave during a period of depression, goes on package holidays to Barbados and Thailand: 'He had surrendered to his self-disgust and thrown himself into the arms of prostitutes, each one younger than the last' (Mankell 2005: 13).

of these two socially constructed female roles. In the first passage, Rebecca remembers the imaginary world of her childhood in a flashback: 'So small, so short, she had been there in front of the mirror in her room playing bride. […] The little girl had looked so excited. Dressed in a thin Lucia wedding gown and with an old, lacy tablecloth covering her long hair' (212).[93] In a parallel passage, Emma, Jonas and Rebecca's teenage daughter, discovers and plays around with her emerging sexuality, acting out another (or indeed, *the* other) female role:

> Emma tries to strike a pose in front of the mirror. She leans up against the wardrobe and drags one leg along the door. [She] puts her head back and sticks out her breasts. [She] imagines that she is in some kind of bar where different men are staring at her and feels their gazes, their desire. (281)

The mother and daughter's self-reflection and imagined sexuality on the threshold between childhood and adulthood are both (per)formed in anticipation of a male gaze, which can confirm them as either housewife or sexual object. This dichotomy sets the scene for the discussion of Jonas's 'crime' of choosing the objectified (and commodified) over the sanctified woman.

The nameless prostitutes from whom Jonas buys sex are described merely by their (erotic) body parts fragmented into separated entities: 'He fixes his eyes on what he is there for: breasts, legs, arse' (159); 'the one with the arse, the legs and the breasts' (200). Defined by bodily attributes, the prostitutes are further objectified by Jonas's use of the impersonal pronoun 'it' [den] when referring to a woman he has paid for: 'He never looks them in the eyes. Not in its [this one's] either' (159). The fragmentation and objectification are joined by a further degradation at the level of the narrative. Significantly, the criminal act (the buying of sex) is investigated from the perspectives of the perpetrator/husband/father, the wife, the children, the colleagues, the public prosecutor, the grassroots organisation and the journalist, who all — through the omniscient narrator — are able to express their opinion and emotional reactions. However, the prostitutes are not granted the narrative point of view and are thus

[93] On 13 December, Saint Lucia is celebrated in Sweden with a candlelit procession of children singing 'Santa Lucia' in white gowns. The 'Lucia bride' leads the procession wearing a wreath with candles on her head.

left voiceless (pointless?). The representation of the prostitute in *Smuts* is therefore firmly inscribed within what Shannon Bell, in her Derridian reading of the prostitute's body, has described as 'a process which has produced "the prostitute" as the other of the other: the other within the categorical other, "woman"' (1994: 2).

The marginalisation of the prostitutes within the female sphere intersects with the figure's inferior position in other hierarchical structures. Firstly and most evidently, the prostitutes are defined within a class system; while the perpetrator is a wealthy lawyer, the victims are low-paid girls at the bottom of the food chain. The masculine–feminine power relationship is therefore and not just bound to the physical (sexual) authority of the man over the woman, but also related to an economic superiority. Secondly, the fact that the prostitutes in all cases are also foreigners adds a further process of othering to their position. This intersectionality of various identities (gender, class and ethnicity) however remains unexplored in the novel because of the lack of narrative focus on any other aspects of their personality than their body (parts). This has the effect of reinforcing the socially constructed norms of marginalised femininity associated with prostitution. The exclusion of the perspective of the prostitutes means that they remain stigmatised outsiders instead of being made subjects in a productive counter-narrative. Wennstam's text thus undermines some aspects of its own polemic.

'I am a sadistic pig, a pervert and a rapist': male identity in the first person

Despite the absence of the prostitute's voice, the novel gives the impression of providing a nuanced and in-depth discussion of prostitution and gender roles (for example by including opinions from different professions and from both men and women via the omniscient narrator). Nevertheless, within this discussion the novel does produce a rather one-sided representation of male identity. In addition to Jonas's hypersexuality and the way he acts it out, there is no lack of other incidences of male sexism and perversion in the novel. The novel's men globally seem guided solely by their sexual libido, regardless of their income, social position, ethnicity or profession. Minor male extras equally convey the same set of

attributes, as is the case, for instance, with the bus driver whom we meet briefly when Emma boards her school bus: 'The driver didn't look at the card she held out. His gaze was fixed on her breasts' (20). In fact, the novel leaves no room for relativism when it comes to men's social engagement with the opposite sex. Even the young and seemingly righteous Melker, a prominent member of the grassroots organisation combatting prostitution and described as 'more feminist than all [the] others' (333), does not evade the novel's reductive male categorisation: 'Maria sometimes feels that she is the only one who can see through Melker's façade, and who believes that his engagement and combative spirit are superficial. He plays feminist to get hold of girls.' (333).

As is the case with Jonas (whose 'crime' is exposed at the end of the novel), male libido often leads to a fall. The other chief example of this is Göran Torheim, who — as the ultimate symbol of patriarchal power in his position of judge in the prostitution case — dies of a stroke in his car while an Eastern European prostitute performs fellatio on him (323–324). While his surname ['Thor's home'] evokes associations of protection and phallic strength rooted in its connection with the mythological character (which is further consolidated by correspondence between the old Norse god's hammer and the judge's gavel), the finding of Torheim dead in his car, trousers down and penis limp, contradicts, and perhaps also ridicules, this evocation.

On the face of her novel's general attack on masculinity, Wennstam can be said to be part of a current in Scandinavian crime fiction, occupied in the wake of Stieg Larsson's Millennium trilogy with themes of male (sexual) violence against women and of female retribution. This thematic focus has received attention in international critical literature on the Scandinavian variant of the genre, for example in the collective volume *Rape in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy and Beyond* (Åström, Gregorsdotter and Horeck 2013), which investigates the relationship between sexualised violence in Larsson's series and other Scandinavian and Anglophone crime novels. A much-quoted scene from Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2008 [2005]) , which has become emblematic of this tendency, has the female character Lisbeth Salander engage in a retributive act of violence in which she

rapes her rapist and subsequently tattoos his abdomen with the words 'I am a sadistic pig, a pervert and a rapist' (Larsson 2009: 246).[94] While no such act of violent revenge to right misogynistic wrongs takes place in *Smuts*, an underlying premise for the narrative seems to be that '[a]ll men are potential rapists' and that this statement is metaphorically engraved on the Swedish societal body.[95] Overall, the reviewer in the Danish newspaper *Jyllandsposten* might have a point when he summarises Wennstam's novel by summarizing its agenda as follows: 'men are pigs and the bourgeoisie is rotten' (Levinsen 2008).

There are moreover some points of commonality placing Wennstam in the same category as Larsson. Both novels display a paradigm of misogynistic violence corresponding to that set out by Barbara Fister in her discussion of Larsson: 'violence against women is a choice made by men who have achieved social and economic power and who act out that power by committing violent acts against women' (2013: 35). It is also notable that this power relationship is played out within a state apparatus, as highlighted by Marla Harris in her reading of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, where she argues that '[w]hat begins as a family matter in Larsson's novels […] reveals a systemic misogyny [which] implicate[s] almost every social institution in Sweden, including the national government' (Harris 2013: 77). In her analysis of novels by Henning Mankell, Håkon Nesser and Frederik Ekelund, Tiina Mäntymäki similarly asserts that '[t]he novels narrate stories of traumatised women who remodel their personal experiences of abuse into political statements that read as criticism of the social structures and institutions generative and supportive of male violence' (2013: 442).

The relationship between female inferiority and masculine hegemony in social, economic and institutional terms is in Wennstam's novel furthermore played out within the framework of Swedish national identity and its relationship with the wider international community. In the same way as 'Larsson treats the sexual abuse of women as an (inter)national crisis' (Harris 2013: 76), Wennstam also peruses questions of male identity —

[94] Five out of eleven articles in Åström, Gregorsdotter and Horeck's edited volume (2013) mention this scene.
[95] With reference to the Swedish feminist Maria-Pia Boëthius, Wennstam frames this statement in *Flickan och skulden*, arguing that it is the backbone of societal organisation (Wennstam 2012: 20).

and not least male sexuality — within the context of a breakdown of a national self-understanding.

The menace of Europe and the fear of penetration

Consistently throughout the novel an association between 'prostitution' and the 'foreign' is established via an emphasis on the international mercantile aspect of the sex industry. Besides the obvious influx of illegal immigrant prostitutes and brothel owners, the foreign 'intrusion' is also marked at the level of language. When Emma takes on her 'prostitute' identity (alone in front of her mirror or in online chatrooms), she switches from Swedish to English which she speaks in broken sentences to her (imagined) male interlocutor: 'Looking at me?'; 'you like what you see?' (281). Emma's unwitting mimicking of sentences uttered by the Eastern European prostitutes whom her father visits ('you been here before?' (159)), places the young adolescent's sexual construction of herself within a symbolic transnational perspective. When the young virginal teenager 'comes to her senses', rejects the role of the prostitute and begins exploring her sexuality from an 'appropriate' hand-holding approach, she is redeemed within the text's logic. Prostitution and foreignness are conceived as dangerous forces which intrude into the core of Sweden and threaten to destroy family and childhood experiences.

It is worth noting, moreover, that Jonas contracts his addiction to extra-marital 'dirty sex' in a foreign context. This happens when he is working in a United Nations peacebuilding team of lawyers in Sarajevo after the Yugoslav Wars. In the first instance, Jonas is attempting to impose a Swedish superiority on the moral dilapidation of the other members of the team (from fifteen different countries including Greece, Germany and Britain): 'It was a given that their view on women was not directly sanitized measured in Swedish terms, but at the same time one could hardly expect that all countries had come as far with their work on gender equality' (265). However, Jonas, who at the time of the incident is newly-wed and a new father, is soon to leave his moral high ground to descend into the world of sin occupied by the rest of the men in the European team. This happens on the way to the whorehouse:

> It was as if it was a different Jonas Wahl who left the restaurant with the other men. As if it was not the tired family father, who stumbled into the taxi laughing and sank down on the back seat. As if he had left a man behind him, and that there was another type of man, another type of masculinity, which was taking shape, as he sat there looking at the neon lights and bombed fronts of the buildings. […] He probably felt continental. He felt un-Swedish in the proper and positive meaning of the term. Free and unleashed. So damned wonderful to be with other men, amongst peers who paid homage to their intellect and obeyed their inner voice. (266)

Jonas's inability to stand up for his Swedish heritage has already been foreshadowed by the association of his name with the biblical Jonah, who finds himself incapable of preaching the word of God to the wicked people of Nineveh (Jonah 1. 2–3).[96] The beginning of Jonas's 'un-Swedish' sexual escapades is situated in contrast to the 'Swedishness' of a husband who is normally bound by 'gender equality' (266). The lexical field of 'family/reproductive sexual activity/gender equality/Swedish identity' is thus opposed to 'male-herd behaviour/prostitution/misogyny/European identity'. Masculine sexuality relying on prostitution is firmly placed within a European multicultural context, but additionally within the symbolic setting of the ruins of Sarajevo as the ultimate example of incompatibility of cultures. Just as his biblical namesake, who tries to flee the presence of the Lord, has to answer questions about his cultural belonging ('Tell us, on whose account this evil has come upon us? What is your occupation? And whence do you come? What is your country? And of what people are you?' (Jonah 1. 8)), Jonas Wahl's cultural identity is questioned when he begins to engage in un-Swedish sexual activities. Sexual identity is thus inherently linked to a national and cultural identity.

Looking beyond the text, it is not difficult to stretch the characteristics of the relationship between Sweden and Europe further. Frequently, the Scandinavian welfare state is represented in terms of a focus on its female attributes as 'a benign institution protecting and nurturing the nation' (Nestingen 2008: 11). The mythical notion of 'Moder Svea' [Mother Sweden], the national female personification of Sweden, also contributes to creating

[96] Not only is this association established through the protagonist's first name. His surname, Wahl — which in Swedish is pronounced the same way as the Swedish word for whale ('val') — also points to the story from the Old Testament.

the sense of femininity associated with the Swedish state. In line with this, Risto Saarinen reads a masculine–feminine divide into the Scandinavian welfare state's encounters with international economic agendas: 'The social democratic ideology of *folkehemmet* can be seen as a womanist or small-scale communitarian ideal. The raw capitalism and globalization connected with criminals are in some sense masculine forces, aiming at destroying the weak members of society' (2003: 134). Anthropologist Don Kulick takes things further and gives the discussion a concrete example directly applicable to the reading of *Smuts* when he analyses the wider cultural context for the *kvinnofrid* law of 1999. This law, he argues, 'is about much more than its overt referent "prostitution"' but rather a 'response to Sweden's entry into the EU' (2003: 199).[97] Analysing the political rhetoric employed in the arguments for the introduction of the law, Kulick argues that 'prostitution may provide Swedish politicians, policy makers and journalists with a metaphor for Sweden's relationship to the EU' (2003: 211). He continues: 'As a small, weak, innocent victim threatened with exploitation by a dirty masculinized foreigner like the EU, Sweden suddenly begins to look very much like a prostitute' (2003: 211).[98] This underlying discursive agenda of the law — and one which the novel unquestionably replicates — juxtaposes prostitution with foreignness and perceives them as an inseparable unity. The foreign prostitution networks in *Smuts* impose themselves on a Swedishness which is seemingly there to be violated. The pro-family, pro-gender-equality Jonas thus loses his national (and sexual) innocence in the encounter with the foreign. His daughter Emma, on the other hand, is almost captured by her own performance in the role of the foreign prostitute, but does in the end not fall into the pitfall of European depravity. The textual 'protection' of Emma's virginity can here be accorded metaphorical equivalence to what Kulick designates 'the Swedish fear of penetration', expressed by the introduction of the anti-prostitution law as 'a way [for the

[97] Sweden became a member of the European Union on 1 January 1995.
[98] The association between prostitution and the EU has also previously been discussed by the historian Lars Trägårdh, who in his analysis of Swedish anti-EU campaigning materials leading up to the EU referendum in 1994 comes to the conclusion that '"Europe" was equated with a "bordello"' (2002: 165).

country] of symbolically distancing itself from an EU that offers it rewards but threatens to exploit it' (2003: 211).

This subtext of 'dirty' Europe's invasion of puritanical Sweden shines through in the novel's representation of the foreigner. On multiple occasions, misunderstandings or inability to communicate transculturally are emphasised, as here in a conversation Jonas is having with a lawyer colleague about 'a Mohammed' being accused of having attempted to murder his sister: 'Fundamentally, we do not speak the same language, you know. The guy has grown up here, so he speaks excellent Swedish. However, he is from a different planet. I cannot talk with him' (33). Later in a conversation with a TV journalist, Jonas emphasises Swedish cultural supremacy when it comes to democracy and gender equality in his comment on the prostitution network case: 'Those men have a completely different view on women. They have a different set of values from you and me. I have often wondered if there exists a word for equality in Estonian or Russian' (78). He continues: 'It's probably not coincidental that it's often men from such countries, and women for that matter, who function as pimps. Have you ever heard of Swedish pimps?' (78).

This underlying discursive context of anxiety of Europeanisation and sexual otherness pervades the novel and its discussion of violence against women. The novel's account of a foreign infiltration in the form of Eastern-European prostitutes is part of a narrative about mercantile forces, which do not correspond with a Swedish sense of an egalitarian society. Ultimately, the effects of globalisation (in demographic, financial or sexual terms) threaten to destroy the family unit or — at a societal level — a Swedish sense of community. The ultimate breakdown of the relationship between Jonas and Rebecca thus symbolically happens because of foreign interference as well. When Rebecca's sister visits the Wahl family with her new hot-blooded Slavic boyfriend, Rebecca, too, experiences an awakening of a different type of sexual desire. Being drunk and having witnessed the boyfriend's erotic behaviour towards her sister, Rebecca, sexually charged at the end of the evening, assumes the role of the prostitute and invites Jonas to have anal sex with her. His wife's abandoning the mother/Madonna character for that of the whore, symbolised through the non-

reproductive sexual act, is for Jonas a devastating intrusion into the domestic domain of something filthy and foreign: 'Last night the worlds met each other. Last night she became one of them. He has made her dirty' (232).

Sexual and national identity

Wennstam's critique asserts that under the official Swedish discourse of gender equality (as for example promoted by Gunilla Ekberg 2004), there exists a problematic and contradictory misogynistic attitude which pervades society. The revelation of this misconception is significantly and symbolically directed at the judiciary, represented by Jonas, as the supposed uppermost guarantor for the upkeep of the country's moral codex. However, despite the text's attempts to create some balance in the discussion, Wennstam's novel falls into the trap of reproducing some of the dichotomies that it sets out to critique. While it gives the impression of nuanced and multifocal discussion — especially through the shared, and thus presumedly democratic and unbiased, narrative perspective of the text — it does not remove the ethical fixity of a victim/perpetrator opposition predicated on the female/male dichotomy. Furthermore, the suggestion that Jonas's (individual and psychological) Madonna/whore complex may be representative of the sexual identity of the entire male population of Sweden is a very questionable generalisation. The text's immanent critique of male hegemony ultimately relies on gender stereotypes and further gender essentialising, which paradoxically places its feminist claims firmly within a structure consisting of multiple binary structures (self/other, man/woman, good/bad, Swedish/foreign, etc.).

Like Anne Holt's novels discussed in the previous chapter, Wennstam's *Smuts* concentrates on the (dis)comfort of the domestic environment into which it transfers a political and social matter. This combination is a selling point, in as much as the blurb on the back cover of the novel emphasises the connection between the private and the public: '*Smuts* is a thriller and a strong family drama which lands right in the centre of the debate about sex purchase and trafficking' (my translation). The façade of the perfect family unit becomes identifiable with the self-promoted notion of Sweden as model country for gender

equality and anti-prostitution measures, while there are contradictory currents threatening to destroy the idyll. Treating sexual identity as an integral element of a national identity, Wennstam's novel allies notions of feminine and masculine erotic desires to questions of Sweden's position within a European setting. Approaching prostitution as something utterly 'foreign' to the national self, the novel subsequently exposes the ideal-type Swedish man supportive of gender equality (in the incarnation of Jonas) as 'contaminated' because of his contact with an un-Swedish sexuality imposed from the outside. The feminist critique that the text promotes is thus problematically linked with an idealised feminised image of the Swedish welfare state, unable to protect itself from intrusion in form of commercialisation and Europeanism, conceived of as a deviant forces corrupting the national self-understanding.

Virginie Despentes: Gender and Generic Transgressions in *Baise-moi*

If Wennstam's novel makes the pair of the Madonna/whore the pivotal idea in its description of the female condition and assumes an inferiority of the prostitute in comparison to the position of the wife, Virginie Despentes (1969–) engages with alternative notions of gender and sexuality in a much more radical way by letting the prostitute take the subject position.

Despentes has, among other fictional and non-fictional texts, written three novels — *Baise-moi* (1994), *Les Chiennes savantes* (1996) and *Apocalyse Bébé* (2010) — and a collection of short stories, *Meurtres à travers* (1999) — which to varying degrees employ characteristic features of crime fiction. These texts are in general inhabited and narrated by female protagonists and experiment with alternative expressions of gender and violence, and her crime writing can thus be regarded as 'an outright rejection of the typical gender balance in crime fiction since it plunges the reader into a uniquely female environment' (Jordan 2004: 121). The following reading focuses on the representation of female protagonists in the first of the novels, *Baise-moi,* contemporaneous with Anne Holt's *Blessed Are Those Who Thirst* (1994) discussed in the previous chapter.

Despentes's fictional work has frequently been characterised as 'radical' and can be viewed moreover as a more literary exemplar of the crime fiction genre (see for example Forrest 2013: para. 1). While her novels might not be representative of a more mainstream French *polar au féminin*, there is justification for reading *Baise-moi* within the framework of crime fiction. Firstly, *Baise-moi* does contain the *polar*'s universal elements — murder, victim, criminal, investigator and society — though the distribution of these is disproportionate in comparison with the more typical arrangement of roles. Secondly, when *Baise-moi* was initially published by the newly-established (1989) alternative publishing house Florent Massot it appeared in the imprint 'Poche revolver' dedicated to crime fiction, with a front cover connoting the hardboiled genre. Thirdly, Despentes's novels are in France repeatedly categorised as *polars* (Viviant 1995, Lançon 1996, Médioni 1996) and often by literary journalists who also comment on more typical crime fiction (Argand 1997b, Ferniot 1998). Finally, they frequently appear in newspapers' 'dossiers' about *le polar au féminin* (Argand, Ferniot and Frey 1997) and in libraries' reading lists introducing the *polar au féminin* to their borrowers (SAN de L'Isle d'Abeau 2005). It is therefore not surprising either that Despentes's texts — other than being read within the parameters of 'women's writing' (Jordan 2004, Baillargeon 2007) — appear in the only extant book-length Anglophone academic studies of the *polar au féminin* (Hamilton 1994 and Barfoot 2007).

In the conclusion to her extensive analysis of French reviews of Despentes's second crime novel, *Les Chiennes savantes,* Nicola Barfoot determines that 'woman writers are associated only reluctantly with the *roman noir*, and are not presented as capable of conscious innovation, nor of using the crime novel for political aims' (2007: 168). By contrast, Barfoot's own reading of the novel characterises it as precisely 'a feminist rewriting of the hardboiled novel' (2007: 202). Barfoot's survey of reviews of *Les Chiennes savantes* further confirms the general tendency in the press of blurring the line between the author and the protagonist, as discussed in the previous chapter. The analysis of the material also reveals a lack of interest from the French media in Despentes's fictional articulation of her feminist project. Barfoot interprets this more broadly as the general attitude in the French press

towards young female writers according to which 'we find a surprisingly uniform linguistic and critical stance […], a superficial and ironic treatment of their texts […], and an attitude towards the writers themselves which mixes prurience and condescension' (2007: 169).

The labelling of Despentes's fiction as *polar au féminin* raises questions about categorisation more widely. The extension of the notion of the *polar au féminin* to include such a controversial and radical writer as Despentes demonstrates the power of labels. From a journalistic and marketing standpoint it is a simplification which fits with a clearly recognisable category. From a critical, academic perspective the reading of Despentes is however more problematic. Despentes herself rejects obvious categories: 'j'étais stupéfaite qu'on me compare toujours à des écrivains femmes, plutôt qu'un Vincent Ravalec dont je me sens plus proche. Voilà un exemple de cette construction imposée de l'extérieur qui définit le féminin, et qui souvent le défigure' (Costa 2007).[99] Importantly, however, the texts defy categorisation and themselves critique the various categories in which they are situated.

'Mais on ne peut pas rester sans rien faire'[100]: female agency

Baise-moi follows the experiences of two young women, Manu and Nadine, whom we meet in their respective parts of the *banlieue*, where they are both exposed to male violence — and in Manu's case also rape. A coincidental encounter between the two young women at a point-of-no-return in their both of their lives develops into a close friendship between them as they set off on a murderous and highly-sexed journey through France in the second part of the novel. From being passive violated female victims in the first part they become active perpetrators, sexually abusing their victims and cold-bloodedly killing passers-by. As well as employing characteristic features of the *roman noir*, the novel makes allusions to a multiplicity of generic templates: the road movie, pornography and novels which have acquired cult status through their depiction of 'ultra-violence' (for example Bret Easton

[99] Vincent Ravalec (1962–) is a French writer, scenographer and film director who won the first 'Prix de Flore' in 1994 for his novel *Cantique de la racaille* (1994) placing him in the same boat as Michel Houllebecq who received the same literary award in 1996 for his novel *Le Sens du combat* (1996), and Virginie Despentes, who was nominated for the prize in 1998 for her novel *Les Jolies choses* (1998).
[100] Despentes 1999: 13.

Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991) or Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) and Stanley Kubrick's 1971 film version of the latter).

In many respects, *Baise-moi* corresponds to a definition of the *polar* frequently offered by Didier Daeninckx in publicity material: 'un roman de la ville et des corps en souffrance'.[101] Set in an urban — or more properly suburban — landscape, the novel explores themes of prostitution and rape. Crucially also, it addresses the key concerns of female solidarity and female identity, particularly that of the female character as victim and as perpetrator. This problematic status — that of dual identity — will be the focus of the present analysis.

Baise-moi's first description of Manu in the novel's second chapter compares her character with that of her male friend, who has just informed her that the police have caused the suicide of one of their mutual friends:

> Il se voit viril face aux forces de l'ordre, renversant des voitures aux côtés de camarades très dignes et résolus. Et ces images le bouleversent. Il est sublime et héroïque. Manu n'a pas l'âme d'une héroïne. Elle s'est habituée à avoir la vie terne, le ventre plein de merde et à fermer sa gueule. (14)

The perspective of the chapter switches between Manu and her friend and is clouded by the use of 'discours indirect libre', while they engage in a conversation about 'la violence policière, l'injustice, le racisme et les jeunes qui doivent réagir et s'organiser' (13). The narrative consequently sets up a juxtaposition of active, heroic masculine agency and tacit female passivity in the face of social injustice. This is the predominant idea in the first 13-chapter-long part of *Baise-moi*, where furthermore there prevails a gendered violence, which includes murder, brutal beatings, sexualised and racialized abuse and rape. Manu's strategy for survival in the *banlieue*, where 'les esprits [sont] toujours à la limite de l'incendie' (29), is pretending that she is not aware of what is going on: 'rien vu, rien entendu, qu'on la laisse tranquille' (28). Likewise, Nadine is a character who has learned to endure life by making a barrier between herself and the outside world. She drinks heavily, smokes joints ('elle sent la

[101] See for example the programme for the crime fiction festival *Le Polar en cavale* (Coti-Chiavari: Association Corsicapolar, 2013), p. 26.

distance entre elle et le monde brusquement pacifiée' (11)) and physically blocks off the exterior by covering her ears with the headphones of her Walkman:

> *I'm screaming inside, but there's no one to hear me.* Ce putain de casque a des faux contacts de plus en plus fréquents. Heureusement, elle a une rentrée d'argent prévue pour ce soir, elle pourra en acheter un neuf avant que celui-ci ne fonctionne plus du tout. Elle essaie d'imaginer quelque chose de plus frustrant que d'être en ville sans walkman. Coupé l'air des oreilles, consternant. (33)

As well as constituting an associated prop for the Nadine character, the Walkman has a playlist of songs with lyrics intersecting with the narrative throughout the novel, which also function as a supra-narrative voice echoing Nadine's emotional register. Like the chorus in classical Greek theatre, Nadine's private music comments on and gives an alternative interpretation of the dramatic action. Where her Walkman allows her to escape the world, it simultaneously gives the reader textual access to her interior 'poetry'. The second part of the novel, where the two girls set out on their journey together, symbolically begins with Nadine taking the cassette out of her Walkman and inserting it into the car stereo: '*Lean on me or at least rely*' (87).

The turning point of the novel's first part is the chapter in which Manu and her acquaintance, Karla, are brutally raped. Manu's strategy for survival is in this scene the same as has been the guiding principle for female endurance in general: 'Elle fait comme on lui dit. Elle se tourne quand on le lui dit' (52). Manu, covered in blood, dirt and shame after the rape, explains the violent sexual attack to Karla as something unavoidable and in the nature of being a woman: 'C'est juste des trucs qui arrivent… On est jamais que des filles' (57). The double meaning of 'les filles' as both prostitutes and the female gender more generally is implicitly a critical focus for the novel.

La femme publique

The prostitute is a central figure in Despentes's writing as the archetype of womanhood, or rather of a femininity constructed by patriarchal society in which women exist as

exchangeable commodities to be bought and sold. When Nadine gets ready to go to work on the street, she dresses up and is ready to perform an act within this predetermined paradigm: 'Quand elle va travailler, elle a toujours la même tenue, toujours le même parfum, toujours le même rouge à lèvres. Comme si elle avait réfléchi à quel costume endosser et ne voulait plus en entendre parler' (47).

In her critical autobiographical essay *King Kong théorie* (2006), Despentes's personal account of her first real-life experience as prostitute merges with her first appearance on TV in her role as famous writer after the controversy following her own film adaptation of *Baise-moi* in 2000: 'La première fois que je sors en jupe courte et en talons hauts. La révolution tient à quelques accessoires. La seule sensation comparable, depuis, a été mon premier passage télé, sur Canal Plus, pour *Baise-moi*' (Despentes 2006: 62–63). In both situations, the change instigated by make-up and high heels immediately brings her into being — a transformation from a life in anonymity to 'être incroyablement présente' (63) — and gives her in the first instance a sense of control over her surroundings. However, this control is limited and has a paradoxically addictive character that can cause her precisely to lose control: 'Immédiatement, dès le costume d'hyperféminínité enfilé: changement d'assurance, comme après une ligne de coke. Ensuite, comme la coke: c'est devenu plus compliqué à gérer' (64).

The prevailing societal model for a woman is that she is judged on a scale of beauty, and that her success in life is dependent on her outer appearance and performance as sexual object for the male gaze. When Despentes describes her writing as being for 'toutes les exclues du grand marché à la bonne meuf' (Despentes 2006: 9), she adopts both literally and metaphorically the perspective of the prostitute, who — despite playing the role of the seductive woman to its limits — remains a marginalised identity in society. Despentes's advocacy for the prostitute lies in the fact that she is acting precisely according to the same paradigm as everyone else:

> [Les prostituées] sont les filles de l'entertainment par excellence, qui ont poussé la logique de l'exhibition jusqu'au bout. Bien sûr, elles 'font

> semblant': tout le monde 'fait semblant' au cinéma ou à la télé! Pourquoi faudrait-il qu'il y ait vérité pure dans le sexe plutôt qu'ailleurs? (Interview with Despentes, Costa 2007)

Femininity, according to Despentes, is part of the marketisation process happening in the public sphere, not only as it is expressed in the figure of the prostitute advertising and selling her body, but also as it appears in popular culture and the media and marketing industries: 'La féminité telle que vendue dans les magazines et celle de la pute, la nuance m'échappe toujours' (Despentes 2006: 75). Moreover, the same conditions are present within the private sphere: 'ce n'est pas si différent de ce qui se passe dans certains mariages' (Costa 2007).[102] An easy conclusion in the reading of *Baise-moi* would be that Despentes exploits the role of the prostitute as the ultimate suppressed female by merely inverting the masculine/female power relationship as a subversive act. But it is not as simple as that.

Performing identity

The eye-opening encounter between Manu and Nadine gradually evolves into a process of self-realisation and mutual understanding. Experiences and thoughts which have previously been silenced and suppressed now find a channel through which they can be expressed: 'Nadine sourit. Elle cherche ses mots quand elle parle, hésite à chaque nouvelle phrase. Se rend compte qu'elle n'a pas l'habitude de faire un effort pour s'expliquer. Ça ne l'avait encore jamais gênée' (99). This linguistic liberation is connected to the emancipation of the violated female body, 'le corps prisonnier, obligé d'endurer' (100), which the two girls set free during the road trip in sexual encounters with multiple men over whom they exert an aggressive sexual power, sometimes with fatal consequences (at least for their sexual partners). The casting of Manu and Nadine as avenging females who take control of themselves and their surroundings inverts the roles within the power relationship between male and female actants from the first to the second part of the novel.

[102] The same idea is developed in *King Kong théorie* (Despentes 2006: 59, 75–85).

This shift in the two young women's status from dominated objects to domineering subjects is described by Manu — when they are celebrating their escape in a bar — as an existential awakening: 'ça, c'est de l'entrée dans la vraie vie, on peut fêter ça dignement' (103). The notion of their entrance into a true 'reality' is however destabilised by multiple allusions to a theatrical *mise-en-scène* where the girls find themselves having to invent their new identities. Manu thus describes their first joint killing as 'exactement comme de monter sur scène' (118). With this realisation subsequently comes the need for a new language; as actors on the stage they must employ an adequate template for the dialogue. Manu comes to this conclusion after their shooting of a sales assistant (who has just furnished Nadine with a selection of new Walkmans): 'Putain, on a pas le sens de la formule, on a pas la bonne réplique au bon moment. […] On est en plein dans le crucial, faudrait que les dialogues soient à la hauteur. Moi, tu vois, je crois pas au fond sans la forme' (121). The script in which they are acting is that of the *roman noir,* and they are (de)constructing an identity as cold-blooded murderers according to an already existing formula, which, moreover, they are in fact reformulating through their transgressive actions. The girls as active, powerful subjects are engaged in a creative process in which they constantly challenge received notions of identity at various levels (as characters in a genre, as women) and create new non-stereotypical, non-normative 'personnages'. The focus is on the substance of their actions; the form follows after. This substantialization is clearly linked with external bodily expressions and opposes itself to the view of the female body which Manu describes to Karla immediately after they have been raped in the first part of the novel: 'C'est comme une voiture que tu gares dans une cité, tu laisses pas des trucs de valeur à l'intérieur parce que tu ne peux pas empêcher qu'elle soit forcée. Ma chatte, je peux pas empêcher les connards d'y rentrer et j'y ai rien laissé de précieux…' (57). The body described as an empty, dehumanised shell deprived of its substance is symptomatic of the existential void felt by the girls before they meet each other and begin their sexual and murderous adventure.

What lies between Manu's first symbolic death (the rape) and her eventual actual death, is the two girls' experiments with what substance can be put into the form — the shell

— of the live female body. The form itself can also be altered and modified according to their liking, and different disguises are hence part of the *jeu de rôle* in which they engage: Manu bleaches her hair (113), while Nadine dyes hers black and buys 'un tailleur bleu marine et une serviette en cuir' (142); later, Nadine cuts her hair short (147), Manu dyes hers black (194), and after their final murder of an architect, Nadine dresses up in his 'costard noir, […] chemise blanche et cravate' (232). Excess make-up and nail-polishing likewise form part of their daily rituals during the week they spend together. The multiple body transformations that the two girls perform represent a concerted attack on any sense of fixity of gender and sexual identity. Indeed, they are performances in the sense understood by Judith Butler, for whom 'what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body' (1999: 7). By analogy with the construction of their performed gender identity, their equally performative criminal identity is similarly predicated on relations within society which are sustained by the credibility of the performance. Nor is their performance a case of art for art's sake. These are performances which occur within a commercial context.

The title of the novel, *Baise-moi*, can be interpreted from the perspective of the novel's first part as an erotic advertising tag displayed on the prostitute (Nadine) and the rape victim (Manu). In the second part, however, the sexual invitation is made on the basis of the girls' own sexual desire, and of their desire to be in control of their own bodies, if not indeed as a response to dominant masculinity with the alternative meaning of the imperative: 'fuck off'. With reference to the film adaptation *Baise-moi*, sociologist and queer theorist Marie-Hélène Bourcier characterises the title — as well as the film itself — as an act of *queering* of its pornographic content:

> Elles [Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trinh-Thi, co-directors of the film] font subir à la phrase 'Baise-moi' ce que les lesbiennes, les gays ou les trans ont infligé à des termes initialement injurieux comme 'pédés', 'gouines' ou 'queer'. En se réappropriant la sentence porno, en la faisant tomber, elles déstabilisent l'identité même de la femme qu'elle indique et les privilèges de la masculinité dominante. (Bourcier 2006: 13)

The last sexual victim whom Manu and Nadine approach in a bar before taking him to a hotel room is made uncomfortable by their directness which, perhaps, does not conform with his received notion of male/female roles: 'il est un peu déçu aussi parce que ça aurait été mieux s'il avait dû un peu les baratiner, avoir l'impression de les forcer un peu. […] Jamais les filles ne s'excitent comme ça juste à l'idée de la besogne. Elle en conçoit un peu d'envie, en même temps qu'un certain dégoût' (201–2). The girls' attitude towards the man also finds expression in Manu's transgressive recitation — or indeed rather repurposing — of the insult uttered by the man as he is about to leave the hotel room: 'Sales petites putes dégénérées, c'est joliment trouvé et même adéquat. Mais c'est pas toi de le trouver, connard' (206). There are clear resonances with queer critical concerns in the novel's contestatory reappropriation of oppressive gender discourse.

Whereas *Baise-moi* is repeatedly categorised by the journalistic press as part of a homogenous *polar au féminin,* the novel itself explicitly defies and contests any easy categorisation. Its multi-generic, hybrid structure transcends and deconstructs all the genres into which it is easily situated and thus creates something new. Not only does the deconstruction of the *noir* script allow for an anti-hegemonic subversion of gender roles, but the novel's general generic hodge-podge also gives room for an epistemological playing with preconceived intrinsic and stable meanings of identity. Despentes's characters might be said to be acting within what Shannon Bell refers to as 'the contemporary postmodern' which she defines as 'a unique historical moment in which prostitutes, like other others of modernity, have assumed their own subject position and begun to produce their own political identity' (1994: 2). In the novel's second part, which has its own — and controversial — system of domination, Nadine and Manu, in Butlerian terms, intervene in society's production of the female performative identity. By constantly changing shape and by constructing new identities, they are seemingly oblivious to any societal or generic norms. At the same time, the novel also offers reflections on the theatricality of self-representation, and its final return to a recognizable closing resolution within the logic of the *roman noir* — Manu's death and Nadine's arrest — emphasises the novel's own self-awareness of its status as fiction.

Conclusion:

In Wennstam's *Smuts*, the prostitute is a submissive object for male desires while being marginalised, if not entirely excluded — as a voiceless entity — from the narrative point of view. In Despentes's *Baise-moi*, however, the prostitute takes centre stage and becomes an active character revolting against her status as a doubly disprivileged figure. The two novels' employment of the figure of the prostitute thus signals not only different narrative methodologies, but also different critical concerns. Wennstam's novel may contain an attack on male dominance, but its women are constructed and continue to construct themselves within pre-established and immutable masculine paradigms. Despentes's novel, on the other hand, articulates its critique by exploring female sexuality and demonstratively recasting its female characters outside of the male-defined feminine. The lack of female agency by marginalised identities in *Smuts* can thus seem symptomatic in contrast with the overt and strong assertion of subjectivity in Despentes's textual universe. Performativity plays a large part in both novels' construction of female identity. However, Wennstam's characters perform within a pre-existing dominant script, whereas Despentes's Manu and Nadine in their *jeu de rôle* improvise their performance and dissolve any overarching dichotomies as they go along. Ultimately, the two novels construct the prostitute as a 'site of politicized resistance' in Despentes's case or a 'site of oppression' in Wennstam's case to use Shannon Bell's oppositional notions (1994: 137). It might be possible then to argue that while Wennstam's novel is still coming to terms and engaging with binary structures prevalent to modernity, Despentes' novel — despite being published 13 years earlier — consciously destabilises, if not break down, general binary divisions.

It will also be relevant here to make some more general conclusions, which combine the findings of the last two chapters. Firstly, the protagonists — whether in their position as investigators or victims — in fact play a key role, but they also illustrate stark differences between Scandinavian and French crime fictions. Whereas the Scandinavian protagonist (to some extent in Wennstam's novel, but definitely in Anne Holt's works) is able to function on an equal footing with men within a society in which gender and sexual difference have

become unremarkable (at least on the surface), the French protagonists engage in transgressive behaviour as a revolt against a patriarchal society masquerading as one operating on universalist republican principles. At the same time, the French fictions considered in this and the previous chapter revolt against the generic conventions of crime fiction. If the novels of Wennstam and Holt — whose protagonists, living in suburban Stockholm and Oslo, are far from marginal — appeal to the mainstream, the *polar au féminin* permits inclusion of novels that are far more radical in their critique of male dominance. While Despentes and Tabachnik's texts might not represent the *polar au féminin* in its entirety, it is still noteworthy that these contributions exist, and also that 'radicalism' in the Scandinavian context is defined within parameters that are considerably less elastic. The *polar au féminin* can, particularly through its marginalised and subversive protagonists, adopt a confrontational stance that is overtly critical and political, whether within feminist or proto-queer parameters (Tabachnik and Despentes) or in a critical engagement with republican discourse (Manotti).

The texts move moreover beyond merely critiquing the masculine detective narrative by inserting active female agents into roles previously occupied by men. While they all explore themes of female victimisation (violence against women, sexual abuse, incest, trafficking, rape, murder and mutilation of female bodies), their narrative methods in dealing with these themes vary, as do the ideological frameworks in which they might be situated. Again, significant differences emerge in terms of themes treated. Scandinavian texts frequently stress the relevance of the intimate environment of the home, everyday life, relationships and especially the female protagonists' management of the balance between private and professional roles. If Holt's and Wennstam's novels bring the crime narrative into the private sphere, the female characters in the French texts, by contrast, are depicted in their confrontation with a gendered public space. Rather than being in the comfort of their homes, the French female protagonists are metaphorically but also quite literally 'on the streets' — if not entirely dislocated from a French setting (Tabachnik). Furthermore, in the case of Despentes's novels (and also Manotti's as discussed in Chapter 2), the streets are

significantly those of the peripheral *banlieue* with its symbolic outsider position in relation to a normative centre. The spatial stigma associated with the topographical extremity of the *banlieue* is analogous with the exclusion of the marginalised woman, considered in her relationship to the society that marginalises her. And whereas Scandinavian novels like Holt's might engage, despite a preoccupation with marginalised identities, in somewhat of a 'straightening of the queer' to paraphrase Rees (2011: 106), Despentes's work resolutely queers its subject-matter, contexts and medium, but above all queers the model of the hard-boiled male detective, writing against the *noir* script using marginalised female existences in order to validate non-normative identities. Where Scandinavian novels presume social consensus, in both Tabachnik and Despentes's fictional worlds violence is an acting out of desires and wishes that do not comply with society's rules. This violence is reflected in the hyperbolic nature of the text, which is in a sense emblematic of the close relationship between genre and gender, in that the radical disturbance of the generic form is intertwined with radical disturbance of perceived notions of gendered roles.

Having examined various facets of gender-based marginalisation in the present section, the thesis turns in the next part to consideration of marginalisation through other aspects of identity, in particular in terms of ethnic otherness. Despite the differences and the clearly unique standpoints of the individual French and Scandinavian texts, the main general conclusion drawn in the current section is that the discussion of issues related to gender and sexuality in the Scandinavian examples is addressed from a central and non-controversial position, the perspective symbolically placed within a domestic milieu. The French crime novels, on the other hand, articulate their critique from a peripheral position with a subjectification of the marginalised as an essential feature. This orientation, as we shall see in the next chapters, also plays an important role in the ways in which discussions of ethnic identity and cohabitation of different cultures take form.

PART III

Cultures in Migration

CHAPTER 5

Bled and *Banlieue*: French Crime Fiction from the Fringe

> La France n'est ni un peuple, ni une langue, ni un territoire, ni une religion, c'est un conglomérat de peuples qui veulent vivre ensemble. Il n'y a pas de Français de souche, il n'y a qu'une France de métissage.
>
> —— Éric Besson, Minister of Immigration (2010)[103]

Introduction

The investigation of the representation of female figures in Scandinavian and French crime writings in the previous part of the thesis highlighted a number of differences in both fictional and critical engagement with gender issues in the two cultural settings. However, that part also demonstrated that the creation of categories such as the *femikrimi* and the *polar au féminin* clearly identifies a counter-reaction to the hardboiled subgenre's earlier stereotypical depiction of female characters, and that the categories themselves hold a key position in gender debates finding expression in contemporary popular fiction. Investigating identity issues relating to ethnicity and immigration in the crime novel demands a different approach, mainly because there is no single clearly-defined subcategory encompassing novels that deal with the designation of the foreigner as outsider. The critical position that the *femikrimi* and the *polar au féminin* are produced *by*, *about* and *for* women as an identified and particular part of society finds no equivalent stance when it comes to the identity of the writer, the protagonist or the reader as foreigner from a non-mainstream ethnic grouping. However, there are — in both the Scandinavian and the French contexts — a large number of crime novels which in various ways engage with problematics concerning cohabitation of

[103] Anon. *Le Parisien* (2010).

different ethnic and cultural groupings. More nation-centred representations of the foreigner as the racial Other are now being joined by the voices of those designated as marginalised; these contributions are acquiring such new subcategorical nominations as the postcolonial crime novel, the *polar francophone*, the *polar urbain*, the immigrant crime novel.

Questioning identity issues relating to nationality, immigration, ethnicity, race and cultures, these crime novels might broadly be considered within a category which Behschnitt and Nilsson designate *multicultural literatures*. They define this as 'literatures written, read, and discussed in the context of migration, multiculturalism and multilingualism' (2013: 1). While migration and multilingualism relate to the *de facto* effects and reality of globalization in Scandinavia and France (and most other European countries), multiculturalism is, however, not an easily-definable concept and it certainly takes on different meanings and connotations in the two respective geographical-national contexts. A distinction must be made here between 'multiculturalism' as a term used to describe the reality of ethnically heterogeneous and culturally diverse societies, and the ideological notion of 'multiculturalism' as a means of relating to this reality. To discuss crime novels from the perspective of multiculturalism then necessarily implies an investigation of the socio-historical backgrounds and the particular national political and critical discourses that precondition them. This contextualisation is the starting point for the discussion and the focus of the first section, which will go on to present Scandinavian and French crime fiction contributions to debates on migration and the cohabitation of different cultures. In the second section, which engages with close readings of four novels, the analysis centres on similarities and key differences in the cultural representations of immigration and integration issues in Scandinavia and France.

Immigration in Scandinavia

Immigration into Scandinavia mostly happened in the second part of the twentieth century. Following rapid economic growth from the late 1950s onward, Scandinavian governments introduced intense labour recruitment campaigns beginning in the late 1960s, which resulted

in immigration of workers mainly from Turkey, Pakistan and Yugoslavia. The oil crisis in 1973 led to restrictions in the labour immigration laws in all three Scandinavian countries. The mid-1980s saw the beginning of an increase in the incoming numbers of non-European refugees, which led to new demographical changes in Scandinavia. Accordingly, the immigration debate has over the last three decades 'been transformed from being a labor issue to a cultural one, and immigrants who were originally characterized as workers (a class category) are turned into Muslims (a cultural category)' (Yilmaz 2015: 38).

While there is a high degree of similarity between the Scandinavian countries in numerous respects, the political approach to integration of immigrants has taken on different forms in the three countries. Sweden has taken a liberal position and been deemed the 'flagship of multiculturalism' (Brochmann and Hagelund: 2012), in opposition to Denmark, where a far more restrictive and assimilationist approach to integration has been put in place. Norway positions itself in between the two approaches (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012; Bevelander et al. 2013).

An intensification of increasingly polarised attitudes in public debates in relation to immigration and integration has become a key political issue from the 1990s onwards. On the political scene, anti-immigration, right-wing populist political parties, arguing that the welfare state is being undermined through extensive immigration, have increased in popularity since the 1990s. The respective parties in Denmark (Dansk Folkeparti [the Danish People's Party]), Sweden (Sverigedemokraterna [Sweden Democrats]) and Norway (Fremskrittspartiet [Progress Party]) all currently (2015) have representatives in the national assemblies[104] and have had political influence on the countries' restrictive immigration laws introduced during the 2000s. A further consequence of the rise of such parties is in the cultural domain; controversies surrounding the role of Islam in Scandinavia have provided a context where 'immigrants turned Muslims have increasingly become the Other against

[104] Sverigedemokraterna won 20 parliamentary seats (5.7% of the votes) in the 2010 general election, a number which increased to 49 seats (12.9%) in the 2014 general election; Fremskrittspartiet in Norway formed a coalition with the Conservative Party in 2013 and is currently in government as the country's third largest party; and Dansk Folkeparti became Denmark's second largest party with 21.1% of the votes in the general election in June2015.

which national identities are narrated' (Yilmaz 2015: 38). This is not least true within the realm of the crime fiction genre where the foreign Other — especially in the figure of the Muslim immigrant — frequently appears.

In her chapter on Henning Mankell's novels and their depiction of a multicultural Sweden, Kerstin Bergman concludes that '[s]ince the 1990s, Swedish crime fiction has devoted much attention to the clash between traditional national identities and the processes of Europeanization and globalization' (2014: 52–3). Immigration and conflicts caused by clashes between different ethnic population groups are topics that appear regularly not only in the works of Swedish crime writers but in contemporary Scandinavian crime fiction generally. Some examples of such representations are: in Denmark, Sara Blædel's *Kun ét liv* ['Only One Life'] (2007), Elsebeth Egholm *Personskade* ['Personal Damage'] (2005) and Paul Smith's *Mordet på imamen* ['The Murder of the Imam'] (2008); in Sweden, Kristina Ohlsson's *Tusenkönor* (2010) [*Silenced*, 2013], Henning Mankell's *Mördare uten ansikte* (1991) [*Faceless Killers*, 2000] and the popular Arne Dahl Intercrime (A-team) series of ten novels (1998–2007); in Norway, Jan Mehlum's *For guds skyld* ['For God's Sake'] (2007) and Roy Jacobsen's *Marions slør* ['Marion's Veil'] (2007). In Chapter 6, we will examine in more depth how the representation of the 'foreigner' manifests itself in the Scandinavian context through a close reading of two of these novels: *Marions slør* and *Mordet på imamen*.

Immigration in France

As distinct from the Scandinavian context, the background to the French representation of the foreigner is one of a longstanding colonial encounter and engagement that may well affect all forms of cultural representation of these issues, and certainly affects the crime fiction genre. The question arises as to whether the colonial legacy as background understanding has a particular effect upon the crime fiction genre, and, if so, the further question is raised of what the reasons for that might be.

The history of immigration in France — the encounter first with the colonial Other and later with the post-colonial Other — has been shaped by the country's colonial legacy

and its various aftermaths, making the situation much more complex than in Scandinavia. The most significant aspect of this encounter has been in connection in particular with *l'Orient* — as famously identified in Edward Saïd's account (2005 [1978]) — and the importance of France's historical colonial engagement with North Africa is substantial, particularly in terms of current controversies surrounding the relationship of Islam to the secular French state.

The story of immigration to France, with its origins partly in the colonisation of Algeria beginning in 1830, therefore goes back much further historically than that of immigration to many other countries, and is much more problematic and troublesome, not least in terms of the relationship between immigrants and the state — a state which has very distinctive and specific features. It has much more far-reaching social, political and cultural consequences, above all in relation to France's secularist policy of *laïcité* which affects all state institutions. The assimilation policies of France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries meant that in much of the French empire, French cultural knowledge was inculcated in the inhabitants of France's colonial territories.[105] Assimilation also led to influxes of immigrants from the French colonies and of their cultures into the metropolitan centre, as well as to a degree of ethno-cultural diversification considerable in comparison with other European countries.

The republican universalism ostensibly underpinning assimilation policies has been at the heart of controversies surrounding the relationship of Islam — and by implication, of France's Muslim immigrant population — with French society. The most contentious aspect of this universalism is *laïcité*, which is perceived by many as a stick used to beat the Muslim Other within a selectively universalist framework intolerant of difference. The crisis arising from the 'affaire du voile' in the late 1980s, and culminating in the 2004 legislation banning the wearing of the veil in schools and other state institutions, is in fact a continuation of debates that have been happening within French intellectual culture for some time, going

[105] In certain territories, assimilation proved difficult to implement and was replaced by 'association', in which French nationals lived separately from 'autochtones'.

back at least as far as Frantz Fanon's works on the identity of colonial subjects in the 1950s and 1960s.

Indeed, French intellectuals are all too aware of the problematics of the universalism that purports to define social life in France. Jacques Rancière, in a recent interview in *Le Nouvel Observateur* entitled 'Les idéaux républicains sont devenus des armes de discrimination et de mépris', asserts that 'l'universalisme a été confisqué et manipulé' (Aeschimann 2015). Sociologist Michel Wieviorka, in his response to the question posed in his introduction to *Une société fragmentée* — 'que peut signifier le projet de vivre ensemble avec nos différences?' — concludes that this discussion in France is as good as 'impossible':

> Elle [la question] touche en effet à un postulat qui semble de l'ordre de l'évidence : ce serait faire courir à la collectivité nationale et à la démocratie un immense danger que d'envisager de reconnaître les particularismes culturels dans la vie politique ou dans les institutions, où ils ne peuvent qu'exercer des effets ravageurs; ces particularismes n'ont pas à s'épanouir en dehors de la sphère privée, et toute demande identitaire ou communautaire qui tenterait sa chance dans l'espace public doit être rejetée, refoulée, condamnée. (Wieviorka 1997a: 5)

The opposition between the universalism of French republicanism and particularism — or 'communautarisme' as it is pejoratively referred to — has been a constant in debates on immigration and integration in France (Forsdick 2003, 2007). The French assimilation model developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for integrating the peoples of the colonies — a model contrasting with the differentialist, multicultural Anglophone approach — finds renewed grounds in French integration laws passed in the 2000s.

The official French narrative of national identity as a homogenous collective under the concept of *le citoyen*, finds echoes in much contemporary legislation. Indeed, the creation of the 'Ministère de l'immigration, de l'intégration, de l'identité nationale et du codéveloppement' in 2007 under Nicolas Sarkozy's government explicitly establishes that integration of newcomers should happen within the parameters of universalist republicanism by having as one of the ministry's key assignments to '[participer] à la politique de la

mémoire et à la promotion de la citoyenneté et des principes et valeurs de la République'.[106] In relation to this, Laura Reeck points out:

> Through the lens of French republican integration, two identifications have historically determined social identities in France: French or foreign. Ethnicity and race have never been operative social categories as there is no census reporting on them and consequently no standardised vocabulary for them. New ethnic and racial categories would stand to undermine the very foundation of the French republican model by fashioning minority groups with the majority. (2011: 3)

There is therefore a binary opposition between sameness and otherness, in which sameness is privileged as desirable, and attainable through assimilation and suppression of otherness. This state of affairs is arguably unique to, or at least more pronounced in, France, since it is so bound up with the founding ideals of the Republic. By contrast, whereas Scandinavian countries share the social democratic emphasis of French consensus politics in the postwar period, their approach to cultural difference and foreignness is somewhat different, as the following outline of the problematics of integration in the respective contexts suggests.

Politics of integration in France and Scandinavia

Behschnitt and Nilsson's suggestion that literature dealing with multiculturalism is concerned with 'the politics of difference' or 'the politics of recognition' (Berry 2011: 5) takes on different — and rather controversial — perspectives in the respective Scandinavian and French contexts. Politically, the Scandinavian countries have in general been in favour of a multiculturalist approach to integration and been 'considered models for tolerance and openness towards cultural diversity' (Behschnitt, de Mul and Minnaard 2013: ix). The Norwegian government for example defined the integration project in an early document as successful when '[a] foreign group becomes a well-functioning part of the host society, without losing its cultural or ethnic identity by assimilation' (cited in Ellingsen 2007: 67).

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106 'Décret n°2007-999 du 31 mai 2007 relatif aux attributions du ministre de l'immigration, de l'intégration de l'identité nationale et du codéveloppement'. The document is available online at www.legifrance.fr [accessed 10 November 2014]

The French integration model has, then, contrastingly cultivated an assimilationist approach to the integration of immigrants in which the notion of a universal citizenship has relegated ethnic, cultural and religious identitarian particularities to the private sphere. In France the debate surrounding a multicultural reality has continuously in critical commentary been characterised in terms of a dichotomy between a republican universalism, which promotes a notion of citizenship blind to any ethnic, cultural or religious identity, and a particularist communitarian *dérive* which threatens to undermine the republic. The French model has met with serious objections (from for example Wievorka, Bourcier, and, more recently, Rancière) and been accused of cultivating an 'ethnocentric universalism' resting upon 'assimilation in the fields of language, culture and, if possible, mentality and character itself' (Modood and Werbner 1997: 76). This model relies on a strong notion of the state and its citizens:

> La France, expression forte de l'État-nation, société nationale très intégrée, est attachée à des valeurs républicaines et au principe de la laïcité […]; elle résiste à toute reconnaissance des particularismes culturels dans la vie politique, où elle ne veut connaître que des individus-citoyens. Elle ne peut donc traiter les différences culturelles de la même manière que d'autres pays, dont la tradition politique est plus ouverte. (Wieviorka 1997b: 35)

Meanwhile other countries — including, notably, the Scandinavian countries — have since the 1990s experienced serious objections to a perceived official state ideology of multiculturalism. While multiculturalism — as opposed to the French ideology of the *République une et indivisible* — seemingly allows for 'hyphenated identities', it has been accused of undermining social cohesion and leading to a strengthening of differences rather than the promotion of integrated and peaceful cohabitation. This condition — diagnosed by the sociologists Aleksandra Ålund and Carl-Ulrik Schierup as 'ethnization' (1991: 120) — is one which Norwegian anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen goes so far as to call *kulturterrorisme* ['culture terrorism'] (1993). *Kulturterrorisme* involves the tendency of 'culturising' and reducing complex social processes to simple and static preconceptions about culture. This is particularly the case when a majority culture participates in discourses about 'immigrant cultures' (Eriksen 1993).

That the Scandinavian version of multiculturalism is undergoing a crisis at the same time as republican universalism is being called into question makes the question of managing cultural diversity a suggestive and productive theme for the investigation of this part of the thesis. One of the key questions in the French context is whether crime fiction as a popular genre in France opens up a discussion of multiculturalism in a country where it is seemingly inadmissible. Another related question is whether crime fiction in fact offers a forum for discussion of a topic that in conventional political discourse is, as Wieviorka shows, beyond discussion. In the Scandinavian context the main points of interest concern the extent to and manner in which state discourse based on multiculturalist ideology is reflected in the crime fiction genre, and the ways in which the genre in this context deals with the reality of ethnic hybridity and cultural cohabitation. Ultimately, this part of the thesis investigates how the different politically-defined social realities in Scandinavia and France find expression in a popular genre.

French crime fiction as *littérature-monde*

Whereas a considerable amount of Anglophone scholarly attention has been given to the topics of post-colonial and transcultural detective fiction over the last 15 years (Gosselin 1999, Christian 2001, Reddy 2003, Matzke and Mühlesen 2006, Pearson and Singer 2009), there has been minimal French academic engagement with crime fiction from a postcolonial perspective. An explanation for this void in the critical discussion may be seen in relation to the late development of postcolonial studies in France. Critics, especially from outside France (Forsdick and Murphy 2003 and 2007, Thomas 2003, Coursil and Perret 2003, Hargreaves and Murphy 2008, Moura 2008 and 2010), have extensively commented on this. One of the early advocates of the introduction of postcolonial studies in France, Jean-Marc Moura, reads the relative absence of postcolonial studies in French literary critical discussion as 'in keeping with the fact that French national identity is constructed on the abstract and universal notion of citizenship, which is supposed to transcend issues of race, gender and

class, in order to create a society where all citizens are equal' (2008: 263).[107] The lack, or late arrival, of postcolonial studies in France has however not prevented fiction — not least crime fiction — from engaging with postcolonial issues. Writers from former French colonies have utilised the genre since the mid-1980s as a means of, in Pim Higginson's words, 'systematically turning away from a complex dialectical relationship to a French aesthetic model inherited from the colonial experience' (2011: 1). However, the nature of the literary — and the political — association between France and its former colonies remains problematic in that the *métropole* continues to exert a hegemonic sphere of cultural influence:

> According to the dominant French perspective, the division separating French and Francophone literatures is clear, and it is often taken to mean that the symbolic currency of the Francophone periphery is of lesser value than that of France though this does not of course prevent institutionalized Francophonie from using Francophone literature to justify its existence. (Moura 2010: 31)

The categorisation *polar francophone*, framed by the publishing business to designate French-language crime novels written by non-metropolitan authors, brings with it the weight of what Pierre Halen has labeled 'le système littéraire francophone'. In this system, Halen argues, literary production is defined by a Franco-Parisian centre: 'Chaque zone "francophone" est soumise, dans une mesure certes variable, à la dépendance du champ français, dont les productions propres et les jugements de valeurs (*indexations*) continuent à s'exporter vers les périphéries' (Halen 2001: 59).

When forty-four writers in 2007 signed the literary manifesto 'Pour une littérature-monde en français' published in *Le Monde* on 16 March (Barbery et al. 2007), their action tapped into discussions of both the centripetal power of the institutionalized 'système littéraire francophone' exerted by the metropolitan publishing business, and the lack of intellectual engagement with postcolonial issues. This polemical manifesto deprecates the relegation of 'littérature de la "périphérie"' and challenges the neo-colonial cultural hegemony that the central heartland exerts over 'littérature francophone', denouncing the

[107] Moura is the author of *Littératures francophones et théorie postcoloniale* (1999) which is considered one of the first French studies applying Anglophone postcolonial theory to the French context (see for example Hargreaves and Murphy 2008: 221).

vision according to which 'une France mère des arts, des armes et des lois continuait de dispenser ses lumières, en bienfaitrice universelle, soucieuse d'apporter la civilisation aux peuples vivant dans les ténèbres'. *La francophonie* thus constitutes, according to the signatories of the manifesto, 'le dernier avatar du colonialisme'. The other main argument of the manifesto deals with the status of French literature, which the signatories deem 'une littérature sans autre objet qu'elle-même' with no relationship with the world as it is.

Interestingly, the *roman noir* plays a significant role in the manifesto's argumentation. Not only is the programmatic declaration signed by a number of engaged crime writers (Didier Daeninckx, Patrick Raynal, Jean Vautrin), but it also explicitly mentions the *noir* genre in its listing of previous literary initiatives announcing 'les capacités de résistance du roman à tout ce qui prétend le nier ou l'asservir'. The manifesto stresses the *roman noir*'s capability to contest established French literary ideology and the genre's aptitude for moving beyond the official narrative and telling the world as it is: 'D'autres, soucieux de dire le monde où ils vivaient, comme jadis Raymond Chandler ou Dashiell Hammett avaient dit la ville américaine, se tournaient, à la suite de Jean-Patrick Manchette, vers le roman noir'.

The fact that the publication of the manifesto was followed by abundant and often agitated reactions in the media, on the internet and in academic debates demonstrably highlights, as Christiane Albert states, 'combien les relations qui existent entre les notions de langue, de littérature et de nation restent encore aujourd'hui complexes, conflictuelles et d'actualité' (2008: 162). For Moura, the manifesto's message furthermore accentuates the immanent problematic of French research culture's engagement with French-language literature from outside the *Hexagone*. He argues that what he calls the manifesto's 'desire for a '"post-Francophonie" […] questions the very methodological basis on which specialists of Francophone literature operate' (2010: 29). The manifesto thus offers a method for reading *le polar francophone* within the paradigmatic context of World Literature which also implies reading it as a *polar post-francophone*.

Before we attempt to put such a method of reading into practice, it will be instructive to look at how scholarship to date has received crime fictions dealing with the problematics

of immigration and assimilation, and in particular with the figure of the immigrant. It is significant that such scholarship in France is fairly scant.

The immigrant in French crime fiction

One of the few academic studies in French which investigate the figure of the immigrant in French crime fiction is Nadège Compard's comprehensive monograph *Immigrés et romans noir (1950–2000)* (2010). The representation of the foreigner in French crime fiction falls according to Compard's analysis into four temporally-defined categories. The first of these describes the immigrant as 'un étranger' (1950-60), the second period deals with 'l'immigré' (the 1970s), in the third period (the 1980s), Compard finds a 'victimisation de l'immigré', and in the last period (the 1990s) the common theme is 'la culpabilité de la France'. Her analysis leads to the conclusion that there is an overrepresentation of stereotypes in the *roman noir*'s depiction of immigrant figures reflecting contemporary discourses in French society:

> Oui il y a des figures dominantes de l'immigré dans la représentation de l'immigré notamment parce qu'il y a des figures dominantes de l'immigré dans notre société, dans les débats politiques ou sur le plan médiatique et en ce sens le roman noir est bien un reflet de la réalité. Plus qu'un reflet déformé de la réalité, le roman noir est un reflet des déformations de la réalité. (Compard 2010: 249)

Her inference is that a nominally left-wing universalism governs the representation, and that this ideological vision becomes increasingly more discernible during the period she describes. From the 1980s onwards, antiracism expressed in the novels studied is linked with the 'omniprésence de l'universalisme dans le roman noir':

> L'antiracisme universaliste domine la représentation culturelle des immigrés, la culture d'origine étant souvent réduite à sa simple expression folklorique. L'accent et les difficultés de pratique de la langue française, la prédilection pour la langue d'origine, sont de moins en moins abordés au fur et à mesure des années et les indicateurs d'intégration sont relativement nombreux. (Compard 2010: 243)

Compard's period of interest ends in the year 2000 and does not include any references to the immigrant as observer and participant in the creation of imagery; neither does it include any immigrant or francophone crime writers. While Compard's analysis briefly mentions that there is 'une evolution du différentialisme' and that — with the example of Didier Daeninckx — 'les différences identitaires et culturelles sont vues comme une richesse pour la France' (242), the study rather unambiguously inscribes itself into a universalist discourse; cohabitation of different ethnic groups and cultures are observed from a hexagonal viewpoint from which (linguistic and cultural) assimilation is a sign of integration.

My selection of two crime novels from the French context examines how voices from the periphery go beyond a mere contestation of the genre's received notions of the 'figure de l'immigré' by engaging in a discussion of national identity and challenging the nation's dealing with a multicultural reality. The first novel, Roger Fodjo's *Les Poubelles du palais* (2011), deals with France's colonial legacy by highlighting the necessity of rewriting history to include hidden stories which have been suppressed by the official political rhetoric. The second novel, Rachid Santaki's *Les Anges s'habillent en caillera* (2011), approaches the issues from another peripheral position, namely that of the *banlieue*, but at the same time rejects the peripherality and the binarism on which conceptions of the *banlieue* are premised. Both novels are set in and around Paris and use the symbolic power position of the capital as the *point de départ* for a discussion of these issues.

Roger Fodjo's *Les Poubelles du palais*: hidden places of memory

As Claire Gorrara demonstrates in her 2012 monograph, *French Crime Fiction and the Second World War: Past Crimes, Present Memories*, crime narratives play an important role as 'vectors of memory' (Gorrara 2012). While a considerable amount of academic attention in crime fiction studies has been given to the topic of memory and the Second World War (Gorrara 2003, 2005, 2010 and 2012; Hutton 2013), Cameroonian writer Roger Fodjo's first novel, *Les Poubelles du palais* (2011) investigates links between France's colonial past and the present shape of the Fifth Republic in a story that accentuates hidden places and lost

memories. The novel is published in L'Harmattan's series 'Ecrire l'Afrique' which explicitly places it within the paradigm of a francophone depiction of the African continent. However, the object of the novel's investigation is more accurately a representation of the dialectical relationship between imperial France and its former colonies, a relationship which is not solely defined by a white French hegemony but is complex by nature. The novel questions the grand narrative of the French Republic by accentuating and bringing to light the *non-dits* of the nation's collective memory in relation to the slave trade, imperial power and exploitation of its African colonies. This questioning places the novel in ongoing controversies about the 'condition noire' following the Taubira law, which made 10 May a national commemoration day in France for the abolition of slavery and which resulted in numerous publications on the issue.[108]

While working on a 'chantier archéologique' in the cellars of the Château de Versailles in order to finance his studies in France, the Beninian biology student Cyprien Guézo discovers a hidden inscription on the wall, which hints at the unfortunate fate of a slave and his daughter: 'A la mémoire de Nabo et de sa fille Louise-Marie, née de la reine, condamnés par la cour de France et expédiés' (85). The story from the Ancien Régime about the disappearance of Nabo — a Dahomeyan prince abducted from his home country to serve as a slave at the court of Louis XIV — and his new-born 'métisse' daughter with the Queen is intricately linked with Cyprien's personal family history. Cyprien, himself a descendant of the royal family of Dahomey, becomes determined to uncover the truth about what happened to his family in the past ('c'est de la disparition d'un parent qu'il s'agit' (20)) and to make this knowledge public ('c'est dénicher la vérité et la rendre publique qui compte' (20)).

When Cyprien — with the aid of his friend Jules and of the latter's girlfriend, Yasmina — steals some classified documents from the Archives nationales, he becomes the centre of a different investigation. A massive police operation led by police inspector Laurent Fournier has the purpose of preventing public exposure of the 'secret d'État'. The novel thus

[108] Examples of academic publications which challenge France's identity politics and the country's treatment of ethnic minorities include Rama Yade-Zimet's *Noirs de France* (2007), Dominic Thomas's *Black France* (2007), Pap Ndiaye's *La condition noire* (2008) and the volume edited by Pascal Blanchard *La France Noire* (2012). See also Puig (2013: 86).

consists of two crime narratives, which are juxtaposed by the text's constant change of point of view from Cyprien and his friends to Fournier. The two parallel investigations are simultaneously also two criminal acts in an interdependent exchange where one investigator (the police, representing the state) is trying to expose the criminal (Cyprien) who himself is investigating the criminal acts of the state. By continuously contrasting and exposing the discrepancy between Cyprien's personal experiences and the official French narrative, the novel oscillates between treating the events of the past as either 'secret d'État' (Fournier's expression) or 'crime d'état' (Cyprien's expression). The figure of the detective in the incarnation of Fournier thus loses its immanent classic characteristics through his active aiming at the erasure of traces, the destruction of clues and the silencing of the past. Antithetically, his criminal adversary, Cyprien, works towards resolving the mystery, discovering and, indeed, exposing the truth about a hidden and repressed past.

Cyprien and his friends are trying to reveal the truth about what happened to 'la métisse', but their investigation is equally concerned with the cultural and ethnic 'métissage' of France. This is reflected in the fact that the three investigating protagonists represent a trio of minority identities in the French demographic landscape. Their Beninian, Corsican and Algerian backgrounds furthermore stress the postcolonial complexity and multifaceted relationship that France has with its former colonies, a relationship that cannot be reduced to a simplistic umbrella perception of France's relationship with the singular Other, but insist on plural 'Others' who have had different experiences in their respective encounters with colonial France. In the character of Yasmina, whose father was killed during the Algerian demonstration in Paris on 17 October 1961, the text links the injustices committed towards the 'princesse Noire' and her father (and by extension the African peoples) with other wrongs in the history of France that need rewriting: 'Le nom de la princesse Noire et la réapparition du roi solaire sont deux pavés jetés dans la Seine. Ils vont faire des vagues' (250). Through the subtle reference to the corpses of the Algerian demonstrators thrown in the river after the 1961 massacre, the novel's fictional enquiry into the discriminatory crimes of the Ancien régime converges with investigations into other more recent events subject to similar cover-

up by official discourse.[109] The novel's focus on the Ancien régime, moreover, is highly charged with symbolism in terms of the opposition between the periods preceding and following 1789 and the advent of the enshrinement of *liberté*, *égalité*, and *fraternité*.

The novel displays from the outset a strong consciousness of the importance of history, articulated here by the narrator: 'Les secrets sont les véritables reliefs de l'histoire. On se méprend en pensant qu'ils créent des trous, mais ils sont plutôt des montagnes retournées vers l'intérieur de la terre. Ainsi ensevelis, ils deviennent des abcès qui couvent sous un pansement fragile (Fodjo 2011: 10). This vision of history, evocative of Foucault's conception of archaeology, characterised by Downing as 'the tracing of histories (archaeologies/genealogies) of silenced voices, the writing of the small narratives that have gone unheard in the traditional "grand narrative" of modern history' (2008: 31), is profoundly archival and at the same time bodily, suggesting that evidence metaphorised as pathological matter corroding the body (of society, of the state, of history…) cannot disappear or be conveniently disposed of: items, bodies, of evidence remain 'ensevelis' in archives. And indeed, the search for the truth, specifically the truth about what happened to Louise-Marie, is an archival one: the three young people visit a vast number of physical locations in Paris, all major centres of cultural and historical knowledge (les Archives nationales, la Bibliothèque nationale in Rue de Richelieu and at the site François Mitterrand, the Louvre, the Basilique de Saint-Denis, Sainte-Geneviève, the Panthéon). While libraries and archives contain important sources of information for Cyprien's investigation, the institutions of the Republic appear inherently unfriendly, non-accommodating, seemingly impenetrable and unwilling to provide the necessary documentation. 'Aucun résultat' is the repeated message that Cyprien receives (31), when he searches for the story of Nabo and Louise-Marie at the Sorbonne. His experience at the local university library that 'la bibliothèque est vide' (31) expands into a universal — and anthropomorphic — silence residing in all the Parisian libraries: 'les bibliothèques sont muettes' (35). The novel argues that this silence stems from an imperial discourse, which has existed uninterruptedly from the colonial past into the

[109] It is worth comparing the allusions to this event with the fuller account of the Paris Massacre offered in Didier Daeninckx's controversial novel *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1984).

postcolonial present. In the beginning of the novel, this continuum is merely noted as an obstacle to the investigation ('ce sont les politiques qui ont censuré les publications depuis l'Ancien Régime jusqu'à nous' (35)), whereas the rhetoric towards the end of the novel becomes more confrontational, criminalising the state's censuring of compromising material: 'ce sont les mêmes voleurs de documents et destructeurs de sources qui opèrent siècle après siècle et qui traquent les chercheurs' (258-9).

Representing physical and symbolic benchmarks organising the trajectory of Cyprien's investigation, the Parisian institutions also constitute important 'lieux de mémoire' as pointed out by in a review of the novel by C(h)ris Reyns-Chikuma (2012: 84). But as well as being sites holding the collective elements of memorial heritage, these places are also 'lieux de crime', where documentation is hidden by time (the inscription on the wall in Versailles), misplaced (the important book at the Bibliothèque nationale), or where staff are obstructive. Thus, Fodjo's novel critically engages with the vision represented in Pierre Nora's landmark work, which, though authoritative, has been critiqued for omitting the *lieux de mémoire* relating to France's colonial history and the role these have played in the construction of the nation. *Les Poubelles du palais* becomes a fictional expression of the critique Nora's project has received in the academic sphere for being reductive and hexagonal in its perception (see for example Forsdick 2009: 277-280, Anderson 2005: 50 and Barclay 2011: xix).

The concluding scene of the novel, which gathers all the novel's major characters ('culprits' and 'investigators' on both sides), takes place at the Panthéon, where Cyprien's investigation has led him to find the urn containing Louise-Marie's heart. The urn is buried in a concrete monument under the inscription 'AUX MARTYRS INCONNUS' (272). The physical metropolitan monument depicted in the story contains the keys both to the crime narrative's resolution and to an unlocking of the obstacles that these *lieux de mémoire* present to present-day relations between France and its former colonies. There is, moreover, a generic dimension to this scene, which borrows from classic detective fiction the trope of the gathering in the library as conclusion to the process of detection. The novel in fact offers a

metacommentary on the utopian quality of detective fiction by self-referentially characterising the writing process within a rather idealistic reflection on the place of everything within the universe: 'Tout a un sens. Chaque mot trouve sa place dans la phrase, comme chaque idée trouve la sienne dans la philosophie humaine' (11-12). As in the detective novel, everything finds its proper place; all questions are resolved; order is restored.

The conclusion is preceded by another event involving resolution — this time, resolution, and assertion, of identity — when Cyprien finally finds the grave of his ancestor (who did escape from the royal castle and lived undercover as a nun in Moret). His reaction is a powerful, supernatural cry which penetrates the country, emphatically contrasting with the silence and filling the emptiness which has been the dominating factor in the story about his ancestor:

> "Aïeule!!! Me voiciii!!!" crie-t-il de de toutes les forces de ses poumons. Sa voix tonitruante a produit un écho audible dans toutes les rues de la ville. Les immeubles ont tremblé. On a entendu l'écho de cette voix se propager à travers les montagnes lointaines qui forment la cuvette de la ville de Moret. La voix s'est déchaînée comme un éclair invisible. Pas comme une bouteille qu'on jette à la mer et qui accoste hasardeusement n'importe où, mais plutôt comme un pli qu'on confie au postier et qui suit un destin précis. De Paris à Abomey, les palais royaux ont tremblé. (236)

The reclaimed existence and identity of Nabo and his daughter in Cyprien's contemporary presence is a fundamentally disturbing force, which, to use Homi Bhabha's term, can be identified as a 'disruptive temporality' (Bhabha 2005: 54), a belated intervention by a colonial past that challenges our perception of contemporary practices for an understanding of time and therefore of cultural heritage. In the same way as Cyprien's cry subsequently in the novel is accompanied by an article in *Le Canard* which reveals the true story about 'La princesse Noire', Fodjo regards his *polar* as a means of making the silenced 'audible' and reaching an audience with his message. The crime-fiction-reading audience is not the final destination for the communication, as Fodjo has announced in a lecture:

> Je suis conscient du fait qu'on ne peut pas changer le monde tout d'un coup par l'écriture, cependant j'ai espoir que le message de ce roman [*Les Poubelles du palais*] arrivera à son destinataire, car après l'immense travail

> abattu par les journalistes pour rendre compte de l'existence du livre et de son contenu, le relais est maintenant donné aux acteurs universitaires pour distiller ce message comme ils savent le faire dans des articles qui ont la chance d'atteindre les preneurs de décisions. (Fodjo 2012)

Fodjo is quite open about the explicit if not didactic policy-informing agenda of his work. Moreover, there is a related academic agenda; and indeed, again Fodjo is quite clear about the strongly implied presence of key concepts in postcolonial theory in his work, having explicitly stated of *Les poubelles du palais* that '[l]e roman est […] le refus de l'eurocentrisme, doctrine qui place l'Occident au centre du monde géographique et culturel' (2012).

What the novel involves, then, is a restoration of order that takes the form of a retelling of the failed official narrative of the nation. It consists of a rewriting or reconstruction of history, not just of Africa and of its relationship with France, but of a particular course of events which relates the fate of individuals to that of the collective.

An important point made by the novel is that the history of France and that of its former colonies are symbiotically linked. This can be seen in terms of the authoritative notion in postcolonial theory of the 'empire writing back to the centre', which operates at both a spatial and temporal level in the novel.[110] The act of writing back from the postcolonial periphery to the ex-colonial centre also requires a writing-back in time with the implication of having to rewrite history. The novel, moreover, is a case of the Other communicating to the centre through the centre's own institutional apparatus, engendering a critique both of the racial order and of the police and legal system maintaining a discriminatory power discourse, as exemplified by Fournier in his racist, neo-imperial stigmatisation of Cyprien in his initial reaction to him: 'Ne me dites pas qu'un négrillon en sandales est en train de mettre en déroute notre Police nationale' (12). The racially discriminatory remark uttered by Fournier, a representative of the state, indicates a failure to realise that the hegemonic order can indeed be turned upside down. This is flagged at the beginning of the novel which is also the outset

[110] The expression stems from Salman Rushdie's 1982 article 'The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance' and is iterated in 1989 by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in their theoretical contribution to postcolonial studies *The Empire Writes Back*: *Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002).

of a process of self-realising change whereby Fournier — in his change of attitude at the end of the novel — comes to a personal realisation. In keeping with Cyprien's similar self-realisation, he finds his true identity. The crime narrative's restoration of order is in the novel's conclusion linked with the individual's acquisition of knowledge or enlightenment as Fournier shakes hands with Cyprien and concludes: 'un homme sage est celui qui a perdu ses préjugés' (278).

It can be seen in the light of the above that even narratives set in France lend themselves to analyses borrowing their theoretical terminology from postcolonial criticism. In the case of *Les Poubelles du palais*, this is straightforward as there is a quite clear engagement with key concepts in postcolonial criticism (made fully explicit on numerous occasions by the novel's author): the narrative is expressly about the history of colonialism and its implications in modern-day France, and in modern-day relations between France and its former colonies. However, it is also possible, as the further examples discussed in this part of the thesis illustrate, to investigate traces of colonial ideology in metropolitan cultural representations which do not explicitly engage with colonialism and its history, which are firmly set within the *métropole*, but in which nevertheless the legacy of colonialism is never far from the narrative surface. That is, as Huggan has advocated, to 'reintroduc[e] Europe into the domain of postcolonial literary and cultural studies' (2008: 241).

Rachid Santaki's *Les Anges s'habillent en caillera* : 'de l'autre côté du périf'

Les Anges s'habillent en caillera (2011), the second of three novels in Rachid Santaki's trilogy about life and death in Seine-Saint-Denis, follows the first person narrator, Ilyès, alias Le Marseillais, through three periods of his late teenage years and early adulthood. The novel has a distinctive documentary style, announced by its black and white front cover depicting HLM blocks in a manner reminiscent of Mathieu Kassovitz's *La Haine* (1995). The novel's narrative is rhythmically intersected by multiple newspaper articles situating it in the textual space between documentary and fiction.

The novel's features correspond closely with those of the new 'polar urbain' identified by Jean-Noël Blanc in his *Polarville* (1991). For Blanc, the 'polar urbain' is a variant of the genre that denounces the *roman noir*'s mythological description of urban space. According to Blanc, what occurs in the *polar* in the 1980s is the emergence of a realist representation of the city: 'Si le polar, pour la première fois de son histoire, cherche maintenant dans la ville ce qui fait la ville, il ne peut plus se contenter d'images séduisantes, fulgurantes et fantasmatiques. Il lui faut pénétrer dans la complexité concrète des phénomènes urbains' (Blanc 1991: 274–275). Christina Horvath makes a similar distinction in her monograph, *Le roman urbain contemporain en France*, between 'les récits ayant la ville pour référent d'une part et le roman urbain d'autre part' (2008: 17). The *roman noir* belongs, for Horvath, to the first category. While situating the narration 'de préférence dans un cadre urbain', the *noir* genre does not, like the *roman urbain*, make the city its 'véritable point focal, voire le protagoniste du récit' (16–17).

In the case of Rachid Santaki's novels there is, however, an insistence on a merging of the *roman noir* and the *roman urbain.* On the one hand, the novel insists on the depiction of Seine-Saint-Denis as *ville-personnage*, an urban organism with its own bodily rhythms and emotional registers. On the other hand, the affiliation with the *roman noir* is confirmed in the name of Santaki's publishing house Moisson Rouge, responsible for the publication and distribution of *Les Anges s'habillent en caillera.* Evoking the French title of one of the classic *noir* novels — Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest* (1929) — Moisson Rouge claims its attachment to the American *noir* tradition. Moisson Rouge's imprint, Le Syndikat, which publishes — as its very first publication — *Les Anges s'habillent en caillera*, however, defines its agenda on the back cover of Santaki's novel as being 'consacrée à la littérature urbaine contemporaine'.

Making the outer suburban environment the central point of the narration also allows for the transgression of another literary category, previously used to classify writers from the Parisian *banlieue*:

> Ces écrivains tantôt labélisés comme écrivains 'de banlieue' ou écrivains 'urbains' peuvent être perçus comme les symboles d'une nouvelle mouvance littéraire qui transcende l'appartenance ethnique des auteurs (on parlait auparavant de littérature "beur" par exemple) pour mettre l'accent sur leur appartenance géographique (à la banlieue parisienne)' (Puig 2010: 183).

The first generation of *beur* writers are, as Hargreaves points out in his early study of *banlieue* literature, concerned with the description of an identity crisis (in relation to an identity which moreover is presumably male by default): 'Finding a way of being himself in France is the problematic which conditions most Beur fiction' (Hargreaves 1991: 87). Michel Laronde identifies the same problematic in his study of *beur* literature: 'le discours identitaire *beur* est […] un discours de *différence*' (Laronde 1993: 21). The labelling of works by so-called second generation immigrants as 'littérature beure' has received much commentary and critique from — amongst others — sociologist and novelist Azouz Begag, who accuses the term of creating a 'ghetto littéraire' (Olsson 2011: 15). Because of this 'ghettoïsation littéraire' (Le Breton 2013: 24, Olsson 2011: 1), the term was abandoned for the lexical replacement of 'littérature de banlieue' around 1995 (Reeck 2011: 126). 'Urbain', however, is increasingly the term used to refer to the generation of young writers from the *banlieue* who started publishing after the widespread disturbances in November 2005. Santaki — whose novels are marketed precisely as 'polars urbains' — may unproblematically be counted among these writers.[111]

Classifying *Les Anges s'habillent en caillera* as a 'polar urbain' taps into two discussions. Where the first of these concerns a development within the crime fiction genre which takes place in the outer suburban rather than more literally urban *intra muros* landscape, the second identifies it as crime fiction in which this zone is the key subject and indeed protagonist. Santaki comments on his employment of the *banlieue* as protagonist in an interview in *Le Parisien*: 'D'ordinaire, dans ce genre, on a toujours le point de vue de la police. Moi je donne le point de vue de la cité' (Mongaillard 2011: 11). The vision of the novel is however not that 'la cité' takes the perspective of a criminalised protagonist as

[111] Le Masque, publisher of Santaki's third novel, *Flic ou caillera* (2013), describes the author with a quotation from the magazine *Hip Hop International*: 'Rachid Santaki est l'orfèvre du polar urbain français' (www.lemasque.com/revuedepresse/flicoucaillera).

opposed to that of the law-enforcing order. Rather the focus is the particular space in which both police and *banlieusards* must operate under the same conditions. This confluence is noted by Stéphane, a corrupt police officer, who explains to his colleague Michael: 'Tu sais la frontière entre nous et les voyous, y en a pas, et ça faut l'accepter. Ces saisies, ces crimes, toute cette merde, c'est pas ça la loi. Tu le sais très bien. Alors à un moment, soit on passe au-dessus, soit on reste en dessous' (81). 'La cité' — as an *hors-la-loi* space where protection by a legal system does not exist — is defined by a general feeling of *malaise* which transgresses into every societal grouping and erases differences between them. But it is also a cultural space where there is a shared understanding of urban art forms and activities; Stéphane, for instance, is both a practitioner and spectator of boxing and makes references to hip hop music in his conversations with his colleagues.

The text's insistence on the self-contained, autonomous status of the *banlieue* is reinforced by the anthropomorphism of this urban space as a living organism that breathes and functions in accordance with its inhabitants: the second and third parts of the novel open with the scene-setting narrative observations that 'la banlieue Nord a le sommeil agité et ne va pas tarder à se réveiller' (59), and that 'la banlieue est énervée, ses trafics sont surveillés' (117).

The *banlieue* is presented also as the site of living, organic communities where everyone knows one another, and in particular, where everyone knows one another's stories. This is made clear through the experience of the narrator, Ilyès, who at the beginning of the novel has just emerged from an 18-month prison sentence. Other people's knowledge of his story and his family is an essential part of his identity. His friend Yazid uses this to encourage him to settle scores with an enemy, stressing that 'je connais ta daronne et je t'ai vu grandir' in order to convince him that the community solidarity that their long association reflects is a reason for seeking out and punishing this enemy: 'dans le quartier, on n'est pas unis et ça nous détruit' (17). Long-term acquaintance and observation become an essential feature of life in the quartier. Of Hamed the local barber, the narrator comments: 'Il est installé depuis des années, il nous a vus grandir et entend toutes nos conversations' (15). Indeed, 'm'a vu

grandir' (and variations of the phrase) becomes a refrain for the first part of the novel in the presentation of the important characters surrounding Le Marseillais, as Ilyès is also known. Most significantly of all in this regard, the *banlieue* itself is announced as among Le Marseillais's network of close protective relations by playing the role similar to that of an older family or community member who has followed his development from child to criminal: 'Saint-Denis, ma ville, celle qui m'a vu grandir, qui m'a vu gravir les échelons de la délinquance, celle qui m'a rendu accro au fric' (14). Like the *banlieue*, like the ville, the *quartier* also is not merely a tacit observer, but plays an active role in the formation of the boy's development. Even when Yazid turns out to be a police informer and betrays Le Marseillais to the police, who subject him to a violent interrogation, community ties rooted in shared upbringing in the *quartier* remain hard to disentangle. Objecting to the violence of the interrogating officers, Yazid comments: 'C'est un petit de mon quartier […]. Sa mère a grandi avec la mienne.' (236).

This sense of belonging within a self-contained local community of interconnected individuals with shared experience as their primary identity is reiterated throughout the novel. Indeed, the notion of identity as a fixed, and specifically national, quantity is contested in the text on various levels. For Le Marseillais, it is not simply a matter of having a dual national identity and having been exposed to two different cultures. The complexity and implications of the French assimilation project are symbolically exhibited in the fact that Le Marseillais picks up and develops a love for 'la chanson française'. It is not in France that he learns about Aznavour, Brel, Brassens and Renaud, but from a girl he meets in Morocco during his annual 'vacances au bled'. In Saint-Denis — where the only accepted music among Le Marseillais's peers is rap — this displacement and ensuing reintroduction of French culture back to France from the former colonies plausibly amounts to a commentary on the absurdities and the shortcomings of a cultural *mission civilisatrice* only concerned with canonical French contributions. The underlying critique of the official discourse that dictates that 'being French' means to demonstrate an appreciation for appropriate French culture becomes apparent when Le Marseillais — on the day when he in legal terms acquires

the status of a French citizen — is stopped by the police: 'le jour de mes dix-huit ans, je roulais avec ma première bagnole et les keufs m'ont soumis à un contrôle d'identité' (36). The police's examination of his boot reveals a pile of 'disques de variété', which makes him pass the identity 'assessment'.

Ilyès's complicated and non-fixed identity in fact arguably reflects the social reality in the Parisian *banlieue*. In his sociological study of Saint-Denis, Bernard Dinh describes the inhabitants' sense of identity as based on the local rather than national:

> L'identification à la nation et au territoire semble d'une pertinence marginale au profit d'une identification communautaire, ethnique et/ou confessionnelle, laquelle permet de faire lien avec son groupe d'appartenance, sa terre d'origine, de faire sens à se maintenir ici et à y envisager l'avenir dans des conditions d'existence jugées acceptables. (2007: 128)

The notion of 'home' is accordingly for Le Marseillais not connected with a feeling of national affiliation either with France or Morroco; rather his sense of identity is linked with a strong connection to the local: 'le bled' in his country of origin and the close-knit community in Saint-Denis.

Language is also an important signifier of identity, or rather, in particular, of the lack of fixity of identity. While the final novel in Santaki's trilogy includes a glossary of *banlieue* vocabulary, this novel makes much use of a 'métissage des langues', with frequent recourse to *verlan* and slang, in its depiction of a hybrid community identity that is as linguistic as it is cultural. This can be seen in the novel's title, which, while evoking the titular conventions of *noir*, also contains the word 'caillera', the *verlan* transformation of 'racaille', a term habitually associated in the popular imagination with the *banlieue*; elsewhere in the novel, *verlan* and *argot* are intersected by loan words from the native languages of the inhabitants' families, especially Arabic. The vocabulary of the 'téci', *verlan* for cité, represents in turn an expression of the confluences of immigration and globalisation.

There is perhaps a further symbolic allusion to hybridity in the surreal presence within the novel of a zebra, or at least a zebra that is perceived by Yazid, who issues an urgent entreaty to Le Marseillais: 'Regarde le zébre, il s'approche, téma, téma'. Le

Marseillais's response — 'Ta gueule putain, nique ta mère avec tes zébres' (243) — is uttered in the language of the banlieue, but contains an allusion to another representation of the banlieue, Mathieu Kassovitz's *La Haine* (1995), in which the Jewish *banlieusard,* Vinz, sees a Friesian cow strolling through the graffiti-painted desert of concrete apartment blocks, and utters the words 'téma, la vache'. The intrusion of the cow into the environment is mirrored in the soundtrack to the scene in question, where Edith Piaf's 'Je ne regrette rien' is sampled with NTM's 'Nique ta mère' by a DJ in a top-floor apartment. *La Haine* presents the intrusion of an unfamiliar image and a clash between two superficially incompatible spheres of reference, along with an individual experience — only Vinz (and the viewers of the film) can see the cow. Santaki's novel performs a similar operation, but does so more allusively. It arguably exploits the symbolism of Kassovitz's film — in particular, that of the intrusion of an unfamiliar image perceived from a uniquely personal perspective — to make a more general point precisely about spheres of reference that appear superficially incompatible but ultimately are potentially highly productive when perceived or represented via a particular subjectivity.

By exhibiting the hybrid nature of the language of the *banlieue*, along with Le Marseillais's shuttle between Saint Denis and his home village in Morocco and the ethnic diversity of the people populating 'le 93', *Les Anges s'habillent en caillera* constitutes 'un type de littérature mettant en cause le récit national conçu comme le reflet de l'unité d'une langue, d'une terre et d'un peuple' (Obergöker 2014: 62). But there are further indicators of cultural hybridity, such as food and (as seen earlier) music. After Le Marseillais returns home from prison in the novel's incipit, his mother's meal evokes his *other* home in North Africa, problematising the notion of home: 'Qu'est-ce qu'il est bon le tagine de ma mère. La formule secrète de ses épices sur les légumes nous fait retourner les couleurs du Maroc et les saveurs du bled' (18). The 'bled' is notably distinct from the national homeland of origin in the same way that the quartier is distinct from the French territory. In another area of sensory experience, 'la musique française m'emporte, l'écriture et les mélodies me plaisent' (36). The verb *emporter* has a double meaning, denoting both an immediate emotional carrying-away

and a symbolic cultural displacement. Stimulating sensory inputs, then, whether they are gastronomical or musical, are vehicles to emotional and cultural transportation and serve as linking devices in Le Marseillais's self-understanding and self-realisation.

Whereas Saint-Denis is described, in classic realist style, with a mimetic focus on detailed spatial markers — le 129 (a kebab bar on Rue Gabriel Péri), the Basilique Saint-Denis, Place du 8 mai 1945, Place du Caquet — and on the infrastructure that links them to each other, there are very few references to a France outside of Seine-Saint-Denis. When Le Marseillais spends the first part of his sentence in Nanterre — barely 20 kilometres away from Saint-Denis — he feels alienated and alone, not least because of his strong feelings towards the place where he has grown up. When he is transferred from the prison in Nanterre to that of Villepinte, he affirms that 'je suis de retour à la maison, dans mon quatre-vingt-treize' (111). If the protagonist is grounded in his habitual locale, the diegesis more generally is grounded firmly in reality, and the novel offers an implicit commentary on the relationship between reality and the fictions that sometimes represent it. When Yazid expresses concern over the violence of Ilyès's interrogation, Stéphane retorts: 'Ta gueule. […] On n'est pas dans *Raï,* t'es pas Nordine! La vie c'est pas un film. Tu crois qu'on va le tuer? On n'est pas au ciné. On va le faire parler, tu vas prendre ton argent, et lui va aller en prison. C'est tout' (237).[112] Criminality and law enforcement are banalized rather than glamorized. At the same time, the claims to mimetic exactitude of the 'polar urbain' are bolstered.

It remains however that French crime fiction in the 21th century could indeed be said to follow the patterns of representation in the mainstream literary tradition, undergoing the shift in perspective outlined by Michel Laronde in his conclusion to his study of immigration and identity in the 'roman beur':

> Si l'Histoire dans sa circularité (entre le début et la fin du 20e siècle) fait passer l'Exotisme du discours de l'Occidental dans le discours de l'Oriental en position interne à l'Occident (dont en situation d'Etranger), je m'attends à

[112] Stéphane here makes a reference to Thomas Gilou's comedy-drama *Raï* (1995; France: M6 Films), filmed in the Parisian banlieue Garges-lès-Gonesse, in which the main protagonist's heroin-addicted brother, Nordine, is shot dead by the police.

> ce que dans sa résurgence ce discours soit remodelé par le regard nouveau que l'Oriental porte sur lui. (Laronde 1993: 212)

What Laronde sets up as a hypothesis for the future in his 1993 study is confirmed in Santaki's novel where the 'Western' or 'colonial' gaze is entirely omitted and the narration centres on the self-contained multicultural world of the *banlieue*. The notion of a centre-periphery dichotomy between Paris and its suburban edges is in the text inverted, or perhaps indeed subverted by the absence of a normative focalising perspective or representational filter. The centre of the capital thus lies at the fringe of the *banlieue*'s reality and is represented as a mythical, unapproachable site which can be observed from a distance and only in the form of an outline of a Parisian cliché: the Eiffel tower. Arguably, the novel subverts not only perceived notions of the Parisian HLM suburbs, but also the social premises of 'littérature beure' which frequently accentuate the question of the *banlieue* as 'la périphérie'.

Conclusion: the view from the fringe

We may conclude this section by stating that Santaki and Fodjo's crime novels are contrapuntal writings from the fringes of society (the periphery of Paris and Benin as a former French colony), both contesting received notions of the places and characters that they describe. The notion of place and of its construction through history — individual or collective — is significant in both texts, which exhibit not only an immigrant perspective, but also an emigrant perspective. The position of the abandoned country of origin, or — in the case of Santaki's text — the local community, thus plays a significant role in the development of the protagonists' self-understanding.

Inversion as principle is in both cases a dominant feature; this manifests itself at a narrative level where the traditional agents of crime fiction are abandoned for more fluid categories or overturned roles, and at an ideological level where the notions of majority/minority, centre/periphery and normativity/deviancy are put into play and demonstratively inverted. Santaki and Fodjo's novels insist in their analysis of French

republicanism on a change of perspective which is not unlike the inversion which Laronde employs to characterise the *roman beur*: 'c'est le discours (le Regard) de l'Autre qui commande la vision: dans une inversion de la perspective, l'Autre (l'Oriental) devient le Moi énonciateur face au Moi (l'Occidental) qui devient l'Autre, récepteur du discours' (1993: 213).

Both novels are written after what Charles Forsdick and David Murphy have described as the 'postcolonial turn' taking place in France after 2005 (Forsdick and Murphy 2007). The texts' approach is inherently postcolonial in the sense that they explicitly and contestingly deal with issues of colonialism and its aftermaths. The novels can therefore be seen as fictional contributions to a debate in an academic climate in which 'many French scholars remain largely suspicious of (when not completely hostile towards) postcolonial approaches to literature' (Forsdick and Murphy 2007: 7). Contributing to an inclusive understanding of France as a complex postcolonial construction, the two novels emphasise that issues relating to the centre-periphery dichotomy are far from having been solved. Refraining from mere description, they engage with societal injustice within the Republic transformatively.

In the following chapter, the focus will be on how Scandinavian crime fictions in quite different ways from the French deal with issues emerging from the cohabitation of multiple cultures in Scandinavian novels contemporary to those of Santaki and Fodjo.

CHAPTER 6

Representing Self and Other in Scandinavian Crime Fiction

The widespread enthusiasm for Nordic crime fiction resulting from what is habitually termed the 'Scandinavian invasion' can arguably be said to have been initiated by Danish author Peter Høeg's novel *Frøken Smillas fornemmelse for sne* (1992) [*Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow* (1993)], which is, for Barry Forshaw, responsible for 'the geographical relocation of the crime genre northward' (Forshaw 2012: 5).[113] What is distinctive about Høeg's novel — which falls within the remit of both literary and genre fiction — is that it deals with issues of ethnic and cultural identity in an emphatically postcolonial context. The novel's prevalent theme is the negotiation of identity for Smilla, who tries to navigate between Greenlandic and Danish cultures. While Høeg in *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow* explicitly addresses complex issues relating to the negotiation of cultural identities, it is a novel which is quite distinct if not indeed unique in its approach to multi-ethnicity and mixed cultures and in its postcolonial critique of Danish society. Smilla is a loner, both in the novel where she struggles to find her place literally and emotionally, but also in terms of the novel's place on the literary crime fiction scene in its way of critically engaging with postcolonial questions of cultural and ethnic identity.

The representation of Self and Other in Scandinavian crime fiction riding on the wave initiated by Høeg in the early 1990s has been somewhat understated. This understatement is not so much in a thematic sense, since a multitude of Scandinavian crime fictions deal precisely with issues of globalisation and multiculturalism, but more in terms of the ways in which such works approach these topics. While Høeg approaches Otherness through the postmodern and highly ambivalent Smilla character, the representation of the foreign Other

113 Elements of the present chapter are to be published in an article entitled 'Investigating the Silent Other: Negotiating Difference and its Absence in Contemporary Scandinavian Crime Fiction', in *The Scandinavian Invasion: Perspective on Nordic Noir and Beyond*, ed. by Richard McCulloch and William Proctor (Oxford: Peter Lang) [forthcoming 2016]

finds more stereotypically-constructed expressions in other best-selling Scandinavian crime novels. Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy (2005, 2006, 2007) is an example which — rather than rendering the complex and ambivalent relationship of cultural cohabitation — 'exoticize[s] and heighten[s] Otherness, making it impossible to fit into an everyday framework in any plausible way' (Nestingen and Arvas 2012: 135).

Whereas France has experienced an emergence during the last three decades of crime fiction written in French by writers from the former French colonies and ethnic minority writers within the *Hexagone*, Scandinavian crime fiction still remains a field occupied almost exclusively by white, ethnic Scandinavian writers. Accordingly — while novels have a clear focus on issues relating to immigration and cohabitation of different cultures — the discussion of these issues appears to a certain extent mono-directional and self-contained. In other words, these novels are involved in processes of 'writing the Other' and of representing the Other which are part of the dominant culture's response to minority cultures.

Scandinavian crime fiction in the context of 'literature of migration'

Scandinavia's lack of crime fiction writers of non-Scandinavian ethnic background seems unusual in comparison with the prevalent presence of writers with immigrant-status in France. Considering the massive interest the publishing business and the public have taken in the Scandinavian variants of the crime fiction genre during the last decades, and the fact that these countries have percentages of immigrants in their populations equivalent to that of France,[114] it is important to raise the question of why the absence exists precisely and so prominently in the Scandinavian context. This is a question that surprisingly remains unexplored in crime fiction studies, whereas if the perspective is broadened to Scandinavian literature in general, there exists a sizable amount of academic engagement with the notion of 'indvandrerliteratur' [immigrant literature] and critical commentary — especially in Denmark — on the dearth in Scandinavia of writers with a 'foreign' background.

[114] The foreign-born population in Sweden was 15.1%, in Norway 12.4% and in Denmark 7.9% in comparison with 11.6% in France all in 2011 (OECD. 2015. 'Foreign-born population (indicator)' <https://data.oecd.org/migration/foreign-born-population.htm> [Accessed 23 April 2015].

The articles in the collected volume *Literature, Language and Literature* (Behschnitt and Nilsson 2013) establish that there are nation-specific differences within the Scandinavian countries. While Sweden has a relatively well-established tradition since the 1990s of published works by bilingual authors having migrated to the country as adults or being so-called 'second-generation immigrants' (Nilsson 2013, Leonard 2013, Behschnitt 2013), these writers have been almost non-existent in the Danish context (Graettens 2013, Frank 2013).

In Denmark, Hans Hauge notices that 'considering how much the immigration debate has occupied the political and public agenda the past 15–20 years, it is peculiar how little this is reflected in literature' (Sørensen 2010). Critical commentary is occupied with the rudimentary and often reductive representation of 'foreigners' by ethnic-Danish authors, and the fact that they very infrequently take centre stage, but almost always appear as minor fictional characters (Sørensen 2010; Bergløv 2013; Hauge 2013). The lack of writers with other-ethnic background, who would be able to counter this simplified literary image of the 'foreigner', is read as a sign of the Danish cultural establishment's self-reliant 'national' attitude:

> One could question whether the tradition for 'foreign' voices in Danish literature and film has been slight, not so much because there have been few writers and directors with foreign backgrounds and few literary works and films concerned with immigration and cultural encounters, but rather because these artists and their works have lived a shadow existence in Denmark — a country which historically has placed considerable weight on the national coherence, the idyllic self-image and the homogenous and homogenising narrative. (Frank and Ümit Necef 2013: 10, my translation)

In line with this observation about the strong national narrative, Hauge compares the position of 'immigrant literature' to the lack of interest in literature from the former Danish colonies: '[w]e [have] also got an immigrant literature, but it plays no main role. Its status is often as the Danish "colonial literature" — Icelandic, Faroese and Greenlandic. The subaltern can talk, but is seldom heard' (2013: 12, my translation).

While the Danish term 'indvandrerlitteratur' (and the equivalent Norwegian and Swedish terms 'innvandrerlitteratur'/'invandrarlitteratur') has been extensively employed by

the Scandinavian media, it has been met with critique from (especially Swedish) academia as a concept which 'implies categorisation and dichotomisation, ethnification and racialization' (Jankowska 2010–2011: 33–34; see also Trotzig 2005, Gaettens 2013 and Nilsson 2010b). In his monograph *Den föreställda mångkulturen: Klass och etnicitet i svensk samtidsprosa* ['The Imagined Multiculture: Class and Ethnicity in Contemporary Swedish Fiction'] (2010a) and in several articles (2007, 2009, 2010b and 2013), Magnus Nilsson discusses 'invandrarlitteratur' as a tool for a hegemonic cultural discourse. With reference to Fredric Jameson, Nilsson argues that 'ethnicity has come to function as […] a "master code or interpretive key" for understanding Swedish society' (2010b: 199). The frenzy for 'invandrarlitteratur' is creating a myth about ethnicity rather than reflecting it. This, according to Nilsson's perspective, is inevitable within the discursive context of multiculturalism. Søren Frank argues for the use of the term 'migration literature' instead of 'migrant literature', reasoning that '"migrant literature" (like *indvandrerlitteratur*) refers directly to the biography of the writer and thus connotes a compulsory (and therefore very problematic) link between authorial background and literary theme' (2013: 220).[115] In crime fiction studies, a similarly problematic connection between thematic literary content and authorial biography is also frequently made. A signal example is Gosselin's definition of 'multicultural detective fiction', which bears some resemblance to the critiqued notion of 'immigrant literature' in Scandinavian literary criticism insofar as its interpretative approach to texts rests on a similarly autobiographical premise:

> Multicultural detective fiction is the detective story in the hands of authors whose cultural communities are not those of the traditional Euro-American male hero, whose cultural experiences have been excluded from the traditional detective formula, and whose cultural aesthetic alters the formula itself. (Gosselin 1999: xii)

Reading Scandinavian crime fiction within the parameters of the (problematic) discursive cultural context of 'indvandrerlitteratur' allows firstly for a questioning of the absence within the genre of writers with 'foreign' backgrounds. Secondly, it draws attention to the fact that

[115] These arguments in the debate about the rejection of the term 'indvandrerlitteratur' are not unlike the one concerning 'la littérature beure' mentioned in Chapter 5.

crime fiction — far from being a self-contained entity — operates within a broader frame of cultural discourse and that it is dependent on and in constant dialogue with this broader field. Finally, it highlights the fact that Scandinavian crime fiction in its mono-cultural representation of immigrants has followed a pattern that resembles that of literary fiction.

How, then, are we to identify and characterise a cultural discursive context in which we can productively discuss Scandinavian crime novels thematising migration and textualising personal or collective experiences of a multicultural society? A large number of contemporary Scandinavian crime novels might be considered as being what Behschnitt and Nilsson define as 'multicultural literatures' ('literatures written, read, and discussed in the context of migration, multiculturalism and multilingualism' (2013: 1)), or what Frank terms 'migration literature' ('all literary works that are written in an age of migration — or at least […] those works that can be said to reflect upon migration' (2008: 2)). Both these categories refer to literary works not necessarily written by authors with a multicultural or immigrant/emigrant background, but which at the same time in some form or another engage with questions of multiculturalism or migration. As such, these approaches allow a shift away from a biographical focus on the origins of authors to an arguably more objective and productive emphasis on discourse, as Nilsson's argument suggests:

> The key to understanding the relationship between ethnicity and literature is the insight that ethnicities are *culturally constructed identities*. And this insight implies in turn that literary texts can never be considered as an *expression* of any ethnic culture or identity. The fact that ethnicities are cultural constructions implies that they are *constituted* in cultural practices. And given that fiction is one of these practices it must be regarded as a phenomenon contributing to the *construction* of ethnic identities. (Nilsson 2010a: 220, my translation)

The readings which follow will thus consider crime fiction first and foremost as cultural practice, and pay particular attention to questions of cultural constructions of identity.

The representation of the 'foreigner' in Scandinavian crime fiction

Examining the representation of 'the immigrant' in Danish literature generally from a historical perspective, Hans Hauge characterises a development which has moved from centring on the immigrant as 'worker', via a focus on cultural and ethnic Otherness to the present day perspective in which, he argues, '[immigrants] are almost solely considered as a religious group' (Bergløv 2013; see also Hauge 2013). Scandinavian crime fiction demonstrates a similar shift in the perception of the immigrant from *class* via *culture*/*ethnicity* to an identity of which *religion* — specifically Islam — is presented as the defining feature.

Accordingly, in the fourth novel in the *Story of a Crime* decalogue, *Den skrattande polisen* (1968) [*The Laughing Policeman* (2007)], Sjöwall and Wahlöö depict and comment on the poor living conditions and the exploitation of the first wave of immigrant workers to Sweden in the 1960s (2007: 113–117). The foreigner in the novel appears as a very minor, subordinate character who speaks a rudimentary broken Swedish, lives in dormitory-like accommodation and remains unnamed during the interview that investigator Beck and his colleague carry out: he is simply referred to as 'the Turk' or 'the Arab'. The reductive representation of 'the Turk' is however firmly inscribed within a subversive discourse about economic injustices related to the foreigner's status as worker, the conversation focusing on his low weekly pay as a lorry driver, the high rent he must pay and the Swedish landlady who is 'raking in money' (Sjöwall and Wahlöö 2007: 116). The novel's ideological subtext in relation to the immigrant is thus, in Nancy Fraser's terms, associated with 'the paradigm of redistribution' (Fraser 1997; Fraser and Honneth 2003). In the 1990s and 2000s, as will be discussed in the rest of this section, the representation of the 'foreigner' becomes firmly inscribed in the 'paradigm of recognition' instead, with novels having a strong focus on injustices based on the ethnic individual's status in the Scandinavian societies.

Henning Mankell's Wallander character

One of the most prominent examples of the contemplation of the 'foreigner' from an inside perspective and of this figure's influence on Scandinavian societies and cultures is to be found in Henning Mankell's Wallander series (comprising ten novels published between 1991 and 2009). International — including Scandinavian — scholarship on the representation of the 'foreigner' in Scandinavian crime fiction focuses to a large degree on Mankell's cycle. Kerstin Bergman, in her recently published monograph *Swedish Crime Fiction: The Making of Nordic Noir* (2014) correspondingly makes Mankell the key author in a chapter comprehensively analysing 'issues of immigration, multiculturalism, and the ethnic Other' (2014: 51).

Mankell's novels are highlighted for their concern with 'the alarming rise in racism, xenophobia and anti-immigration feeling in Sweden, which traditionally regarded itself as a tolerant and generally welcoming country' (McCorrestine 2011: 78; see also Bergman 2014 and Mrozewicz 2013). Central to a discussion of these issues in Mankell's work is the character of Kurt Wallander, as it is through his perspective (focalised via an omniscient third-person narrator) that the world is observed and told. Having exclusive right to the narrative point of view, Wallander also dominates the way in which the 'foreigner' — whether victimised or villainised (but never part of the investigatory body) — is observed and told. Most important, however, is perhaps Wallander's self-reflexivity and his continuous interpretation of his own position and identity. This is intricately connected with a Swedish state struggling over transformation in the post-1989 era (Nestingen 2008). Echoing Sjöwall and Wahlöö's investigator Martin Beck's physical and emotional unease, Wallander has an unhealthy lifestyle; he suffers from depression and alcoholism; he eats too much junk food, struggles with diabetes and excess weight. At the same time, he is undergoing a mid-life crisis: following his divorce, he experiences difficulties establishing and maintaining new emotional relationships.

The link between Wallander's psychological condition and a (regional) Swedish identity is reinforced through imagery evoking melancholy and depression in both

environmental and personal human contexts. The novels' setting in Ystad in the Southern Swedish district of Skåne is counterposed with intimidating intrusions from the outside world. Slavoj Žižek reads this relationship between the global and the local in Mankell's work as an expression of how popular fiction adapts to and reflects the global political and economic system. He characterises the Wallander series as an 'exemplary case of the fate of the detective novel in our era of global capitalism', where the 'main effect […] is discernible in its dialectical counterpart: the powerful re-emergence of a specific *locale* as the story's setting — a particular provincial environment' (Žižek n.d.).

The thematic importance of this intrusion is accentuated in the first Wallander novel, *Faceless Killers* (2000 [1997]) (*Mördare utan ansikte,* 1991) which opens in a bucolic, Skanian setting where an elderly farmer couple are brutally attacked and tortured by unknown intruders. The woman survives and manages before she dies a couple of days afterwards to utter the word 'foreigner' (41). The subsequent investigation focuses on various interpretations of this word, and not least on how the word can be misinterpreted by the press and the public opinion and reinforce already existing xenophobic attitudes. Indeed, the rest of the Wallander cycle could be said to continue this investigation of the notion of the foreigner and indigenous Swedes' relationship with newcomers, which is initiated in the first novel's incipit.

By contrast with French crime fiction where — as is certainly the case in Fodjo and Santaki's novels — the three main character categories of the genre, the *victim*, the *villain* and the *investigator*, merge, or where the borders between these figures are of an osmotic nature, Mankell preserves a fairly watertight separation between the traditional agents in the crime novel. The perspectival arrangement of Mankell's novels furthermore emphasises the investigator's point of view, with the other agents being examined through this lens.

The foreign murder victim is frequently found on the outskirts of a social reality, in a remote place such as a forest or a dump. This is the case for example in Mankell's 2006 Wallander episode *Täckmantlen* (which was given the English title *The Container Lorry*), in which the bodies of illegal immigrants are found suffocated in a shipping container in a

remote part of the forest. Death in itself can be seen as an obvious alienating status, and when the only survivor is a small baby — who is naturally unable to articulate any explanation for the circumstances — the symbolic 'voicelessness' of the foreigners, depending on the investigator to articulate their case, is made obvious. The authoritative status of Wallander as someone who can speak on behalf of a silenced Other is an enduring feature of the series.

Another constant over the course of the Wallander cycle is the intrusive presence of the globalised world in the form of the foreigner — either as victim or as perpetrator — in the provincial setting of Ystad, as Nestingen argues:

> The Other is always present in Mankell's crime novels, and Wallander is transformatively entangled with Others. Solidarity is Mankell's response to these entanglements, yet that solidarity must always grapple with the ambivalence of confronting oneself amid heterogeneity that challenges one's own worldview and rational categories. (Nestingen 2008: 252)

The ambivalence which Nestingen ascribes to Wallander sometimes translates into anti-immigrant sentiments which the investigator is cognizant of not displaying publicly, implying what McCorristine interprets as Wallander's 'repression of his politically incorrect beliefs' (2011: 79). Anna Westerståhl Stenport however examines Wallander's ambivalence in terms of an orientalist optic in her analysis of *Faceless Killers*, commenting on a sexual dream the investigator has at the beginning of novel in which a black woman appears: 'the dreamt desire for violent intercourse […] with an exoticized Other, a […] "colored" […] woman, introduces the figure of the ethnic and gendered Other as a figment of a racialized and sexualized imagination — the ultimate colonial fantasy' (2007: 4). The novel opens and ends with what Westerståhl Stenport characterises as '[a] clichéd diametrical opposition between the white male and the colored female, mediated by one-directional sexual desire and violence' (2007: 22). Sexism, racism and immoral and unethical aspects of the Wallander character are not, Nestingen maintains, an invitation for the reader to identify with him, but a textual device to 'attack the collective ethnocentrism and romantic individualism that would make Wallander a Swedish Philip Marlowe' (2008: 251). This ambiguity in the vision of the profoundly troubled and conflicted Kurt Wallander character captures the uncertainty and

instability experienced by contemporary Scandinavia and its problems coping with being in a state of transformation.

The ambiguity also extends into the notions of physical space and nationality, which Mrozewicz captures in the concepts of *border* and *boundaries* in her discussion of Mankell's novels: 'the first one is rooted in the old world with pronounced national divisions, while the other anticipates a globalised world with the question of borders at stake' (2013: 352). There are indeed 'porous borders' both in terms of geography and social identity — the ambiguities of a changing Sweden are seemingly in parallel with those of what can be seen as an 'in-between' character. Wallander's nostalgia for the old times and the idea of a transition into something new and anxiety-provoking is not — as is the case in Sjöwall and Wahlöö's work — solely linked to the rise and fall of the social democratic welfare state, but is also associated with a transition from homogeneity to heterogeneity in cultural and ethnical terms.

To sum up the characteristics highlighted by academic commentary on the Wallander series — which is perhaps rightly described as 'the cornerstone of the new crime fiction in Scandinavia' (Lingard: 167) — Mankell's novels establish a detective type who at a personal level is deeply conflicted; they expose a certain nostalgia for the disappearing foundation of the welfare state; they have a strong focus on the provincial *locale*, which functions as a nexus of anxieties about intrusions from the outside world. The Wallander character can arguably be considered an emblematic figure for Scandinavian crime fiction's engagement with the immigrant Other — and consequently with the topic of cultural diversity — in what were previously considered ethnically and culturally homogenous societies. Mankell's texts and academic engagement with them establishes the considerable shift in the perception of the 'foreigner' from a low-ranked member of the working class to a cultural/ethnic immigrant who can be approached by the ethnic-Swede by a feeling of solidarity, but who can also induce sentiments of unease and anxiety:

> Wallander's struggles invoke a diversity of questions and demands about the emergent transnational system's ethical and cultural failings, articulating a struggle for their redress. Wallander becomes a particular name that speaks for the dispossessed of the global era. Yet Mankell recognizes the stupendous

> narcissism and ethnocentrism of such a position, its incapacity to include the subaltern. (Nestingen 2008: 254)

Nestingen's characterisation of the Wallander figure as a struggling Swedish Self, speaking on behalf of the Other and having the awareness of the power constellation this perspective entails, also implies that if there is a struggle within what Nancy Fraser defines as the 'paradigm of recognition' (1997) in the case of Wallander, it is solely from the perspective of the observer who has to come to terms with how the world is affecting him.

Characteristic of most critical engagement with Mankell's work is affirmation that it is deeply involved in a humanitarian project frequently linked to the author's real-life involvement in promoting awareness of Third World issues. Nestingen thus highlights both Mankell and his Wallander character for their sense of 'solidarity' (2008). Bergman reads a similar authorial intentionality into the texts: 'Mankell enables the reader to identify with Wallander and his biases, while simultaneously realizing that the biases are nothing but just prejudices that ought to be fought and suppressed' (2014: 67). Correspondingly McCorristine argues with reference to the writer's position as an 'activist' that 'Mankell is a good example of a committed writer taking aim at injustice in his society' (2011: 78). This stands in contrast with the fact that Mankell's Wallander texts themselves can be viewed as locked in a bipolar constellation of Self and Other, an us-them dichotomy which can be described by using much of the terminology from postcolonial studies. The use of possessive pronouns in McCorristine's conclusion to his article about Wallander accentuates this feature of criticism: 'Wallander's investigations […] reflect the increasing sense of disorientation and insecurity among contemporary Swedes about *their* place in the world, and about the place of the Other in *their* world' (2011: 86, my italics). When McCorristine further states that the novels 'offer the reader insight into the psychosocial state of modern Sweden' (86), it is again, in the context of the Wallander character's self-centered outlook, an insight which is monophonic in scope by not including voices of the subaltern.

Westerståhl Stenport takes a diametrically opposite stance when she in her close and critical reading of *Faceless Killers* and its reception points out 'how steeped in the Swedish

consensus tradition *Mördare utan ansikte* actually appears' (2007: 22). Critical commentary on Mankell's work could likewise be said to incorporate this consensus tradition: '[c]ritics […] choose to read Mankell […] according to the image he [Mankell] proffers of himself: a good concerned citizen not only of Sweden, but also of the world' (2007: 22). The observation that Westerståhl Stenport makes in 2007 also seems to be prevalent in much of more recent scholarship on the Wallander texts.

How is it possible to differentiate between critical interrogation and symptomatic reflection in the fictional texts? Can Mankell's texts — and with it also other parts of Scandinavian crime fiction — be seen as a scene on which various forms of *orientalism* are either played out or depicted? Can Mankell's work and some of the academic critical commentary engaged with it be said to incorporate and expose what Nilsson characterises as 'the hegemonic Swedish discourse about the so-called multicultural society' (Nilsson 2007: 444)?

One possible stance to take is that proposed by Nilsson in his engagement with the notion of 'immigrant' literature which he reads using Nancy Fraser's distinction between two different political approaches to identity: *affirmation* versus *transformation* (Nilsson 2007, 2009 and 2010a). Fraser herself defines these as follows:

> By affirmative remedies for injustice I mean remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them. By transformative remedies, in contrast, I mean remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework. (Fraser 1997: 23)

When Westerståhl Stenport argues that the Swedish consensus ideology, of which she asserts that Mankell's Wallander novels are part, 'raises pressing questions of the moment, yet refrains from answering any of them' (2007: 22), she inscribes Mankell's work firmly within the affirmative politics characteristic according to Nilsson of mainstream multiculturalism, defining the multicultural society 'primarily in ethnic terms' (Nilsson 2007: 446). The same can be said about most critical engagement with Mankell's crime novels, which serves as an emblematic example of how critical issues can be elided by a simplistically affirmative

approach. The absence of serious engagement here signals the usefulness and applicability to contemporary crime fiction of the transformative and deconstructive approach outlined by Fraser. Such an approach, as applied by Nilsson to 'immigrant literature' (Nilsson 2007), is arguably applicable to the study of literature more widely in its engagement with cultural diversity. Accordingly, the following discussion of two fictional representations of the most emblematically controversial symbol of contemporary cultural difference — the Muslim Other — will attempt to go beyond the affirmative tropes present in works such as Mankell's and in criticism of them.

The Muslim Other

As the investigations of numerous scholars indicate, relationships between the Baltic states/Russia and Scandinavia occupy a particular significant place in Scandinavian crime fiction: authors frequently cited include Henning Mankell, Stieg Larsson, Leif Davidsen, and Kim Småge (Arvas 2011; Mrozewicz 2013), all of whom investigate crime within a post-1989 perspective. The representation of the Russian or Eastern European foreigner however seems to have been superseded in the post-2001 era by a new type of foreigner: the Muslim Other. This will be the focus of the following readings of Norwegian author Roy Jacobsen's novel *Marions slør* [Marion's Veil] (2007) and Danish author Paul Smith's *Mordet på imamen* [The Murder of the Imam] (2008). These two novels by non-migrant writers can both be characterised as migration literature inasmuch as they deal thematically with questions of migration. Furthermore, these two authors use the crime novel form to incorporate the 'aesthetic-formal concept' of migration literature characterised by what Frank refers to as its 'fluidity, hybridity and metamorphosis' (Frank 2013: 221). Significant, however, is that the two novels in their approach to the topic of migration do not possess any 'nostalgia' for the old homogenous Scandinavian nation states found in the Wallander figure. Rather, they engage with the globalised, multicultural conditions present in contemporary society. Additionally, both novels — albeit in different ways — introduce a representation of the (Muslim) Other in the role of the investigator.

Roy Jacobsen: *Marions slør*

Julie H. Kim asks in her introduction to *Race and Religion in the Postcolonial British Detective Story*: 'what is more "othering" than to be murdered, no longer being part of the living community — or perhaps not really having been, even in life, part of that community?' (Kim 2005: 1). In Roy Jacobsen's novel *Marions slør* [Marion's Veil], the central victim — a young woman and second-generation immigrant with a Pakistani background — is quite precisely 'othered' by death at the beginning of the novel. Found in a skip containing shattered glass from discarded windows and doors, the young female body is missing a hand and is covered in a hijab. The lack of transparency, symbolically emphasised by the broken glass and the veil, ties in with the crime narrative, which the third person narrator comments on in the novel's first sentence: 'It was a story without a *clear* beginning' (17, my emphasis).[116] An essential part of the investigation which follows consists of reconstructing Nasreen's identity from the shattered pieces that remain. The fragmentation of Nasreen's body — physically dumped as rubbish on the outskirts of the city as a social space — is also symbolic within the narrative of the social and cultural segregation within Norwegian society on which the novel centres, and indeed of what Graham Huggan refers to as an 'age of fragmentation' in Western societies (2001: 9).

The overarching textual imagery of disintegration, fragmentation and shattering — alongside the amputated limb as a metaphor for the separation of the ethnic individual from the social body — is further visually reinforced by the original Norwegian front cover from the publishing house Gyldendal, which foregrounds precisely these aspects of the novel. The front cover illustration depicts nine differently-coloured individual hands separated from their bodies in a three-by-three grid on a dark-red background, the cut-off hands decorated with stamp-like 'tattoos' representing for example an elephant, a lotus flower or other iconic symbols referring to different cultures and religions from around the world. The victim, moreover, has been reduced to the role of the Silent Other, excluded from knowledge and

[116] This and all following quotations from *Marions slør* are my own translations based on the Danish edition.

power, and is presented in terms of ready-made associations existing in the public sphere and of predetermined notions about her cultural identity.

At the immediate narrative level, Nasreen's missing hand plays an important role in the investigation. The corpse itself becomes a (bodily) jigsaw puzzle of missing pieces and of wrong pieces when another woman's cut-off hand is discovered wearing Nasreen's ring. The subsequent investigation takes the form of the (re)assembly of all the pieces to enable the reconstruction of Nasreen's identity by giving her dead body a name, a distinctive personality, a soul and a social life. Emphasised by the covering-up of Nasreen's face with a veil, the murder is an act of concealment. The hijab covers over a young woman, who never when she was alive wore a head scarf, having left a traditional life with her Pakistani family to live with her ethnic-Norwegian boyfriend and pursue her university studies.

The process of reassembling the dismembered body and identity of Nasreen also parallels the reconstruction — in Todorov's term — of the crime narrative's primary story. Marion is employed as an investigator for a special unit designed to 'work with ethnic-related crimes [which] for political reasons [is] named "The Contact Group for Intercultural Conflict Resolution"' (19). Besides Marion, the team consists of the team's leader, the Scot McNaughton, Reza — a 'second-generation immigrant of Pakistani origin' (19) — and William, an intellectual who as a child came to Norway with his bourgeois Iraqi parents, having fled their country because their democratic ideals conflicted with Saddam Hussein's regime. The cultural and ethnic diversity of the team, of which Marion is the only member with an ethnic-Norwegian background, is within the narrative regarded as an asset reinforced by the fact that the team members have all in their past had a personal encounter with 'ethnic criminality' in some form or another and therefore 'have all been hand-picked because [they] know the "enemy as [themselves]"' (98). The team in fact constitutes its own microcosm of a multicultural Norwegian society.[117]

In juxtaposition to the media's subdued treatment of the murdered Muslim girls described by the narrator as 'a line of tragedies treated with pity, murders of guests from far-

[117] The microcosmic prominence of the police procedural's team of investigators has also been exploited in Arne Dahl's Intercrime series, where the 'A group' is an epitome of diversity (see Chapter 2).

away, partly un-wanted, yes even illegal, and women' (167), there is a pronounced difference — rendered by an ironic narrator — in the public's reaction to the murder of a rather miserable white man. The new murder is described as 'an attack on the innermost soul of the nation, on the white man's masculine skin in the city of Trondheim, the solar plexus of the saga of the king' (167). At the individual level, however, all of the victims share two common characteristics. Firstly, none of them are missed; their family and acquaintances do not report them missing, a social invisibility which McNaughton comments on, noting 'All this damned absence of the feeling of loss' (102). Secondly, 'they had a strong dream of living in harmony with people from other cultures' (162). The crimes moreover have a resonance that goes far beyond Norway, provoking '[f]ive death screams that had all been overheard, in line with an injustice which has escalated and become habitual, like the world's poverty, Africa's illnesses and the Middle-East's wars' (258).

This new and extended contemporary context also has its effects on characters' immediate surroundings, and indeed provokes through a changed environment a new kind of nostalgia in the protagonist, who is:

> at all sides surrounded by immigrants and ethnic Norwegians, a bustling busy afternoon at the end of September, in the cosy little corner of the community which is suddenly in the middle of having its richness of colours replaced by hard, old-fashioned black and white contrasts in the neighbourhood where Marion buys her food and eats kebabs and open sandwiches [smørrebrød] with bacon and fried eggs of which the immigrants have taken over the production. The original Norwegian kitchen and the miserable lentil soup from the Helmand province side by side in all its usual everyday friendly tolerance, the new and the old. (50–51)

The nostalgia that Marion exhibits here is not Wallander's nostalgia for a homogenous country of the past, but a vision of a society which has gone through a process of seemingly peaceful and harmonious integration of immigrants to then finish in a segregated community where the ethnical and cultural lines are drawn up. This vision is later in the novel reiterated in the description of Oslo as a 'smiling, everyday-like, normal, modern city, a slowly pulverizing ethnic grinder which it had taken decades to set in motion, and which was now threatened by the past and about to come to a stop' (252).

The novel deploys a range of immigrant stereotypes: Russian villains involved in trafficking; illegal immigrant workers employed by Norwegian farmers and living under horrible living and pay conditions; Hassan at Tariq's kebab shop where Marion buys her dinner; Eastern European prostitutes. The novel exploits clichés and stereotypes while at the same time leaving some room for a critique of them in the name of an encompassing 'friendliness' mixed with suspicions. McNaughton states that this is a characteristic Norwegian attitude towards foreigners: 'the ordinary Norwegian can really be emphatically prejudiced, […] but he does not like being mean, certainly not for long, then he begins to feel uneasy. The Norwegian likes to feel friendly, if you understand what I mean' (164).

The representation of foreigners in the novel exposes the idea of the 'ethnic grinder' which in the novel's optic seem to imply perfect assimilation. Besides Nasreen who has turned her back on her Muslim family, we also meet the well-integrated Pakistani who runs a chain of fast-food restaurants and has even bought a 'hytte' [a Norwegian log cabin]. Perhaps most accentuated is William, who as a member of the police team is the personification of a model immigrant, described by Marion as 'the final and illustrative example of the nation's glorious passion for integration. The Norwegian William. The art of the possible' (330). Reza, the other Muslim in the team, ends up being involved in a retributive killing of the original murderer; the explanation for his 'fatal weakness' (324) lies precisely in the fact that he is not assimilated but struggles between two irreconcilable cultures, according to Marion's interpretation: 'he didn't know where he wanted to be, he wanted to be both places, both in his family and in Norwegian society, the bitter and the sweet which cannot be mixed, which will produce nausea, which undermines your self-respect' (324).

For the police team there are only two probable murderer profiles which are compatible with the brutal nature of the murders and the personal background of the victims: either the murders are committed by an extreme racist organisation or individual or by an extreme Islamist organisation or individual. Blinded by a reductive vision of the world and by their own unnavigable prejudices, the team continuously find themselves at dead ends in the investigation. The investigation is conducted in accordance with the discursive practices

which foster a dichotomising black and white world view, summed up by Marion in an early stage of the investigation: 'Close your eyes and focus on "white hand" and "black hand". Both of them are atrocious. But they belong to each their own atrocity. Each their own world' (58). This Manichean imagery runs through the novel's imagery and is repeated in harsher terms further into the novel when McNaughton claims in relation to the three murdered Muslim women and two ethnic-Norwegian men: 'It looked in other words like war. Between two genders. And two cultures' (237).

When the murderer is finally revealed as Fennevold — an ordinary 'hypnotically anonymous' (338) Norwegian man — it breaks down the black and white pattern that both the investigation and the public have been seduced by. Near the end of the novel, Marion retrospectively reflects on the team's incapability to find this murderer sooner:

> We didn't find Fennevold in time, because we weren't looking for Fennevold. The team is not created to find Fennevold. It is created to find Nasreen's brothers. A racist organisation. A fanatical Islamist. It is created to find the signs of the times. And *that* is always something completely different from the truth. (325)

Marion reasons that this is also an attitude that prevails in Norwegian society, seen in its reaction to the exposure of Fennevold as the murderer: 'Both the immigrant milieu and the ethnic-Norwegian parts of the population want a murderer they can understand. They cannot stand the sight of Fennevold. Because Fennevold resembles the people. The Norwegian people' (323).

The novel is far less a narrative about an investigator's trajectory through serial murders, than a case of investigating the associations and preconceived perceptions attached to images of the (Muslim) Other. This thematic concern is built into the narrative structure of the novel. While the team is investigating the murders, another investigation begins: the team itself is investigated by an examination committee. This examination — which chronologically takes place after the case is closed — intersects with more plot-driven chapters in the second half of the novel. McNaughton finds himself in front of a tribunal of unnamed members interrogating him on the investigation team's failure to discover Reza's

involvement in the murder of Fennevold. The narrative purpose of this embedded meta-investigation however remains unclear until the final pages of the novel. The committee's prolonged and at times harsh interrogation of McNaughton, which insinuates ethnicity as being the key to understanding the conflictual disagreement of the team, is at the end of the novel irrevocably refuted by McNaughton. During the final session in front of the tribunal, the power relationship in the interrogation is reversed; McNaughton now asks the questions to an ever-more confused and vocally weak chairman of the committee:

> McNaughton, alert:
> 'It was our individual competencies which didn't suffice. Irrespectively of our cultural background, do we agree on that?'
> 'Ehm…yes.'
> 'Yes, I just wanted to hear you say it, because I totally agree.'
> The chairman, now completely ruined:
> 'What are you trying to insinuate?'
> 'That our problems were not at all linked to ethnicity?'
> 'Ehm….no. What?'

The novel's *mise en abyme* of the investigation perhaps indicates an attempt at challenging prevalent public discourse on society's disintegration as a symptom of ethnic diversity. However, within the textual universe, this attempt remains only a scratch on the surface when it becomes obvious that McNaughton will be forced to step down as the leader of the team as a consequence of the case.

Fennevold's motives for committing the murders remain unclear, bringing the novel's conclusion back to where it started with questions unanswered: 'a story which did not have a beginning, and which now did not have an ending either' (339). Kim Toft Hansen argues in his reading of *Marions slør* that the novel gives 'neither an affirmative nor a subversive answer […] but a reflexive investigation of the topic […], which arises from the fact that the novel refuses to leave the reader with a resolution and clarity' (2012a: 244, my translation). Rather, I would argue, the text applies a consensus-seeking agenda in which its sense of a narrative continuum of uncertainty relates to its notion of historicity as circular motion which will always find its way back to the known and reinforce a sense of the inertia of tradition. Despite the undoubted success of the 'ethnic grinder' in turning out model assimilated

citizens, a return to the starting point is inevitable not only in a narrative sense, but also when it comes to societal organisation and the discourses surrounding it. This becomes apparent in Marion's final conclusion after the closure of the case: 'the ethnic dividers had appeared again, yes, actually they were fully in place, […] the old positions had been occupied and reinforced by all of those who had been right all the time and who were now right again, the way it had always been in this country' (360). The hint of irony in Marion's closing comments subtly makes an attempt at approaching Norwegian segregational attitudes, but ends with an acceptance of the status quo.

The reception of *Marions slør*

Reviews of Jacobsen's novel could be said to operate within the optic which Astrid Trotzig has named the 'ethnic lens' (2005: 126). Nilsson places his discussion of 'immigrant literature' as 'part of a more general discourse about the so called multicultural society, which has become hegemonic in the public sphere during recent decades' (2007: 444). The press interest in *Marions slør* confirms this strong focus on ethnicity in the Norwegian public sphere, in that the reviews foreground aspects of multiculturalism and identity politics.

One feature of the reviews is that *Marions slør*'s status as crime fiction is put aside for a focus on the novel's sociological study of contemporary Norway. Terje Stemland in his review for the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten* thus decribes Roy Jacobsen's novel as a 'very topical criminal study of multicultural Norway' (2011, my translation). Another feature which further accentuates the novel's reception within the realm of identity politics can be found in the Norwegian newspaper *Dagbladet*'s controversial categorisation of *Marions slør* as a 'norsk innvandrerroman' [Norwegian immigrant novel]. This nomination caused Noman Mubashir, employed as a journalist for NRK (the Norwegian state broadcaster), to immediately reciprocate with a critique of the absence in the Norwegian literary landscape of writers of foreign descent, highlighting his disappointment that the 'new novel from the immigrant milieu comes from a middle-aged white man' (Lauritzen and Aubert 2007, my translation). Unni Malmø, interviewed in the same article as Mubashir, completely

denounces the use of the term 'innvandrerroman', in line with Trotzig and Nilsson, because its application 'is about satisfying Norwegians' imagination about immigration' (Lauritzen and Aubert 2007). *Marions slør* as a novel advocating ethnic identity is also found in NRK's review of the novel:

> It is […] a novel about the Norway that we are in the midst of creating — or perhaps rather are in the midst of allowing to be created. A place where political correctness deprives us all of the sense of security that we can despite everything talk with each other, as long as it is a conversation based on mutual respect. (Elke 2007, my translation)

An article in the Danish newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* published after the launch of the Danish translation of the novel accentuates this sense of unease over identity politics by focusing on the differences between Norway and Denmark in their attitudes towards immigrants, both in political terms and in terms of public opinion. The article features an interview with Roy Jacobsen, in which he explains his own agenda: 'I […] make an attempt at challenging the preconception in fiction that immigrants automatically equal criminality. I have as far as possible tried to break away from the clichés dominating crime novels so that the readers' own preconceptions and prejudices are tested' (Lohse 2008).

Returning to Fraser, the underlying discursive propositions of the reviews are palpably rehearsed within the 'paradigm of recognition'. While the reviews focus on the novel's thematic 'questioning' of discriminatory preconceptions about immigrants and cultural injustices, the press's engagement with the novel is firmly inscribed in what Fraser refers to as 'mainstream multiculturalism' which proposes affirmative remedies to 'redress disrespect by revaluing unjustly devalued group identities, while leaving intact both the contents of those identities and the group differentiations that underlie them' (1997: 24). The fact that Roy Jacobsen's novel is primarily read through the filter of 'immigration', and through use of the notion of the 'immigrant' as a collective term that needs to be explored, gives further comfort to Nilsson's view of 'the ethnic othering [as a characteristic of] contemporary Swedish [Norwegian and Danish] debates about literature and the multicultural society' (2009: 5).

Norwegian consensus mentality

The overarching premise for the advancement of the novel's crime, investigation and (absence of) resolution is the juxtaposition between ethnic prejudices and 'politically correct' attitudes. Prevalent in this is a highlighted conceptualisation of Norway as a fundamentally harmonious country which has just been disturbed momentarily by the murders committed with a motive presumed to be ethnicity-related. In an interview, Roy Jacobsen emphasises what he refers to as the 'consensus mentality in Norwegian society' as the underlying fabric of the novel (Lohse 2008, my translation). The textual ambivalence is not unlike that of Mankell's Wallander novels: on the one hand *Marions slør* contains a descriptive account of societal prejudices and cultural divides, while on the other hand the text itself falls into traps of reproducing well-rehearsed tropes about the so-called 'multicultural society'. The novel's insistence on a dichotomous view of the world, which is reproduced in much of the textual imagery, reinforces these tropes.

While the novel makes a point of challenging the crime fiction genre's stereotypes and clichéd images of the foreigner through use of counter-stereotypes, the novel's own interpretation of a 'consensus mentality' is wholly reliant on an image of the well-assimilated 'model immigrant' in the figure of William, who is beyond issues of cultural ambivalence and identity struggles. These are the same issues that lead Reza astray into his criminal actions and bring about his personal and professional downfall. Moreover, through the characters of William and Reza, the novel replicates a frequently-employed, but problematic, popular distinction between the good, secularised, westernised Muslim and the bad, anti-Western, fundamentalist Muslim (see Mamdani 2004: 20–24). Disintegration here is the real danger for successful cultural cohabitation: the investigating body is, through Reza's involvement in the killing of Fennevold, damaged in the same way as the girls' hands are cut off and a well-functioning society dismembered when some of its members are murdered.

Paul Smith: *Mordet på imamen*

As pointed out by Kim Toft Hansen in his analysis of the role of Islam in Scandinavian crime fiction, novels dealing with the encounter between Islam and the post-secular Scandinavian societies do not form a uniform entity, but cover a spectrum reaching from 'more traditional critical approaches to Islam' to novels '[trying] to kick-start a nuanced debate about the Muslim faith' (2012a: 235, my translation). The Danish author Paul Smith's novel *Mordet på imamen* [The Murder of the Imam] (2008) places itself in the latter category by directly addressing a number of questions relating not only to the Muslim faith, but to the West's encounter with the Muslim world.

At the beginning of the novel a Swedish man is found killed in his house, remotely situated in a forest in Northern Halland, south of Gothenburg. The man is the former alcoholic, village misfit, Wahid Abu Svensson, newly converted to Islam and known locally as 'the Imam'. What for the local police appears to be an easily solvable case with the village's National Socialist as the obvious suspect soon becomes transnational in scope when two further imams are murdered, first in Aarhus, Denmark and then in Oslo. The investigation's geographical movement from the local to the transnational is also echoed by the composition of the investigating team, which consists of two couples based locally in Halland: police officers Ingvar Windén and Ayan Mohammed Gyrhan; alongside Jan Åkesson with his girlfriend Helena Maria Cirio.

This crime fictional plot is expressively situated in the midst of immediate current historical temporality with references to events that have intensified public and political debate on the 'immigrant question', such as the attack on the World Trade Center (2001), the murder of the Swedish Social Democrat Anna Lindh (2003) and the Danish Mohammad cartoon controversy (2005). Insisting on employing the names of real, contemporary persons involved in public debate (editors of newspapers, politicians, cartoonists etc.), *Mordet på imamen* inserts the fictional crime plot into a realist, recognisable setting, specifying the novel's temporal context as 2006. On the other hand, the novel also plays around with an emphasised fictional reality by employing characters from other contemporary crime novels

in minor roles. The main investigator in Swedish Liza Marklund's crime novels, Annika Bengtzon, thus appears in *Mordet på imamen* as a journalist who, writing for a Swedish tabloid paper, presents unnuanced claims, jumps to easy conclusions and is the target for a critique that the novel launches against the sensational press and its treatment of Muslims (183–196). This rather caricatured image of Annika Bengtzon perhaps also implies a critique aimed at certain aspects of Scandinavian crime fiction which play a role in shaping the popular imagination by uncritically contributing to the reproduction of stereotypes. Moreover, Paul Smith's novel also engages with stereotypes in the crime fiction genre — and in the popular imagination — by being more subtly and generically subversive in the creation of its own detective figures.

The detective figures

Ingvar Windén embodies a recognisable Scandinavian male detective character: he is 'ærkesvensk' ['thoroughly Swedish'] (69),[118] middle-aged, 'dressed as [a] secondary school teacher' in 'a dark-brown and slightly wrinkled corduroy suit' (70) and retreats to a workaholic existence to avoid the increased tensions with his wife and children at home. His unhealthy lifestyle with a tendency to eat pastries and drink too much coffee causes him to have a 'constant problem of 5–10 kilos of excess weight' (117). Windén's resemblance to Mankell's Kurt Wallander — an association further reinforced by the novel's primary setting being Halland on the South-West coast of Sweden and the letter 'W' as initial of his family name — is striking, almost to the point of being a caricature.[119] Windén, as a representative of the typical Wallander figure, does not, however, get much narrative focus in the novel. Neither does Jan Åkesson, whom the Swedish police employ as a consultant in the first murder case. Instead, the novel openly rejects the expected and typical by insisting on giving the point of view to two women: Windén's colleague, Ayan, and Åkesson's partner Helena,

[118] This and all following quotations from the novel are my own translation from *Mordet på imamen.*
[119] A further allusion to the 'classic' Swedish detective is established by Windén's troublesome relationship with Sapö, the Swedish secret service, a characteristic which he shares with both Wallander and Sjöwall and Wahlöö's main protagonist Martin Beck.

both of whom are immigrants. Although they are introduced as inferior female sidekicks to their male counterparts, these two women are both given more full-bodied characters. It is indeed through the interior point of view of these two women (mediated via the novel's omniscient third-person narrator) that large parts of the novel are narrated. Also, it is their insights which lead to the case being solved.

Both Ayan and Helena can be said to personify 'the "new specimen" in international crime fiction: 'the so-called "hybrid-detective" whose role acknowledges cultural multiplicity' (Anderson, Miranda, and Pezzotti 2012: 2). Ayan ticks a number of boxes for identity categories: she is a young, black, Somali woman, and furthermore a Muslim; Helena is a Chilean national who came to Sweden as a refugee fleeing the turmoil after Pinochet's military coup in 1973. Both women are well-established in Swedish society and know how to navigate it both professionally and socially.

The character of Ayan oscillates between being in a binary relationship with Windén (young/old, culturally Muslim/culturally Christian, woman/man, black/white, African/European) and having a professional function in society which eliminates these schismatic structures: she is a policewoman as he is a policeman. However, it is not Ayan's professional status as investigator, but her branding as 'foreigner' which is repeatedly evoked in the novel. The character of Ayan functions as a prism through which a multitude of different visions of the foreigner in the novel are refracted. It begins with the first obvious suspect in the Wahid Abu Svensson murder case, the neo-Nazi K.G., who agonises over the black female police officer interviewing him: 'The bitch had Mohammed as her middle name, that is a Muslim nigger in the Swedish police […]. She probably had AIDS' (63). When Ayan and Windén later interview Wahid's sister and her husband, who are devoted Pentecostal missionaries, Ayan 'senses the prejudices of the woman who probably equated Osama bin Laden with [her] religion' (148). She is also commented on as someone who deviates from the common image, as noticed by the woman whose child has found the body of Wahid: 'the Somalians in Gothenburg dressed differently, in an exotic manner, from this woman [Ayan], who wore blue jeans, a long dark-green shirt and an even longer dark-grey

jacket' (69). The same woman also refers to her as 'the African', but has to reconsider this categorisation when met with Ayan's articulate Gothenburg dialect (70).

The prejudices relating to Ayan's ethnicity and religion are joined by a quasi-orientalist sexist gaze which make her an exotic and at times erotic Other. Alf Karlsson, member of Säpo (the Swedish Secret Service) asks in a conversation with Windén: 'How is your new colleague? I mean, apart from the fact that she is extremely good-looking? Don't tell me that cultural diversity has no advantages.' (122). Ayan's erotic appeal is encapsulated as part of her exoticism. This racial othering and the othering of Ayan as a woman are suggested by a female witness earlier in the novel who focalises Ayan in an essentialising subjectivity by reducing her to the fact that she has 'large and sensual […] "bedroom eyes"' (69).

Ayan rejects the various attitudes to her Otherness. She counters the explicit and negative preconceptions about her racial and religious identity with didactic responses demonstrating her superiority in terms of knowledge and her aptitude for navigating the Swedish social landscape. The textual construction of Ayan's identity responds to the minor characters' epithetical preconceptions, and she becomes a counter-stereotype who can sweep away all judgmental clichés linguistically, intellectually and professionally. As a parallel to the character of William in *Marions slør*, Ayan is an impeccably well-cultured and seamlessly assimilated immigrant, to the extent that she surpasses ethnic Swedes in her 'Swedishness'. Before her career in the police, she has studied history at university and knows more than enough about Karl XII to expose and correct the neo-Nazi suspect's manufactured image of the Swedish king,[120] and on several occasions, her knowledge about Swedish history, place names and culture exceeds that of even the 'thoroughly Swedish' Windén.[121]

[120] Karl XII (1628–1718; usually referred to as Charles XII in English) is considered one of the main national heroes for the neo-Nazi movements in Sweden. In the 1930s the King was celebrated on the day of his death (30 November) by members of the Swedish Nazi party, a tradition which was taken up in the 1990s by the Nordic National Socialists. Gathering around the statue of Karl XII in Stockholm, they are usually met with anti-racist counter-demonstrations.

[121] Exaggeration as part of fictional creation of a counter-stereotypical Muslim is also for example found in Danish author Elsebeth Egholm's novel *Personskade* [personal damage] (2005) in which Aziz — the boyfriend

The excessive idealisation of Ayan overtly functions as a deconstruction of a negative, stereotypical image of Muslim women. It also contrasts with the image on the cover of the novel, which depicts the face of a hijab-covered woman whose clothing blends in with the black background. The question remains as to how effective this method is, and whether or not the use of the 'hybrid-detective' in this case actually promotes a recognition of cultural differences. The novel's 'construction of ethnicity', to employ Nilsson's term (2010b), through the use of counter-images, might allow for a rejection of stereotypes, but it does not leave room for cultural shadings or nuances. Because Ayan antithetically responds to perceived notions of Muslim Otherness, she necessarily adapts to a normative Swedish worldview, becoming more Swedish than the Swedes themselves.

Reception and its context: the Mohammad cartoon controversy

The novel includes as one of the clues in the investigation the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard's much-debated caricature of the prophet Mohammad wearing an ignited bomb in the shape of a turban, referred to as the 'exploding head' drawing, and originally printed in the Danish newspaper *Jyllandsposten* in September 2005. A print of the drawing is pinned to the wall in Wahid's house where his body is found. The following investigation centres on the symbolism of the placement of this controversial cartoon at the crime scene. Furthermore, the cartoon also becomes the point of departure for the novel's interrogation of representations of Muslims in the public sphere. The novel from this point onwards thematically evolves around the increasingly xenophobic attitude exhibited in the Danish media in the wake of the Mohammad cartoon controversy. Peter Hervik has characterised this as the 'Scandinavian Nexus of exclusionary thinking that primarily seems to revolve around anti-Muslim racism' (2015: 68).

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of the female investigator's daughter — is a well-integrated, overly-assimilated medical student who enjoys watching film adaptations of Morten Korch novels (romanticising cinematographic representations of Denmark in idyllic, bucolic settings from the 1950s and 1960s). Another example is Anne Holt's character Nefis Özbabacan, the lesbian Turkish lover of Hanne Wilhelmsen, who first appears in *Uten Ekko* [No Echo] (2000). Ellen Rees in her discussion of the transnational aspect of Holt's fiction describes Nefis as someone who actively embraces Norwegian culture: 'she becomes fluent in Norwegian, learns to ski and celebrates a secular Christmas with glee'. This leads Rees to the conclusion that 'Nefis […] figures problematically as an idealized, perfectly assimilated and domesticated exotic (and erotic) Other in Holt's texts' (2011: 108).

Helena's investigation into media and political commentary on Kurt Westergaard's cartoon at the public library in Aarhus exposes the ideological narrative subtext. This subtext is expressed in the form of her ironic interior monologue. Reading *Jyllandsposten*, she contemplates her findings:

> If one were to believe the letters to the editor, Muslims in Denmark were incessantly churning out murdered Christians on a conveyor belt. Strange that they did not write where they got their sensational knowledge from. There was in fact nothing about these daily serial killings in the news sections of the newspaper. (216)

Her contemplations also lead to the questioning of the purpose of *Jyllandsposten*'s printing of the cartoons in the first place, prompting the question, reported indirectly by the narrative: 'had freedom of speech become the new religion in a so-called secularised country?'

Ayan's and Helena's analytical interpretation of cultural conflicts and their origins — informed by their extensive reading — are further complicated by the novel's shifting between two Nordic countries, opening up a binary series: there are two murdered 'imams' — one in Sweden and one in Denmark (the Norwegian imam does not get much attention); the investigation proceeds in parallel in two places; the action is witnessed from insider and outsider perspectives. The narrator moreover takes the voices of the two immigrant women and makes them spokeswomen for the novel's immanent ideology.

This ideological standpoint is difficult to disentangle from the contextual climate in which the novel was published. If the reception of *Marions slør* was characterised by a focus on the novel's analysis of Norwegian society and consensus-seeking identity politics, the media's reading of *Mordet på imamen* foregrounds its political immediacy as an asset with readings accentuating the novel's relevance because of its treatment of current affairs. The publication of *Mordet på imamen* in early March 2008 coincided with a renewed intensification of the Mohammad cartoon controversy.[122] Subsequently, press reviews of the

[122] After the arrests of three people on 12 February 2008 accused of having planned to murder Kurt Westergaard, 17 Danish newspapers made a collective editorial decision to re-publish the much-debated cartoons the following day. The re-publication led to renewed tensions between Denmark and the Muslim world: demonstrations in Pakistan and Gaza subsequently took place, and a new boycott of Danish products was introduced in several countries in the Middle East.

novel link its thematic focus to the issues occupying the headlines of Danish newspapers at the time of its publication. Commenting on the novel's weaknesses as a crime narrative, the review on the Danish libraries' national website, *Litteratursiden*, highlights the novel as being 'highly topical' and justifies the recommendation precisely with reference to the novel's actuality: '[The novel] is recommended though and especially now with the renewed intensification of the Mohammad drawings controversy' (Larsen 2008). The novel's aesthetic success is thus downplayed in comparison with its functionality — and relevance — as a novel providing political commentary on issues relating to the 'crisis' coinciding with the novel's publication. Typical press reaction included that of Klaus Rothstein in *Weekendavisen*:

> Show me a recent Danish crime novel or thriller which is not in one way or another about Islamist terrorists. No, that branch of literature does the same as the political debate which, as we know, has been infested with Koran and caricature, and now we have Paul Smith who attempts to combine the thrill with political commentary. (Rothstein 2008)

Likewise, Peter Nørskov, in his review of the novel in *Århus Stiftidende*, demonstratively reads the novel into the concurrent political context with the suggestive article title 'Imam-mord midt i en krisetid' [Imam murders during a time of crisis] (Nørskov 2008). The article, rather than properly engaging with the novel itself, focuses insistently from its first sentence on the resemblance between the character of the second imam who is murdered in the novel, Ahmed Balasa, and the Danish imam from the Grimshøj mosque in Aarhus, Ahmed Akkari.[123] The review thus takes as its starting point and dominant focus a section of the novel which only constitutes a minor preoccupation in the fictional text, and moreover, goes beyond mere comparison to assert an identity between the fictional imam and his real-life counterpart:

123Ahmed Akkari acted as spokesman for Islamic Society in Denmark during the Mohammed controversy. He was accused of promoting fundamentalism and mobilising protests among Muslims by travelling to Egypt and other countries in the Middle East in January 2006 to draw attention to the cartoons.

> During the first Mohammed controversy, he [Akkari] joked in front of a French TV photographer about blowing up Nasar Khader and the [Danish] Ministry of Integration. At a time when hatred against Denmark and the Mohammed cartoonist Kurt Westergaard has been resurrected in some Muslim countries […], Ahmed Akari [*sic*], the former Aarhus imam, is himself murdered in cold blood on his way to work in the Grimshøj mosque in Brabrand. (Nørskov 2008)

The review moreover leaves out any reference to *Mordet på imamen*'s thorough analysis of geo-political concerns as background understanding for the 'crisis'. Nor does it mention the novel's multi-faceted and philosophical discussions of the relationship between Western and Muslim cultures or —perhaps most importantly — the unnuanced representation of Muslims within the Danish press which Helena characterises as a 'freakshow [in the name of] freedom of speech' (215) defined by a rhetoric of 'mockery, insults and ridicule' towards Muslims (218). By making Akkari the centre of the review and by employing (parts of) the novel's plot as a retributive reaction to real-life events, Nørskov manipulates the novel into a simplistic position highlighting precisely what the novel itself advocates against. Rothstein's more nuanced position argues that 'the novel's aim is essentially to advocate a Popperian view of society in a period of too much faith, too many threats and too much terror' (Rothstein 2008).

Schooling of the foreign Other

The crime narrative's concern with detecting the individual source of the 'imam' murders intertwines with the philosophical reading of 'our time' and the exposure of pronounced and also more subtle islamophobic tendencies within Swedish and Danish societies. The discussion in *Mordet på imamen* of encounters between Christian and Islamic cultures proceeds, as the novel's subtitle — *en filosofisk krimi* ['a philosophical crime novel'] — suggests, from philosophy and employs a vast apparatus of Western philosophers and thinkers to support its arguments. Longer passages of philosophical exposition, intersecting with the novel's more plot-driven parts, explicate Christianity and Greek philosophy's intertwinement with Islam, different directions within Islam, American and European

involvement in the Middle-East and the consequences for the development of the region, the history of modern Sweden (including the aristocracy's and political and financial elites' alliances with Nazi Germany during the Second World War).

Alongside the philosophical and socio-historical analysis of the Muslim world's relationship with the West, the novel features the formal characteristics of an academic essay (there is an extensive use of footnotes and in-text brackets with birth and death dates of philosophers and historical figures). In this two-component genre-hybrid, the 'murder of the imam' is thus examined through both an academic investigation and a criminal investigation. Well-suited for the novel's overlap between essayistic and novelistic writing modes, the intellectual and knowledgeable characters of Ayan and Helena serve the purpose of enlightening the reader. The critical — and perhaps, for the popular genre, pretentious — philosophical reflections tie in with the novel's own didactic representation of the foreigner and in particular its discussion of the status of the Muslim immigrant in contemporary Sweden and Denmark. Ayan and Helena are not there to explore themes of identity, belonging or exile — as was the case for example in Peter Høeg's *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow*. Rather, the narrative insists on positioning these two women of foreign descent as the bearers of (Western) cultural, philosophical and historical knowledge and places the textual emphasis on their contribution to a profound and nuanced analysis of (Western) society. Their highlighted presence in the novel as investigators explicitly challenges the genre's stereotypes and counters the monopoly of a mono-directional point of view in Scandinavian crime fiction, most usually typified by a middle-aged white man commenting on and being anxious about a changing society defined by its diversity. Ingvar Windén as the representative of the Wallander figure is categorically rejected, caricatured and pushed into the background to give prominence to the voice of his colleague, who represents various identities (young/female/black/Muslim/Somali) which have previously been voiceless in the Scandinavian variant of the crime fiction genre. However, while the novel plays around with the notions of insider- and outsiderdom and contests the stereotypes of the genre, it is noteworthy that is does so within a (white/male) Western paradigm; both Ayan and Helena

have been schooled in and employ Western concepts of knowledge and rationalism in their argumentation and analyses.

Conclusion: the view from the centre

In both Jacobsen and Smith's novels there exists a sense of disintegration and breakdown relating to the condition of individuals and of society in the absence of social norms and values. At the forefront of these two texts, however, is not nostalgic reflection on the social democratic construction of the welfare state, which plays a role of reference in Wallander's imagination — albeit with the knowledge that it is a paradise lost. Rather, the two texts foreground the 'multicultural society', and their plots are played out within the ideological context of 'mainstream multiculturalism', in Nilsson's understanding of the terms (2007, 2009, 2010a, 2010b). Like Mankell's Wallander novels, these two texts are concerned with writing the ethnically and culturally foreign Other, but adding a further layer, *Mordet på imamen* and *Marions slør* also provide an explicit commentary on the ways in which ethnic identities are created and displayed in public imagination and the media.

Perhaps the fundamental contradiction — or indeed dialectical premise — for the two novels is the following: on one hand they are part of a fictional corpus in contemporary Nordic popular culture which, as Nestingen rightly states, is 'inventing stories that call to mind and challenge background understandings', so that these 'texts […] use crime to engage with debates over individualism, collective claims, the status of national homogeneity, gender, and transnational relations' (2008: 14); on the other hand, however, the texts themselves are part of an affirmative discursive context in which they unwittingly propagate an ethnocentric vision and reproduce some of the tropes they themselves are opposing.

In *Marions slør* the distinction between William as the 'good Muslim' and Reza as the 'bad Muslim' underpins the logic that runs through the media's representation of Muslims. *Mordet på imamen* explicitly engages with preconceptions and stereotypical representations, but by creating a counter-stereotype in the character of Ayan falls into a similarly reductive paradigm. 'The ethnic grinder' creates to all intents and purposes a

normative ideal of the model immigrant, a figure also found in media debates and which Hervik in that context refers to as 'the "apostate" or the "civilised other", a person of Muslim background who has embraced "Our" values and denounces Islam and "Islamism"' (2015: 71). What can be seen in these novels' articulation of topical issues is an interdependence between popular culture and debates in the public sphere.

A further possible way of looking at the dialectical relationship between a critical position and symptomatic reproduction of common tropes is to examine the murder as the centre of the conflict. If we see murder as the ultimate violent 'resolution' to an individual or collective conflict, the murders of the imams and of the young Muslim women metaphorically expose what German philosopher Alex Honneth has in another context called the '"brutalization" of social conflict', arising from 'a state of society where struggles for social recognition escalate and become anomic because resolution can no longer be found in the existing systemic spheres of negotiation' (2012: 5).

What the analysis in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 has indicated is that there is a clear contrast between the respective treatment of issues of ethnic and cultural diversity in French and Scandinavian crime fictions. Crime writing in French tends to be within the context of a universalism which it frequently critiques. In the case of both Rachid Santaki and Roger Fodjo, there is an explicit concern with countering a non-inclusive ideology, a concern aligned with a more general apprehension of the problematics of the overarching ideology of universalism in France, as outlined by Michel Wieviorka:

> Notre point de départ est là: dans le souci de desserrer l'emprise de la pensée dominante qui, au nom d'un universalisme quelque peu débordé, interdit tout réflexion sur l'espace de la différence culturelle dans la société, et postule, dans ses extrêmes, que, faute de place pour elle, son seul avenir acceptable est dans sa dissolution pure et simple — assimilation. (Wieviorka 1997a: 6)

Fodjo, for example, in *Les poubelles du palais* promoting an anti-colonial and moreover anti-neo-colonial project, is thereby contesting a generally uncontested universalism.

While French crime fiction narratives have included many voices from immigrant writers engaging either explicitly or more subtly with debates on relationships between minority and

majority identities, the Scandinavian tradition remains culturally monophonic, and immigrants are generally represented as anonymous and voiceless (*Marions slør*) or adapting to the normativity of the majority culture (*Mordet på imamen*). In contrast to what we have seen in readings of French crime fiction, negotiation of identity in the mainstream of the crime fiction genre relates primarily to a Scandinavian Self in a society that is to all intents and purposes homogenous, where outsiders — in particular, ethnic outsiders — are not fully integrated, and therefore lack any effective voice or indeed identity. The villainised or victimised stereotypes of the 'foreigner' clearly find expression in *Marions slør* and *Mordet på imamen*; however, both make explicit attempts to turn around the pivot of the stereotype and engage critically with issues of stigmatisation and representational oppression.

It is not that Scandinavian fiction has been completely lacking in critical engagement with the problematics of cultural diversity. However, this has primarily been in the 'literary' rather than 'genre' field. There are exceptions, such as the postmodern 'hybrid' novel *Miss Smilla's Feeling for* Snow. But whereas Peter Høeg's literary crime novel explicitly addresses issues relating to the negotiation of cultural identities, the foreign immigrant has in mainstream Scandinavian crime fiction since Sjöwall and Wahlöö (and through the 1990s and early 2000s) been stereotypically characterised and often reduced to either a silent (female) victim or a (male) villain whose foreign — frequently Eastern European — background has been essential to his status as a criminal.

Contrastingly, in the French crime fiction tradition there is clearly an engagement with the problematics of colonialism and postcolonialism in a more polyphonic sense. Here, transcultural encounters are described both from an internal perspective by metropolitan writers (Manotti for example) and from 'external', peripheral perspectives by writers from the *francophonie* (*le* (post-) *polar francophone*) or from an internal periphery symbolically and concretely situated in the *banlieue.* This latter (peripheral) category is practically unexplored in the Scandinavian context.

By contrast with fiction, Scandinavian scholarly discussion is far from lacking in such exploration. What is in fact striking is that critical, academic engagement with the topic of

cultural diversity in relation to literature takes very different forms in the Scandinavian and the French contexts, and, moreover, differs radically from the literature itself in its approach. In France, for example, where fiction clearly problematises the legacy of colonialism within the national territory, 'postcolonial studies' is, in the academic field, still very much a minority interest. The French crime fiction genre over at least three decades has been able to discuss the complexities of cultural diversity and its relationship with the country's colonial past, but academic engagement has remained — until recently — wary of the topic. In Scandinavia the situation is perhaps the opposite: the crime fiction genre is reliant on stereotypes in its representation of immigrants. Even novels that are directly critical of reductive public discourses about the foreign Other discuss cultural cohabitation and diversity at a rudimentary level. However, academic engagement (with other countries') postcolonial or minority writers has received attention since the early 1990s.

In French crime fiction, the breaking down of genre conventions is frequently a means of describing, analysing and critiquing perceived notions of identity within the French republic. Here, the association between the collapse of conventional genre features and the breakdown of identity normativity is especially evident in contemporary francophone crime fiction from the former French colonies, or crime narratives written from the outskirts of the metropolitan centres by and about socially marginalised ethnic minority protagonists.

It might be concluded that the representation of issues of cultural difference and identity in the respective crime fiction contexts discussed here should be seen within those contexts' overarching salient features: in the case of Scandinavian crime fiction, a tendency to reflect on the post-welfare state relatively superficially in terms of easily discernible symptoms and outcomes, and in the French version of the genre, systematic attempts to reflect on the condition of the Republic critically and transformatively.

Conclusion: Closing the Case

I embarked on this doctoral project wanting to investigate the reception of the Scandinavian crime novel in France in the light of the considerable and unparalleled media attention it had been receiving in the wake of the French translations of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy (2006–2007). The French media's representation of the *polar scandinave* emphatically focused on the Scandinavian variant of the genre as one displaying a particular political and critical engagement with societal organisation. While the mediatisation of this Scandinavian *phénomène d'édition* focusing on its interrogation of the welfare state is not unique to France, it has a particular resonance in a country with a well-established and genuinely critical crime fiction tradition, and one moreover which proposes a critique that we have seen is — in Nancy Fraser's terms — transformative rather than merely affirmative. On closer examination, it becomes apparent that the French media accords greater complexity to the *polar scandinave* than it does to its own *polar domestique* — which is in fact more subversive in nature. Therefore, one of the first conclusions to be drawn from this research is that the reception in France of the *polar scandinave* overstates the political engagement of the Scandinavian crime novel. Secondly, there is at least some obfuscation of the nature of this engagement, which is relatively superficial compared to that of its French counterpart.

At the centre of the analysis has been a comparison of the ways in which the French and the Scandinavian crime novels engage with the Nordic social model and the French Republic, especially in terms of how these two social models accommodate difference. Both socio-cultural contexts have faced challenges to their postwar settlements in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (in the form of neoliberalism, immigration, globalisation, Europeanisation, and so on). Both have, since the 1980s, and even more markedly in the 1990s, been witness to similar senses of decline or breakdown of the social consensus. In France, this is expressed in terms of a 'crisis of universalism' and in Scandinavia in terms of a 'crisis of the welfare state'. In the crime fiction genre, however, already in the 1960s and 1970s, there are attempts to address issues which can be seen as an

initial corrosion of the social systems, as we have seen in the novels by Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Manchette discussed in Chapter 1.

Exploring the Scandinavian critical crime novel in juxtaposition with the French equivalent shines greater light on the specific and distinct kinds of engagement present in the two traditions. If the Scandinavian crime novel situates its social critique within the context of the decline of the welfare state, the French crime novel, conversely, engages critically with the very premises of the modern French polity and the foundation on which the Republic is built.

When the contemporary Scandinavian crime novel stages the 'trauma' of the dismantling of the social democratic settlement, the causes of this trauma are generally attributed to an intrusion of external forces disturbing previously homogenous and harmonious nation states. In the case of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's *Story of a Crime*, the criminal act is that of capitalism's destruction of 'true' Swedish social democracy. In Mankell's novels from the 1990s, the focus is on the notion of a 'paradise lost' and 'anxiety' over the transformation of the welfare state caused by immigration and globalisation. In the case of Wennstam and Dahl, emphasis is given to the Europeanisation of the Swedish state, which is regarded either as an unsettling and intrusive threat (Wennstam) or in more constructive terms (Dahl). Smith and Jacobson's representations of the ethnic and cultural Other likewise engage with a heterogenization of the Scandinavian region.

In France, crime fiction does not propose an account of a 'story of a crime' in terms of a decline caused by external agents from outside the system disrupting the social consensus. Rather, the French crime narratives examined in the present study offer a transformative account of the internal contradictions and weaknesses of the French republican model, which, conversely to that of the Scandinavian welfare state, is not presented in a nostalgic light. It is thus not coincidental that Manotti in *Bien connu des services de police* makes direct allusions to the 1791 'Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen', or that the novels of Fodjo and Santaki directly or indirectly engage critically with the legacy of French colonialism. The difficulty that the French model has in terms of

accommodating difference finds its explanation in its structure of selective universalism, which is rooted in the country's ideological underpinning and history. The tenacity of this model and the widespread acceptance of it within the French political establishment, makes it hard to contest within 'normal' channels. The *polar*, however, as we have seen, is a privileged site for challenging this pervasive assumption.

The thesis has further identified a more general development in the way that justice is imagined. This development is consistent with what Nancy Fraser in *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition* (1997) refers to as the 'shift in the grammar of political claims-making' (1997: 2) arising in the post-1989 era. Characterised by a move away from justice being understood in terms of 'redistribution' to a preoccupation with 'recognition' (1997: 2), this shift, as the thesis has demonstrated, is discernible in the history of crime fiction as well. Whereas Manchette and Sjöwall/Wahlöö both offer similar critiques of crimes relating to advanced capitalism and class differences (Chapter 1), crime fiction has, at least since the 1990s, turned away from questions of capitalism and class, and towards a paradigm concerned with identity (Chapters 2–6).

This general shift in thematic and political preoccupation happens both in France and Scandinavia. However, when group identity displaces socioeconomic interests as the critical focus, it becomes evident that the French examples offer a much more radical critique than their Scandinavian counterparts. Here we can conclude that because issues of identity are more difficult to discuss within the paradigm of the more rigid social model of French universalism, the critique that is possible within the flexible discursive space offered by fiction — outside the parameters of usual political conversation — becomes more innovative, far-reaching and provocative. This has implications for genre and style as well as content.

Generic differences

Traditionally, the detective was, in Gill Plain's words, 'the lynchpin of the [crime fiction] formula, providing certainty and stability at the centre of the narration' (Plain 2001: 3). Whereas the position of the investigative figure in the French tradition has been considerably

manipulated, Scandinavian crime fiction maintains the centrality of the detective, despite his or her frequently unstable and ambiguous role.

A suitable keyword to describe the mode of critique in the French *polar* is 'déplacement', understood as an insistent positioning of the perspective in a peripheral location in order to counter a normative or hegemonic centre. This dislocation can be observed both in concrete physical — or in more allegorical — terms as a shift. For example, the focus is shifted from the metropolitan city centre to the *banlieue*, from the *hexagone* to ex-colonies, from a male to a female perception, or from a hetero-normative to a homosexual perspective. Likewise, in French crime fiction of the period covered by the present study, narrative voice, and by implication the critical positioning of the text, is typically decentred.

Despentes's political feminist enterprise, for example, is inscribed within a transgressive queering of the text during which templates of both genre and gender are significantly disturbed. The topographical point of departure for this transgression is the liminal space of the *banlieue*. This suburban space is similarly the setting for Manotti and Santaki's novels, in which Frenchness and republican norms are read through the prism of marginalised identities — including those of immigrants and women. The *banlieue* is thus a symbolic space situated exactly on the outskirts of the locus of normative activity, not quite within but also not separated from the centre.

Applied to the crime fiction template, then, topographical 'déplacement' is coupled with a shift in narrative perspective away from the investigator as the trustworthy and authoritative centre of focus. Instead, the point of view is almost systematically in the French *polar* that of a marginalised figure, usually in the role of either victim or perpetrator (or a combination of the two): the revolutionary kidnappers in Manchette's *Nada*, the abused women in Tabachnik's *Un été pourri*, the prostitute/queer figure in Despentes's *Baise-moi*, the post(/ex)-colonial immigrants in Fodjo's *Les Poubelles du palais* and the *banlieusards* in Santaki's *Les Anges s'habillent en caillera*. If point of view is not inscribed solely within a non-normative character, a polyvocal structure allows for the voices of people from a diversity of different backgrounds to be heard, as for example in Manotti's *Bien connu des*

services de police. While identities are being constructed in the French variant of the genre, in the same vein as in its Scandinavian counterpart, these various identities are also being problematized — or, indeed, there is a critique of the construction of identities — because the liminal position from which the construction is emanating is ambiguous and troublesome. The French *polar* thus engages critically with the powerful overarching state discourse and opens space for debate on alternative social models.

By contrast, the critical aspect of Scandinavian crime fiction is to a great extent found in the main investigator's inquiry, analysis and judgement of the society that (s)he lives in. Through the perspective of the investigator — a character showing sympathy and solidarity with vulnerable and marginalised members of society — the Scandinavian crime narratives evoke a fundamental humanism, an ethical position of equality and an acknowledgement of difference. Importantly, this social conscience is in the Scandinavian crime novel emphatically articulated from a centralised position, predominantly within the structures of the police as a state institution.

Diversity and difference are negotiated from within this structure as well. The police procedural, as the dominating Scandinavian subgenre, prominently showcases communal integrity through its inclusive investigating team. The team functions as a microscopic reflection of Scandinavian society, designed to display a notion of equality between various groups of the population. The collective protagonist thus promotes gender equality (Holt, Smith, Jacobson, Wennstam); accommodates ethnic and cultural diversity (Dahl, Smith and Jacobson); and welcomes non-mainstream sexualities (Holt). In other words, the integration of non-normative or minority identities into the societal body generally conveys an impression of an open-minded, tolerant and inclusive Scandinavian society.

However, this accommodation is also one which is conditioned upon assimilation to the norms of the majority, and often, characters positioned outside of this collective ensemble are not given much of a voice. While the incorporation of non-normative identities seems unproblematic in the discussion of gender and sexual identities (Chapter 3 and 4), the inclusion of other-ethnic characters is only successful when they perform according to

mainstream prescriptions (as demonstrated in the examples in Chapter 6). When Scandinavian crime fiction mounts a critique of the exclusion of different vulnerable groups in society, it is articulated from the central perspective of social solidarity with a sense of having to 'rescue' or 'protect' subaltern members of society. Where injustice is highlighted, it is not voiced by the excluded, who within the crime narrative commonly assume the status of silenced victims (the prostitute and the old man in Holt's novels, the young murdered Muslim woman in Jacobson's *Marion's slør* or the suffocated illegal immigrants in Mankell's *Täckmantlen*). Ultimately, given that the narrative voice in Scandinavian crime fiction is socially hegemonic and tends to endorse an ideological state discourse on identity issues, it can also come across as didactic and to a certain degree ethnocentric.

Open cases

The two distinct cultural settings of France and Scandinavia have two distinct crime fiction traditions, each with different concerns, and each informed by setting-specific discourses of citizenship. The different ways in which the Scandinavian police procedural and the French *polar* address these concerns are reflected in how these models deploy or — as is frequently the case — subvert generic conventions. The generic form is reflective of content — and of cultural or societal context. While the Scandinavian police procedural generally maintains a clear structure of crime (murder)–investigation–resolution, the disturbance of the generic template — as of the underlying ideology of the state — is more radical in the French *polar*. In the latter, there is frequently no single crime, the plot centres less on the investigation and the narrative usually ends on an open or ambiguous note, suggesting no resolution.

The specificity of the corpus is of course an important consideration here, in that the observations I have just made may appear somewhat sweeping if applied to all crime fictions from the two settings. A research project of this kind necessarily requires a process of making various choices. In prioritising the close readings of a smaller selection of texts over a more general reading of a larger corpus, the study evidently cannot regard the texts as wholly representative of their respective crime fiction traditions in their entirety. Rather, the aim has

been to discuss texts rendered *possible* by conditions obtaining within the discursive configurations of Scandinavia and France, and to read these texts on their own merits. My choice of texts from the (most) engaged end of the crime fiction spectrum in both cultural settings may well have validated the critical approach and preoccupations of the thesis. Conclusions drawn on the basis of these can subsequently be verified (or falsified) through readings of other — and perhaps less critical — crime novels.

The culturally comparative approach constituting the methodological basis for the research has sought to move the study of crime fiction beyond the arbitrary paradigm of the nation state, the matrix under which generic developments and themes have commonly been examined, in order to look at other issues pertaining to the status of the individual subject vis-à-vis the prevailing polity. By placing the French and Scandinavian crime narratives on an axis of commonalities (crime fiction, Western-European cultures, global conditions pertaining to advanced capitalism and late modernity, etc.) as well as on an axis of local particularities (*polar*/police procedural, crises relating to post-welfarism/republican universalism, specific historical conditions for immigration etc.), the thesis's comparative analysis allows identification of nation-specific aspects within the two traditions which an analysis grounded in one setting alone may not have identified, particularly in relation to the differing articulation (in France and Scandinavia) of questions of ethnicity, gender, sexuality and other issues of belonging, citizenship and difference.

Again, the corpus of highly engaged works discussed in the present study — which performs thematic readings of citizenship, gender, sexuality and ethnicity — may well inevitably have prioritised these issues to the exclusion of others of equal interest and importance. It is doubtless the case that a wider corpus could have afforded possibilities for investigating the intersectionality of a wider variety of identities, as well as a wider variety of political and social perspectives.

Indeed, in terms of the priorities for crime fiction critics, there are further studies to be done more generally on the role that crime fiction plays in reflecting contemporary society. One thing that the present study has reconfirmed is that there are significant

differences between national crime fiction traditions, which as often as not are rooted in the relationship between citizens and the polity to which they belong, or indeed feel as if they do not belong. Just as there is no monolithic European Crime Fiction template, nor is there an amorphous Nordic Noir; there is thus doubtless room for a comparative study of Scandinavian crime fictions specific to the variants of the Nordic model that have developed within national settings that are far from homogeneous.

What is also striking is that crime fictions' reflection of the societies from which they emerge has taken on particular urgency in the postmodern, post-industrial age, where the experience of the human subject is one of dislocation, whether in relation to society or technology. Undoubtedly, the crime fiction genre in view of its engagement with identity issues will continue to thrive in this multicultural global environment where it plays a vital role in discussing cultural cohabitation and accommodation of differences. The current refugee crisis in Europe, the rise of right-wing populist anti-immigrant parties in both France and Scandinavia, the uncertain future of the European Union, terrorist attacks in western Europe and the political cataclysms which they produce represent new critical moments with which it seems likely that the crime fiction genre, as societal chronicler and debater, will continue to engage.

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