Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Nordic Noir on Page and Screen

Edited by Steven Peacock

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Also by Steven Peacock

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HOLLYWOOD AND INTIMACY: Style, Moments, Magnificence

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Edited by

Steven Peacock
Reader in Film and Television Aesthetics, University of Hertfordshire, UK

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For Nick and Lyn

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Contributors

Sarah Casey Benyahia is Head of Film at Colchester Sixth Form College. She is the author of *Crime: Routledge Film Guidebooks* (2011) and *Teaching Contemporary British Cinema* (2008).

Barry Forshaw is a writer and journalist. His latest book is *Death in a Cold Climate: A Guide to Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (2012). His other work includes *British Crime Writing: An Encyclopaedia* (2008), *The Rough Guide to Crime Fiction* (2007), *The Man Who Left Too Soon: The Life and Work of Stieg Larsson* (2010), and books on Italian cinema and film noir. His next book is *British Crime Film* (forthcoming). He has written for various national newspapers, edits *Crime Time* and is a talking head for ITV and BBC TV documentaries. He has also done much work for foreign broadcasters. He has been Vice Chair of the Crime Writers' Association.

Janet McCabe is an honorary research fellow at Birkbeck College, University of London. She is the editor-in-chief of *Critical Studies in Television*, series editor, with Kim Akass, of 'Reading Contemporary Television' and editor, with Kim Akass, of *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond* (2007) and *Reading Sex and the City* (2003).

Sarah E. H. Moore is a lecturer in the newly established Centre for Criminology and Sociology at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her main research interests are gender, the sociology of risk and sexual violence in the media. She is particularly interested in how threats to young women's personal safety and health are represented by charities, the media and government. She has published articles in a range of international journals, including the *British Journal of Criminology*; *Crime, Media, Culture*; and *Feminist Media Studies*. She is also author of *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness* (2010), which was awarded the British Sociological Association's Philip Abrams Memorial Prize in 2009.

Sarah Niblock is Head of Journalism and a reader in journalism at Brunel University, London. She began her career in journalism with the *Birkenhead News* in 1987, covering the Hillsborough disaster, before moving to the *Liverpool Echo* and reporting on the James Bulger killing. She has since contributed to numerous national newspapers and magazines. As an academic she has written several single and co-authored books, chapters and papers on journalism and visual culture. Her major academic study of the pop star Prince (co-authored with Stan Hawkins) was published in 2011. In 2012, Sarah travelled to Columbia University, New York, where she has been awarded a Dart Center Academic Fellowship to examine journalism and trauma.

Heather O'Donoghue is Reader in Old Norse, Linacre College, University of Oxford, and she has published on the post-medieval reception of Old Norse literature and myth. She is also a judge for the Crime Writers' Association Dagger awards for crime fiction, and regularly reviews contemporary crime novels for various journals.

Steven Peacock is Reader in Film and Television Aesthetics at the University of Hertfordshire. He is the author of monographs *Hollywood and Intimacy: Style, Moments, Magnificence* (2011) and *Colour: Cinema Aesthetics* (2010). He is the editor/author of *Reading 24: TV against the Clock* (2007) and editor of *The Television Series*. He is currently writing *Swedish Crime Fiction: Novel, Film, Television* and editing *Television Aesthetics and Style* with Jason Jacobs.

Introduction: Beginnings and Endings

Steven Peacock

The bravura title sequence of David Fincher's 2011 film *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is at once unexpected and strangely familiar. Here come the drums. Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross's electronic soundtrack bleeps and crackles across the entire film, and their take on Led Zeppelin's 'Immigrant Song' kicks proceedings off in arresting style. Whereas the credits introduce music to weave its way alongside the visual fabric of the rest of the film, the visuals of this opening sequence stand completely alone.

Nothing in the long-running trailer campaign or poster design prepares you for this sudden assault of impressionistic detail, melding CGI bodies with close-up shots of computer hardware, thorns, insects, tyres, wires and fire, all dipped in a monochromatic wash of dead-of-night black. Abstract chunks of trappings associated with the film's world – keyboards and motorcycle components – are glued together by a gloopy rain of black liquid (oil, molten rubber, tattoo ink?). Spiky textures play against the gelatinous mess out of which springs a naked human couple (male, female?). It is uncertain whether the pair seeks to rend free from each other's sticky embrace, or blend more firmly together as one. Their forms slip, slide and sink in goo, before a beginning and ending are announced in quick cryptic images: a phoenix rises from the flames, and the entire screen is swallowed up by one of the morphing figures. In more ways than one, the start to the film is slick.

As well as quickening the pulse, the opening sequence declares its difference from the Swedish film version of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (dir. Niels Arden Oplev, 2009, opening more traditionally,

inside the narrative world, on one of the main characters), while alluding to another lineage entirely: the James Bond film. In style and design, the title sequence explicitly recalls the famous work of Maurice Binder on 14 Bond openings, from *Dr. No* (dir. Terence Young, 1962) to *Licence to Kill* (dir. John Glen, 1989). As Charles Taylor notes:

> His title designs – swirling neon fogs of colour set against enveloping backgrounds of velvety black – are all about freedom, not only the freedom of a filmmaker to work abstractly instead of narratively, but a metaphor for the sexy and liberating physical exhilaration of watching James Bond's adventures. You could say that Binder was to Isaac Newton what Blofeld was to Bond. His title sequences are three-minute refutations of the laws of gravity: figures jump and bounce and run through the colourful voids, or simply luxuriate in mid-air as if the atmosphere itself had become the most inviting bed in the universe. The sequences are a distillation of the films to colour and movement and sex.[1]

If we follow Taylor's interpretation, then a more precise description of Fincher's opening titles would be 'Anti-Bond'. Colour is immediately stripped away, and the emphasis is equally on restrictions to bodily movement as it is to a sense of free expression: the couple are ensnared by wires and each other. Further, the erotic aspect of Binder's work is made complex. The sensorial quality of the sequence, emphasising texture, has a sensual edge, but is bound up in the sadomasochistic pleasures of bondage as much as those of Bond. This is not a portrait of 'the most inviting bed in the universe'; the thorns, straps and watery depths look sinister, painful, suffocating. Equally, the celebrated and fixed iconography of Binder's Bond sequences – guns and girls – becomes less clear here. Polymorphous forms and androgynous bodies hint at *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*'s explorations of unfixed identities. Expressions of ambiguity – the blurring of forms and lines – are at the heart of Larsson's trilogy: physical, political, institutional and sexual. The textures of the opening are also in synch with the film's narrative and thematic threads. The elastic plastics and supercharged blast of the opening sequence prepare us at an instinctual level for a tale of emotional pliability and the act of being taken to breaking point. And, in

emphasising the intermingling of forms and allusions, the opening speaks of its mixed heritage: the novels, the Swedish films, a Led Zeppelin song transformed into electronica, of James Bond the cinematic phenomenon, and indeed of Daniel Craig's appearance in the film. All gets tangled together in a two-minute fix of pure adrenalin.

Following the thrust of Fincher's opening sequence, the emphasis of this edited collection is on forms of fluent exchange. It explores the worldwide phenomenon of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy from a number of critical perspectives. Beginning with *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (*Män som hatar kvinnor*), the book offers the first full-length academic study of Karl Stig-Erland 'Stieg' Larsson's work in its written, filmed and televised versions. The collection looks closely at all three fictions: *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played with Fire* (*Flickan som lekt med elden*) and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* (*Luftslottet som sprängdes*). Topics covered include the crossover between literature, television and film; translations and transitions both local to global, and from Europe to Hollywood; the positioning of the trilogy in the genre of crime fiction; and debates around gender – so central to a set of novels the first part of which was originally entitled *Men Who Hate Women*.[2]

It is a buzzword of modern scholarship that research should be, wherever possible, interdisciplinary in nature. Often this idea – of bringing together scholars and practitioners from various fields to discuss one subject – is given, at best, lip-service, and the result is a range of discordant voices all fighting to be heard. My own reservations were tested and overturned in the organisation of a symposium at the University of Hertfordshire in 2011 on Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy, entitled 'Dragons, Fire, Hornets'. In this forum, academics and teachers from various schools of thought came together to address Larsson's works and the result was a strikingly coherent, fruitful set of debates. Drawing on the work from the symposium, this collection showcases the possibilities of a crossover of interests between criminology, sociology, gender studies, Norse studies, journalism, new media cultures and film and television studies and highlights what these fields may learn from and add to each other when entering into a productive dialogue.

Then, the collection introduces voices from practitioners and novelists to widen the interdisciplinary involvement even further. The

final section presents two interview transcripts with leading figures in the world of Scandinavian crime drama. The first is a full transcript of an interview I undertook in 2011 in Stockholm with Mikael Wallén, chief executive officer of Yellow Bird Productions – the company behind the filmed Swedish versions of the *Millennium* trilogy as well as *Wallander*. This interview provides an essential and exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the workings of the trilogy in production. The second transcript is of an online interview I conducted with Swedish crime novelist Johan Theorin. In a post-*Millennium* world, Theorin is one of the leading writers of Scandinavian crime fiction. His engaging and illuminating interview provides a very personal insight into the realm of Nordic noir, and the shape of things to come.

The collection is also fluent in its movements between discussions of the trilogy of novels and films. This appears a particularly fitting approach because the status of the filmed Swedish versions is one of a merger between works of television and cinema. As Wallén suggests in his interview, only the first of the three films was originally conceived as a cinematic release, with the other two scheduled for straight-to-TV broadcast. The immense worldwide popularity of Larsson's novels persuaded him and his colleagues at Yellow Bird to present all three films on the big screen, as abridged versions of a six-part television series. This unique set of circumstances promotes the idea of fluid transitions from one form to another, and this is echoed in the chapters' easy shuttling from discussions of written narrative forms and extracts from the novels to an appraisal of film conventions and moments. It is an underlying objective of this book not to restrict the content to studies of adaptation from page to screen, but to allow instead for more fluent comparisons to emerge across and within the chapters. Indeed, the majority of the chapters deal primarily with the film versions of the texts, providing another crucial development to existing scholarship on Larsson's work (most of which focuses on the novels alone).

Equally, another key aim was to allow space for longer pieces of work. Often in edited collections of this kind – considering one set of texts, be they films, television programmes or novels – a greater number of shorter chapters is encouraged. As a regular reader of these works, I have found that the shorter form sometimes restricts the emergence of complex or nuanced arguments. Above all, the

collection's remit was for the contributors to focus on the primary sources themselves, to open up Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy in accessible and insightful ways, to enrich our understanding of this body of work.

The 2000s saw an explosion of interest in Scandinavian crime fiction that continues to this day. Between 2008 and 2010, in the UK, digital television station BBC Four hit upon a winning formula of screening double-episodes of Swedish detective series. First onto the channel came the Swedish *Wallander* (dir. various, 2005–2010), based on the characters of Henning Mankell's bestselling novels, the *Wallander* mysteries.[3] A wintry sort of *Inspector Morse* (dir. various, 1987–2000), *Wallander* focuses on an eponymous loner detective (played by Krister Henriksson) and replaces Oxford's dreamy spires with the ice-blasted terrain of Southern Swedish city Ystad. At the same time in 2008, BBC One aired a new, English-language co-production of *Wallander* (dir. various, 2008–ongoing), starring Kenneth Branagh in the title role, and focusing on stories from the original Mankell novels.[4]

Flush with the success of these two hits, the BBC took more steps in quick succession, building the momentum around Nordic noir. BBC Four picked up another Swedish series with the same name – *Wallander* – an earlier production (dir. various, 1994–2004) starring a different actor (Rolf Lassgård) and adapting the Mankell novels. Then, confident that the climate was right for more subtitled Scandinavian serials, it aired the Danish series *Forbrydelsen* (*The Killing*, dir. various, 2007) to universal acclaim. The series garnered a cult-like following of UK fans, with members of the British media falling over themselves to cover *Forbrydelsen*'s popularity. The curious apogee of this frenzied interest was the launching of a competition in UK TV-listings magazine *Radio Times*, inviting readers to send in photographs of themselves wearing knitted sweaters in the style of those favoured by *Forbrydelsen*'s lead character Sarah Lund (played by Sofie Gråbol).[5] The series' place in the nation's hearts was also represented by Gråbol's knowing cameo appearance (as Sarah Lund) in one of the 2011 Christmas episodes of Jennifer Saunders' sitcom *Absolutely Fabulous* (dir. various, 1992–ongoing). The sequel to the crime drama – *Forbrydelsen II* (dir. various, 2009) – followed, again shown on BBC Four, and was quickly pursued by another Danish thriller investigating the seedy underbelly of the political realm,

Borgen (dir. various, 2010). This too was met with widespread praise.[6] Next, on the same channel, came *The Bridge* (dir. various, 2011): a Danish/Swedish police procedural co-production about cooperation and discord between the two countries. And, like a bass-line reverberating across all of these successes, was Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy, in novel and filmed forms.

Barry Forshaw's opening chapter in this collection sets out the origins, evolution and legacy of Larsson's trilogy in detail, as well as mapping the contours of critical debate to follow in the subsequent contributions. The essay discusses the 'Stieg Larsson phenomenon' in terms of its impact on popular commercial writing and the new acceptance of translated fiction. It considers the writer's assimilation of the strategies of British and American crime writers, and Larsson's own place in Scandinavian crime fiction. The author's fellow Nordic writers are compared in terms of the political impulse of the new wave of crime fiction and its origins in the novels of Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö.

Rather than attempt a much less effective summary of the trilogy's successes here, an extensive quotation from the novelist Edward Docx may serve us better at this point, as encapsulating the widespread impact of *Millennium*. In a somewhat sniffy piece for the *Observer* newspaper – bemoaning the 'amateurish' writing of Larsson and Dan Brown, as well as rehearsing, once more, the age-old and deeply suspicious debate about 'true literary works' as superior to genre fiction – Docx begins with a humorous account of *Millennium*'s almost unprecedented popularity:

> On my way back to London the other day, I was clawing my way toward the buffet car when I noticed with a shock that more or less the entire train carriage was reading . . . novels. This cheered me up immensely, partly because I have begun to fear we are living in some kind of [Simon] Cowellian nightmare, and partly because I make a good part of my living writing them . . . . My cheer modulated into something, well, less cheerful (but still quite cheerful) when I realised that they were all, in fact, reading the same book. Yes, you've guessed it: *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* who *Played with Fire* and who, sometime later we are led to believe, *Kicked the Hornets' Nest* . . . . And when, finally, I arrived at the buffet car, I was greeted with a sigh and a how-dare-you raise of the eyebrows.

> Why? Because in order to effectively conjure my cup of lactescent silt into existence, the barrista would have to put down his . . . Stieg Larsson. In terms of sales, 2010 has been the year of the Larsson. Again. His three books have been the three bestselling fiction titles on Amazon UK. Along with Dan Brown, he has conquered the world.[7]

It is hardly a controversial statement to note that Larsson's writing is not comparable to that of Shakespeare, or Flaubert, or Bellow. But in contrast to Docx's critique of Larsson as a 'bad genre writer', Heather O'Donoghue's essay in this collection traces the trilogy's skilful engagement with central structural elements of the detective and thriller novel. O'Donoghue's chapter shows how, while dealing with modern phenomena such as high-tech computer hacking, Larsson's narratives are also built around the classic structures and topoi of nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries crime fiction. These elements include the isolated community with a fixed set of suspects, all, Agatha Christie-like, with a possible motive for murder; the edgy double-act of detective and assistant; and the setting and solving of the cryptic clue.

The next two chapters look in detail at the other part of this equation – of late modernity and classicism – focusing on the trilogy's rendering of the digital age. First, Sarah Casey Benyahia's chapter explores how the *Millennium* films position us in the context of cyberspace. It investigates the *Millennium* trilogy's exploration of the shifting, uneasy relationship between the state and the individual in the era of new technology. The narration of the trilogy is perceived as functioning as a discourse on the policing of society in the virtual world. Just as the Hollywood crime films of the 1930s have been read as representing anxieties about the future of cities in a time of rapid change, the *Millennium* trilogy explores similar disquiet about cyberspace.

Then, Sarah Niblock's chapter focuses on how the long-established 'journalist-as-hero' character in crime fiction is recast in the *Millennium* trilogy, as an agent of the digital age. Exploring the novels, as well as both Swedish and Hollywood films versions of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, the essay discusses how films about journalists have almost always negotiated contemporary ethical debates about the real-world media industry at any given moment because

of the close historic ties between the sectors. Stieg Larsson, as a journalist and author, is seen as ideally placed to revision the literary figure of the investigative reporter for the new millennium, chiming with a moment of moral and financial crisis for real-world journalism. The chapter focuses specifically on what Mikael Blomkvist, Lisbeth Salander and their wider network's activities and motivations suggest about the uncertain future for quality journalism in the digital age.

A further coupling of chapters explores the relationship between the *Millennium* trilogy and two of the other popular Scandinavian crime dramas noted earlier. Steven Peacock's essay considers the way both *Millennium* and *Wallander* in their various television versions blur different kinds of boundaries. Both series are thoughtful about the striving of a person, region and nation to preserve selfhood in an environment of constant (often violent) flux and exchange. Both are set and made in contemporary Sweden, alert to the small-nation's position – geographical, socio-political and industrial – in the modern world. Throughout their narratives, the texts map out distinct levels of attempted seclusion and intrusion across boundaries of the Swedish body politic, in national and corporeal forms. Equally, linking aesthetic to institutional consequences, *Wallander* and *Millennium* are presented as particularly vital texts in debates surrounding the modern blurring of boundaries between national television productions and film. Their industrial and stylistic hybrid form complicates traditional determinants of big and small screens as well as national and global television.

In 'The Girl in the Faroese Jumper: Sarah Lund, Sexual Politics and the Precariousness of Power and Difference', Janet McCabe offers a compelling and revealing comparative study of gender, genre and structural strategies at work in *The Killing* (*Forbrydelsen*) and the *Millennium* trilogy. McCabe's chapter responds to many of the queries and challenges first raised in Forshaw's opening contribution, on the controversial and divisive topic of Larsson's handling of sexual politics and female characterisation. Drawing on various strands of feminist theory, combined with Foucauldian readings and interview extracts by the female actors portraying these strong, wronged women, the chapter negotiates the complex, potentially contradictory stances occupied by both Nordic dramas and society at large.

As picked up on by McCabe, one of the most striking aspects of the *Millennium* trilogy is each entry's affiliation with different subgenres of crime drama. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, in introducing post-punk cyber-hacker Lisbeth Salander and investigative journalist Mikael Blomkvist, soon settles into a variation of Agatha Christie's 'locked room' mysteries, with a family's secret murky history playing out on their own private island. The second book, *The Girl Who Played with Fire* expands the mythos of the *Millennium* universe to detail a government-led conspiracy against Salander, harking back to Cold War political thrillers and antics akin to James Bond's brand of derring-do. The third and final novel, *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* continues in this vein before moving towards a courtroom finale of the kind more often seen in Hollywood legal thrillers.

Or perhaps this is not quite right. Concluding the collection as it deals with the final book in the trilogy, Sarah E. H. Moore's chapter 'Storytelling and Justice in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*' reveals another fundamental feature of *Millennium*'s world: its legal landscape. It also binds thoughts on the novels and cinematic convention in new ways, emphasising the notion of fluent exchange at the heart of this collection's content. It is often said, the chapter suggests, that the Anglo-US model of criminal justice is particularly suited to dramatisation. There is certainly something theatrical about the tiered courtroom, the costumes donned by legal officials, and the battle that is played out between legal advocates – all central features of the adversarial model. The other dominant model of criminal justice – and the one popular in most of continental Europe – relies instead upon round-table discussion and a collective endeavour for the truth in which the judge and defendant tend to play a central role. The presentation of evidence might be done in a less theatrical manner, but this system is much more conducive to complex stories being told in full; courtroom proceedings that follow this model might therefore possess a literary quality. Moore's chapter considers how the courtroom episodes at the end of Stieg Larsson's *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* show up the relationship between storytelling and justice in the Scandinavian system of criminal justice. Such a system of criminal justice is seen, in the novel and chapter, to allow for back-stories to be heard, a more fluent discussion of evidence, and complex stories to be told in full. Larsson's final novel gives us an opportunity to consider these benefits more fully.

Larsson's final novel: it is sad that such a definitive ending marks the world of *Millennium* due to the writer's early death at the age of 50, in 2004. Sadder still is the fact that Larsson himself never witnessed the publication or tremendous success of his novels, the first of which was released in Sweden in 2005, and the UK in 2008. His estate is now held by his partner, Eva Gabrielsson, who has published her own account of their time together, *'There are Things that I Want You to Know': About Stieg Larsson and Me*.[8] Rumours abound of a fourth novel in fragments on a laptop locked away by Gabrielsson, though at the time of writing, it remains private and I for one hope an unfinished draft manuscript stays that way.[9] Larsson's legacy is borne out in the works of a future generation of Scandinavian crime writers, and all those involved in the film and television productions, finally receiving much-deserved attention on a global scale.

Notes

1. http://www.salon.com/2002/07/29/bond_titles/.
2. *Män som hatar kvinnor* (*Men Who Hate Women*), 2005. English translation by Reg Keeland under the title *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, January 2008 (London: Quercus). US release 16 September 2008.
3. Henning Mankell's *Wallander* novels (1991–2009) are enormously popular in his native Scandinavia, Germany and the UK, and have won many awards including the German Crime Prize and the British 2001 Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger Award for *Sidetracked*. The novels, in order of publication, are *Mördare utan ansikte* (1991; English translation by Steven T. Murray: *Faceless Killers*, 1997); *Hundarna i Riga* (1992; English translation by Laurie Thompson: *The Dogs of Riga*, 2001); *Den vita lejoninnan* (1993; English translation by Laurie Thompson: *The White Lioness*, 1998); *Mannen som log* (1994; English translation by Laurie Thompson: *The Man Who Smiled*, 2005); *Villospår* (1995; English translation by Steven T. Murray: *Sidetracked*, 1999); *Den femte kvinnan* (1996; English translation by Steven T. Murray: *The Fifth Woman*, 2000); *Steget efter* (1997; English translation by Ebba Segerberg: *One Step Behind*, 2002); *Brandvägg* (1998; English translation by Ebba Segerberg: *Firewall*, 2002); *Pyramiden* (1999; short stories; English translation by Ebba Segerberg with Laurie Thompson: *The Pyramid*, 2008); *Den orolige mannen* (2009; English translation by Laurie Thompson: *The Troubled Man*, 2011).
4. First series: *Sidetracked* (aired 30 November 2008); *Firewall* (aired 7 December 2008); *One Step Behind* (aired 14 December 2008). Second series: *Faceless Killers* (aired 3 January 2010); *The Man Who Smiled* (aired 10 January 2010); *The Fifth Woman* (aired 17 January 2010). Third series:

An Event in Autumn (1 April 2012); *The Dogs of Riga* (8 April 2012); *Before the Frost* (15 April 2012).

5. http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2011-11-18/the-killing-knit-your-own-sarah-lund-jumper.
6. See for example, Janet McCabe http://cstonline.tv/nothing-like-dane, and Sam Wollaston http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/2012/jan/07/tv-review-borgen-sherlock.
7. Edward Docx, 'Stieg and Dan: Two of a Bad Kind?', The New Review, *Observer*, 12 December 2010, p. 36.
8. Eva Gabrielsson with Marie-Francoise Colomban, *'There Are Things that I Want You to Know': About Stieg Larsson and Me* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2011).
9. See for example, Elaine Sciolino http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/17/a-word-from-stieg-larssons-partner-and-would-be-collaborator/.

1
The Larsson Phenomenon: Sales Figures and Sexual Abuse

Barry Forshaw

Stieg Larsson was comfortably the most commercially successful writer of the first decade of the twenty-first century, albeit posthumously. His phenomenal success has been rivalled only by the American Dan Brown.[1] But the late Swedish writer's achievement is shot through with knotty paradoxes. Was he (as his admirers would have it) a gifted novelist who forged a radical reinvention of the strategies of popular fiction, possessed of a *non-pareil* gift for narrative? Or was he (as per his detractors) a prolix, inelegant wordsmith, undeserving of the acclaim that came his way after death? Larsson has achieved a position of literary respectability of the sort that has so far evaded his American counterpart. To make sense of the arguments for and against this acclaim, the Larsson phenomenon merits sustained inquiry on a level with Blomkvist and Salander's own sleuthing.

What follows in this essay is an attempt to map out the topography of key elements in the Larsson phenomenon:[2] his radical approach to the mechanics of the crime/thriller form (as adumbrated above); his remarkable productivity before his early death (three substantial novels in a trilogy delivered before publication, a virtually unprecedented achievement in the thriller field); the much-discussed nature of his early death; the acrimonious, unresolved familial dispute over his estate; and – most crucially – an examination of the highly contentious sexual underpinnings of his work. The latter elements are the most significant in terms of their value as plot engines, as well as for their passionately avowed feminism (a putative feminism, in fact, which is the source of much discussion concerning the author's

ambiguous approach to his material). Principally, as will be posited and discussed here, it is the author's presentation of a variety of sexual acts (consensual and otherwise) which is the *locus classicus* for any understanding of the *Millennium* trilogy, not least in terms of its sexually abused polymorphous heroine.

Nordic iconoclasm

The Scandinavian countries have long been a breeding ground for iconoclastic, groundbreaking approaches to the arts. Modern drama, for instance, was forged in the uncompromising plays of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, whose stripping bare of layers of psychology was immensely influential on the playwrights of other nations (George Bernard Shaw, for instance), and has virtually become the *lingua franca* of modern theatre.[3] Similarly, artists in other fields from the Nordic countries have often been characterised by a bloody-minded readiness to dispense with the shibboleths dear to earlier generations: the most influential of Nordic composers, Jean Sibelius, for instance. In his Seventh Symphony of 1924, the composer deconstructed conventional symphonic form, creating blocks of sound – virtually inert passages for brass which give way to string ostinati of nervous intensity – the conventional developmental passages that listeners would have been used to virtually absent. Similarly, the Danish Carl Nielsen, in his aggressive Fifth Symphony of 1920–1922, sets up a titanic battle between his orchestral forces and the manic improvisations of a side drummer (the composer's instruction is that extempore passages for percussion should halt the progress of the orchestra). The violence of these sections (at least in unbuttoned performances that do justice to the directions of the composer) alternate – as in Sibelius – passages of savagery and intensity with sinuously undulating melodies, with virtually no attempt to integrate the two.

Intriguingly, this musicological model was to be followed by the most successful of all Scandinavian crime and thriller writers, Stieg Larsson, whose orchestration of his literary effects similarly eschews an organic development. Larsson demonstrates a kindred reluctance to integrate expository passages with more kinetic writing designed to raise the pulse of the reader. As with his musical forebears, Larsson creates a destabilising effect in which disparate elements

are shoehorned together in a fashion that would have been considered inelegant by earlier generations, but which now seems utterly contemporary. This parallel syndrome has resulted in the fact that Nielsen and Sibelius now seem to be very much more relevant composers to our own fragmented era than more mellifluous musicians such as Grieg. Much Nordic crime writing (notably Stieg Larsson) presents a similarly fragmentary, angular syntax (a challenge for the translator of the texts into English) which grants a unique quality to the narratives. This angularity is reflected within the decidedly non-English structure of some of the Nordic languages, in particular, Danish (perhaps as exemplified in the abrupt octave leaps of that country's most significant composer, the aforementioned Nielsen).

After the sprawling, patchwork construction of the thriller narrative that Larsson forged, these innovations have become (to some extent) the norm, and other contemporary blockbuster thrillers are beginning to show his influence.[4]

Groundbreaking duo

So, might a case be made for two authors inaugurating a similar shibboleth-shaking upheaval in the field of Scandinavian crime fiction? Alongside considerations of Larsson, we can also usefully refer to the impact and achievements of fellow Swede and crime-writer Henning Mankell. Mankell is best known as the author of a series of novels forming the *Wallander* mysteries. It is certainly true that Mankell and Larsson performed radical surgery on this rarefied form of popular literature and (like Sibelius and Nielsen) retain an ineluctable position as the twin calling cards for their field, as yet unrivalled in terms of both sales and influence (although, in terms of influence, the Swedish duo of Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö should be noted; the first Scandinavian crime writers, in fact, to achieve international success). The Norwegian writer Jo Nesbø is rapidly gaining ground with such books as *The Snowman*, to the extent that in late 2011 his publishers were claiming that the author was selling a book every 23 seconds.[5] And perhaps to the general reader, unaware of the imposing amount of Scandinavian crime fiction written in the late twentieth century (much of it as yet not translated into English), the names of Mankell and Larsson as the two key masters of the Nordic

crime novel would occur before any other practitioners in the field sprang to mind.[6]

Avant-Larsson

The Scandinavian invasion of the crime-fiction field has had a striking effect on every aspect of the publishing industry, in terms of sales (which are prodigious, with many publishers scrabbling to find the next influential – or saleable – writer in the field) and critical approval, with most serious newspapers now giving the same kind of informed attention to writing in this popular genre customarily accorded to literary fiction.[7] In fact, the perceived literary quality of the Scandinavian crime novel is one of the Trojan horses by which a variety of writers made inroads. This was undoubtedly true of Stieg Larsson, but by the time his three posthumous works had attained their current levels of unprecedented popularity, a certain cold-eyed reassessment of Larsson's abilities was under way – a reassessment, what's more, which led to a forensic examination of the role of the translator in making this material available to non-Scandinavian readers. This reassessment has had the effect of making many readers appreciate the value of linguistically sensitive translations.

As writers from the Nordic countries began to make commercial inroads in Britain and the United States, the translation process began to be examined thoughtfully (heretofore such endeavours were often invisible, although William Weaver's celebrated translation of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* was perhaps the first version of a major novel to be considered in terms of its sympathetic translation as much as the achievement of the Italian essayist and novelist). Certainly, the use of language in the field of Scandinavian crime fiction invites considered attention. For Nordic writing, a variety of highly esteemed translators (Don Bartlett, Laurie Thompson, Marlaine Delargy, Charlotte Barslund, Kari Dickson and Sarah Death, among others) are now recognised as contributing immeasurably to the success of the texts that they work on, making decisions that crucially affect the original authors' choices. This, of course, goes beyond the mere transliteration of the original languages but registers in the apposite choice of phrase which can subtly alter the character of the original prose. Similarly, in terms of a final accumulation

of effect, the translator – as much as an editor – may orchestrate elements of the narrative to offer a different experience for the English reader. Larsson translations throughout the world offer very different experiences from the original Swedish version.[8]

One aspect of the popularity of Nordic crime fiction was perhaps a corollary of the search for innovation in the field. The genre frequently seemed moribund in the late 1990s as British and American practitioners relied on recycling familiar elements which were regarded as sure-fire in terms of conditioned reader response, and Nordic crime fiction was perceived as being qualitatively aligned with literary fiction. This gave more ambitious readers the promise of the best of both worlds: the visceral, low excitement of the crime novel combined with a more creative and elegant use of language than is customarily to be found in the commercial field. There was also, to some degree, a concatenation of various trends, both in literature and film (if television is included in the latter category); two simultaneous television series based on Henning Mankell's signature character, the dour detective Kurt Wallander, had brought the character – and, *inter alia*, Mankell's writing – to a whole new audience, and similar work was done by the remarkable Danish television series *The Killing* (*Forbrydelsen*, written by Søren Sveistrup), which demonstrated a welcome readiness to sideline the kinetic qualities of British and American cop shows, replacing them with a measured existential tone more akin to European art cinema.[9]

The Killing's tenacious, humourless policewoman Sarah Lund sported the kind of dysfunctional lifestyle that had heretofore been the province of fictional male coppers, Lynda La Plante's similarly awkward Jane Tennison aside. But before the Faroe-Island-jumper-sporting policewoman became a cult figure (notably in the UK more markedly than in her native Denmark – and certainly before any screenings of the series in America, which showed its customary resistance to subtitled material), a female heroine far more dysfunctional than Sarah Lund had captured the imagination of readers (and subsequently filmgoers via a trilogy of intelligent Swedish films from Henning Mankell's production company): Stieg Larsson's uncommunicative punk-goth heroine Lisbeth Salander, the eponymous Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. But there were many antecedents of the latter figure, and the author himself – omnivorous in his reading – utilised a variety of elements to forge his memorable (and damaged)

protagonist. However, most aspects of Larsson's writing have clear precedents, which the author himself was ready to acknowledge.

Drawing a map

Despite their relative proximity, the individual characters of the Scandinavian countries are markedly pronounced, and enthusiastically (even forcefully) celebrated by their various inhabitants – although a certain wry tolerance is extended to British and American notions of all the Nordic nations as constituting one amorphous mass (something I've found when discussing such perceptions with Scandinavian crime-fiction novelists[10]). Interestingly, if the latter perceptions are being subtly changed of late, it may well be due to the immense popularity of Scandinavian crime fiction as opposed to any classroom initiatives or the success of literary Nordic writing (which remains more modest: such 'serious' writers as Per Petterson enjoy critical encomiums but unspectacular sales). Aficionados of the genre are learning to distinguish between the Norway of Jo Nesbø, the Sweden of Johan Theorin and the Finland of the late Matti Joensuu. As well as affording the pleasures that are comfortably within crime fiction's customary remit, these authors (and their numerous *confrères*) have helped realise for readers a complex, nuanced picture of Scandinavian society, with a wide variety of sociopolitical insights built into the narratives – notably, of course, among the latter a rigorous and sober examination of the European social democratic ideal, an ideal celebrated (until recently) in unquestioning fashion by observers in Britain, America and the rest of Europe, but now under severe strain. The *aperçus* afforded to readers by such fiction, however, are not freighted into the novels in any straight-faced editorialising fashion on the part of the various Scandinavian writers; such insights (generally speaking) are incorporated within the exigencies of popular crime fiction, whose deepest imperative is to entertain, with societal analysis never subsuming the eternal pleasures of narrative.

German conquests

Speak to any Scandinavian crime author, and you're likely to hear stories of how commercially successful they are in Germany; sometimes,

in fact, more so than in their native countries (such writers as Camilla Läckberg are notable successes in both countries). But by the first decade of the twenty-first century, these idiosyncratic novels were beginning to break into Britain and America, with an index of their growing popularity to be found in the burgeoning newspaper and television coverage (not to mention a new hunger on the part of publishers to corral their own dedicated Scandinavian talent – thereby offering some kind of challenge to the sales of Stieg Larsson, Henning Mankell, and company). Literary agents from the Nordic countries have remarked upon how much easier it is at present to make appointments with British publishers when discussing possible new acquisitions; this is a marked change from the situation as it existed at the turn of the last century, when Nordic authors with barely pronounceable names were considered caviar to the general, and doors remained closed.

Triple appeal

The appeal of such fiction for non-Scandinavian readers is, to some degree, tripartite: there is the intriguing dichotomy between the familiar and unfamiliar which Nordic fiction specifically offers to British readers (along with concomitant identification for the English reader of life in a recognisably unforgiving climate); the radical transformation (and even elimination) of cliché in the structure of most Scandinavian fiction (although the corollary of this is the growth of a whole new set of familiar conventions now growing up in the field); and, perhaps most significantly, the continuing gloss of the literary cachet which such material is still perceived as possessing. Regarding the last factor, even the most cursory examination of the genre will suggest that there is just as wide a range of achievement and misfire as in similar fare from any other country, with every example of elegant stylish writing matched by more workaday fare. The literary aspect, of course, is finessed by the impressive proficiency of the newly esteemed breed of translator who demonstrates a total understanding of the nuances of the Nordic languages. Most tellingly, what is recognised by the most casual reader is the fact that Nordic crime fiction is frequently prepared to take some audacious leaps into unfamiliar territory, producing work which is both generic and strikingly individual at the same time. The *primum mobile* for the syndrome is, of course, the late Stieg Larsson.

Posthumous fame

By now, the basic elements of Stieg Larsson's life are well known, and barely need rehearsing. Perhaps the most significant aspect of his celebrity lies in the fact that his was a posthumous success, and that the author did not live to see the three books of the *Millennium* trilogy (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played with Fire* and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*) become an unprecedented publishing phenomenon. Stories of such posthumous fame have long maintained a considerable hold on the imagination, particularly when that success did not register in the creator's lifetime. For example, Georges Bizet saw the premiere of *Carmen* receive lacklustre reviews and the composer had no idea that it would go on to become the world's most popular opera; Bizet was criticised by contemporary critics for *Carmen*'s lack of melodiousness (a judgement which seems bizarre to modern ears) and, before Friedrich Nietzsche called it 'the most perfect opera ever written' (*Der Fall Wagner/The Wagner Case*, 1888), it was even suggested that it was the kind of piece 'His Satanic Majesty' might write. Such was the verdict of the *London Music Trade Review*, which boasts a denunciation of the central character in language reminiscent of that sometimes used about Lisbeth Salander: 'The heroine is an abandoned woman, destitute not only of any vestige of morality, but devoid of the ordinary feelings of humanity – soulless, heartless, and fiendish. Indeed, so repulsive was the subject of the opera that some of the best artists of Paris declined to be involved in the cast.'[11]

Of course, had Stieg Larsson not become one of the most successful popular authors of all time, he would now be celebrated (by a much smaller coterie of admirers than he now enjoys) as something of a political hero, a man who took on a variety of sinister far-right enemies, and whose early death in 2004 at the age of 50 provoked much fanciful speculation. What had caused his demise? Was the official explanation – a massive heart attack – to be taken at face value? Or did his neo-Nazi opponents (who often threatened his life) have something to do with his early death?

Scion of the left

Larsson, born 400 miles north of Stockholm, was the scion of a family that took decisions which may seem strange to modern English

readers. As a boy, he was sent to live with his grandfather when his mother and father felt that they could not give him an adequate upbringing.[12] The influence of this grandfather – an intensely political figure whose views led Larsson towards sympathy with the Communist Party and the traditional 1960s rejection of American foreign policy in such countries as Vietnam – was to forge (to some degree) the kind of man that Stieg Larsson became. As a journalist on the magazine he helped create, *Expo* (transformed into the magazine *Millennium* on which he has his protagonist Mikael Blomkvist work), Larsson was a brave – sometimes foolhardy – campaigning journalist. As well as his sorties against far-right groups, he was a supporter of the rights of battered women (a highly significant initiative for him, given the tenor of the narratives he would address in his trilogy of crime novels). Larsson was also concerned with defending the rights of oppressed women in fundamentalist theocratic countries.

It can be observed that the feminist credentials which Larsson's supporters celebrate (and those with a more ambiguous view of his achievements criticise) were clearly an element in both his campaigns and his writing before he began the sequence of novels that was to ensure his posthumous acclaim. Before his single-minded determination to succeed as a novelist, he was celebrated as an authority on extremist organisations (to the degree that he was able to lecture Scotland Yard on neo-Nazi groups and even became the Swedish correspondent for the British magazine *Searchlight*, which took on similar opponents in the United Kingdom). The writer began his 30-year stint as *Searchlight*'s Scandinavian correspondent after National Service, at about the time that he decided to devote his life to tackling fascism along with racial and religious intolerance. He also wrote about the incendiary subject of honour killings, and the rise of the far right in Sweden (a country which had a punk music scene similar to that in Great Britain, but which was radically different in one respect: where British punk groups embraced nihilism and anarchism, Scandinavian 'white power' groups (with punk influences) often extolled specifically right-wing agendas.

All of this, of course, could well have engendered a slew of dangerous enemies and produced a recipe for a short, abruptly curtailed life – but it is now generally acknowledged that the reasons for Stieg Larsson's death had more to do with other reckless lifestyle choices than the nemeses he chose to tackle.

It is well known that Larsson and his partner Eva Gabrielsson (an architectural historian who is now the principal torch-holder for his reputation) shared a similar lifestyle and she was inevitably obliged to take the same precautions as her brave (reckless?) companion. If the two were sitting in a restaurant together, they would arrange it so that both had different entrances in view. To some degree, these conflicts with perceived enemies were harbingers of the less physically dangerous but no less bitter disputes that are now the *de facto* norm between Gabrielsson and Larsson's blood relatives after the death of the writer. What was once a mere talking point (this acrimonious posthumous battle) has become an issue on which it is now regarded as necessary to take sides. Who do you support: the late writer's partner of many years – or the family from whom he appears to have been estranged? (There are communications between Larsson and his brother which cast doubt on the latter interpretation.[13]) There is, of course, a third way of regarding the brouhaha – and it is one which is gaining increasing support: the feeling that all the parties involved in the dispute should be able to come to an accommodation after the years of bitterness.

On occasion, Eva Gabrielsson has likened herself (some have felt, unwisely) to the beleaguered heroine of her late partner's *Millennium* trilogy: the much put-upon (but immensely resilient) computer hacker Lisbeth Salander.[14] And there are many (particularly in Sweden) who see Gabrielsson as a wronged woman, with implacable forces lined up against her, in analogous fashion to Larsson's fictional protagonist. Such notions, however, are not (in the final analysis) relevant to any consideration of the novels and the narrative strategies they employ.

British success

When the independent British publishers Quercus (who have also been responsible for such unlikely successes as Stef Penney's *The Tenderness of Wolves*[15]) inaugurated an early print run of 200,000 copies of Stieg Larsson's novel *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, eyebrows were initially raised.[16] The publisher (an enterprising maverick run, at the time of writing, by Mark Smith) was celebrated for its intelligent choice of foreign fiction in translation, principally courtesy of the company's *éminence grise*, the much-respected veteran publisher

Christopher MacLehose, who might be said to have launched the current wave of Scandinavian crime fiction popularity with the seminal *Miss Smilla's Feelings for Snow* by Peter Høeg.[17] The initial success of the Larsson book (in a translation by Reg Keeland, also known as Steven Murray) was regarded as another piece of perspicacious publishing by a man with a gift for spotting breakout literary fiction. But then the sales of the book began to move into stratospheric realms (far beyond the reach of most literary fiction), and other publishers (envious of the phenomenon) began to cast around for the reasons for the success of the book – and the two novels the author had already written before his premature death. The completion of the trilogy before the author's death, along with years of abuse of his own body (long periods of overwork with a diet of junk food and a 60-a-day cigarette habit) were very quickly part of the legend, even before the onerous battle over the estate began to gain coverage in newspapers around the world. But inevitably, it was the content of the books themselves that had rival publishers scrambling to discern the recipe for its unprecedented success. Was this a case of the syndrome first identified by William Goldman in regard to Hollywood – 'nobody knows anything'?[18] For while there are quantifiable factors that could be identified and then, hopefully, reproduced, the literary alchemy that gave birth to Larsson's success was – initially – mystifying. But the code breaker for the enigma was one principal element that publishers and readers quickly focused on. The element could be summed up in two words; the name of Stieg Larsson's sociopathic heroine: Lisbeth Salander.

The Salander factor

In the course of the vast, sprawling, politically charged, sexually graphic, violent epic that is the *Millennium* trilogy, Larsson (who, as emails to his publisher revealed, painstakingly anatomised and utilised what he perceived as the 'hot button' elements of crime/thriller novels from writers he admired such as Val McDermid, Thomas Harris and Sarah Paretsky[19]) allows the reader – whether male or female – a surrogate, the disgraced middle-aged journalist Mikael Blomkvist. But readers, like the author's male protagonist, are invited to gaze out (sometimes in admiration, sometimes in horror) at the young, sexually polymorphous, punk heroine (who remains

essentially unknowable – ironically, one of the writer's key achievements). Lisbeth Salander was something of an innovation in terms of character in the crime fiction genre: the tattooed torso, ill-matched clothes and pierced face that she presents to the world are deliberately designed to alienate and maintain distance. The eponymous dragon tattoo on her body is, of course, likely to be seen only by her sexual partners. And as Salander's sexuality is protean, the latter will be both male and female, consensual and non-consensual. In fact, it is the non-consensual sex in the novel that quickly became one of its most talked about and controversial elements – defended as possessing a keen feminist tenor by its supporters, strongly criticised by those who felt that the forced sexual encounters in the book were gloating and exploitative, granted a cynical feminist gloss in order to make them acceptable (and politically correct) to modern readers.

Speaking to the crime-fiction author and clinical psychologist Frank Tallis when I was writing the first UK biography of Larsson, we discussed the resonances that exist between psychotherapy and detection. 'For Larsson,' Tallis said,

> crimes are like symptoms and the process of detection is very similar to psychotherapy. We have to dig deep, to find the perpetrator or the traumatic memory. Larsson exploits these relationships in an inspired way. We are presented with a mystery – but embedded within it is another, and perhaps more compelling, mystery: that of Salander, a violent, anti-social young woman who has been labelled psychotic and appears to have obsessional and autistic personality characteristics. At one point, she is described as looking like a half-witted fifteen-year-old anarchist. As her resourcefulness and impressive talents are revealed, we want to know – more than anything else – the answers to questions that a psychotherapist would ask. Why is she the way she is? What motivates her? What makes her tick?[20]

As Tallis says, we are as interested in Salander's personal psychology as we are in the overarching plot. Tallis continues,

> Although Salander is given various psychiatric labels, an accurate diagnosis seems impossible. In this respect, Larsson demonstrates his liberal credentials, because, in actual fact, there is nothing

'wrong' with her at all. She is not 'medically' ill. One is reminded of stalwarts of the anti-psychiatry movement, renegades like Thomas Szasz[21] and R.D. Laing,[22] who suggested that a mind can only be sick in a metaphorical sense, and that 'madness' is the only sane response to an insane world. It is unusual for a work of genre fiction to address such profound issues. They are at the very heart of *The Millennium Trilogy*, and provide a satisfying philosophical underpinning to a fast-paced, dramatic narrative. Few people have been able to pull this off, but Larsson succeeds with a light touch and without the usual tub-thumping piety.[23]

Dangerous vulnerability

In spite of the off-putting carapace that the combative Lisbeth Salander has built around herself, she is, in fact, a deeply damaged individual (for numerous reasons that Larsson will reveal to readers during the course of the narrative). One of the key causes of her vulnerability is the fact that she is the victim of sexual abuse – repeated sexual abuse, in fact, as we are to learn. The progress of the abuse is unfolded in unflinching fashion during the course of the first book and also presented in a flashback by Larsson (with no warning that we are no longer dealing with events taking place in the present). In what is now a famous stylistic tic, Larsson precedes many sections of the book with superscriptions, all concerned with the brutalisation and subjugation of women at the hands of the male sex. Larsson's original title for the first book was *Men Who Hate Women* (the title by which it is known in its native country) and Eva Gabrielsson has made explicit her own deep displeasure at the changing of her partner's title, reminding us that he was at considerable pains to avoid it being altered. Few, however, in the publishing world would argue with the fact that it was an extremely perspicacious move to alter the title of the first book to that which it is now known by, along with ensuring that subsequent books maintained the unity of 'The Girl . . . ' motif. What's more, the original title may be seen as distinctly tendentious and, at the same time, unnecessary: readers of the book are left in no doubt as to Larsson's jaundiced attitude towards many members of his own sex. The sexual brutalisation that Salander repeatedly receives is describing in unflinching detail, and is perhaps the key source of the controversy over the

attitude behind the authorial voice. In a duality of response, there are two principal defence claims: first, that Larsson allows the consensual sexual encounters to be described in a non-judgemental fashion, notably the lesbian encounters involving the bisexual Salander. And the author's feminist credentials are further burnished by the fact that fact that no feminist writer of the 1970s (when male sexual desire was frequently identified as a negative and destructive force as opposed to the purer anima) could have described the violations with more incendiary fury than the male writer of the books presents here.

The feminist writer Andrea Dworkin's ineluctable linking of male desire with rape is echoed by all the violent brutalisation which is to be found within the pages of the trilogy, and her assertion that sexual intercourse is the pure, sterile, formal expression of men's contempt for women has a Larssonian ring (Dworkin, *Intercourse*, 1987). But such apparent misandry – on Larsson's part – is undercut (as if in exoneration of the male sex) by Mikael Blomkvist's formidable series of positively described amorous conquests. What's more, the trilogy's crucial episode involving heterosexual, consensual sex (as opposed to similar, positively described lesbian encounters) takes place between Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomkvist, and is conducted exclusively on her own no-nonsense terms rather than his.

The encounter occurs after the journalist's disgrace and his reluctantly accepted commission to investigate a disappearance in the wealthy Vanger family with the surly Lisbeth helping him, despite what appears to be her extreme hostility. When she unexpectedly appears in his room one night, and virtually demands sex, we are given a good example of how the author repeatedly inverts the clichés and conventions of genre fiction. In the same fashion in which, as Larsson told his editor, he would make his hero the 'bimbo' (i.e. have Blomkvist adopt a helpless female role in dangerous circumstances, and would reconfigure the heroine to be a violence-dispensing saviour for the helpless male),[24] the sexual encounter here is dictated by the female protagonist. It is made very clear to Blomkvist that Salander will be annoyed if he is not prepared to sleep with her, and when he points out that he has no condoms, her reply is 'Screw that'. The brusque but erotic sexual encounter, like so much else involving Salander, firmly turns well-worn conventions on their

head and is further proof (for those in the pro-Larsson camp) that the author's feminist credentials are impeccable. But this view is hotly contested, as we shall see.

Dissenters

Those who have rejected Larsson's image as a feminist writer often utilise the methodology which reverses virtually all of the points in the preceding catalogue. Despite the worthy superscriptions detailing the appalling sexual behaviour of the male sex throughout the ages, Larsson, his dissenters claim, is attempting to have his cake and eat it. While the various sexual assaults described in the novels could hardly be described as titillating – except perhaps in terms of a very specialist reading of the books – their extremely graphic nature has nevertheless been characterised as gloating and exploitative. What's more, the sheer number of assaults endured by the luckless heroine (not to mention other female members of the dramatis personae) stretches credulity. The syndrome has been described as inviting, in even the most enlightened reader, something akin to a kind of remark famously made by antediluvian judges to the effect that Salander must be – in some unconscious fashion – 'asking for it'. Certainly, the author presents his heroine as a serial victim (although of course, those who rape or brutalise Salander inevitably play a very heavy price, often inviting far worse violence on their own persons than they inflicted on their seemingly helpless victim).

Loading the dice

What's more, the dissenters' claim that Larsson's heavy loading of the dice where his despicable villains are concerned (and all three novels present a virtual army of utterly reprehensible male monsters) allows a truly exploitative detailing of both the original sexual violations and the subsequent hyper-violent settling of dues. It is, the detractors say, a crass kind of reader manipulation, having far more in common with a low-budget slasher film than the rarefied literary thriller genre to which the books were originally characterised as belonging. The presentation of Blomkvist's sexuality as something positive and irresistible is also, it is argued, not to be taken at face

value. Like his creator, Blomkvist is a paunchy, middle-aged journalist who takes on far-right opponents, but seems to enjoy an endless succession of available women, all presenting themselves for him even though Larsson never takes the trouble to explain his hero's appeal. In other words, the anti-Larsson camp claims, Blomkvist is simply an unpersuasive wish-fulfilment figure for the author or the male reader, vicariously enjoying this sexual licence. Whichever of these two wildly disparate views the reader chooses to accept, both are given a certain gravity in line with the author's reinvention of the standard tropes of the thriller – and it is a measure of Larsson's achievement that it is actually possible for the reader to change his or her mind during the course of the narrative, rather in the way that Fyodor Dostoyevsky – whatever his own views – presented equally persuasive arguments for both Christianity and atheism during the course of *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoyevsky's original title for the book was *Atheism*, and when the Christian novice Alexey is extolling the virtues of Christianity, Dostoyevsky allows him to be the most persuasive of advocates, but subsequently affords the same courtesy to his secular writer brother Ivan when the latter is arguing for a humanist approach to existence.[25]

Contrary voices

The debate over Stieg Larsson's command of language is a complex one, and also – to some degree – a clandestine one. In conversations with this writer, several important practitioners of the crime novel form expressed surprise that such clumsy and inelegant writing (as they perceive it) gleaned so many critical endorsements, leaving aside notions of the importance of the process of translation with regard to this issue. This discussion may remain a discreet one, because at least one important crime novelist declined to be quoted on the subject, for fear that any caveats concerning Larsson's use of language would seem like an unappealing combination of envy and resentment on the part of any less successful writer – which, in terms of commercial success, might be said to be virtually everyone. Such considerations clearly do not constrain writers expatiating on the prose of such novelists as Jeffrey Archer, who (despite massive sales) does not possess the literary imprimatur of Stieg Larsson.

When speaking to the novelist N.J. Cooper for *The Man Who Left Too Soon*, I found she had no compunction about expressing her reservations concerning both Larsson's writing and his feminism:

> Stieg Larsson's three enormous novels about Lisbeth Salander are one of international publishing's most peculiar successes. There is a powerful and moving story embedded in them [...] but Larsson took something like 1,500 pages to tell his story. His characterisation veers between the absurd and the perfunctory, which makes distinguishing between some of the individuals in the story hard work. The violence he scatters about the volumes is so extreme as to be farcical. Much of the writing is turgid and careless. He piles up vast amounts of unnecessary details, e.g. every single item Salander buys when she goes to IKEA to furnish her flat. Larsson himself was clearly aware of the deficiencies in his fiction. He writes in the first volume, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, about the hero's lover's assessment of his work: 'Berger thought that the book was the best thing Blomkvist had ever written. It was uneven stylistically, and in places the writing was actually rather poor – there had been no time for any fine polishing [...]'.
>
> There is no doubt that huge numbers of readers enjoy tales of unrealistically tough, transgressive women like Salander. They revel in stories of bloated plutocrats being brought low by plucky individuals. And [...] Larsson gives them plenty of [these elements]. His hero is generally accepted to be a more or less autobiographical figure, which may be why he did not trouble to do more than sketch his character [...]. It is suggested that [Blomkvist] is enormously attractive to women, and also that he detests the sex trade and all other manifestations of misogyny.
>
> Myself, I don't see any particular feminist importance in the 1,500 pages of the *Millennium* trilogy. Swedish girls may have been empowered by reading about Pippi Longstocking's prowess, but I can't see any teenager deciding to model herself on Salander after immersing herself in these novels – or having a better life if she did. Quite apart from Salander's cartoonish physical attributes (all the less convincing in fact because she is noticeably small), and her delight in her own thefts, she is portrayed as using sex as coldly as her own abusers. Sexual abuse undoubtedly distorts its victims' views of their bodies and emotions, but Salander's sexual activities

> would not fit neatly into any feminist manifesto [...] like most enduring fairytales, the *Millennium* trilogy deals with dark and terrifying things in an excitingly exaggerated manner that has little to do with most people's direct experience and so lifts them out of their own mundane lives for a while.[26]

This analysis, it should be noted, is by no means atypical, and is even shared by those who admit to being in thrall to the books and the character of Salander, unlike Cooper.

The inheritors

The Salander phenomenon has given birth to a healthy post-Larsson industry, with readers hungry for the late author's successors, and publishers are furnishing a slew of candidates. The Dane Jussi Adler-Olsen is one such; his novel *Mercy* has been a phenomenal success in various languages. Despite clear congruence between Denmark and its Nordic neighbours, there are striking divergences; Danes pride themselves on being the cultural nexus of Scandinavia, boasting a cornucopia of modern design, tolerance and innovation. But, of course, Denmark is no fairy-tale country. The government is under the sway of right-wing politicians (to the dismay of its more liberal inhabitants, notably those in the arts); immigration laws are routinely criticised by the United Nations; and Denmark is engaged in the Iraq conflict. And Copenhagen, like other big cities, has its own violent gangs, prostitution, poverty and drug problems. These currents – the good and the bad – inform Adler-Olsen's weighty (and disturbing) novel. *Mercy* deals with corrupt individuals, social outsiders and manipulative psychopaths, and the spectacle of the abuse of power in the 'perfect' social democracy of Denmark (not to mention grim visions of torture in this sylvan setting) has a lacerating force.

Jussi Adler-Olsen has written several novels in the Department Q series, which have enjoyed great success in Germany and Denmark.[27] His real coup in *Mercy* (the first to be translated into English) is perhaps Mørck's seemingly maladroit assistant Assad, a Moslem utterly lacking in social skills (à la Lisbeth Salander, but in a different fashion) and possessed of astonishing counter-intuitiveness. It is the eccentric Assad as much as the over-familiar figure of

the burnt-out detective who underlines the socio-political underpinnings of the novel. Assad is presented as a character lacking in social skills; almost, at times, an idiot savant whose inability to relate to others conceals a fierce analytical intelligence and an almost supernatural ability to make connections – an ability denied to those who function in a more normal capacity. Adler-Olsen's particular skill lies in the steady revelation of his secondary character's importance to the narrative structure; initially, the author uses sleight of hand to persuade the reader that we are dealing with a minor comic character. But Assad is no piece of window-dressing – and his centrality to the structure is revealed as the novel progresses.

Other times, other lives

The individual character of post-Larsson writers' work can seem similar, dealing as they frequently do with the assault on social democrat ideals. But certain writers stand out from the pack. This is the case with Leif G.W. Persson, whose sprawling, pungent, state-of-the-nation novels utilise the tropes of crime fiction to identify the fault-lines in Scandinavian society. *Another Time, Another Life* is the second in a trilogy which the author has called 'The Story of a Crime' – audaciously, as the gold standard of all Scandinavian crime fiction is the sequence of books by Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö which bear that title.[28] But Persson is very much his own man. As in the earlier *Between Summer's Longing and Winter's End*, the crime at the centre of the book (there, the assassination of Prime Minister Olof Palme, here a Baader-Meinhof terrorist outrage) opens up in widescreen fashion into a picture with the broadest national perspective, illuminating a society under deep strain, as in Larsson's fiction. Persson uses myriad techniques: detailed, gritty police narrative and cool documentary perspective, to create a baggy (weighing in at over 600 pages), compelling and idiosyncratic novel. The book begins with the 1975 Baader-Meinhof bombing of the German Embassy in Stockholm, but stretches out over a decade, tying in other crimes (notably several bloody murders) to the original incident, thereby echoing Larsson. We are shown the unvarnished activities of less-than-sympathetic Swedish coppers (another Larssonian touch), led

by the caustic Jarnebring, as sexist and macho as in the first book, now coping with a new female detective partner (who quickly shows that she can give as good as she gets). In fact, the controversial aspect of the earlier book (the misogyny of its officers) is here countered by the resourcefulness and professionalism of the female characters.

New heroines

Inevitably, the groundbreaking notion of placing a markedly original heroine at the centre of a crime narrative – and its unprecedented success in Stieg Larsson's case – has created a taste for more and more distinctive heroines. A near-namesake, the Swede Asa Larsson (who shared the same UK publisher, Quercus/MacLehose Press), in such books as *The Savage Altar*, had already obliged, though her protagonist is cut from a more orthodox cloth than Salander.[29] In Asa Larsson's signature book, the body of an establishment figure is found, grotesquely mutilated, in a large public building, heralding an investigation into a labyrinthine and dangerous conspiracy. But Asa Larsson's *The Savage Altar* sports prose that lacks the heightened poetic quality that readers have come to expect from most crime in translation (though not, in fact, Stieg Larsson) – the reader is not granted that self-congratulatory feeling that they are tackling something with more gravitas than the bloodletting of the average crime thriller. Plot strategies are familiar: charismatic religious figure Viktor Strandgård is found in a church in Northern Sweden, his eyes gouged out and his hands removed. And soon the female Larsson's protagonists are trying to pick their way through a complex mystery, stymied at every turn by hostile bosses resenting the success of their subordinates. So far, so familiar. But then the reader begins to notice the texture of things, subtly different from most crime writing – lean prose, yes, but transmuted into something rich and allusive. Twin female protagonists are characterised with real bravura, but some distance from Lisbeth Salander: corporate lawyer Rebecka Martinsson, called in by her friend Sanna who is a suspect in the murder, is a wonderfully shambolic heroine – professionally capable, but sniffing her tights to see if she can get away with them for another day. And there's heavily pregnant police inspector Anna-Maria Mella,

her maternity leave interrupted; both are trenchant female characters. Readers may have problems with the slightly retro feminist stance Larsson accords her heroines, in the fashion of her male near-namesake: both are highly competent women encountering mostly hostile and insecure men, who treat them in outrageously sexist fashion: the diminutive inspector Anna-Maria Mella is hated by her superior ('this midget of a policewoman [...] with her long horse's face [...] the inevitable result of inbreeding in those little isolated Lapp villages'), while lawyer Rebecka Martinsson's alcoholic boss resents the failure of his drunken attempt to seduce her and makes a practice of trying to humiliate her (shades, of course, of Stieg Larsson). But Karin Fossum is more a model for Asa Larsson than Marilyn French, and there is some superlative storytelling technique here. The skill of the book becomes apparent in a scene in which Rebecka calls on her troubled sister to find her comatose in bed, her children dirty and unfed – now we know we're in 'literary' territory, where characterisation is as imperative as the exigencies of a thriller narrative, and we begin to notice the panache with which the snowbound Kiruna setting underpins the carefully orchestrated tension – making the thought of encountering Rebecka Martinsson again a comforting one.

Stieg Larsson, in his weighty magnum opus, made no secret of the fact that he was synthesising existing elements (including Peter O'Donnell's highly efficient female warrior Modesty Blaise, Sarah Paretsky's rebarbative private eye V.I. Warshawski, even the well-tooled plot machinations of British crime-legend Agatha Christie), but Larsson himself is now ineluctably the gold standard, and a legion of followers are starting to ring variations on the tropes he has established. Will his achievement prove durable? Several crime-writing sensations of the past are now barely read (such as Edgar Wallace), while others appear to have created imperishable legacies (such as Philip Marlowe's creator Raymond Chandler and the aforementioned Agatha Christie). The auguries are that the late Swedish writer's *Millennium* trilogy shows every sign of being read for decades to come, and his literary innovations are still spawning an army of progeny. Lisbeth Salander (incarnated at the time of writing by Rooney Mara in David Fincher's intelligent 2011 film of the first novel) and her offspring will be with us for a while.

Notes

1. Overall, UK sales figures for Dan Brown register 13 million copies across all paperbacks sold in the UK – not accounting for over 1.4 million hardcover copies of *The Lost Symbol*. 8.6 million copies of the English translation of Stieg Larsson's novels have sold worldwide (Quercus Publishing and Random House UK sales figures, February 2011).
2. As discussed by this writer in the first biography of the author, *The Man Who Left Too Soon: The Life and Work of Stieg Larsson* (London: John Blake, 2010).
3. See, for example, Henrik Ibsen, *Ghosts/Gengangere* (New York: Dover Publications 1882, reprint 1998); August Strindberg, *The Dance of Death/Dodsdansen* (London: Methuen 1901, reprint 2001); the Scandinavian influence on George Bernard Shaw is discussed in Keith M. May's *Ibsen and Shaw* (London: Macmillan, 1985).
4. Two Swedish writing duos in particular echo Larsson's political commitment: Anders Roslund and Börge Hellström (*Three Second*, Quercus, 2010) and Alexander and Alexandra Ahndoril, who write as 'Lars Kepler' (*The Hypnotist*, Blue Door, 2011).
5. Nielsen total consumer market (TCM) Book Data figures, December 2011.
6. See Barry Forshaw, *Death in a Cold Climate: A Guide to Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
7. UK newspaper reviewers of Scandinavian crime novels include Barry Forshaw in *The Independent*, Marcel Berlins in *The Times*, Laura Wilson in *The Guardian*, Jake Kerridge in the *Daily Telegraph* and Joan Smith and John Dugdale in the *Sunday Times*.
8. Larsson's French translators are Lena Grumbach and Marc de Gouvenain; English/American duties are handled by Steven Murray (also know as Reg Keeland). The German translator is Wibke Kuhn, while Italian versions are the work of Carmen Giorgetti Cima.
9. Other example of Nordic dramas utilising the accoutrements of the thriller include *Borgen* (2010), which acknowledges its debt to such political thrillers as Alan J. Pakula's *All the President's Men* (1976) by featuring a poster from the film, and *The Bridge* (2011), a Swedish/Danish co-production. *The Killing* has also enjoyed a controversial American remake (2011).
10. Håkan Nesser has pointed out to me that most Scandinavians are not too exercised by the English tendency to homogenise their individual countries – unless it is clear that no attempt whatsoever at differentiation will be made by the miscreants; then individual nationhood begins to be quietly stressed.
11. *London Music Trade Review*, 15 June 1872, pp. 56–57.
12. Barry Forshaw, *The Man Who Left Too Soon*.
13. *The Local: Sweden's News in English*, 27 January 2011, pp. 37–38.
14. Eva Gabrielsson with Marie-Françoise Colombani, *Stieg and Me: Memories of My Life with Stieg Larsson* (London: Orion, 2011).

15. Quercus Publishing, 2011.
16. Quercus sales figures, 2008.
17. Collins Harvill (1993).
18. William Goldman, *Adventures in the Screen Trade* (New York: Abacus, 1996).
19. Barry Forshaw, *The Man Who Left Too Soon*.
20. Ibid.
21. Thomas Szasz, *The Second Sin* (New York: Doubleday, 1974).
22. R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London: Penguin, 1960).
23. Barry Forshaw, *The Man Who Left Too Soon*.
24. Email exchange between Stieg Larsson and his Swedish editor Eva Gedin, 2004 (author's own archive research).
25. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (London: Penguin Classics, 1879).
26. Barry Forshaw, *The Man Who Left Too Soon*, pp. 66–67.
27. Jussi Adler-Olsen, *Mercy* (London: Penguin, 2010); *Disgrace* (London: Penguin, 2012).
28. Leif Persson, *Between Summer's Longing and Winter's End* (London: Black Swan, 2011); *Another Time, Another Life* (London: Black Swan, 2012).
29. Asa Larsson, *The Savage Altar* (London: Penguin, 2008).

2

Old Wine in New Bottles: Tradition and Innovation in Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* Trilogy

Heather O'Donoghue

The complex plot of the first volume of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, can be separated out into two quite distinct narrative strands. Mikael Blomkvist, an investigative journalist, is employed by Henrik Vanger, the retired head of a large Swedish family business, to look into the disappearance, decades previously, of his niece Harriet. Meanwhile, Blomkvist himself is involved in a project to expose the long-term criminal dealings of another Swedish businessman, Hans-Erik Wennerström. The narrative link between the two strands – in addition, of course, to Blomkvist's part in both – is the fact that Vanger promises Blomkvist information about Wennerström as an inducement for taking on the investigation into Harriet's disappearance. Apart from this formal link, the two strands remain quite separate, although there are some limited – and, one might argue, contrived and even otiose – thematic parallels between them. In this essay, I will show that the first of these strands, centring on Harriet's disappearance, exemplifies all of the key conventions of traditional detective fiction, a genre popularly known as the 'whodunit', and that it does so in a self-conscious, self-referential way. I will first define the genre, and then outline its key conventions, examining how Larsson uses these conventions in his novel, weaving this generically distinct and distinctive narrative into and around the story of *Millennium* magazine's battle with Wennerström.

It is possible to define detective fiction very closely and neatly by attending to the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of

'detective' – crucially, as an adjective, rather than as a noun: 'Of, pertaining to, or employed in the investigation of things apt to elude notice, or deliberately concealed, especially of crimes.' The successful handling of the classic detective narrative entails maintaining right up to the denouement a secret sequence of events: the story of what has been concealed (by the author) and escaped notice (the notice of most of the characters in the narrative). This disguised, hidden or occluded element in the story essentially contains the answer to the playful question – whodunit? – which has given the genre its popular name. And the done thing is most often a murder, though not invariably.

Classic detective fiction is open to the charge of being formulaic, and indeed the most successful examples of the genre do seem closely to follow a set of predictable and surprisingly clearly defined rules.[1] The existence of ostensibly prescriptive codes, such as S.S. Van Dine's 20 celebrated 'commandments', framed as instructions to would-be detective fiction writers, bears out this evident regularity.[2] Some of Van Dine's commandments no longer seem mandatory – 'there must be no love interest', for example, is not now often observed, though perhaps it should be.[3] And many writers have taken up the challenge of deliberately flouting some of the rules – for instance, Van Dine's seventh commandment about the nature of the crime: 'There simply must be a corpse in a detective novel, and the deader the corpse the better. No lesser crime than murder will suffice. Three hundred pages is far too much bother for a crime other than murder.'[4] Nevertheless, the majority of Van Dine's 'rules' confirm the experience of most readers of most detective fiction, whether or not readers themselves could have consciously formulated those rules – and, indeed, whether or not authors have consciously adhered to them.

I want to focus on six key features of the detective novel, features so fundamental to the genre that they might be termed structural necessities, and without which the genre could not function in its classic form – even though some may be honoured more in the breach than in the observance. These features are the interpellation, the investigator, the sidekick, the double narrative, the circumscribed setting and the clue. To conclude, I will look at the way Stieg Larsson not only exploits but also reflects on and alludes to the conventions of the genre in his own narrative, in a plainly self-referential way, and as an

epilogue to the essay, I will briefly consider the generic affiliations of the second and third novels in the *Millennium* trilogy.

As first formulated by the philosopher and political theorist Louis Althusser, an interpellation is the moment when individuals are summoned to take up a role which has already been allotted to them by a prevailing ideology.[5] In its application to fiction, and specifically, detective fiction, I use it to mean the moment when the reader sees what roles the main characters are going to be playing, and what the underlying structure of events is; in short, the genre of the ensuing fiction. In detective fiction, the more general sense of interpellation as an interruption is also significant: we are talking about the moment, at or near the opening of the main narrative, when what appears to be the normal life of one character – most often, the investigator – is interrupted by some sort of summons to action, and the whodunit begins. Most familiar, perhaps, is the interpellation of the character whom we can then identify as a police officer or professional investigator: the phone rings, often shattering a silence, or some sort of peaceful or domestic ambience, perhaps when the character is asleep in bed, or sitting quietly, like Colin Dexter's Inspector Morse, listening to opera, drinking a quiet glass of malt whisky. This is most often the moment when the finding of a body is announced, and the hunt for the murderer begins. The private eye may be startled by a knock on the office door, like Sherlock Holmes, summoned to action by an appeal for help.

In *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, after a brief prologue, which I shall discuss shortly, there is a relatively lengthy account of Mikael Blomkvist's 'normal' life as an investigative reporter. He has just lost a libel case brought against him by the industrialist Hans-Erik Wennerström. We learn that an investigation has been commissioned to find out what can be known about his personal and professional life, and this report is duly presented and accepted (a neat technique for providing detailed background information about one of the main characters). As a result of this favourable report, the interpellation takes place: Henrik Vanger's lawyer Dirch Frode summons Blomkvist to a meeting with Vanger himself, at which Vanger appeals to him to take on the investigation of Harriet's disappearance – specifically, as Vanger himself puts it, to solve the mystery. Frode's phone call comes to Blomkvist when he is alone in the deserted *Millennium* offices, which are closed for the Christmas holidays.

What prompts this interpellation is thus not the discovery of a body. Vanger has been receiving an anonymously sent pressed flower on every birthday since Harriet disappeared. This is the subject of the novel's short prologue; and, interestingly, on receipt of the flower, every year for the past 30 years Vanger has instituted a series of abortive interpellations himself, ringing the police officer originally in charge of the investigation. But for a long while nothing further has followed from them; no narrative has ensued, and the mystery seems set to remain unsolved, even when the clue – the species of flower, and the place from which it has been sent – has been exhaustively studied. What prompts Vanger to turn to Blomkvist is the realisation that he will not live much longer, that Blomkvist is a celebrated investigative journalist, now unexpectedly without work since he has had to resign from his job at *Millennium* magazine, and perhaps that Vanger might be able to persuade Blomkvist to take on the task by offering damaging information about Wennerström. This set of circumstances prompts the interpellation, and sets the detective narrative off with Harriet's disappearance as the possible crime (in spite of Van Dine's seventh commandment!) and Blomkvist as investigator.

The role of investigator is my second key feature. All whodunits need an investigator. By and large, detective novels can be divided into those featuring law enforcement investigators or professional detectives and those featuring amateurs gifted in some way with investigative skills.[6] One significant technical problem with amateur investigators is that there is a limit to the number of serious crimes – let alone brutal or multiple murders – such characters might plausibly become involved with (this is even a problem with police detectives, though most readers are prepared to suspend disbelief about the inflated murder statistics in Oxford, or Kingsmarkham, or St Mary Mead). Interestingly, the difficulty makes itself felt in the second volume of Larsson's trilogy, *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, when Lisbeth Salander improbably stumbles across a murder on her holidays in the Caribbean. This element is judiciously omitted in its entirety from Niels Arden Oplev's 2009 film of the novel. And as we shall see, Larsson thereafter sidesteps this potential implausibility by making no other attempt to create a series of murders for his investigators to solve in the classic whodunit way, turning instead to exploit other popular literary genres.

In addition, authors using amateur investigators must ensure that there is some plausible space in the life of their detective to fit in the time needed to solve the case. Blomkvist's resignation from *Millennium* offers the perfect solution, and this hiatus in his 'day job' also explains why he has become involved in the case at all.

So-called 'police procedurals' owe much of their appeal to the accuracy and detail with which they represent the eponymous procedures of the police. The 'gifted amateur' novel offers the opportunity to inform the reader about the investigator's specialist talent: Kay Scarpetta's skills as a forensic scientist in Patricia Cornwell's novels, for instance;[7] or, in a field less obviously relevant to murder investigations, Loretta Lawson's expertise as a humanities academic, good at 'reading' a situation or the partial and perhaps incriminating accounts of witnesses, in Joan Smith's crime novels.[8] Examples could be multiplied; there seems to be no limit to the number of bizarre but useful specialisms which amateur detectives can bring to murder investigations. Blomkvist's very relevant expertise is his investigative journalism, and this is supplemented by the thrillingly cutting-edge skills and resources of Lisbeth Salander, the girl with the dragon tattoo herself, who is a computer hacker with a photographic memory and even more skilled contacts in the cyber-hacking world. I will shortly consider the relationship between Blomkvist and Salander, but there are some noteworthy characteristics of the investigator which Larsson has ensured that Blomkvist exemplifies.

The detective with the troubled private life is a stock character in detective novels. Blomkvist's professional trouble – his defeat by Wennerström – naturally impacts on his private life, since he is sentenced by the courts to a term in jail. But it is clear from the outset that Blomkvist has been unjustly accused and found guilty. Many celebrated detectives also have failings – but never ones which compromise their essential decency and fundamental commitment to justice. Alcoholism is a popular flaw which creates difficulties for the detective and, at the same time, sympathy in the reader; so too is a troublesome propensity for violence, though only against deserving male opponents. Police detectives are often presented as being at odds with their superiors: Ian Rankin's Rebus, Colin Dexter's Morse, R.D. Wingfield's Frost, and very many more, are at constant risk of suspension, either because of a forgivable – or even admirable – flaw (Frost's careless way with paperwork, for instance, or his generally

squalid presentation) or because they refuse to play along with amoral compromises or cover-ups suggested by the powers that be. Cornwell's Kay Scarpetta is regularly derided and put down by male colleagues. Often, the detective's name alludes to some impressive personal quality of the detective: a rebus is a puzzle, suggesting John Rebus's intellectual gifts; Morse is a code, associated not with spies but with daring wartime exploits, and the first name, Endeavour, is transparently moral, if eccentric. Frost is a perfectly normal surname in English, yet manages to suggest attractive qualities of purity, composure and unyielding rigour (almost comically at odds with Jack Frost's external presentation, but perfect for conveying his inner worth). Blomkvist means in Swedish 'flowering branch', suggesting an attractive, organic stability and ruggedness; it may not be stretching the point to note that Michael the Archangel is depicted as a heavenly warrior who weighed the guilt and innocence of souls on a balance.

The most striking – and perhaps the most difficult to explain – quality in the investigator is his or her essentially solitary private life. Many detectives are unmarried loners. This is a feature they share with a number of archetypal heroes: the Old English hero Beowulf, for instance, never marries and has no siblings or heirs; and even Jesus Christ fits the pattern. Examples of lone detectives spring to mind very easily: in earlier fiction, Holmes or Poirot; in contemporary novels, Lee Child's Jack Reacher (a wonderfully extreme example, since he does not even have a fixed abode or any possessions beyond a credit card)[9] or Sue Grafton's Kinsey Milhone (who is not only unattached, but also an orphan).[10]

It may simply be that, in purely practical terms, commitment to a family life would compromise the devotion of the hero – or detective – to the task. This is a familiar dynamic: we need only think of Morse's single-minded attention to the detail of the case and the unremittingly long hours he devotes to it, in contrast with his hapless sidekick Sergeant Lewis's attempts to manage the demands of a wife and family. It may also be a useful way of incorporating a series of interesting love affairs, or developing an extended but tantalisingly unconsummated relationship. However, Rankin's John Rebus, with his unhappy marriage behind him, a series of high-profile heterosexual flings ahead and a long-term, un-acted-upon understanding with his younger colleague Siobhan Clarke, is nevertheless

most characteristically shown alone in his dingy flat, darkness falling, drinking.

Blomkvist is a particularly interesting example of the unattached detective. Larsson (perhaps with a degree of wish fulfilment in his writing) shows him to be extremely successful with women. In *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Cecilia Vanger seduces him almost as soon as she meets him (though in Oplev's film much less is made of this relationship), and Blomkvist has long had the editor-in-chief of *Millennium*, Erika Berger, as his 'occasional lover' – with the forbearance of Berger's husband, so there can be no question of any conventional commitment or moral dilemma. We see Blomkvist's sister being used to raise precisely this issue, teasing him about why he has never settled down.

For whatever reason, the unattached hero seems to be essential. Harriet Vane's rejection of marriage and commitment in favour of independence and freedom of action, on the one hand, and the relationship between Wimsey and his resourceful manservant Mervyn Bunter on the other, are altogether more successful and appealing themes. This leads me to an important issue, the third of my key features: the relationship between the investigator and his or her 'sidekick'. Paradoxically, the lone investigator rarely works completely alone, but typically shares the investigation with a partner, or sidekick.

In narratological terms, one of the functions of the sidekick is to allow the author to make the lone (and often loftily taciturn) investigator open up to the reader, a way of managing the necessary secrecy of the withheld revelation of whodunit. The sidekick may ask questions (often, one feels, on behalf of the reader), requesting clarification, updates on progress or summaries of what is known. But in terms of character action, the relationship between the primary investigator and the sidekick is one of the most crucial elements in detective fiction (although it should also be borne in mind that the sidekick is a very common role in all kinds of fictional narratives, from Don Quixote to Batman, and not peculiar to crime writing). In most cases, the sidekick is in some sense a junior partner: inferior in rank, in police procedurals, and female to boot, in far too many of them; inferior in intelligence – or at least, not prodigiously intellectual (again, very celebrated examples are Holmes's Dr Watson or Poirot's Captain Hastings); or in

some respect outshone by the primary investigator (one might recall Kinsey Milhone's elderly neighbour, whose main role is to provide moral support and soul food to Milhone's more vigorous work, or Scarpetta's unstylish, tactless and fast-food guzzling helpmate Marino). Plainly, the sidekick shows the hero in a flattering light. He or she may also supply some valuable skill needed for the investigation. The relationship between the two may produce comic effect, or it may be sexualised, with a conventional consummation playfully or tantalisingly postponed. A good ongoing example would be Val McDermid's creation of the on–off relationship between Carol Jordan and Tony Hill.[11]

The relationship between Mikael Blomkvist and Lisbeth Salander is central to the trilogy, and certainly forms the heart of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. In a number of ways, it departs from the stereotypical partnership in detective fiction, but the degree of creative variation exercised by any author in the genre is a mark of his or her mastery of it and does nothing to undermine the persistence of the conventions. In spite of the fact that Lisbeth Salander is a good deal younger than Blomkvist, and female, their partnership is much more equal than is usual with detective and sidekick – indeed, sidekick is a highly inappropriate term for her.

Salander is initially taken on by Blomkvist to help with the investigation, but far exceeds him in her expertise with online resources and, perhaps more importantly, comes to dominate the book and indeed the trilogy. It is significant that the original Swedish title of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (*Män som hatar kvinnor*) translates as 'men who hate women', and that though the Swedish title of the second volume (*Flickan som lekte med elden* – literally, 'the girl who played with fire') uses 'the girl who' pattern of all three English-language titles, implying the dominance of Salander, the Swedish title of the third volume (*Luftslottet som sprängdes* – 'the castle in the air which was blown up') does not. And yet it is Salander's own story which forms the basis of the second and third volumes and she has an extraordinary biographical profile. She is a sociopathic misfit, the Swedish equivalent of a ward of court, consumed by, and acting upon, the desire for devastatingly violent revenge against those who have wronged her or other women. She has – not surprisingly – an abiding mistrust of other people. Larsson has created a remarkable heroine, an unpredictable time bomb of a character.

In fact, Blomkvist serves rather as a foil for Salander's exceptionality, and does not lead the investigation once it is underway. The sexual relationship between them is relatively insignificant; the real 'will they won't they' issue does not rest on whether or when they have sex, but is a matter of love, trust and friendship. As the Swedish title of the first volume, together with the section headings throughout the volume, with their dry statistics about crimes against women, suggest, the principal theme of the first volume of the *Millennium* trilogy is the misogyny endemic to modern society, and the violence with which it often manifests itself.[12] Thus, the relationship between Blomkvist and Salander is even more fundamental to the novel than is usual with investigative partnerships. That Blomkvist's masculinity is unaggressive and unthreatening is what makes him acceptable and even attractive to Salander, but Larsson goes much further than this; in one of the more disturbing scenes in the novel (not represented in full in Oplev's film) it seems that Blomkvist is aligned to such a degree with the women in the story that he may be destined to suffer the same sort of sexual molestation and violence as the female victims in the narrative.

The fourth structural feature of the classic detective novel might be regarded as its actual defining feature: the double narrative. At the interpellation – the moment when we as readers recognise the roles allotted to the as yet undefined players in the narrative, and our expectations of the genre are decisively confirmed – an investigation begins. As we have seen, the discovery of a body is the commonest trigger for the interpellation, though, as with *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, whether the subject is a murder or a disappearance remains part of the undisclosed narrative. But whatever the circumstances, as readers we know that the central investigative story begins here. Nonetheless, the discovery of the body, or the summoning of the investigator, is clearly the middle, or even the end, of the hidden narrative – of the back story, the set of events leading up to it. Most typically, then, the story of the investigation moves forward in time, while the investigation itself either moves gradually backward in time – perhaps as the investigator pieces together the last movements and sightings of the murder victim or disappeared person – or starts a long way further back in time and moves gradually forward to the point at which the crisis prompting the interpellation occurred. These two narratives are usually handled concurrently, though they

are chronologically separate. Sometimes, the only movement in the investigative narrative is the progress of the investigation. But more often, the progress of the investigation itself sets off further events, further murders or disappearances.

In *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Blomkvist and Salander's progress with the investigation of Harriet Vanger's disappearance triggers an attack on Blomkvist, as the culprit attempts to prevent revelation. This, and other events, particularly in the personal lives of both Blomkvist and Salander, in their own relationship, and in the forward movement of the Wennerström affair, constitutes the forward movement of the narrative. But the chronology of the investigation begins long before, with Harriet's disappearance, as Blomkvist goes through the contemporary case notes and studies photographs taken on the very day she disappeared. The reconstruction of what happened to Harriet and, more complicatedly, what had happened before that, and what went on happening after it, is a chronology crucially separate from the forward movement of the narrative, and this double narrative is a defining feature of the whodunit. One narrative is hidden, and revealed only gradually, while the other is ostensible, an open narrative most usually set in the present time of the story.

The classic literary theoretical distinction between *sjuzhet*, the narrative as presented to the reader by the author, and *fabula*, the underlying substance or material of the narrative, offers a very useful way of defining the difference between these two narratives.[13] Essentially, the *sjuzhet* of a detective novel begins at or near what is actually the mid or end point of the first half of the *fabula*. In its simplest and most extreme form, in other words, the author begins by relating or alluding to the discovery of a body, for example, but the story of how and by whose hand the victim died – the first half of *fabula* or underlying story-matter – began at a point in (fictional) time before the *sjuzhet* starts, and is not fully reconstructed, revealed, and therefore concluded, until the very end of the *sjuzhet* and, thus, the whodunit narrative. According to what I have called the 'double narrative' criterion, the Harriet Vanger plot strand in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is a classic whodunit. But Larsson produces a further twist.

The denouement of a detective novel is often a stock scene of revelation: as, for example, when Agatha Christie's Poirot calls together the suspects, reviews their (conflicting) accounts, and relates his own

reconstruction of what has happened, concluding with a denunciation of the culprit. It has sometimes been remarked that this revelation alone carries the weight of the narrative; the threat of capital punishment is very rarely evoked, or indeed any punishment at all.[14] Exposure is everything. At the end of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,* the concealed narrative is disclosed and concluded, that is, the culprit is revealed – but only to the partnered investigators, the main characters themselves and, outside the narrative world of the novel, the reader. Larsson moves from the ethics of murder and misogyny to the professional ethics of the journalist and shows Blomkvist the journalist struggling with Henrik Vanger's desire to keep the newly disclosed narrative secret (Salander the sociopath is not at all conflicted about this; for her, the less people know about her part in the investigation, or indeed about any aspect of her life, the better). This heralds a shift in balance towards Larsson's frame narrative, the Wennerström affair, almost as if the Harriet Vanger plot strand were secondary to it. Blomkvist's ongoing and very public professional success as a journalist – not as a missing-person investigator solving a case – takes over as the novel's climax. And the story of Blomkvist and Salander's relationship is left unresolved. Here we see the dynamics of an over-arching narrative which is to be continued across more than one volume, one which will keep moving forward. But the core whodunit strand has come to an end.

The fifth key feature of the whodunit is the significance of the setting. The term setting denotes two separate but linked concepts: the wider geographical setting of the narrative and the more closely defined, even isolated area in which the action typically takes place. Both play a key role in detective novels. Naturally, the geographical location of the narrative is an important element in the success of any novel, but it is especially true of detective fiction. An immense variety of settings have marked out the work of particular authors who have often set a number of novels in the same area, which has then become a defining feature of the series. One might think of Alexander McCall Smith's use of Botswana as a delightful (and perhaps, as some have complained, over-buoyant) backdrop to the investigations of Mma Precious Ramotswe;[15] or of Colin Cotterill's Laos, in his novels about elderly coroner Dr Siri Paiboun;[16] or of Ian Rankin's Edinburgh.[17] The role of the setting is not merely to inform and perhaps delight the reader, though the author may well

use his or her own specialist knowledge of a location – and its attendant cultural norms – in much the same way as the presentation of specialist knowledge of the investigator both interests and informs the reader. It is more fundamental to the genre than mere entertainment: crime is itself deeply rooted in society, and both its commission and its investigation are rarely separable from that society. Moreover, in revealing the hidden narrative of detective fiction, the author of a good detective novel will need to lay bare, or at least represent in knowing detail, the workings and secrets of the society itself. Crime is very often presented in its social context, its causes as much as its effects constituting the subject matter of the good detective novel.

The Swedish setting of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy has of course contributed greatly to its success with English-speaking audiences who have long, rightly or wrongly, regarded Sweden, with its liberal morality, its celebrated material stylishness and its perceived gloominess of person and place, as being both familiar and yet exotic.[18] But the setting must do more than entertain and inform, and the success of the trilogy in Sweden itself demonstrates that Larsson has gone further. His grim depiction of a dysfunctional Sweden hidden beneath the stereotypically social-democratic and tolerant surface is one version of exactly what serious (as opposed to 'cosy') crime novelists are best at.[19] To offer just one example, Ian Rankin's exposure of deep-seated corruption and criminality in Edinburgh, especially around the brave new world of the new Scottish parliament, uses a similar tactic.[20] Here we see crime writing as a literature of complaint, of social protest, a campaigning tool.

And yet paradoxically, murder especially is the most timeless of crimes, with motives, methods and perpetrators that seem to have changed remarkably little since the inception of detective fiction (though the relationship between the murders as represented in fiction and the actuality of murder statistics is a whole other subject). We are all familiar with the unhinged serial killer, the jealous spouse, the impatient or uncertain heir. And some critics have regarded detective fiction as a form which offers welcome escape from the realities and social contexts of human killing, with the premise that its mysteries can be solved, the criminality isolated and exposed, the perpetrators brought to justice; the experience in Britain of two world wars being held to explain the popularity of carefully managed

and apparently tractable evil in detective fiction.[21] So the balance between tradition and innovation, between unchanging literary convention and the particularity or topicality of individual setting and incident, is the equilibrium detective novelists must somehow achieve. Larsson, himself an investigative journalist like his creation Blomkvist, offers the reader present-tense factual information about actual Swedish society (for example, his careful explanation of the conditions of Salander's guardianship, her rights and her guardian's responsibilities) alongside fictional, though factual-seeming, background information about the Vanger family, just as if it were a magazine article. We have here a marked contrast between the artificiality of the whodunit genre and the appearance (as well as the actuality) of information about the real contemporary world.

We can see precisely this balance in practice when we turn to the other aspect of the setting: the isolated area in which the action takes place. It is remarkable how many detective novels mark out a remote, inaccessible or in some way physically isolated site for their setting. The novels of Agatha Christie offer a huge variety of such locations: country houses (made even more isolated when a storm brings down the telephone wires); an island; even a moving train. Many of P.D. James's works use the same device. And of course, Stieg Larsson creates just such a setting for the disappearance of Harriet Vanger: the island of Hedeby, the family home of the Vanger clan, is cut off from the mainland on the day of the disappearance when a tanker overturns and blocks the bridge that constitutes the only access to the island, so that Hedeby was 'to all intents and purposes cut off from the rest of the world' for 24 hours.

Such isolation is in one sense an obviously physical one, and has certain practical consequences within the narrative. Primarily, the number of suspects is limited, apparently absolutely, and one of Van Dines's key rules, that the culprit should be one of a predetermined group of characters whom the reader has got to know well, is easily satisfied.[22] But the isolation is invariably symbolic as well as physical. The identification of the culprit is transformed into something more like a purely intellectual puzzle, often depending more on issues of precise timings and locations within the closely circumscribed location than on naturalistic psychological or social factors. Any one of the characters might have been the perpetrator of the crime. In fact, it is often the case that the least likely perpetrator is found to be the

guilty party, and a major clue to the culprit in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is the stated unlikeliness of one of the group of suspects. This equality of potential guilt stands in direct contrast to the idea of crime as a socially engendered – and therefore to some extent a predictable or at least socially explicable – phenomenon.

My final key feature of detective fiction is perhaps its most iconic element: the clue. It may be as well to distinguish at the outset between two very different forms of clue: the material and the textual. A traditional material clue might be a footprint, a scrap of cloth, a smear of mud. There is a very clear line of descent from the clever Holmesian interpretation of the clue to the more scientifically advanced analysis of contemporary material evidence: the fingerprint, the DNA profile, the corpse itself; minutely dissected by forensic pathologists such as Cornwell's Scarpetta or Kathy Reichs's Temperance Brennan.[23] Perhaps the most inventive and innovative use of the traditional material clue is found in the work of Jeffery Deaver, whose investigator Lincoln Rhyme is paraplegic, though able, just, to operate a computer; he is therefore an almost wholly mental, rather than physical, entity, and his mantra is that every contact leaves a trace, no matter how minute.[24]

But there is another sort of clue, also necessarily material, but better characterised as textual, and like the purely material clue, it too is a familiar feature of traditional detective narratives. This sort of clue may be found in the form of a torn scrap of paper, a charred letter, a coded sequence of letters or numbers. The detective need not be a scientist, but must simply exercise ingenuity and intellect to solve this cryptic textual challenge, which is like a microcosm of the whole case. Harriet Vanger's coded diary entries in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* could not be a more classic and traditional example of the textual clue. But Larsson produces distinctively journalistic evidence to be read and understood: the newspaper photographs taken on the day of Harriet's disappearance, whose blurriness functions like the code of the more literally textual clues. Blomkvist recognises the significance of some of the photographs, bringing pure mental agility to bear on the puzzle.

Salander's own IT skills, and those of her contacts in cyberspace, represent an innovative development of the clue, a new and disturbing tool for the investigator to employ and a new kind of evidence to work on. Online material – the email, or real-time activity on a

PC, monitored by the ruthless and skilful hacker – seems to me to constitute a kind of clue, or evidence, which is primarily textual, but even less material than the written code. Salander is reminiscent of such traditional detectives as Sherlock Holmes, when her expertise in locating and interpreting online data is simply baffling to her associates; her intellect and the workings of her mind are a prodigious mystery, and like Holmes she is disinclined to share or explain them.

These, then, are six key features of classic detective fiction – the whodunit – which in my view define the genre and which are prominently applied in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. There are a number of other less ubiquitous but still familiar conventions in evidence in the narrative. For example, on more than one occasion, Blomkvist is represented as having a suspicion about the significance of a piece of evidence, but he cannot quite put his finger on what that significance is. It is a familiar feature of many detective novels that the author teases readers by implicitly challenging them to recall or interpret what the investigator cannot. Similarly, the exposure of the culprit, often by the investigator who then finds him or herself apparently at the mercy of his adversary, is a traditional opportunity to hear a monologue from the evil-doer, who, full of confidence that there is no escape for the investigator, at last relates in full and self-incriminating detail the elements of the hitherto hidden narrative – and, especially, the motives and perhaps self-justifications which have led to the crime or crimes. Blomkvist finds himself in just this situation when Martin Vanger imprisons him in the basement torture chamber, and Larsson exploits it to the full. He intensifies the suspense by intercutting the narrative of Vanger's boastful confession and torture of Blomkvist with Salander's increasingly frantic attempts to locate Blomkvist. Vanger, however, is completely confident that he can – and will – kill Blomkvist whenever he wishes and cannot resist the temptation of answering Blomkvist's questions; these answers not only revealing to Blomkvist and the reader the details of his many crimes, but also exposing him as a deranged psychopath and exploring this perverted perspective.

Salander's violent intervention saves Blomkvist, and as described from Blomkvist's own point of view Salander is a beast of prey, with bared teeth and glittering eyes. So before moving on to address the issue of Larsson's active consciousness of genre, it may be worth pausing briefly to consider the relationship between text and violence

in detective fiction. In many classic detective novels, the violence is wholly textual, that is, we, and the investigator, hear about it – *read* about it – but the detective is not physically involved (in common with the reader, who never is). Thus, Poirot rarely has any physical contact beyond the most perfunctory social touch with the other characters; Deaver's Lincoln Rhyme is paralysed, a bold extension of the 'armchair detective' topos, in which the detective solves the mystery, and identifies the culprit, without, as it were, ever leaving his seat: that is, by sheer powers of deduction or, in Edgar Allan Poe's term, 'ratiocination'.[25] By contrast, some investigators are themselves involved in the physical violence that characterises the genre. This is particularly – but not exclusively – true of male detectives, and in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* even a male detective as unaggressive as Blomkvist is tested physically in his violent confrontations with other characters.

It is also true that some celebrated female detectives play a full part in both enduring and inflicting violence; a good example would be Sara Paretsky's physically formidable V.I. Warshawski.[26] But just as it is often noted, of both detective fiction and real-life crime, that female murderers typically avoid physical violence, using poison – or even hired male killers – whilst male ones employ more direct methods, so it is that we might associate fictional female detectives with more cerebral challenges to criminality. Salander is at first sight a classic example, since her computer hacking is a non-physical form of violence: it replaces traditional surveillance, especially the familiar scene of the detective breaking into a suspect's home to gather evidence. But Salander is also shockingly, inventively, violent herself. Described by Larsson as skinny, undersized and looking much younger than her actual age, her personal crusade against violent misogyny nevertheless manifests itself in some extraordinary scenes, including her barely controlled and ferocious attack on Martin Vanger. I would argue that with Salander, Larsson has created a female investigator who fits the traditional stereotype of the verbal, or textual, female, but is not limited by it and exceeds it in disturbing ways. Her meticulously planned and savage vengeance on her abuser Nils Erik Bjurman, involving tattooing and anal penetration, is the most extreme example.

One final striking feature of detective novels, though I would not claim it to be a defining one, is a preoccupation with the creation

of narrative itself, amounting to self-referentiality. Investigators are very often writers themselves (from Harriet Vane, Dorothy L. Sayers's heroine, through to Adam Dalgliesh, P.D. James's poet police officer). Such protagonists mirror in general terms the literary creativity of the author. But they create the narrative *sjuzhet* too, as investigators who reconstruct and articulate the hidden story leading up to the crime. And they function not only as writers, but also as readers: like readers, and even more like literary critics, they assess and evaluate texts – in this case, the accounts of witnesses or suspects – and attempt to interpret them, though their aim is to isolate the truth, rather than to arrive at a 'reading' of their many texts. As we have seen, these 'texts' may be oral, the statements of characters in the narrative, or written, as the clues or evidence, which the detective must pore over. It is significant that contemporary literary critics often use the term 'interrogate' to refer to this sort of close, evaluative reading of a text and refer to key extant texts as 'witnesses'.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo is saturated with references to writing and written accounts. Blomkvist is a writer – a journalist – and he is shown to be writing not merely magazine articles, but an actual book about the Wennerström affair. As I have already noted, Larsson gives us Blomkvist's own history in the form of a written report on him compiled by Salander, and Henrik Vanger gives Blomkvist boxes of case files about Harriet's disappearance. The case against Wennerström is contained in an online file of documents. And finally, Blomkvist's cover story for the whole investigation is the writing of a book about the Vanger family. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* itself is thus one of a number of versions of the events that constitute its subject. But to a certain extent this is true too of the other volumes in the trilogy. There is a similar meta-narrative in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*: in the course of the book, Salander is said to be producing an autobiography which will not only provide a backstory to the events of the trilogy, but also present this material from Salander's own point of view. Further, Blomkvist is said to be writing a book too, about the hitherto secret cadre within Sweden's security services. Both books take their place alongside Larsson's novel as alternative and complementary accounts, or *sjuzhets,* of the same *fabula*.

As I have shown, then, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* contains a classic whodunit narrative, exemplifying all the distinctive features

of the genre. May we then assume that Stieg Larsson was purposefully and consciously operating within the genre, meticulously reproducing its traditions and conventions? I am sure we may.

Larsson has packed his narrative with allusions to other detective novels. This degree of intertextuality goes way beyond coincidence and is clear evidence that he is self-conscious and self-referential about writing in the genre of the whodunit. Blomkvist's surname is the same as that of Astrid Lindgren's detective in her children's fiction; nicknaming Mikael Blomkvist 'Kalle' is the equivalent of creating a modern detective surnamed Holmes and then nicknaming him Sherlock.[27] Blomkvist's bedtime reading matter is always detective fiction: he reads Elizabeth George, Sue Grafton, Val McDermid and Sara Paretsky. These references are not in any respect necessary to Larsson's plot (the books Blomkvist reads do not, for instance, shed any light on the case he is involved with) but are simply playful and knowing intertextual allusions. Even Vanger compares the (fictional) real life he is presented as experiencing with detective fiction, asserting more than once that 'this isn't some damned locked-room mystery', which he says he knows because he has read his Dorothy L. Sayers. Such paradoxical assertions, on the part of characters in a detective novel, that they are not characters in a detective novel are surprisingly common; they present a playful challenge to the perceived artificiality of the genre. Their use is clear evidence that Larsson is well aware of the generic conventions governing and enhancing his narrative.

I have already alluded to the various difficulties of ascribing more than one major criminal investigation to an 'amateur' detective who does something different for a living. After this first volume in a trilogy, Larsson leaves behind the whodunit and, I would argue, writes to the conventions of plainly different genres. Interestingly, this generic shift actually serves to define by contradistinction the particularity of the whodunit.

The Girl Who Played with Fire is essentially a thriller.[28] Though it deals with crime and violence, and a wrong-doer is hunted down, it nonetheless lacks the double chronology of the whodunit, since the action is mostly forward moving. Secrets are indeed uncovered, but they are not the primary drivers of the plot. There are also some classic folk-tale elements: Salander is equipped with two 'magic helpers',[29] significantly representing the cerebral and physical

aspects of combating evil, since one has technological expertise in electronic surveillance (as we have seen, an advance on traditional method of information gathering) and the other is a boxer (an impressive but distinctly low-tech skill). There is also a fantastic adversary, the humanoid monster reminiscent of similar figures throughout literature: the monstrous Grendel, in the Old English poem *Beowulf*, for instance, or some of Ian Fleming's villainous creations in the James Bond thrillers.[30] These figures function as fitting foes for brave heroes to contend with. Larsson dresses up his monster with pseudo-scientific plausibility: Ronald Niedermann suffers – or rather benefits – from 'congential analgesia'; he is The Man Who Feels No Pain.

The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest is at heart an espionage novel. Here the secrecy is not primarily something to be retrieved from the past, but occludes the action of the present as well and continues to deepen with the forward movement of the surface narrative; the plot is driven by the conspirators' desperate attempts to preserve it. As with all classic spy stories, it is uncertain until the end who is part of the conspiracy, who can be trusted and who is acting as a double agent – apparently on the side of right and justice, but actually betraying those who are incautious enough to trust him or her. Larsson also writes in a second major fictional genre: the courtroom drama, which has its own conventions and generic markers. In this part of the story, Salander's physicality is brilliantly limited to her appearance. The intellectual aspect – in many ways parallel to the assessing of oral evidence in the whodunit – is contained in the question and answer exchanges between the lawyers and the witnesses.

In the *Millennium* trilogy, Larsson exploits several different traditional literary genres in the composition of his narratives. It is true of detective fiction that since its inception – arguably at the end of the nineteenth century – advances in science and technology have necessitated major adaptations in the way the narrative is handled. The advent of, for instance, DNA profiling, forensic science and psychology, and perhaps most importantly of all the mobile phone, have revolutionised what we might call the fight against crime – and consequently, the traditions of the detective novel (except for historical crime novels, increasingly popular with writers at least, since the plot does not need to take into account more recent technologies that have made identifying the culprit a matter not of ratiocination

but of applied science, or simply systematic police work). Another broad shift one might claim to see is the move from the locked-room mystery, in which the least likely, and therefore most unpredictable, character, is the culprit and the scene of the crime carefully removed from an actual society,[31] to the setting of the crime in a realistic society and the crime itself as arising from social conditions. The hugely successful work of Ed Burns and David Simon, in *Homicide* and *The Corner*, in which an accurate, naturalistic and ostensibly actual depiction of life in a deprived area of Baltimore, in the US – indeed, on one particular street corner – completely dominates the form of the narrative, superseding the whodunit form and substituting the new and innovative genre of faction, is perhaps the best example.[32]

But in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Larsson, while incorporating the latest technological advances – especially in information technology – and including up-to-the-minute contemporary information about an actual society, nevertheless self-consciously exploits the traditional forms and features of the time-honoured whodunit in one important strand of his narrative. Similarly, in the next two volumes of the trilogy, he knowingly plays off the artificial conventions of folk tale, courtroom drama, spy novel and thriller against his pseudo-journalistic exposé of Swedish society. This distinctive bringing together of contrastive elements of fact, pseudo-fact and traditional fiction is to my mind a key, but hitherto unremarked, factor in the success of the *Millennium* trilogy of books and films.

Notes

1. See P.D. James, *Talking About Detective Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 16ff, for an elegant and persuasive rebuttal of such a charge.
2. S.S. Van Dine, 'Twenty rules for writing detective stories', first published in *The American Magazine*, September 1928, and widely available online (see for example, http://gaslight.mtroyal.ca/vandine.htm [accessed 6 March 2012]). See also Ronald Knox's 'Ten Commandments' in the introduction to *The Best Detective Stories of 1928* (London: Faber and Faber, 1929) and chapter xi, 'Rules of the Game', in Howard Haycraft's *Murder for Pleasure: the Life and Times of the Detective Story* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1984).
3. 'Love interest' can turn into a weak point in otherwise successful detective novels. Patricia Cornwell's heroine Kay Scarpetta becomes engaged to her colleague Benton Wesley, *Book of the Dead* (London: Sphere, 2008)

after a lengthy on–off courtship, but their relationship as a married couple is unconvincing and Cornwell seems to lose interest in Wesley as a character. Ian Rankin's hero Rebus portrays himself as unsuccessful in his romantic dealings with women, but this image becomes harder to sustain when in book after book he forms relationships with powerful and desirable women. And the marriage of Harriet Vane and Lord Peter Wimsey in Dorothy L. Sayers's *Busman's Honeymoon* (New York: Harper, 1937) is widely regarded as a disastrous misstep by the author. Much more successful is the playfully extended courtship of the couple, with its carefully postponed consummation. See my remarks on the lone investigator later in this essay.

4. See Robert Champigny's *What Will Have Happened: a Philosophical and Technical Essay on Mystery Stories* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1977), for a discussion of rule evading, especially p. 14ff. With regard to the Harriet Vanger plot, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* itself offers a classic example.
5. Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso,1984).
6. Examples of popular police officer investigators include Ruth Rendell's Reginald Wexford, Ian Rankin's John Rebus and Colin Dexter's Morse. Sherlock Holmes is perhaps the most famous British private investigator, but Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot and Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe are equally celebrated. Obvious, and much-loved, examples of the amateur investigator are Agatha Christie's Miss Marple, and G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown; their particular investigative skill derives from their understanding of human nature.
7. Cornwell's novels featuring the forensic scientist Kay Scarpetta began with *Postmortem* (London: Sphere, 1990); the nineteenth, so far, in the series is *Red Mist* (London: Little, Brown, 2011).
8. Joan Smith has published five novels featuring Loretta Lawson, the first, *A Masculine Ending*, in 1987 (London: Faber and Faber), and the last, appropriately enough, *Full Stop*, in 1995 (London, Bloomsbury). For more details, see Heather O'Donoghue's entry 'Joan Smith' in *British Crime Writing: An Encyclopaedia*, Vol. II, ed. Barry Forshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 740–741.
9. Lee Child's first Reacher novel was *Killing Floor* in 1997 (London: Bantam); the latest is *A Wanted Man* (London: Bantam, 2012).
10. Kinsey Milhone is the heroine of Grafton's so-called 'alphabet' series of crime novels, the first being *'A' is for Alibi* (Pan, 1982) and the most recent *'V' is for Vengeance* (Mantle, 2011).
11. Val McDermid has so far published seven novels featuring Carol Jordan and Tony Hill, beginning with *The Mermaids Singing* (Harper, 1995) and the most recent being *The Retribution* (Sphere, 2011).
12. The epigraphs to the novel's four parts are, respectively: '18% of the women in Sweden have at one time been threatened by a man'; '46% of the women in Sweden have been subjected to violence by a man'; '13%

of the women in Sweden have been subjected to aggravated sexual assault outside a sexual relationship'; and '92% of women in Sweden who have been subjected to sexual assault have not reported the most recent violent incident to the police', Stieg Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (London: MacLehose Press, 2008/2010), pp. 7, 113, 245, 399.

13. For a wonderfully clear exposition of this distinction and its application to crime novels, originally propounded by the formalist critic Tzvetan Todorov, see Laura Marcus, 'Detective and Literary Fiction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 245–267.
14. See Champigny, *What Will Have Happened*, p. 41.
15. *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* is the title given to this bestselling series of novels by McCall Smith, the first being the novel of the series title (Abacus, 1998), and the most recent *The Saturday Big Tent Wedding Party* (Abacus, 2011).
16. Cotterill's first Siri Paiboun novel was *The Coroner's Lunch* (Quercus, 2007); the seventh and latest was *Love Songs from a Shallow Grave* (Quercus, 2010).
17. Ian Rankin has published 17 novels set in Edinburgh, with Rebus as the protagonist; the first of these was *Knots and Crosses* (Orion, 1987).
18. For an account of English-speaking readers' responses to Scandinavia and the reception of Scandinavian crime writing, see Barry Forshaw, *Death in a Cold Climate* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
19. 'Cosies' is the affectionate but mocking name given by readers and reviewers to crime novels 'remarkable for their non-threatening context and non-violent characters' (see Marilyn Stasio, *New York Times*, 18 October 1992). Such novels are often humorous, and are sometimes set in a past era. For a long list of examples, see the entry 'cosy mystery' in Wikipedia. P.D. James, in *Talking About Detective Fiction*, uses the term 'soft-centred' (as opposed to the more familiar 'hard-boiled') for the same phenomenon and David Trotter ('Fascination and Nausea: Finding Out the Hard-Boiled Way' in *The Art of Detective Fiction*, ed. Chernaik, Swales and Vilain, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 21–35, p. 21) makes the same distinction.
20. See *Set in Darkness* (Orion, 2000).
21. See for instance an interview with Kazuo Ishiguro, http://bookpage.com/interview/ishiguro-takes-a-literary-approach-to-the-detective-novel, and further discussion in Heather O'Donoghue's entry 'Kazuo Ishiguro' in *British Crime Writing*, Vol II., pp. 428–429.
22. Van Dine's rule ten reads: 'The culprit must turn out to be a person who has played a more or less prominent part in the story – that is, a person with whom the reader is familiar and in whom he takes an interest'.
23. Brennan is the forensic anthropologist heroine of a series of 14 novels by Kathy Reichs, beginning with *Déjà Dead* (Arrow, 1997); the most recent is *Flash and Bones* (Heinemann, 2011).

24. The first Lincoln Rhyme novel was *The Bone Collector* (Hodder, 1997); the most recent, *The Burning Wire* (Hodder, 2010).
25. The first armchair detective may have been Edgar Allan Poe's Auguste Dupin, who, in *The Mystery of Marie Roget* (1842), solves the crime by reading reports about it published in the newspaper.
26. In the course of over 15 novels, Warshawski, a karate expert and crack shot, not only physically challenges her opponents, but suffers increasingly violent attacks from them, showing increasingly improbable powers of endurance and recovery. Fortunately, her closest friend and ally is a doctor. See, for example, *Deadlock* (Gollancz, 1984) or *Tunnel Vision* (Penguin, 1994).
27. Astrid Lindgren, best known for her children's books about Pippi Longstocking, published three novels featuring a boy detective called Kalle Blomkvist; the first was *Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist* (1946) (translated into English as *Bill Bergson, Master Detective*).
28. For an analysis of the distinguishing features of the thriller, see David Glover, 'The Thriller' in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, pp. 135–153.
29. For the figure of the magic helper in folk and fairy tales, see Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folk Tale*, trans. Laurence Scott (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1958); or Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Cornell, 1975).
30. For instance Mr Big, in *Live and Let Die* (dir. Guy Hamilton, 1954), or Oddjob, in *Goldfinger* (dir. Guy Hamilton,1959).
31. For an analysis of the hermeneutics of the 'locked room' mystery, see Champigny, *What Will Have Happened* (Part I, Mystery, pp. 13–56). Two early and classic examples of the genre are Edgar Allan Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841), and *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* by Gaston Leroux (first published in 1908, with a centenary reissue in 2008).
32. David Simon and Ed Burns, *The Corner* and David Simon, *Homicide* (both 2009).

3
Salander in Cyberspace

Sarah Casey Benyahia

This chapter considers the *Millennium* (Swedish) film trilogy's use of the crime genre to explore contemporary anxieties around the role and significance of cyberspace. The three films develop a discourse on the possible organisation of society in the virtual world; here the borders between detective and criminal, legal behaviour and criminality are entering new territory. In 'Cyber Crime and Punishment' Drucker and Gumpert argue that, 'When criminal behaviour meets cyberspace, a collision occurs between material and virtual worlds'.[1] This collision between the material and the virtual is a fight for dominance in the new world of cyberspace. It determines whether this new world will reinforce the existing power structures of the material world or subvert them. These conflicts include those concerned with gender relationships in which the border between masculinity and femininity is being contested. Cyberspace as an unregulated space also provides a new and urgent context for the tension between the role of the state versus the autonomy of the individual, whether cyberspace will be 'wild west or gulag'.[2] The two central characters, Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomkvist, represent the different sides of the conflict: the virtual versus the real world, female versus male, the individual versus the state. The conflicts which structure the films are a response to the new world of cyberspace, reflecting disputes over which values and ideologies will dominate. Salander, with her technological prowess and enigmatic character, is the most compelling figure in the trilogy in relation to these matters, as she personifies a range of attitudes and apprehensions about the future effects of cyberspace. Her character will be considered in detail. First, though,

let us consider the spaces around the protagonists and the settings in which they are placed.

The role of cyberspace in the *Millennium* trilogy is comparable to that of the city setting in earlier crime films. In Hollywood gangster films of the 1930s, the city was used to symbolise anxieties about the future at a time of rapid technological and societal change; the *Millennium* films explore similar contemporary responses to cyberspace. In the earlier period the city is represented as modern and technologically advanced, characterised by the iconography of progress – skyscrapers, cars, telephones and machine guns. The city is simultaneously enticing and glamorous, frightening and vicious; it is the setting for the gangster's rise but also his fall. In *Scarface* (dir. Howard Hawks, 1932), Tony Camonte's flat looks out onto a revolving neon advertising sign (for Cook's tours) which reads 'The World is Yours'. The sign signifies the modern city as a place of opportunity and individualism; the slogan is both seductive and unobtainable. In *Public Enemy* (dir. William Wellman, 1931) the increasing paranoia of Tom Powers is apparent as he mistakes the noises of the city (refuse collectors, coal deliveries) for gunshots, as if the city itself is attacking him. In 'The Gangster as Tragic Hero' Robert Warshow demonstrates how the figure of the gangster is an invention of the city, a way of exploring a society's complex attitudes; 'And the gangster – though there are real gangsters – is also, and primarily, a creature of the imagination. The real city, one might say, produces only criminals; the imaginary city produces the gangster: he is what we want to be and what we are afraid we may become'.[3] Salander fulfils a similar function in the *Millennium* trilogy; she is a product of society's fears of, and attraction to, cyberspace.

The earlier representation of the city in genre films is a reworking of modernism's concerns, which both celebrated and feared technology and mass production. In his analysis of the German expressionist film *Metropolis*, Andreas Huyssen characterises the opposing ideas held by two modernist movements: 'The expressionist view emphasises technology's oppressive and destructive potential [...] this expressionist view was slowly replaced by the technology cult of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* [New Objectivity] and its unbridled confidence in technical progress and social engineering'.[4] The *Millennium* trilogy is structured by a similar response to the 'new world' which is now an abstract (virtual) rather than concrete place.

The emergence of cyberspace is unsettling for states, individuals and institutions because it is challenging to control and because it blurs the boundaries which traditionally make a threat easy to define. In the context of law and order, cybercrime creates the opportunity for the criminal to remain anonymous and beyond the reach of the rule of law. In their analysis of the challenges posed by cybercrime to existing forms of law enforcement, Drucker and Gumpert also argue that, 'the unique attributes which make cyberspace an attractive forum for expression also create an environment well suited to criminal activity because police detection of criminals and prevention of crimes is difficult. The anonymity of online users and their ability to role play (assuming whatever role the user chooses) are freedoms which clearly do not exist in face to face interactions'.[5] In the context of a state's fears of, for example, terrorism, this means that it is difficult to know who is a threat or even what the reason for an attack is, providing unprecedented problems of detection and attribution.

Cyberspace is a realm which encourages anonymity and allows the construction of different personas. In 'Who Am We' Sherry Turkle examines the function of roles created by people online and the effects these might have on identity. In many accounts the ability to role-play a different age and gender is liberating to the participant, with the online experience affecting a person's 'real' behaviour in a positive way. This is particularly notable in instances of female/male gender swapping where women who role-play men online reported behaving more assertively and being taken more seriously in 'real' life.[6] This example of the relationship between a virtual and real identity appears fairly straightforward in that it uses the real world as the referent to the virtual one; the two worlds remain separate, with the participant very clear about the line between the two. Turkle argues that this (seemingly) clearly defined relationship is an example of a liminal moment in the relationship between the real and virtual worlds which will become increasingly fragmented: 'As we stand on the boundary between the real and the virtual, our experience recalls what the anthropologist Vincent Turner termed a liminal moment, a moment of passage when new cultural symbols and meanings can emerge. Liminal moments are times of tension, extreme reaction and great opportunity [...] and living with flux may no longer be temporary'.[7]

For the individual, the possibilities of ambiguity and deception created by cyberspace can alter the nature of social exchange, introducing a precondition of uncertainty or anxiety into all virtual contacts. The inherent necessity of questioning the declared identity of participants is part of a persistent anxiety about the effects of new technology, where issues around privacy and unwanted revelation are cause for concern. In *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Salander's introduction is similarly ambiguous; it isn't clear if she is criminal or victim or why she is spying on Blomkvist. As the narrative develops it is apparent that it is Salander who is in control of the investigation, who has access to all the information, but who remains hidden, carrying out her surveillance in secret. This is the paradox of the virtual world, threatening because of the simultaneous possibility of concealment and revelation. In this framework it is the individual (but also corporation or government) with the expertise to use the technology to their own ends that has the most power, able to remain hidden while revealing the lives of others.

The *Millennium* trilogy as crime films: the detective and the vigilante

One of the functions of the crime genre is to delineate the line between the criminal and non-criminal, a line that is constantly shifting in response to changing contexts. This line is most literally and simply explored where a consensus is assumed around definitions of good and bad, with the morally good police officer pursuing the guilty criminal. More frequently and more resonantly these concepts are treated ambiguously, very often through the debates over appropriate justice and punishment. This tends to concern the conflict between the rule of law where the justice system is pre-eminent, privileging the needs of society over the individual, and the individualism often symbolised by the vigilante. The crime genre negotiates the relationship between the criminal and the nature of justice whether officially sanctioned or individual. The *Millennium* trilogy explores the themes of crime and punishment within the less familiar context of cyberspace, examining the challenge this creates to existing conventions of behaviour. This conflict between the familiar and the new is highlighted by Drucker and Gumpert: 'Cyberspace and computer mediated communication are relatively new developments, but the

need to control behavioural norms and the desire to deter and punish misconduct are old social motives'.[8] In the *Millennium* trilogy, differing responses to the 'old' desire to 'deter and punish' are represented through the familiar roles of the detective and the vigilante, neither of which is seen as equal to the challenge of policing cyberspace. The figure of the detective, as characterised by Blomkvist, with his adherence to an ethical framework and the rule of law is side-lined and impotent, while the figure of the vigilante as represented by Salander, is reconceptualised to be effective in cyberspace.

The conventions of the detective film are clearly evident in the plot, character and iconography of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Examples of established totems include the typical settings of the closed, secretive community of Hedeby Island, the backdrop of a corrupt and alienating city, and the emphasis on new technology to solve the crime. The latter trait is a convention of the crime film familiar from Hollywood conspiracy thrillers of the 1970s and beyond. As Ian Scott states in *American Politics in Hollywood Films*, a key characteristic in the development of the thriller genre is the 'critical function of high tech advancement as a means to unpeel the secrets that lie at the heart of all our lives'.[9] The two detective figures, Blomkvist and Salander, conform to expectations of generic character types, mixing elements of the maverick, vigilante and criminologist detectives.

In her overview of the history of the detective film, Philippa Gates identifies specific types of fictional detectives, and sees them as mirroring changes in society and culture. For Gates, the detective types develop through time from representations of the upper-class gentleman sleuth, the hard-boiled detective of film noir to the methodical, establishment policeman of the police procedural. In contrast to the latter is the vigilante cop of the 1960s and 1970s (*Bullitt*, dir. Peter Yates, 1968; *Coogan's Bluff*, dir. Don Siegel, 1968; *The French Connection*, dir. William Friedkin, 1971; and *Dirty Harry*, dir. Don Siegel, 1971) who symbolised the distrust of law enforcement institutions and the response to an increasingly violent, immoral society. As Gates argues, 'These films introduced a tough and often angry hero who annihilated crime at any cost; he would go so far as to ignore or even break the law to get the job done.'[10]Towards the end of the twentieth century the genre is characterised by the explicit mixing of the detective and action film leading to a new figure: 'the cop as action hero'

that draws on the hyper masculinity of Hollywood action heroes (*Lethal Weapon*, dir. Richard Donner, 1987 and *48 Hours*, dir. Walter Hill, 1982). The emergence of the 'criminalist' or thinking hero, highly trained, scientific and objective can be read in opposition to the action detective, with the formal structure of investigation central (*Se7en*, dir. David Fincher, 1995; *The Silence of the Lambs*, dir. Jonathan Demme, 1991; and *The Da Vinci Code*, dir. Ron Howard, 2006).[11] While clearly a 'modern man', Blomkvist's role as a detective is recognisable from the character type introduced in nineteenth-century American and British crime novels such as Edgar Allan Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) and Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859) as well as the contemporary criminologist, in his cerebral, analytical approach.

The vigilante in the crime film is motivated by vengeance either in response to perceived inequalities in society (the vigilante as protector) or in revenge for pain inflicted on them personally. Frequently the two aspects are combined: the vigilante's initial motivation stems from personal tragedy which is then given a wider social justification (see, for example, *Death Wish*, dir. Michael Winner, 1974; *Harry Brown*, dir. Daniel Barber, 2009; *Law Abiding Citizen*, dir. F. Gary Gray, 2009; and *Justice*, dir. Roger Donaldson, 2011). Whatever their motivation (or justification) the vigilante shares a belief that the rule of law has broken, that the criminal justice system is ineffectual at best and corrupt at worst. Salander's crusade to punish her father for his violence against her has the effect of revealing the hidden workings of a misogynist society in the actions of the Swedish government, its security services and the corruption of national corporations.

This representation of law, order and justice is reinforced in Salander's approach to the new territory of cyberspace. Right and wrong is yet to be institutionally determined in this new world and Salander as vigilante represents an extreme individualism, alone and alienated with no sense of conforming to society's conventions. The sustained alignment of the audience with the character in the final instalment – at the expense of the viewer's relationship with Blomkvist – suggests the film's ideological allegiance to the individualism and isolation of Salander. In the final film of the trilogy, *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*, all the enigmas have been solved

and the film's function is to provide pleasure through experiencing Salander's public vindication at her trial. In the final resolution, Blomkvist, the symbol of traditional investigative journalism, which values selflessness in the pursuit of justice, is sidelined. Like the narrative, the camera's attentions now favour the female protagonist, gazing and lingering in fascination, for example, at her punk outfit for the trial.

There is, though, an aspect of dissonance in the audience's relationship with Salander, provoked by the disruptions to a shared moral code and the audience's well-trained expectation to align with the traditional, crusading hero. For example, Salander is victorious due to her mastery of digital technology and this is always carried out in the context of subterfuge and surveillance, unregulated by either the professional ethics of print journalism or constrained by existing laws. Her use of violence is not just a form of self-defence but also sadistic in nature. With no 'whodunit' left to puzzle in the final instalment the aim of the film seems to be to position Salander as a new kind of hero for the crime drama, one who can police the new, virtual world to be fought over. The construction of this new hero is founded on a range of seemingly contradictory characteristics and types: Salander is vigilante and detective, powerful and vulnerable, detached and emotional, physical and intellectual; characteristics often associated with specifically male or female representations. While paradoxical representations, particularly those concerning gender, are often ideologically conservative (the child-like woman, the boy man),[12] Salander's persona is a reflection of the contradictory, non-categorical nature of cyberspace.

The unknowable, ungovernable nature of cyberspace is the cause of its appeal and threat. The response to this threat has taken a variety of forms. Governments have launched reviews and implemented new policies, made deals with internet service providers (ISPs) and software manufacturers, often under the guise of 'security compliance'. For example, the US-government report *Cyberspace Security Policy Review* (2009) (subtitled 'Assuring a Trusted and Resilient Information and Communications Infrastructure') states: 'Cyberspace touches practically everything and everyone. It provides a platform for innovation and prosperity and the means to improve general welfare around the globe. But with the broad reach of a loose and lightly regulated digital infrastructure, great risks threaten nations, private

enterprises, and individual rights [...] the architecture of the Nation's digital infrastructure, based largely upon the Internet, is not secure or resilient.'[13]

Here the unregulated nature of cyberspace is clearly a threat which outweighs its creative potential and must be controlled by states. In popular culture, the response has been to provide reassuring images of cyberspace through its conceptualisation as a geographical territory which can be colonised and controlled. This is often and best understood via the metaphor of the frontier.

Cyberspace and the metaphor of the frontier

The concept of cyberspace as a frontier, a 'new world', has become familiar and normalised. It is used to name global network communications companies ('Frontier Communications') but also campaigning organisations that aim to protect the internet from regulation and censorship ('Electronic Frontier Foundation'). In 'Women and Children First: Gender and the Settling of the Electronic Frontier', Laura Miller argues that once made, the parallel between cyberspace and the geographical space of the frontier seemed unavoidable, but that the equation is problematic. There are fundamental differences, she argues, between cyberspace and the frontier. Cyberspace is not a physical space, it is bodiless and contains only ideas and information; it has no discernible boundaries or location.[14] Unlike the frontier, cyberspace was created by its pioneers: it is an entirely human construction. The American myth of the frontier rests in large part on the image of a wild, deserted, endless space. The desire for the frontier is motivated by the need to escape from the constraints of society. By contrast, cyberspace *is* society, and it must be shared. The metaphor of the frontier is therefore used for an ideological purpose, introducing an inherently oppositional image of power and conflict. This image fundamentally contradicts the notion of cyberspace as an open place with equal access to all. Once this idea is normalised it becomes inevitable that cyberspace is a place to be fought over, a territory to be controlled. Miller describes how the use of the term frontier explicitly references historical events and cultural knowledge, 'the frontier exists beyond the edge of settled or owned land. As the land that doesn't belong to anybody (or to people who "don't count", like Native Americans), it is on the verge of being acquired;

currently unowned, but still ownable'.[15] The description of a non-geographic space in geographic terms attempts to make cyberspace knowable and recognisable, to render it part of the existing world of regulation, laws and institutions.

The very idea that makes cyberspace both threatening and liberating – that it cannot be categorised and limited – is naturalised by setting up the language of conflict and regulation. Now the lawless, primitive frontier needs to be civilised. In *Cyberspaces of Everyday Life*, Mark Nunes describes how the portrayal of cyberspace has so far been limited to a familiar understanding of space, which restricts the possibility of understanding cyberspace as something different to our existing culture. Nunes argues that this understanding of space is dominated by two traditions, the empiricist tradition where space is a container for bodies and objects and the idealist tradition where space is a conceptual framework of signs and discourse.[16] Following the work of Henri Lefebvre, Nunes states that neither tradition is capable of describing cyberspace. Instead cyberspace should be understood as the interplay of the two traditions, integrated with the lived experience of the everyday: 'In this regard his [Lefebvre's] spatial analysis is neither idealist nor empiricist, claiming a dialectical relation between the material and the conceptual that is also an account of lived spacial practice.'[17] The use of the metaphor of the frontier to symbolise cyberspace creates the demand for regulation and ownership; the problematising of it as neither material nor conceptual space subverts this expectation. Salander personifies cyberspace as a 'problematised' space in her contradictory persona and role as a new kind of hero.

The female hero in cyberspace

Salander, as a hacker, symbolises both the possibilities and threat of an unregulated cyberspace. In 'Technology and Mythic Narrative' Stroud argues that, in films which deal with new technology and cyberspace, the function of the hero is not only to appeal to the technologically savvy audience but also to reassure the technologically anxious.[18] In *The Matrix* (dir. Andy and Lana Wachowski, 1999), the character Neo (Keanu Reeves) unifies the positions of two different sections of the audience and resolves the inherent contradictions bound up in binary understandings of technology as either 'good'

and empowering or 'bad' and repressive. This is performed through the actions of a 'technological hero' simultaneously quelling fears of the pervasiveness of cyberspace *and* affirming the idea of computers as the only possibility 'for true empowerment'.[19] To square this circle the hero must display great technological expertise – even artistry – but use this to attack the control of centralised powers which symbolise the threat to individual security. As Stroud argues, 'the hacker hero controls that which the centralised powers attempt to use to keep information locked away'.[20] The technological hero is recognisable as a typical hero of classical narrative in that he represents two sides of a conflict: in this case technology as threat and technology as power. The hero's journey is to move between these two positions, a journey which may involve criminal activity and living on the margins of society, to reveal them to the audience and ultimately reconcile them. The hero functions ideologically, disguising the threat of cyberspace, normalising it as a concept by suggesting it can be controlled by an individual. Salander, as hero, also embodies an adjacent paradox but does not provide a reassuring, integrating solution. Instead, Salander suggests the impossibility – and undesirability – of maintaining the status quo in cyberspace.

The conceptualisation of cyberspace as a frontier also contains meanings that are gender specific and, in turn, part of the way of replicating the hierarchical structures of the material world. In drawing on the history of the 'Wild West', or more specifically the way in which it has been configured in popular culture, representations of cyberspace use gender stereotypes – specifically the vulnerability of women (and children) – as a justification for increased control and regulation. This is achieved in two ways. First, the frontier and the new world are conceived as passive, as virgin territory for masculine assault, replicating gendered power relations. The second approach is to represent women as a civilising influence in the frontier (domesticated, hygienic, empathetic) who, because of this civilising nature, are also frail and in need of protection. As Miller argues, 'In the Western mythos, civilization is necessary because women and children are victimised in conditions of freedom. Introduce women and children into a frontier town and the law must follow because women and children must be protected.'[21] This gendered meaning gives Salander as a female hero a particular resonance as she is, uncharacteristically, a woman who is not civilising and therefore

does not need protection. In the *Millennium* trilogy this results in the notion of cyberspace as a frontier territory to be fought over, and Salander is cast as a charismatic force of both consolidation and disruption.

Throughout the trilogy feminist concerns are foregrounded, often controversially, through character, plot and themes. Salander is abused and victimised in an institutionalised, misogynistic way: she is tortured in hospital and sexually assaulted by her guardian. Her escape from this is found in cyberspace: a space in which she is defined by her technological skills rather than her gender. In this Salander perhaps best embodies the early, optimistic feminist analysis of cyberspace as a genderless place (echoed in earlier remarks by Turkle). In 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs' Haraway celebrates the '*pleasure* in the confusion of boundaries and for responsibility in their *construction* [...] the utopian tradition of imagining a world without gender, which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end'.[22] Such an interpretation has, though, been problematised by other scholars in the field. In the entry on 'Cyberspace' in *Encyclopaedia of Feminist Theories*, Kember characterises this development: 'Women users of the internet have reported incidents of intimidation, sexual harassment and even virtual rape which would seem to undermine the assumption that because cyberspace is "bodiless" it is also, therefore, genderless.'[23] In the *Millennium* trilogy personal attack is related to the physical not the virtual world; cyberspace remains genderless and bodiless and is a place of immunity for Salander. In the *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, the periods of freedom that Salander experiences are created through her ability to outsmart her opponents, through technological and cerebral expertise demonstrated in hacking and surveillance. Her escape at the end of the first film – which is revisited at the beginning of the second – is into an impossibly perfect, fantasy world of blue skies, dramatic scenery and an elegant beach apartment. Salander enters into this fantasy *mise en scène* in the guise of a new persona, that of the glamorous and sophisticated woman. The incongruity of this persona in comparison to the androgynous, gothic Salander of the physical world makes sense in the context of the limitless world of cyberspace – the elegant Salandar is an avatar, the tropical paradise a symbol of the virtual world and its role as a sanctuary.

The appeal and distinctive nature of cyberspace have been discussed many times in terms of the 'mind/body' split: as a new space free of the physical and cultural constraints imposed by the body. For example, in the online manifesto 'Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace' (presenting yet another reference to cyberspace as territory to be fought over) Barlow, one of the founding members of the Electronic Frontier Foundation states: 'Cyberspace consists of transactions, relationships, and thought itself, arrayed like a standing wave in the web of our communications. Ours is a world that is both everywhere and nowhere, but it is not where bodies live.'[24] In the novel *Neuromancer*, William Gibson, who is credited with the invention of the term cyberspace, explores the possibilities it provides for leaving behind physical spaces and limitations. A good example comes in the experiential positioning of the central character, Case: 'For Case, who'd lived for the bodiless exultation of cyberspace [...]. The body was meat. Case fell into the prison of his own flesh.'[25] Both of these views of cyberspace connote the hierarchical nature of the split between mind and body, with the intellect positioned as superior to moribund physicality.

This division is a further demonstration of the conceptualised structure of conflict used by both sides of the divide of cyberspace in order to dominate limitless space. The 'mind/body' split is not neutral or genderless. While some cyber-feminists initially celebrated the bodiless world of cyberspace as an escape from the inequalities of gender, the construction of the mind/body border was soon evidence of a reiteration of male dominance. In certain strands of feminist theory, the concept of somatophobia, or fear of the body, has been used to demonstrate the cause and practice of domination by one group over another. Most usually the dominant group was white and male while the 'other' was female and/or black. The otherness of this group was demonstrated through the hierarchy of mind and body, the dominant group being linked to intellect and scientific thought while the inferior groups' association with the body linked them to emotions, sexuality, hunger and instinct. As Carol J. Adams argues, 'one of the important reasons for feminists to recognise somatophobia is to see the context for women's oppression and the relationship it has with other forms of oppression [...] it is important for feminists to recognise the legacy of the soul/body distinction and its use in denigrating women, children, animals and the "natural" '.[26]

Ronell interprets this distinction as a continuation into cyberspace of a denial of the corporeal and morbidity which the woman represents: 'While the woman's body produces the eternal return of the "bloody mess and organic matter", the cyborg soldier, located in the command and control systems, exercises on the fields of denial. Intentional reality eliminates the body as organic, finite, damageable, eviscerable, castratable, crushable entity.'[27] Here, cyberspace provides the perfect environment for re-establishing the borders between the physical and the abstract, the unclean and hygienic, the female and the male. It is in this context that Salander as the female hero of cyberspace can be seen to challenge these dominant divisions. Salander, in her representation as physical and cerebral and as existing in the material and virtual worlds, functions to cross the border between the mind and the body, in doing so she reunites them in a way that challenges the dominance of somatophobia.

In the structure of the trilogy Salander's agency is marked increasingly in terms of the intellectual, rather than the purely physical. The final film focuses on her lying in a hospital bed, active – and triumphant – through technology rather than physicality. Salander's intellect is central to the detective plot of the trilogy and is foregrounded in scenes of code cracking, surveillance and hacking. However, the emphasis on the physicality of the body is also notable in the *Millennium* trilogy. The crime narrative of the films takes place in the physical world, while the solution to the crime is provided in the digital and virtual world. Salander, as the ultimate hero, encapsulates both sides of this divide; she is the physically violent avenger of the material world but ultimately aligned with the virtual, cyberspace. This is partly influenced by the emergence of the cop as action hero in the crime film. In turn, scenarios focusing on forms of enigma and investigation were sidelined for an emphasis on spectacle, action and the hero's body. The iconography of Salander's body, reinforced by her tattoo, refers to this entwined representation of the action hero and the vigilante. The sculpted, masculine form of Salander's torso, revealed in sex scenes and emphasised by the repeated pulling on and off of androgynous t-shirts, is familiar from the obsessive moulding of the vigilante's body such as presented in the character of Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver* (dir. Martin Scorsese, 1976). Similar representations of the female vigilante are apparent in Jodie Foster's performance as Erica Bain in *The Brave One* (dir. Neil

Jordan, 2007), and Zoe Saldana as Catelaya in *Colombiana* (dir. Olivier Megaton, 2011). The body is also represented as 'organic, finite and damageable' with Salander's flesh bruised and bloodied; at the end of *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, her body is broken and limp and she is on the verge of death. The significance of the body is also apparent in Salander's punishment of Bjurman: taking a knife and tattooing his body with an explicit description of his crimes. The crimes of murder, sexual abuse and violent assaults which are central to the films are emphasised as a tactile, painful experience of the real world. Characters are starved and strangled, strung up and cut open. Bones are shattered and nails are driven into flesh. The barbaric nature of these physical assaults, whether carried out by hero or villain, is often symbolised as animalistic through the settings of farmyard stalls and deserted barns. Blomkvist has almost no active role in the physical punishment of criminals, although he is a victim of physical violence when he is captured by Martin Vanger. In these climactic scenes of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Blomkvist becomes another example of the trilogy's emphasis on the potential breakability of the body, his eyes bulge as the noose tightens around his neck, blood, dirt and sweat smear his face and his body is hoisted around Vanger's clinical, pseudo-scientific basement like an animal carcass.

Gates argues that the focus on the body carries contradictory meanings about masculine and national identity. The celebration of hyper masculinity where the body itself becomes a weapon also draws attention to the vulnerability and delicacy of the flesh: 'McClane's body [in *Die Hard*] is the site upon which his crisis is expressed through the exposure of his naked, well-muscled physique and then its incurrence of cuts, scars, and injuries as he battles the villains.'[28] The action-hero antecedent which the character of Salander clearly references, functions, like the technological hero, to smooth over contradictions. In the case of *Die Hard* (dir. John McTiernan, 1988), Gates argues, this is to do with a crisis in masculinity, which is unable to express helplessness and emotion and 'transfers internal conflict into external expression on the body of its action-hero'.[29] This representation of the damaged but triumphant body exists in the context of a plot about the threat to US business culture from foreign corporations. The focus on the body sublimates the wider political implications into a celebration of the lone hero and national

identity. In reading Salander against this genre backdrop the differences become clear. As the trilogy progresses the emphasis on the flesh and 'meat' recedes as Salander spends a large amount of the final film immobile in a hospital bed. The physicality which triumphs in *Die Hard* and reinforces traditional readings of masculinity and nationality is rejected in the character of Salander. As the territory to be fought over is abstract rather than physical, the body alone as a weapon is no longer a suitable metaphor. Salander's roles as female, hacker, detective, vigilante and action hero signifies the unity of mind and body, rather than its separation.

Hacker ethics and cyberspace

The representation of Salander as a hacker draws on popular connotations of the hacker as outlaw. In popular culture, particularly crime and science-fiction genres in film and television, the hacker has often been synonymous with the criminal: the equivalent of a thief but breaking and entering in the virtual rather than the real world. While it is commonplace for sympathetic protagonists in mainstream film to be criminals and even contract killers (*Mr and Mrs Smith*, dir. Doug Liman, 2005; *The American*, dir. Anton Corbin, 2005), this is not the case with hackers. When a film does have a protagonist hacker, which is rare, there is a great deal of motivation and rationalisation to explain how the character has been forced into this activity. In the first wave of Hollywood hacking films in the 1980s and 1990s this justification for the hero's hacking included a mistake by a child (*War Games*, dir. John Badham, 1983), blackmail (*Sneakers*, dir. Phil Alden Robinson, 1992) and death threats (*The Net*, dir. Irwin Winkler, 1995), as well as youthful indiscretion and the prevention of a greater crime (*Hackers*, dir. Iain Softley, 1995). With the exception of *Hackers* the characters who become involved in cybercrime were all previously programmers working for corporations rather than outsiders. Even in *Swordfish* (dir. Dominic Sena, 2001), a film which glorifies the idea of the criminal outlaw, the hacker serves a prison term for his cybercrime, forced to return to crime only when he is caught up in a conspiracy and his daughter is in danger.

The more familiar representation of the hacker in film has been that of the hacker as sidekick and helper, relied on by the protagonist to provide expertise that they don't possess. This supporting

function also decontaminates the hero by keeping them distanced from direct contact with cyberspace. The role has tended to be a minor one and quickly became a male stereotype; the hacker helper lives alone in a basement lit only by the glow of computer monitors, any light from the windows has been blacked out. The hacker helper is invariably overweight and lives on a diet of breakfast cereals and pizza (the empty pizza box is an essential component of the *mise en scène*). This representation reaches an apotheosis in the character of Warlock (played by the film director Kevin Smith, whose persona supplies connotations of nerd and fanboy to the role) in *Die Hard 4.0* (dir. Len Wiseman, 2007). Warlock is a middle-aged man who lives in the basement of his mother's house which he refers to as the command centre. Plague, Salander's helper in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, conforms to this stereotype and there are even explicit references to his body odour. A darker variant of the isolated hacker character is found in *Untraceable* (dir. Gregory Hoblit, 2008) where the hacker is a serial killer and his basement becomes the site for a series of gruesome murders.

A revised version of the 'hacker helper' is found working as part of an organisation, often in a high-tech laboratory, either for the villain of the film (Boris Grishenko in *Goldeneye*, dir. Martin Campbell, 1995; Dennis Nedry in *Jurassic Park*, dir. Steven Spielberg, 1993; Rand in *Die Hard 4.0*) or for an official or covert government agency (Fiedler in *Enemy of the State*, dir. Tony Scott, 1998; Benji Dunn, *Mission Impossible III*, dir. J.J. Abrams, 2006; and Tom Cronin – and colleagues – in *The Bourne Ultimatum*, dir. Paul Greengrass, 2007). The marginalisation of the hacker in both their position on the edges of society and the brevity of their roles has changed in more recent films. The traditional representation remains but there is also evidence of the mainstreaming and recuperation of the hacker. In *Die Hard 4.0*, in addition to the use of the traditional hacker stereotype, both the antagonist and helper are hackers; the first using his ability to attack the security defences of the US, the second a young hacker deploying his skills to prevent this. In the example of the *Die Hard* film, the hacker helper now has an expanded role and more screen time. Implicitly, the innate goodness of this hacker is also signified by the actor's star persona. Justin Long is a former child-star who retains an air of innocence and affability, which is reinforced when he helps to save and then falls in love with the protagonist's daughter. The

concept of the good and bad hacker (or 'black or white hat' hackers)[30] derives from the history of hacking in the computing industry where the term hacker has been through several changes and has more complex connotations than simply criminal. (It may also be a shrewd response by Hollywood to accommodate the changing views of the audience; the important demographic of young males won't necessarily see a hacker as evil.)

In *Technology and Pleasure: Hacking Considered Constructive*, Gisle Hannemyr traces the changing meanings of 'hacker' arguing that: 'Part of the confusion surrounding the word "hacker" stems from the fact that it has been applied to at least three distinct communities.'[31] The term was originally a reference to the early computer experts of the 1960s whose ability to program drove developments in computer technology and who believed that programming should be done with a level of craftsmanship and artistic sensibility. In the 1970s the term was embraced by the 'techno-hippie', a grassroots activist movement which recognised the power of the new technology and believed it should be accessible to all. This use of the term hacker has a counter-cultural, anti-corporate position which is related to, but different from, the 1980s computer-underground use of the word. The latter simply refers to the criminal act of sabotage and destruction. As Hannemyr concludes: 'In the second half of the eighties the so-called computer underground emerged, appropriated the terms "hacker" and "hacking" and partly changed their meaning. To the computer underground, "to hack" meant to break into or sabotage a computer system, and a "hacker" was the perpetrator of such activities.'[32] Despite being the definition of a hacker most recognisable from popular culture this last definition is the most marginal aspect of the hacker community. In *Hacking Cyberspace*, Gunkel argues that to be an oppositional act, hacking must resist the gravitational pull of both sides of the opposition and must instead take up an 'eccentric position'. This position will exceed binary logic and disrupt the attempt to organise cyberspace in a replication of the status quo so, Gunkel argues, 'hacking cannot be simply reduced to a destructive intervention or a corrective criticism, its operations appear only as a kind of outsmarting or outmanoeuvring of the system. It is, in the usual sense of the words neither good nor bad. Its logic and value remain otherwise. As a result, outsmarting cannot be forgiven for it exceeds the very definition of wrongdoing that is the condition

for any possibility of forgiveness.'[33] The dichotomy of the 'good' and 'bad' hacker in film works to reinforce another structuring opposition in cyberspace: the need to protect systems from the threat posed by hackers themselves, terrorists and opponents of internet regulation. The hacker moves between sides, either working to secure the system or to break into it. In doing this the hacker unintentionally reinforces the lines of the border, marking what is on either side of the line, whether subject or object, male or female, regulation or freedom.

The original hacker was an unintended product of the increasingly hierarchical practices imposed by computer corporations such as IBM. Based on the scientific theories of management developed by Frederick Taylor at the beginning of the twentieth century, the previously open and egalitarian working practices of computer programmers were divided into circumscribed systems.[34] In this process computer programmers were lower on the hierarchy, with systems analysts at the top. This combination of the downgrading of expertise and dismissal of the intrinsic value of programming encouraged a move away from the mainstream. It accelerated the romanticisation of the hacker as an anti-establishment figure who takes on the corporations and wins. This aspect of the hacker community has been characterised by Steven Levy in what has become known as the hacker ethic, which puts forward an argument for the ideal political, cultural and economic use of computers with particular reference to resisting control and regulation. Central to the hacker ethic is the belief in open access: 'Access to computers – and anything which might teach you something about the way the world works – should be unlimited and total.'[35] This is reinforced by the argument that 'all information should be free', which in turn provides the rationale for the anti-corporate sentiment which is central to the hacker mythology: 'mistrust authority – promote decentralization'.[36] The hackers' open-access position is characteristic of their attempt to extricate themselves from a capitalist mode of production, often working in academic research or for non-profit organisations. The 'techno yuppie' by contrast sees the open aspect of the internet in a very different way. Hannemyr analyses the way that the techno yuppie emerged as a result of the hacker being 'co-opted by the glamour of technology'.[37] This was a new, design-led development, a way of seeing technology as cool, represented by the advent of *Wired* magazine. Like the hacker, the expertise of the techno yuppie allows for autonomy and freedom

from reliance on corporations. In contrast with the hacker, autonomy is inextricably linked to capitalism and to a libertarian freedom from the constraints of regulation and control. The techno yuppies' view of the internet as lawless, as somewhere where control is undesirable and impossible is in opposition to the hackers' argument for governments and ISPs to regulate and control. For the techno yuppie control only comes through expertise; if you can do it then it's allowed, there is no argument around laws and ethics. For many hackers the emergence and dominance of the techno yuppie is a signifier of the failure to achieve their aim that the internet remain open and free.

The character of Salander, although routinely referred to as a hacker in publicity material and in the films, does not have the community-driven, anti-corporation views of the original computer hacker. In the *Millennium* trilogy, Blomkvist represents the hacker, Salander the techno yuppie. Their characters are delineated by the conventions of the crime film and classic narrative cinema. Salander operates as a 'gun for hire' selling her skills for financial gain without recourse to an ethical framework or the rule of law. As a computer expert with an explicit link to the cinematic vigilante, the character of Salander functions as a symbol of absolutist morality which rejects the criminal justice system in favour of individual responsibility. She is able to pursue this ideal through a mastery of cyberspace that makes redundant the system of laws and ethics that currently monitor the process of crime and punishment. Blomkvist shares the ideals of openness and a distrust of corporations recognisable from the hacker ethic; the diminishing nature of his role in the *Millennium* trilogy (in favour of a narrative focusing on Salander) indicates that his belief in the rule of law and the morally indispensable nature of process is seen as outmoded in the context of cyberspace.

Notes

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4

Journalism and Compassion: Rewriting an On-Screen Crusader for the Digital Age

Sarah Niblock

The image of the crusading journalist has proved one of the most satisfying and enduring characters for film-makers and audiences alike, and has taken many forms both in Hollywood and Europe over the past 100 years, from comedies to thrillers. As well as providing entertainment, these images offer a thought-provoking space for audiences to reflect on the role of real-world journalists and their relationship to the public interest. The depiction of investigative journalists, such as Mikael Blomkvist in the film versions of the *Millennium* trilogy, embodies how the role of the news media is viewed in any given context. As Brian McNair puts it, films about journalism are the 'prism, through which is refracted a society's conception [of an issue]'.[1] One only has to think of the public and political reaction to *All the President's Men* (dir. Alan Pakula, 1976), or the press corps tracking atrocities in *Hotel Rwanda* (dir. Terry George, 2004), to note that the impact of film representations of journalism runs deep. To limit the celluloid journalists' impact to entertainment is to ignore other potent and powerful messages that these films can offer.

Accordingly, this chapter will critically examine how the figure of Blomkvist is portrayed as a compassionate journalist in the film adaptations directed by Niels Arden Oplev, Daniel Alfredson and David Fincher, adding a new ethical dimension to the long history of films depicting reporters. While the male protagonist of the Swedish film versions of the *Millennium* trilogy and the US-produced film *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* coheres with the cinematic trope of investigative journalist as detective, he brings additional attributes to the

role. By displaying vulnerability and humanity, Blomkvist challenges the traditional representation of the journalist as a crusading hero in dramatic fashion. The chapter will show how the Swedish and US adaptations, in their very different ways of drawing on varying cinematic traditions, portray Blomkvist as a practitioner who is at odds with the rapidly changing media landscape to which he must adapt. His interaction with his counterpart Lisbeth Salander forces him to reconsider his journalistic approach from one of a professionalised, objective model to a position of compassionate advocacy. In this way, these fascinating films offer a valuable space in which to synthesise tenets of film studies and journalism studies in order to show how cinema can negotiate the real-world media industry at any given moment.

Films about journalists are not made in a cultural vacuum, divorced from wider society. They can only attain popularity if they resonate with the times, allowing spectators to engage and identify with characters and themes depicted. As Graeme Turner points out: 'films are not autonomous cultural events. We understand films in terms of other films, their worlds in terms of our worlds'.[2] In this case, Stieg Larsson, as a journalist and author, was ideally placed to revise the literary figure of the investigative reporter for the new millennium, chiming with a moment of moral and financial crisis for real-world journalism.

The cinematic evolution of Mikael Blomkvist

The Swedish film versions of the *Millennium* trilogy were released in Scandinavia in 2009. Made by Yellow Bird, they were co-produced with the Danish Nordisk production company. Only the first film, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (dir. Niels Arden Oplev), was intended for theatrical release, while the subsequent films, *The Girl Who Played with Fire* and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* (both dir. Daniel Alfredson), were planned as television movies. However, the tremendous success of the first film prompted their cinema release. In 2010, the films were shown in an extended version of approximately 180 minutes per film as a six-part mini-series (each film divided into two parts of 90 minutes) on Swedish television. This version was released on 14 July 2010 on DVD and Blu-ray in three separate sets and, on 24 November 2010, as a complete *Millennium* trilogy box set

with an extra disc. All three films feature Michael Nyqvist as Mikael Blomkvist, an investigative reporter and publisher of the magazine *Millennium*, and Noomi Rapace as Lisbeth Salander.

Yellow Bird, Relativity Media, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures and BBC Films partnered with Sony Pictures to produce an American adaptation of the first novel, which was released in December 2011. The film was written by Steven Zaillian, directed by David Fincher and produced by Scott Rudin, with Daniel Craig as Mikael Blomkvist and Rooney Mara as Lisbeth Salander. Along with *Dragon Tattoo*, Fincher and Zaillian have signed a two-picture deal to also adapt *The Girl Who Played with Fire* and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*, which will be shot back to back. In January 2012, it was announced that Sony was moving forward with the adaptation of *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, with Zaillian in the early stage of scripting it for a planned release in late 2013.

Cinematic elements of form and narrative establish the *Millennium* films as in many ways reminiscent of some of the most abiding crusading journalism films of the past. Since the earliest days of cinema, Hollywood has promoted the cinematic investigative journalist as a hero. This image was 'fixed in the public consciousness by exemplary depictions of the profession, such as the aforementioned 1976 film All the President's Men'[3] demonstrating the power of film as a 'purveyor of myth'[4] and its ability to influence the public's expectations of the news media. The celluloid versions of Blomkvist draw on more than 14,000 previous cinematic representations of journalists. Even before sound and moving image were brought together in 1927, Charlie Chaplin's first screen role was as reporter Edgar English in *Making a Living* (dir. Henry Lehrman, 1914). Despite this, it is possible to pinpoint recurring themes and approaches that are also reflected in the *Millennium* films. These themes include the depiction of the crusading journalist as an upholder of social justice, constructions of journalism as an idealised profession, and public interest versus the profit motive of the news industry. Each of these themes reflect ongoing debates within and about the news media, which are never more acutely addressed than during moments of significant upheaval such as the technical and financial impact felt in the wake of the digital revolution in the early twenty-first century.[5]

First, the narrative addresses the injustice meted out to Lisbeth Salander and, by extension, other young people in the care of the

state. Righting social evils was an important characteristic of some of the earliest on-screen depictions of journalists in both Hollywood and Europe. Lasting less than an hour in duration, *Doss House* (dir. John Baxter, 1933) depicts a night spent by an undercover reporter in a hostel for down-and-outs in the Bloomsbury area of central London. Disguised as a tramp, the reporter is on the hunt for an escaped convict. As well as telling the story, the film attempts to subtly campaign by illuminating the grim conditions the disadvantaged have to contend with. A few years later, the US production *Each Dawn I Die* (dir. William Keighley, 1939) sees the bitterness of prison life through the eyes of a reporter who has been wrongly convicted of murder. However, by Second World War examples of crusading journalism in films were few and far between, most likely out of deference to authority in a time when society had to pull together. At that time, films were more likely to feature journalists driven by exclusives so that the business imperative and the notion of career building were foregrounded over tenets of the virtuous reporter.

A second wave of portraying journalists as heroes began in earnest in the 1950s, with the added dimension that the reporters were professionalised. From the US film industry's perspective, given the growing challenge from European competition, movies with a serious ethical message helped contradict criticism that Hollywood was oversaturated with entertainment genres such as musicals at the expense of tense thrillers or docudramas. However, rather than using the cinematic investigator to expose social injustice, the work of film-makers was under close scrutiny from Senator Joseph McCarthy's House of Un-American Activities Committee, which severely limited their freedom of speech in presenting unpatriotic messages.[6] Notwithstanding this restriction, film representations of journalists from that time still resonate in the figure of Blomkvist as a professional figure with social status. During the post-war period, the news business worked in earnest to forge a positive reputation by professionalising its newsrooms and adopting ethical codes of practice. Cinematically, the journalist-as-outsider prowling the streets in search of scandal, which had so long been the staple of the crusader movie, was being undone by the concerted efforts of the news industry itself to uphold higher standards.

Few films were more impactful in representing the mythical role of American professional journalism than *Park Row* (dir. Samuel Fuller,

1952). The lead journalist, Phineas Mitchell, is said to be a composite of great American newspapermen, and represents all that is good in journalism – a moral and upstanding citizen. His paper, the *Globe*, is in pitched battle against the scurrilous *Star*, culminating in a street fight between Mitchell and one of the rival journalists. The director uses thinly veiled symbolism to heighten the presence of America's great institutions, to exaggerate the good-versus-bad dichotomy in the film. In one outlandish scene, Mitchell hits the hack's head whilst pinning him against a statue of Benjamin Franklin, while the film ends with a shot of the Statue of Liberty. This final shot cements the underlying message: journalists must work in support of the status quo, not against it. These were enduring and powerful myths within American society that served to uphold the seemingly skewed ethics of newspaper magnates such as the legendary Joseph Pulitzer, who published sensationalism while simultaneously pursuing a crusade against it.

The *Millennium* trilogy follows very much in the vein of conspiracy thrillers involving journalists, which particularly resonated against a backdrop of dire post-war uncertainty. World events such as economic depression, the Vietnam War and the nuclear threat heightened suspicion and paranoia about the ability and integrity of major institutions and instruments of power. These factors provided the ideal conditions for the invocation of lasting and resonant cinematic interlocutors in European and other cinemas. Film-makers offered a more considered alternative to the screwball, madcap hack movie that typified much of the Hollywood tradition, inspired by new approaches, particularly neo-realism, pioneered by Italian critics and directors keen to break free from the conventions of cinema. Political conspiracy similar to that underlying the mistreatment of Salander by those in authority seeped into cinema, aided and abetted by the influence of the neo-realist and new-wave movements inspired particularly by French film-makers and critics. European films of this era depicted the journalist as investigator, employing detective-like methods to uncover hidden truths, reflecting the cultural backdrop of unrest and distrust for authority. In *Judith Therpauve* (dir. Patrice Chereau, 1978), Simone Signoret plays the eponymous journalist fighting to save a small local paper, *La Libre Republique*. Her friends from the resistance movement come to her looking for someone to run the financially troubled liberal newspaper. Due to her strong

political leanings, she remortgages her house to raise capital. Concerted opposition by the far right brings down the paper, despite her best efforts.

As mentioned, the *Millennium* films draw heavily on *All the President's Men* which set the benchmark for the highest standards of public-interest journalism. Indeed, the film has been cited a favourite in polls of journalists.[7] Journalism films in the 1970s were based upon a complex web of ethical themes including critical and analytical approaches to big business and, perhaps amidst Vietnam and heightening tensions globally between east and west, a strong sense of impending disaster. As at the *Millennium* magazine, the *Washington Post* featured in the film portrayed the work of serious journalists. The paper's editor is presented as someone willing to hold back on explosive and sensational revelations for as long as it took to get them properly sourced. While not above a bit of trickery, the reporter is shown to be working in the public interest. He or she is confident, assertive, determined and conscientious. But there is also a resurgence of the noir characteristic of the reporter being alienated, working outside the margins of society when confronting powerful people and institutions. The particular noir conventions being borrowed and reshaped in *All the President's Men* include alienation and transgression through the image of the shadowy, unnamed source Deep Throat, amidst a backdrop of the urban claustrophobia of a society in crisis, conveyed through rain-soaked streets and harsh neon light.

Depicted more than 30 years after Watergate, Blomkvist operates in a media landscape that is a world apart – technically and competitively – from that of Bernstein and Woodward, in an industry feeling the impact of the 'fifth estate' of bloggers, data hackers and citizen journalists acutely. New technology combined with concentrated ownership has posed the greatest threat to journalistic integrity and ethics so far, something Larsson negotiates directly through his vision of the synergy between Blomkvist and Salander.

The challenge to journalism posed by the new profit-driven imperative of the corporatised news industry has become more prevalent in films since the late 1990s. Investigative journalists are shown to be working within the capitalist system to maximise profits while, at the same time, notionally informing citizens in the public interest. They are often depicted as embodying the ethical tensions that

journalism faces when needing to operate commercially as part of the system it should really be scrutinising. In *The Paper* (dir. Ron Howard, 1994) and *The Insider* (dir. Michael Mann, 1999), and the recent *Good Night, and Good Luck* (dir. George Clooney, 2005), journalists are seen as being well intentioned yet stifled in their efforts, not just by outside organisations but also their own budget-conscious managers. The reporter is often caught between the demands of their production processes and the interests of their public and sources, a factor that the directors of the Swedish and US versions of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* were keen to address by depicting Erica Berger's dilemma over the uncertain financial underpinning of her magazine.

At the time of writing, David Fincher's Hollywood version of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* has only just been released, so it remains to be seen how the whole trilogy adaptation will unfold. But from the slick 007-style opening credits, it was clear that Hollywood was to stamp its own inimitable style on Blomkvist. Fincher's response repackages the slightly overweight, scruffy coffee-and-sandwich addict of the Swedish films into a carb-free heart-throb with tailoring and designer knitwear for every occasion. Predictably, terabytes of space have been devoted to comparing the enactment of Lisbeth Salander by two brilliant actors, Noomi Rapace and Rooney Mara, who each channel the avenging heroine with great expertise and sensitivity.[8] But very little attention has been paid to the contrasting depictions of Blomkvist. This is surprising given how different they are and, in turn, what that might say about the culture from which they emanate. It is more than coincidence that Daniel Craig's buff, designer-stubbled, bespectacled Blomkvist mark II is a far cry from Michael Nyqvist's ruddied, t-shirt sporting frame – both literally and metaphorically. While Craig's steely Blomkvist coheres with Hollywood's historic ideal of the journalist-as-professional, as if to represent our tarnished faith in an occupation gone askew, Nyqvist's depiction offers a very different model for the digital age – vulnerable, reflective and flawed. It is a vision of the journalist that, though less palatable or dynamic on the surface, has greater depths and asks important questions of the spectator at a time of great disquiet over the function and future of journalism.

In keeping with previous cinematic incarnations of the crusader, Mikael Blomkvist is portrayed as, and believes himself to be, an ethical and professional journalist of the highest calibre, set apart from

his peers in the mainstream. In both the US and Swedish films he is introduced to the viewer as he leaves court, after being convicted of libel, to face the waiting press. In the Swedish version, however, his casual, leather-jacketed representation is quite distinct from the besuited news reporters who swoop and encircle him at the start of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. In the US version, his image resembles that of the slick on-screen newsreader presenting the latest details on the scandal. Daniel Craig's Blomkvist is an idealised figure physically, sexually and professionally. Far from being socially outcast, he has a positive relationship with his daughter, is presentable, displays physical desirability and, as time passes, enjoys a conventional sexual relationship with Lisbeth Salander. He is portrayed as a typical hero figure, in control of his life, relationships and even his destiny.

The Swedish Blomkvist is instantly established as an outsider, a liminal, maverick journalist set apart from the mainstream, while in the US version he is coded as a professional but fallen, once part of the journalistic establishment but now excommunicated. The US approach coheres closely with the idea of journalism as a profession or semi-profession, as opposed to an occupation or vocation. There has been an ongoing process towards professionalisation over the past 30–40 years, which suggests it can no longer claim to be a trade or a craft. Key signs of this include the emergence of a professional journalistic ideology (such as attention to objectivity), the growth of professional institutions and codes of practice.

Blomkvist's work location is thematically significant and introduces ethical dimensions to the narrative. *Millennium*, based closely on *Expo* magazine, of which Stieg Larsson was editor, is depicted as a force for social change, independent and largely divorced from big business conflicts of interest. It represents a safe, idealised space for journalistic camaraderie, one that operates through mutually supportive relationships between its staff, rather than competition with one another. This distinguishes the magazine from the typical editorial environments of the twenty-first century. For instance, in the Swedish films decisions are made quite arbitrarily about pagination. We see no sign of production journalists, deadlines or looming accountants, offering a utopian vision of journalism largely unfettered by economic concerns. The open-ended editorial timescales and lack of pressures over personnel and cost are similar to representations of content over process in *All the President's Men*, when Ben

Bradlee waited for two years to publish the Watergate affair. However, it is perhaps telling that a key ethical dilemma in the US version is whether or not Erica Berger should have allowed the Vanger Corporation, which is under scrutiny by the magazine, to gain a controlling stake in *Millennium*'s finances. As Berger retorts in her defence of her decision to Blomkvist, '50 per cent of something is better than 100 per cent of nothing'. Given the acute financial collapse of so many leading and historic print titles in North America, it is a subject close to the entire media industry's heart.

It is interesting that, in the US version, Blomkvist's role as part of an editorial organisation is very much downplayed – he takes the 'professional' stance of firing himself from the magazine in order to repair the publication's tarnished reputation. This is in contrast to the Swedish version in which Blomkvist remains an integral member of the team, albeit at a distance. These different approaches to his professional status correspond with the US and European tropes, so that the more professionalised model is North American. The viewer witnesses very little of the way the *Millennium* newsroom operates in the US version. When Blomkvist is convicted of libel he shows no emotion and coldly departs for Hedestadt, on the understanding that the mechanisms of magazine publication will continue to operate regardless of his absence. This coheres with the professional model of journalism where the producers of news are but one cog in the production wheel, rather than its totality. John Soloski examines the way that news organisations use professionalisation as a means to develop policies that control the behaviour of their journalists. For efficiency, newsrooms must work very quickly and there is no room for lengthy discussions or dealing with dissent – all involved must agree. The norms of behaviour that emanate from news professionalism constitute a trans-organisational control mechanism. Since the behaviour of journalists is rooted – to a great extent – in shared professional norms, this minimises the problem of how news organisations are able to maintain control over journalists.[9] Thus, Blomkvist's self-dismissal enhances his status as a professional as remaining on staff would not be conducive to the business prerogative.

In sharp contrast, *Millennium*'s ethos in the Swedish version is characterised by the inherent element of duty bound up in the actions of its journalists, while its journalists cement their team affiliation through their individual tenacity rather than homogeneity. Thus,

Millennium is central to the narrative, which promotes the idea of collaboration as more positive than individualism. The newsroom becomes more than a sum of its total parts, a vibrant powerhouse of individual journalistic minds working in cooperation. The reporters feel morally obliged to hold power accountable and seek and relay the truth no matter what the situation or consequences, despite threats to their lives.

Cinematically, the wider physical context in which Blomkvist works and the way he interacts with his world sheds further light on his construction as a journalist. The *Millennium* films are set in and around Stockholm in identifiably real locations and some fictional places such as Hedeby, in the Swedish film, which is renamed Hedestadt in the US version. Location is an important and resonant aspect of *mise en scène*, and a cityscape such as Stockholm can serve as a speechless character within the film, as Anna Claydon identifies:

> regardless of the way in which the city is represented, fictional or otherwise, and however differently the political spaces are rendered, the concept of the city is iconic and specific cities are indelibly etched onto the minds of most who have never seen them except on the screen. This is the realm of the iconographic city, the represented city played back to the spectator and reconfigured as a place for worship.[10]

The location shots serve as an important meaning-making device, reinforcing the notion of journalist-as-hero. As Philip French explains:

> On the more colourful, bustling big city scene, the crusading journalist is not intimately involved in a close-knit community, but his challenges are larger, he is less innocent and his responsibilities are in constant need of redefinition. He is an independent hero fighting for truth and justice on the part of society and the man in the street, against local oligarchies and crime syndicates. And he is not sure of victory.[11]

The Stockholm that the Swedish Blomkvist inhabits emits a sense of downbeat miserabilism, which heralds more darkness to come. Shot from low angles, the spectator engages with the characters'

experiences of danger and malevolence. It symbolises a place needing to be reined in by ethical journalism, reinforcing the crusader role of the protagonist. The backdrop is not one of ultimate good; rather, the setting is part of a never-ending continuum, pointing to the need for continued investigative journalism activity. In contrast, the bleak-yet-beautiful Hedeby offers him a semblance of a domestic family setting, one in which he even takes up running.

The US version depicts the locations in reverse. To Fincher, the city of Stockholm is portrayed as a civilised, orderly backdrop, whereas Hedestadt is dark, frozen, perpetually snowing, cut off from civilisation. It is a wild, unruly and hellish environment, mirroring the inhumanity of members of the Vanger clan he is investigating. Whereas in the Swedish version the site of ultimate evil is the powerhouse of the city, in the US version the horror lies in the domestic disunity, where murderous Nazi impulses are thinly coated with the veneer of modernity, as represented by Martin Vanger's state-of-the-art minimalist residence.

The homes of Blomkvist and Salander in the Swedish films are similarly liminal and revealing of their motivations. Their soulless, unhomely flats are fairly shabby and unloved, but dominated by top-of-the-range coffee machines and computers, suggesting both characters' only *raison d'être* is their work. This contrasts sharply with the home of Blomkvist's lawyer sister Annika, who is just as committed and effective professionally, yet has an orderly and harmonious family life. These settings and *mise en scène* reinforce Blomkvist as a typical filmic crusader who sleeps in the office from time to time and lives on coffee and sandwiches.

However, in the US version, Blomkvist's home is stylish and desirable, which conveys two messages. Firstly, it reinforces his status as a professional who has financial freedom, or at least he did before the libel fine, as well as taste and discernment in clothes and furnishings. This serves to signal that he is a character to aspire to and identify with. Secondly, his domestic comfort serves to heighten the contrast with the unspeakable horror that lies beneath the surface of the Vanger family estate, literally and figuratively.

With Blomkvist's characterisation and status established, both the Swedish and US versions address important professional and ethical concerns for journalism in the digital age. While these topics are frequently tackled in differing ways, the films certainly unite

in undercutting customary manifestations of journalist-as-hero and lead ultimately to the construction of Blomkvist as a compassionate reporter. One of the first steps towards this is by diluting the individualised autonomy of the cinematic journalist.

The narrative actively promotes networked journalism as a more effective means to establish the truth than the traditional model of individual professional agency. Some feel that the world of news will be turned on its head as 'new technologies re-engineer the relationship between how views and information are exchanged, judged and assigned significance, and how public opinion is formed'.[12] The notion of evolving consensus over the qualities and skills belonging to the world of journalism would change as 'technologies of news really broaden the field of who might be considered a journalist and what might be considered journalism'.[13] Some suggest that the three major constituencies in the world of news – journalists, newsmakers and the audience – will merge into each other, with audiences becoming part of the process of journalism.[14] Others suggest that the professional culture of journalism is becoming more diverse, open and dynamic, when journalists become identified as 'media workers' with a 'portfolio worklife' based on flexibility and multi-skilling.[15] While cinematic journalists have often worked powerfully and effectively in teams, whether as the wise-cracking Hildy/Walter Burns duo in *His Girl Friday* (dir. Howard Hawks, 1940) or, of course, Bernstein, Woodward and Bradlee in *All the President's Men*, networked journalism tends to involve larger unaffiliated teams, usually involving social technology. Professional experience and the literature suggest that new media technologies challenge one of the most fundamental 'truths' in journalism, namely the professional journalist is the one who determines what the public sees, hears and reads about the world. In the Swedish films, Blomkvist's endeavours are underpinned and complemented by the effective research of unofficial journalists from the fifth estate of bloggers and hackers. Their efficacy and significance are a revelation to him, but he nonetheless embraces their power and potential into his own reporting. The journey to that point of acceptance takes Blomkvist longer in the US version, with Salander initially pitched as Blomkvist's assistant rather than as his equal collaborator due to her unofficial and non-professional status. The power relations between Daniel Craig's Blomkvist and Salander are established before they begin to work together. On discovering

how Salander has been hacking into his computer and tracking him, Blomkvist goes to her apartment early one morning. In the Swedish version, Blomkvist is willing to enter her world with no preconceptions and makes no attempt to affect her personal style or approach in any way. He accepts and protects her long-term female partner and tolerates her sociopathic non-conformist behaviour. In the US version Blomkvist, however, takes a more paternalistic and leading approach initially by taking coffee and breakfast to her flat and ejecting her girlfriend, who is depicted not as a threat to Blomkvist's male prowess but as a one-night peccadillo. In the US version, he knows nothing of her abuse at the hands of her guardian or her troubled history, removing the complexity of their interconnectedness from the film and replacing it with a simple professional relationship. This develops into a functional sexual affair, which is non-exclusive for Blomkvist but committed on the part of Salander.

While the operation of power relations in the Swedish version is much more nuanced and less stereotypical, in the US version we witness the paternalistic professional relinquish his own power and steadily acknowledge not only Salander's equality with him as a researcher, but her ultimate superiority when she obtains the evidence to expose corruption by financier Hans-Erik Wennerström. However, the narrative does not go so far as to decry the traditional occupation status of the experienced journalist. Larsson makes an interesting point in the books, which is not conveyed in the films. Blomkvist is said to have met Erica Berger while they both studied journalism at college, signalling that, while the professionalised model of journalism might not be the best form of investigative practice if it excludes networking, it is the most stable basis for its continuation.

While *Millennium* magazine prides itself on its forensic attempts to gather and present the truth in all its investigations, indeed going to the extent of hiring the services of doctoral researchers to supply cutting-edge exclusive material, its remit is not to simply represent the facts but to campaign and advocate. Likewise, the films show how Blomkvist actively deviates from the abiding model of objectivity. Objectivity, in its traditional sense, is the ideal that journalists are unbiased, keeping their values and beliefs out of their work. Objectivity did not arise from journalism, but had been a guiding trend in western scientific, mathematical and philosophical thought

for around 2000 years. The concept was adopted as a 'commercial imperative of nineteenth century publishing'.[16] Also, 'just as scientists discovered facts about nature by using normatively established objective methods',[17] journalists decided that that they, too, 'would use their methods to reveal social reality to the news consumer'.[18] In the 1920s, objectivity became a founding media ethic, a goal that should be achieved in professional and ethical reporting. Objectivity eventually came to be seen as a 'central pillar of social responsibility theory' in which detachment was the only way to 'provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events'.[19] In journalism the notion of objectivity also helped to differentiate the practice as professional, as it allowed editors to distance themselves from patronage and party politics. Objectivity, coupled with the notion that journalists were in pursuit of the 'truth', influenced the routinisation of news production. The processes and practices of journalism were to centre on presenting facts in a complete picture in order to achieve objectivity. But one of the problems with establishing journalism as a profession is that the concept of objectivity may be illusory, subject to institutional and socio-cultural mores over time.

The approach in the *Millennium* trilogy of films is not that fact-based reporting should be abandoned in favour of a wholly partisan approach. Rather, in the painstaking and forensic efforts of the team to expose the maltreatment of Lisbeth Salander by those charged with her care, there is no attempt to provide a balanced, bigger picture, or to get the viewpoints of a variety of sources, which is the typical strategy in mainstream journalism. On the contrary, Blomkvist's approach is to be guided by his gut feeling and instincts rather than an objective view of reality based on factual evidence that is 'out there' waiting to be amassed.

The professional goals of independence and objectivity leave little room for compassion. However, in today's changing media environment, the principle of compassion is gaining credibility. The *Millennium* films do not see compassion as incompatible with journalism ethics. Rather, they promote advocacy as a vital part of the investigative news media's role in the public interest. Considering the privileged position of the media under government, if journalists find something that needs to be dealt with, it is entirely appropriate to advocate on behalf of those affected or citizens at large.

This mirrors Martin Bell's controversial notion of a 'journalism that cares',[20] which has been vigorously critiqued by many working in the news media.[21] Distinguishing his stance from that of campaigning journalists, like Orwell, who might collect and represent data about social injustice, he argues that journalists should intervene in certain circumstances instead of standing back and watching people suffer in the name of objectivity. This emotional journalism has attracted some of Bell's colleagues into questioning the role of objectivity, believing that it gets in the way of truthful reporting. However, this idea has drawn criticism from other academics and practitioners of journalism, notably in the context of war reporting, who note how the truth can be blurred because journalists become personally embroiled or even fail to understand the political context in which they work. For those who subscribe to traditional objectivity, compassion is simply not possible. Acknowledging emotions and allowing those emotions into a story is not compatible with objectivity. But the *Millennium* trilogy is saying that this view of traditional objectivity in journalism is outdated. The idea that journalists can be truly objective, completely disregarding their own ideas, beliefs and experiences, has largely been rejected. The legacy of objectivity and independence, wrapped up with notions of professionalism, is changing.

One of the key ways the films negotiate this is in their depiction of the relationships between Blomkvist and his sources. In the films, Blomkvist's close shave with death at the hands of Martin Vanger, depicted graphically and starkly, allows him to both sympathise and empathise with Salander's and also Harriet Vanger's plight, thus enabling him to be more connected, perceptive and protective of them. In the US version, he uses his near-death experience to provoke Harriet into revealing her true identity and, in turn, expresses how he too had been rescued. Also, compassion is shown by Blomkvist in the fact that he is not interested in being a friend or hero to his sources or to his audience.

This use of empathy and compassion may help to explain or contextualise aspects of his reporting behaviour that seem to jar with ethical codes. The films appear to promote unethical behaviour as long as it is in the interests of ethical outcomes. The unethical behaviours include not reporting information in the public interest or details about crimes to the police, sleeping with his sources

and using misrepresentation to access a source's home. The films do not make Blomkvist a hero for it, rather they subvert the traditional view of the heroic, autonomous reporter and replace it with a flawed, vulnerable individual. No cinematic techniques are used by any of the directors to convey courageousness on the part of Blomkvist; in fact, quite the opposite, which makes him appear all the more sincere. His choice of actions is determined by their capacity to get information for a story that he deems is in the greater public interest, or for the greatest happiness for the majority. This outlook justifies many actions that most people would see as not only unethical but also, quite probably, illegal. He believes in the importance of the story and that, when he discovers the truth, it will be in the public interest and benefit the greatest number of people.

But while compassion should be more prevalent in journalism, the *Millennium* trilogy films argue that it cannot be its main value. It if were, journalism's purpose would be defeated. Important information that the public should know would often not be exposed for fear of harming someone. When, in the final film in the trilogy, Blomkvist goes to press regardless of Berger's fears, he does so because of his ethical principle that accuracy and truth-telling are paramount. The concept of minimising harm is important to Blomkvist, but subordinate to the greater public interest.

By forcing the spectator to become immersed in the cinematic narrative and beckoning identifications with a range of protagonists, including reporters and their sources, the *Millennium* trilogy films open a space for reflection and discussion about real-world practices and standards. This is crystallised when we consider the sharply contrasting representations of Mikael Blomkvist in the US and Swedish adaptations of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, emerging as they do from quite different traditions of cinematic approaches to investigative journalism.

The chapter began with a brief history of the cinematic incarnations of investigative journalists on both sides of the Atlantic, conveying how the image of reporters-on-screen had been influenced by extra-diegetic factors such as the socio-political climate and world events at the moment of production. As Thomas H. Zynda points out: 'The films show how the press is structured and commanded, how it relates to the larger society that the audience experiences,

what journalists are like, how they interact, and how they achieve success in the press.'[22] According to this view, journalism films have an educative function – they can provide audiences with insights into a world that is shaded from public view, affording them the opportunity to reflect on the morality or immorality of its practitioners. The on-screen characters become embodiments of abstract concepts, physical representations of ethical principles such as liberty and truth.

Specifically, the chapter argued that Larsson promotes a model of networked journalism practice, as opposed to the autonomous, dogged investigator, which is quite different in tone to previous films. In addition, the films' narrative questions the validity of the abiding journalistic principle of objectivity, proffering the need for compassion and advocacy in reporting approaches. As such these films, like their antecedents, address the shifting commercial, technological and ethical context in which contemporary real-world journalism is practised.

The *Millennium* trilogy are among the first films to address the impact of new digital technologies on the role of the professional journalist. Through the character of Blomkvist, both the US and Swedish versions revision the typical depiction of the crusader working individually to fight crime. Significantly, the films chart Blomkvist's gradual acceptance of the opportunities networked journalism can offer, and his acceptance that he must radically shift away from what might be delimiting professional models of newsgathering to one that embraces collaboration and data gathering to secure evidence. Rather than reject the input of non-journalists, such as Salander and her wider team of associates, Blomkvist gradually leans more and more upon them and their skills.

While, as we have seen, the films conform with formal and representational properties of preceding journalism movies in many ways, they deviate greatly by the inclusion of Salander. This deviation takes two main forms. First, Blomkvist embraces her, literally and figuratively, as a leader in his journalistic mission in a way that reporters have not tended to do in previous films. It is unusual for an on-screen crusading journalist to lend credence to the notion of a 'non-professional' journalist to this degree. In the US and Swedish versions, Blomkvist's own journalism skills are initially palatably complemented by Salander, but they are ultimately eclipsed by the

forensic work of Armansky Associates. Therefore, Salander's leading role in the identification of story angles, as a non-journalist, and her supply of evidence and data suggests a very different dynamic at play between the professional journalist and the fifth estate.

Secondly, Salander is a key agent in pinpointing journalism's ethical weaknesses by virtue of its commercial context. Although – and perhaps because – Salander does not write the journalistic copy, she is driven purely by the mission in the public interest, not by any publisher or perception of satisfying a market. In Salander, Blomkvist and his extended *Millennium* team witness journalism for journalism's sake, with its focus purely on achieving justice through forensic factual veracity.

Nevertheless, while the *Millennium* trilogy reframes the purpose of the staff investigative reporter, it does not obviate the need for professional journalism. Blomkvist, in keeping with his cinematic ancestors, is still a hero even if in a new package; his tough, uncompromising image offering some hope for the future of a journalism less restricted by profit motive. The collective journalism espoused by the *Millennium* trilogy is one that is accountable to its own kind and to the public. It gives the sense of a new model emerging in cinema in response to widespread corruption and malpractice on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ultimately, as the series progresses, we see Blomkvist move to a position of compassion in permitting his most credible and vulnerable source, Salander, absolute control over how and when her story is made public. This goes wholly against the grain of journalistic autonomy and authority, and commercial protocols, muddied yet furthered ethically by their sexual relationship. At the close of the first Fincher movie we witness Salander in thrall to Blomkvist, in sharp contrast to her distantiation at the end of the first of the Swedish trilogy of films. In the US version, the film closes with Salander purchasing an expensive leather jacket for Blomkvist which she plans to hand-deliver, presumably as a romantic gesture. Salander's manner is much more measured in the Swedish version, showing no affection or any desire to continue the relationship with Blomkvist at the close. It will be interesting to see if and how Hollywood negotiates the ethics of the relationship between source and journalist, between the lone professional and his network of data gatherers, as and when further films are made.

Notes

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4. Matthew C. Ehrlich, 'Facts, Truth and Bad Journalists in the Movies'. *Journalism*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2006, p. 502.
5. See Bob Franklin (ed.), *The Future of Newspapers* (London: Routledge, 2009) for a detailed discussion from industry figures as well as academics.
6. For details about the so-called 'Hollywood Blacklist', see Daniel J. Leab, with guide by Robert E. Lester, *Communist Activity in the Entertainment Industry: FBI Surveillance Files on Hollywood, 1942–1958* (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1991).
7. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/longterm/tours/newseum/journfilms1.htm.
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10. Anna Claydon, 'CityScope: The Cinema and the City'. *Global Built-Environment Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2005, p. 64.
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12. John Lloyd and Jean Seaton, *What can be done? Making the Media and Politics Better* (London: Blackwell, 2006), p. 1.
13. Barbie Zelizer, *Taking Journalism Seriously* (London: Sage, 2004), p. 23.
14. Dan Gillmor, *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People* (Sebastapol: O'Reilly, 2004), pp. xxiv–xxv.
15. Cf. Mark Deuze, *Media Work* (London: Polity, 2007).
16. Ian Richards, *Quagmires and Quandaries: Exploring Journalism Ethics* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), p. 33.
17. Raphael Cohen-Almagor, 'The Limits of Objective Reporting'. *Journal of Language and Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2008, pp. 137–138.
18. Ibid.
19. Richards, *Quagmires and Quandaries*.
20. Martin Bell, 'The Journalism of Attachment', in Kieran, M. (ed.) *Media Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 16.
21. See, for example, Mick Hume, *Whose War is it Anyway? The Dangers of the Journalism of Attachment* (London: LM, 1997).
22. Thomas H. Zynda, 'The Hollywood Version: Movie Portrayals of the Press'. *Journalism History*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1979, p. 17.

5

Crossing the Line: *Millennium* and *Wallander* On Screen and the Global Stage

Steven Peacock

Early on in the filmed version of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (*Män som hatar kvinnor*, dir. Niels Arden Oplev, 2009), investigative journalist Mikael Blomkvist (Michael Nyqvist) jostles through a busy Stockholm square.[1] He has just lost a libel case against corrupt industrialist Hans-Erik Wennerström, and is sentenced to prison. Keeping close to the stooped journalist as he walks, the camera gradually arcs around, edging in an enormous building-mounted screen. The screen shows footage of the court case, announcing Blomkvist's fate to the world, on a TV news broadcast. Private affairs become instantly public, pressing upon the journalist's personal anxieties as he shuttles through the crowds.

Just as Blomkvist's case spills into the global public arena, the works of Swedish crime fiction by Stieg Larsson and Henning Mankell – in book and televisual/cinematic form – have become worldwide phenomena. Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*) and Mankell's *Wallander* mysteries form the pinnacle of a current international fascination with Nordic noir.[2] The novels have been translated into many languages, adapted into Swedish films/television series (an importantly blurred distinction between media, as we shall see), and remade for global audiences as Swedish/UK and Hollywood collaborations. An aspect I find most compelling about these fictions is the way they echo Sweden's 'small nation' negotiations of borders transforming across time. The country and texts explore emergent and changing demarcation lines:

public and private, national and international, local and global. The series (for it is the Swedish 'filmed for television' versions we shall concentrate on here) have become internationally popular. Their 're-imagining' for British and American audiences via the BBC/Yellow Bird co-production *Wallander* (starring Kenneth Branagh as the eponymous detective, 2008–ongoing) and an English-language version of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (dir. David Fincher, 2011) says much about their institutional repositioning as global texts. The Swedish and UK series (as adaptations of the novels, the latter retaining the Swedish setting) also explore border-crossings in their themes and plotlines. Dealing with local socio-historical divides, the texts are equally concerned with passages over international and transnational borders in cultural and geo-political terms. It is impossible for these filmed series and their characters to remain isolated in one small nation. The following remarks explore how they embrace, resist and embody pluralism in an era of globalisation.[3]

What makes these fictions' involvement in the 'borderless world' of the global era most fascinating is their nationality. On a broad level, this relationship often demands attention; as Jonas Frykman notes, 'The more Europe is integrated and the world is globalised, the quicker the dissolution of sedimented practices, routines and traditions proceeds, then all the more national identity is discussed, given a sharper profile and challenged.'[4] More particularly, Sweden's identity is informed by an isolationism complicated by borderline closeness to others. Geographically, the country shares boundaries with Norway, Denmark and Finland. Yet, as Paul Britten Austin observes:

> Not lying, like Norway, along the ocean routes, or, like Denmark, facing the continent, Sweden in many ways was for centuries more of an island than Britain. At the beginning of the nineteenth century even the small villages were broken up, the better to till the available soil [...]. Half a century ago, almost the whole nation lived in such solitudes. Now two-thirds have suddenly moved into town. They have brought with them, one feels, their isolation. Distances, more physical, have been introjected, swallowed.[5]

Stockholm's geographical make-up offers a complex interplay of separation and connectivity. It is built on 14 islands, with the

archipelago comprising 24,000 islets. Water surrounds the city, and each small land mass retains an individual identity. Historically, Sweden's impulsion towards homogeneity and neutrality ends in dissolution through the involvement of other countries. Two examples are of particular importance: transgression from the utopian model of the welfare state, and tentative involvements in war and the European Union. Both instances reveal tensions, within the previously staunchly homogenous nation, of a country hesitantly opening up to the world. Francis Sejersted offers a concise understanding of the principles of Sweden's welfare state or 'the Scandinavian model':

> In the 1930s, the Social Democratic parties of Sweden and Norway came to power and formed governments in their respective countries. This marked the beginning of a stable period of Social Democratic hegemony. These parties had taken root at the beginning of the twentieth century as revolutionary Marxist parties. They gradually shook off their Marxism, and by the beginning of their period of hegemony they had managed to wrest the great modernization project from the non-Socialist parties and put their own stamp on it. The result is what we might call the Social Democratic order – also called the Scandinavian model, or simply the Swedish or Nordic model [. . .].
>
> The Scandinavian model is marked – to cite just a few of its characteristic traits – by comprehensiveness of social security systems, institutionalized universal social rights, a high level of public support, and a high level of equality, which grew out of a combination of public commitment to the principle of universalism and equality of income distribution, which, in turn, is partly attributable to the strength of the trade unions.[6]

The emphasis is on countrywide collectivism and protectionism from outside intervention. Under this model, Sweden was an export nation. Like the archipelago, it comprised an intricate system of small bodies working together as a homogenous whole. As Sejersted notes, 'Under Social Democracy [. . .] we find the development of a very tight network linking the interests of organizations and the administration.'[7] The model fractured in the 1970s. Waves of privatisation and the new challenges posed by internationalisation and globalisation led Sweden towards a 'third way'.[8] Sweden's emigration model gave

way to an immigration society.[9] A balancing act had begun between national and international interests.

The assassination of the Prime Minister Olof Palme in Stockholm in 1986 was equally fundamental to a shift in the national sensibility, and emblematic of a deep-seated rupturing of Sweden's conception of public and private sanctuary. Walking with his wife from the Riviera cinema on Sveavägen, Palme was gunned down in cold blood and plain view of his public supporters. As was common and ideologically significant for Nordic leaders, he had no security with him. After all, Sweden was an 'open house'. Palme's death sent shockwaves through a society unused to political extremism of any kind, and led to a radical rethink of the open-government policy Sweden had pursued for decades. New forms of protectionism took shape due to external forces. Sweden could no longer exert its stance of neutrality.

This dramatic crossing of borderlines has a more subtle counterpart in Sweden's relationship with the rest of Europe. Tracing the impossibility of isolation back to the Second World War, Sejersted illustrates how:

> Norway was invaded by Germany on April 9, 1940. The official Swedish reaction to the invasion was expressed in Prime Minister Hansson's radio broadcast three days later. He stressed that Sweden was 'firmly resolved to continue to follow the strict line of neutrality.' This meant that Sweden not only refused to come to the rescue of its former union partner but also, for fear of German reprisal, went a long way toward fulfilling Germany's demands [...]. [Post-war] it was possible in Sweden to put the traumatic events to rest and establish a national consensus based on the fact that the government's pragmatic policy of compliance with Germany had been reasonable and necessary. It was seen as being to the credit of the coalition government that Sweden had managed to avoid being drawn into the war. Unlike in Norwegian society, no lines of demarcation between innocent and guilty were drawn.[10]

An initial assertion of neutrality gave way to tacit forms of interaction. Lines of demarcation were effaced. More recent, equally tentative steps towards international engagement occurred as Sweden joined the European Union in 1994. The move countered its

long-standing opposition to membership, which was linked to its national policy of neutrality. Again, the thrust of the global marketplace makes isolation impossible, with profound socio-cultural effects. As Alan Pred claims:

> Neutrality is not merely a policy that Sweden has pursued in one way or another since the mid-nineteenth century, but a value-laden term highly charged with taken-for-granted meanings, a term long regarded as unforfeitable, a term deeply sedimented in the collective consciousness of much of the Swedish population. 'Neutrality' has served as a symbol for the nation's freedom, for its position outside of power-bloc alignments, for its consequent ability to take an independent stance on important international issues [. . .]. But now the meaning(fulness) and necessity of neutrality had been thrown into question [. . .] would have to be heard and seen differently, if not totally surrendered to hegemonic claims.[11]

Even more subjectively, some scholars see Sweden's small-nation position in an era of global engagement as at odds with the country's collective sensibility of separatism. In his wonderfully outmoded yet lyrically evocative account *On Being Swedish*, Austin gives us a flavour of this 'old Swedish style':

> The cold and distant manner of a Swedish waitress as she takes your order; the icy impersonality of a telephone operator, as if she hated all callers or suspected they were trying to get off with her by the mere act of asking for a number; the usually distant and unsmiling manner of a Swedish hotel porter: all these are part and parcel of this detached and abstract tone of polite intercourse. The old Swedish style was ever: You keep your distance and I'll keep mine.[12]

Contemporary crime dramas like those of Mankell and Larsson explore how 'keeping one's distance' becomes increasingly problematic. By their generic nature, the texts involve themselves in a pursuit to truth, of getting increasingly close to finding a murderer. In turn, the fictional criminals enact forms of involuntary intimacy: violating the space and bodies of others. In the third-largest country in the European Union with a population of only 9.4 million, crime

finds contact in clustered conurbations. Neither the anonymity of Stockholm's crowds nor the solitude of Skåne's vast flatlands and forests can stop the murderer's penetration of privacy.[13] After the killing and during the investigation, secrets and scandals involving suspects and victims alike start to emerge, as their personal lives are placed under the microscope. The television works' achievement stems from their ability to bind socio-political struggles of separation with those of their human characters' physical location and psychological disposition.

The ensuing study delimits its focus to two topics that represent interconnected forms of border crossing and crossovers: first, institution and aesthetics; secondly, space, place and the body politic. While referring to a wide range of crime dramas (different series and episodes), one particular episode/TV movie from the first Swedish television series of *Wallander* (starring Rolf Lassgård as Wallander) is referred to on multiple occasions: *The Man Who Smiled* (1: 9, *Mannen som log*, 2003). Occasionally, the analysis brings in the novels on which the filmed texts are based. This is not to introduce a treatise on adaptation; rather, the series and books are taken as separate entities that, from time to time, join hands.

Institution and aesthetics

Alongside the most recent cycle of written and filmed fictions there is a rich history of Swedish noir, extending back across the decades. Institutionally, there is an established pattern of refashioning material for film and television, in transnational co-productions.

Take, for example, the pioneering police-procedural novels of Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö featuring homicide detective Martin Beck. This husband and wife writing team produced ten novels under the collective banner of 'The Story of a Crime', beginning with *Roseanna* in 1965 and ending with *The Terrorists* (*Terroristerna*) in 1975. All of their books have been adapted as films at least once (*Roseanna* twice) in different parts of the world. Since 1997, a popular movie series (for cinema and television) has been co-produced by German and Swedish companies.[14] Elsewhere, in 1973, an American film version of their fourth novel – *The Laughing Policeman* (*Den skrattande polisen*) – starred Walter Matthau as the Martin Beck figure (now called Jake Martin), and was set in San Francisco instead of Stockholm.[15]

In 1993, *The Locked Room* (*Det slutna rummet*, 1972) was made into a Belgian-Dutch film with the setting moved to Antwerp.[16] Two further quick examples: Mari Jungstedt's detective novels have been adapted for Swedish TV, but their most successful incarnation is as a German television series – *Der Kommisar und das Meer* – running from 2006 to 2010.[17] At the time of writing, nine of Håkan Nesser's ten *Van Veeteren* novels have been made into a pan-European TV series (international in terms of production and broadcasting), an apt fact when one considers that the setting of the works is a fictional country with shades of, variously, Sweden, the Netherlands, Poland and Germany.[18]

These forms of institutional and transnational hybridisation continue with the latest examples of Swedish crime drama. Critics have commented on the so-called 'TV movie' quality of the Swedish *Millennium* films/series.[19] Out of the three works in the trilogy, only the first – *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* – was produced with a theatrical release in mind. All three films are shorter versions of a serial made for television and DVD. Such factors complicate the more usual determinants (or borders) of 'big screen' versus 'small screen' in terms of institutional location and aesthetic design.

In March 2011, I travelled to Stockholm to interview the CEO of Yellow Bird Productions, Mikael Wallén. Yellow Bird is the company behind *Wallander* in both its Swedish and international incarnations (of original Kurt Wallander stories not based on the novels, starring Krister Henriksson in the title role), and *Millennium* in both its TV and film versions.[20] During the interview, the distinctions between the British/US models of TV and film production, distribution and broadcast, and those of contemporary Swedish television became clear. In the latter, a more innovative 'outside the box' approach has started to lead to the dissolution of divisions between the different media forms and formats. As Wallén explains:

> The whole [Swedish] *Wallander* concept was based on the investment made by TV broadcasters in Sweden and Germany. The whole project has been designed such that the broadcasters are satisfied, and such that we can produce the movies in decent quality. And we still have a strong DVD market in Scandinavia. So we adapted that concept to the best way of financing the films: that was – giving the German broadcaster rights for Germany, and in Scandinavia the rights to release the first one on cinema to market

> the new series of films, especially for the DVD sales. So the first film is released at the cinema, setting the way for DVD sales. Then, a month later or so, the second film is released straight-to-DVD. So you release them on DVD about once a month [...]. That is the marketing tool for the new series on DVD. You have your ordinary cinema-release window of 4–6 months, and then the first goes to DVD, and the next month the second one goes to DVD, and so on. And then you have the ordinary window for pay-TV, and then free TV. That is the model for *Wallander*.[21]

This is a radical departure from the more traditional approach still favoured by producers and distributors in Britain and America: in most cases, TV drama is made for, and broadcast on, television alone. Movie spin-offs of successful series made for the big-screen may follow, and may involve crew from the television version, but will be aimed solely, in the first instance, at the cinema audiences. They will also present new stories and scenarios, removed from the serial narrative arc of the television programmes.[22] It is customary for the DVD release of TV series in Britain and the US to follow the television broadcasts (the opposite way around from the Swedish model). Importantly (and, for this television studies scholar, happily), through the Swedish system, the oft-used catch-all terms 'cinematic' and 'televisual' start to become unfixed. The release of the *Millennium* series followed a similar pattern to *Wallander*; it also further complicated established demarcation lines by receiving cinematic releases in different, truncated forms. Whereas Britain and America chose to buy and release the made-for-cinema versions of the TV series, other European countries have opted instead to show and sell the longer made-for-television films on DVD. It is worth quoting Wallén at length here, as the various intricacies are unpicked:

> The [*Millennium*] series – as with the *Wallander* series – was financed by different sets of broadcasters – German broadcasters, Swedish broadcasters; with the first one set for release at the cinema. The only difference was that because the first book was so extensive, we planned on doing two sets of 90 minutes on each book, so in the end, the series would be six 90-minute films for TV [...]. When we started financing it, and got closer to the production, we of course realised that the book was selling so fantastically

> around the world and in Scandinavia, so we asked our main broadcasters at an early stage if it was OK to release all three in cinemas [...]. It was not until the first one was released on cinema, and was even more successful than we thought, that they changed their minds, and allowed us to do it. So, it was a really late decision; we had already filmed all three books at that time.
>
> They were broadcast on all Scandinavian channels and in Germany as the 'six times ninety' TV series, and really successfully so, in Germany especially. And in some markets they released the TV series on DVD rather than the feature films, quite successfully [...]. In Belgium and Luxembourg for example, six months after the initial cinema release, and when they were supposed to release the feature films on DVD, they released the 'two times ninety' versions instead, as a 'deluxe, extra-long version' [...] and people were buying even more DVDs than just the feature film. So in some countries, they really played with the options, because there are a lot of options when you have this kind of series [...]
>
> In terms of Music Box in the States, and Momentum in the UK, they are doing it in a more traditional way. They are both planning on releasing the 'six times ninety' versions [...]. The TV series has been sold to the BBC along with the feature films [...] it is all a question of what they release first, and a matter of timing schedules with the broadcasters. For BBC Four to schedule it for the same slot as *The Killing* or *Wallander* it should be easier to show the 'six times ninety' versions in that way. Instead of releasing the three 'extra-long' movies, it seems more suitable to show the series in this way.[23]

As alluded to in the above transcript, the roles played by digital television companies and 'niche channels' become increasingly central to the broadcasting of small-nation dramas in the deregulated, globalised, multi-platform world of 'TV3'.[24]

The various versions of *Wallander* provide another compelling case of cross-pollination. The Yellow Bird serial of new stories – based on Mankell's characters but set after the events of the novels, picking up the narrative of the last *Wallander* book, *Before the Frost* (2009; first published as *Innan frosten*, 2004) – is currently in its second season. As indicated in Wallén's comments, the institutional location of these television texts becomes flexible. It is not just the first episodes

of a new season that receive a cinema release. The seventh episode of season one – *Mastermind* (original air date 13 December 2005) – was shown, to great acclaim, in Swedish movie theatres. Then, the Swedish/British TV co-productions (between Yellow Bird in Sweden and Left Bank in the UK) provide various aesthetic factors for further scrutiny. The production decision to retain the Swedish setting of the southern town of Ystad and Swedish language on signs, letters and text messages appears to hark back to a rather outdated cinematic trope. The series was one of the first high-end dramas to employ high-definition (HD) technology for British television and to be screened on HD channels. For this viewer, its understanding and handling of the expressive possibilities of HD are yet to be surpassed.[25] Again, it is the melding of the traditional ways of UK television (represented by the BBC) with a Scandinavian company more at ease in pushing institutional boundaries that leads (though not without the need for persuasion) to this production decision. As Wallén explains:

> When we made the first 13 Wallander films in 2003, 2004, 2005, they were produced using old-style cameras: 16 mm. Then when we were starting work on the later 13 Swedish films and these three [the first three British/Swedish films], it was in the middle of that shift from analogue to digital.[26]

It appears that, on the institutional level of broadcast media, an isolationist stance of neutrality towards change and outside influence exists within Britain, rather than the historically circumspect Sweden.

We can also consider the differences between British and Swedish version in terms of narrative and narration. The UK *Wallander* presents new versions of the Mankell novels. The novels were previously filmed as TV mini-series by Sveriges Television and Tre Vänner Produktion AB, from 1995 to 2007 ('pre Yellow Bird'). The UK version concentrates attention on Wallander himself, with colleagues, family and locales becoming, as it were, cyphers or aspects of his own sensibility.[27] A very different set of film-making decisions is in evidence in the Swedish treatments of the *Wallander* novels. Only recently broadcast on British television on BBC Four (2010–2011), the Swedish TV films are shot through with dark humour and an experimental visual style. Often, the Swedish series will punctuate

the narrative with hazy dreamscapes floating between diegetic reality and hallucinogenic fantasy, expressing Wallander's internalised anxieties in abstract metaphorical form. These moments are more akin to the avant-garde Scandinavian experimentation on display in the films *and many TV movies* of Ingmar Bergman than the conventions of the TV detective genre. All of these factors allow for a vigorous re-evaluation of putative divisions – aesthetic, industrial, institutional – of film and television in the global age.

Space, place and the body politic

Alongside the fluid passage between forms of media and national broadcast industries, the various versions of *Wallander* and *Millennium* reveal much about the geo-political impact of globalisation in their thematic concerns. A discussion of crossing cinematic and televisual boundaries encourages thoughts on how the texts handle space and place. Both *Wallander* and *Millennium* are thoughtful about the striving of a person, region and nation to preserve particular aspects of selfhood in an environment of constant (often violent) flux and exchange. Sweden's hidden secrets are unearthed, its schisms magnified. As Mankell ponders in *The Pyramid*, 'An underground fissure had suddenly surfaced in Swedish society. Radical seismographers had registered it. But where had it come from?'[28]

Wallander investigates social tensions both local to Scandinavia and globally important, grounding them in the home 'kingdom' of Sweden, travelling across its territories. Like Oxford for *Inspector Morse* (ITV, 1987–2000), the town of Ystad becomes a fully fledged character in its own right. Ystad is in the far southern region of Skåne, an area of Sweden marked as distinctive due to its past and its peripheral position: 'Historically a Danish-controlled land, Skåne stands out in Sweden for flatness, borderland status, separatist politics and a far-right past.'[29] Geographically and socio-politically, it is a place of extremes. Many of the novels are equipped with a map of the area and the filmed versions, particularly the Swedish series (both from Yellow Bird and the earlier Sveriges Television movies), make repeated use of distinctive locales in the town including the Hotel Continental: a (real) place of exclusive sanctuary and comfort, constantly breached, in the series, by undercover agents and clandestine killers.

In *Faceless Killers* (*Mördare unte ansikte*, Sveriges Television, 1995, playing across four episodes as a one-story TV mini-series), fear of 'the foreigner' threatens to infect the community of Ystad, just as some of the townsfolk react against the growing appearance of migrant workers. A recent article by Shane McCorristine chronicles *Wallander*'s broader patterned preoccupation with xenophobia as resulting not only from the breaching of geo-political borders, but also a collapse of national solidarity. Although McCorristine writes primarily about the novels, his remarks carry equal validity in consideration of the filmed works:

> Mankell's novels offer a veritable taxonomy of threats to notions of a secure Swedish identity: sometimes the evil to be combated originates outside the community, sometimes it comes from within, but it is always linked to spectres of the Other (the Other of Swedish injustice towards the subaltern and neglect of the Third World, for example) [...]. The Other occupies a dominant place in virtually every novel of the Wallander series: the African and Eastern European refugees of *Faceless Killers* (1991); the interaction with Latvia in *The Dogs of Riga* (1992); the presence of South African and post-Soviet killers in Sweden in *The White Lioness* (1993); Swedish-run organ theft in the Third World in *The Man Who Smiled* (1994); the sexual abuse of Third World teenagers in *Sidetracked* (1995); the murder of a Swedish citizen in Algeria and the issue of Swedish mercenaries in the Congo in *The Fifth Woman* (1996); an Angola-based conspiracy to destroy the international financial system in *Firewall* (1998).[30]

Above all, through their narratives and settings, *Wallander* and *Millennium* map out distinct levels of attempted seclusion and intrusion across boundaries of the Swedish body politic. They explore Sweden's social strata by following the impulse of Sjöwall and Wahlöö, using the crime drama as a 'scalpel cutting open the belly of the ideologically pauperized and morally debatable so-called welfare state of the bourgeois type'.[31]

Just as the nation state can be seen as a body to be breached and protected, so too, in fiction, is it often represented in corporal form, by the physical being of the protagonists. The crime texts investigate their characters' desire for separation and self-preservation against

the intervention of other bodies (familial, governmental, homicidal). In *Wallander* (as in most crime fictions), physical attacks by serial killers and murderers are central to the plot. The series binds these assaults of the flesh to the bleeding of socio-political issues across Sweden's borders. *Millennium* is intensely concerned with the violation and enclosure of the female body. Across the trilogy, we learn (and are shown in gut-wrenching detail) how central protagonist Lisbeth Salander (Noomi Rapace) is brutally raped by her guardian, strapped down in a psychiatric hospital, and buried alive. Such violent transgressions are coupled with stories of human trafficking, forming one of the central narrative threads of *The Girl Who Played with Fire*. Notions of entrapment (of the self, by others, in physical, emotional and legal forms) are set against those of freedom and self-expression for the central character: being airborne, fleeing the island, standing on top of the Rock of Gibraltar, living in an unfurnished luxury apartment overlooking Stockholm's sweeping cityscape. Lisbeth's various chosen venues of exile also reveal the text's transnational impulses: sharing time between Stockholm, the Caribbean and Gibraltar.

Wallander is equally alert to the expressive coupling of place and personhood. The various TV versions present the push–pull dynamic of Kurt Wallander as a loner who is constantly dragged back into affairs of the state, the family and the police force. Despite his asserted desire for solitude, he reluctantly continues to gravitate towards community, while standing desperately alone.[32] His stance recalls one of Austin's colourful aphorisms of the Swedish sensibility and other artistic expressions of psychological seclusion:

> What is the tap-root of this compulsive Swedish loneliness? Why can a Swede, sitting in company and looking melancholy declare that he or she sometimes feels so desperately cut off? The misanthropic Doctor Glas, brooding over his empty life after the murder of the clergyman, Vilhelm Moberg's old Swedish-American looking back on his faraway youth in a poverty-stricken Småland in *A Time on Earth*.[33]

Equally, Wallander's failing physical health becomes a metaphorical condition. He is overweight and drinks too much. Diabetes takes hold of him in the books and films, reflecting the imperfect well-being of the modern nation state.

More forcefully, Alfred Harderberg, the villain of *The Man Who Smiled*, is an evil entrepreneur involved in the global trafficking of human body parts from (dependent upon which version is considered) Africa or Brazil, sold to westerners. The television incarnations of Harderberg (played, respectively, by Claes Månsson and Rupert Graves), point up his particularly disturbing and aloof standing, as a global entrepreneur, by audio-visual means: sidling him quietly into a scene; marking his considerable on-screen presence through long silences and an impenetrable, ever-present grin; connecting him *at one remove* to Wallander through phone messages and emails sent from around the world.

Mankell's novels, on the other hand, make Harderberg's transnational situation more explicit by name-checking countries touched by his influential activities: he has property in Barcelona, a bank account in Macao 'wherever that is', businesses in Zimbabwe, and a Brazilian wife with interests in companies exporting coffee. As Mankell has Wallander muse, he is everywhere and nowhere at the same time: 'his life is one long absence'.[34] All forms play on Harderberg as representing a modern (and unsettling) paradox of simultaneous presence and distance. He is globally connected (commercially, technologically), but at one and the same time, exists as a disembodied 'brand name', manifest only in the silence and remoteness of the corporate rich. For Mankell, as for many, the fact that Sweden's welfare state was replaced by a business-led model of international enterprise encouraged unwelcome forms of hierarchy and anonymity. The interplay of politics and business, beginning in earnest in Sweden in the 1970s and growing ever stronger, represents perhaps the most fundamental fusion (and confusion) of public and private identity. For Sejersted, 'There was a move away from the leading and enabling Social Democratic policy and toward a policy in which, to a great degree, the premises lay outside the political system. More business-oriented considerations came to govern even the politicians.'[35] National collectivism gives way to a small number of autocratic collectives: little companies with an eye for world commerce.

The situation becomes even more tightly localised in *The Man Who Smiled* through the concentration on an all-influential Swedish family at the heart of such corrupt global operations: the Harderbergs. This creation of national/familial sin connects with the appearance of family units as corrupt industrial entities in the *Millennium* trilogy.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo begins with Blomkvist's downfall in the Wennerström affair: our 'hero' suffers the consequences of taking on a corrupt, family-led corporate empire. Soon after, he is embroiled in the murky affairs of the Vanger family, with secret histories of Nazi-sympathisers and serial killers. Such (melo)dramatic tropes serve as suitably heightened signifiers of the dangers of close-knit families leading a nation's business in the world. Sejersted sets out the historical antecedents of the contemporary situation:

> The period between 1950 and 1975 represents the golden age of industrialism in Sweden [...]. Characteristic for Sweden, the ownership structure of large industrial firms was concentrated in a few groups, sometimes referred to as the 'fifteen families'. Typically these ownership groups held close relationships to the largest Swedish banks. The Wallenbergs were the dominant group, having a controlling interest in [amongst others] SAAB, Scania-Vabis, L. M. Ericsson, and SKF. An important feature in the structure was their bank, the Stockholms Enskilda Private Bank. The group members typically held ownership positions in their bank, which was simultaneously their most important source of loans.[36]

Karsten Wind Meyhoff makes the links between fact and fiction in his article 'Digging into the Secrets of the Past':

> During his investigation Blomkvist maps out a family history that goes back several hundred years and tells a classic tale of how many of the large family owned companies in Sweden were built [...]. The privately controlled Swedish company Vanger represents the many Swedish companies controlled and owned by powerful families. It is no secret that these family owned, mega-corporations dominate a large part of Swedish corporate life and society. The families have typically been very secretive about their internal affairs and fortunes, and one of the attractions of Larsson's story is that he gives us access to the hidden world of these dynasties.[37]

From Shakespeare to *The Godfather* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 1972) to *Mad Men* (Lionsgate/AMC 2007–ongoing), families are presented

as both corporeally and psychologically specific, and as representative of nationhood. The same is true of these Swedish crime fictions, perhaps best exemplified by the operatic tragedy at the heart of the *Millennium* trilogy, as Salander battles against her father Zalachenko: a Soviet turncoat, crossing geographical and political boundaries to come in from the cold, latterly operating under the secret protection of the Swedish state.

This chapter has investigated some of the 'whodunit' and the 'whereduni' mysteries of the modern Swedish crime series. In 'the case of the many guises of *Wallander* and *Millennium*', there is an impossibility of isolation in terms of the concrete object (the TV text), its medium and its location in contemporary society. Political discourse is deeply embedded in the pieces, as they raise pertinent questions of international responsibility, civic duty, humanism and humanitarianism. After the current craze for all things Scandinavian – from *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* to *The Killing* (*Forbrydelsen*, DR/NRK/SVT 2007–ongoing) and the knitted jumpers worn by its central protagonist Sarah Lund (Sofie Gråbol), to Michelin-starred Danish restaurants – has inevitably died away, Sweden's place in the world as expressed artistically in film and television (or film-as-television) will, I predict, remain tantalisingly mysterious in its complexities. Two thoughts from Wallander himself to close, both taken from *The Man Who Smiled*, binding matters together. Pondering Harderberg's hold over multiple industries, a new aspect dawns: 'What I'm looking at is really an atlas of the world, he thought. National boundaries have been replaced by ever-changing demarcation lines between different companies whose turnover and influence are greater than the budgets of many whole countries.'[38] And yet, in Sweden, in Skåne, in Ystad, climatic particularities of the far country create an ethereal, all-encompassing fog, often cloaking the landscapes of all three television versions. The first words of the novel present us with Wallander's thoughts about it, as 'A silent, stealthy beast of prey. Even though I have lived all my life in Skåne, where fog is forever closing in and shutting out the world, I'll never get used to it.'[39] It is familiarly unknowable, opaque and oppressive. It encapsulates the murky confusions of local, global, personal and private spaces in these Swedish crime dramas. It shuts out the world, but only for a while. After all, as I found on my travels, all doors in Sweden open outwards.

Notes

1. An abridged version of sections of this chapter appears as 'The Impossible Isolation of *Wallander*' in *Critical Studies in Television* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), Vol. 6, No. 2, autumn 2011, pp. 37–46.
2. For a more comprehensive understanding of the Swedish strand of Nordic noir, its origins and its contemporary status, see Steven Peacock, *Swedish Crime Fiction: Novel, Film, Television* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming). See also Barry Forshaw, *Death in a Cold Climate: A Guide to Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011); Andrew Nestingen and Paula Arvas (eds.), *Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (Bangor: University of Wales Press, 2011); Gunhild Agger and Anne Marit Waade (eds.), *Den Skandinaviske krimi. Bestseller og blockbuster* (Gothenburg: Nordicom, 2010); Michael Tapper, *Snuten i skymningslandet. Svenska polisberättelser I roman och på film 1965 till 2010* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011); and Daniel Brodén, *Folkhemmets skuggbilder. En kulturanalytisk genrestudie av svensk kriminalfiktion i film och TV* (Stockholm: Ekholm & Tegebjer, 2008).
3. I have elsewhere examined related concerns in the relationship between the Danish television drama *Riget* (*The Kingdom*, dir. Lars von Trier, 1994) and its US remake *Kingdom Hospital* (dir. Craig Baxley, 2004), in Steven Peacock, 'Two *Kingdoms*, Two Kings', *Critical Studies in Television* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), Vol. 4, No. 2, autumn 2009, pp. 24–36.
4. Jonas Frykman, 'Nationalla ord och hangligar', in Billy Ehn, Jonas Frykman and Orvar Löfgren (eds.), *Försvenskningen av Sverige – det nationellas förvandlingar* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1993), p. 123. Cited in Alan Pred, *Recognizing European Modernities: A Montage of the Present* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 257.
5. Paul Britten Austin, *On Being Swedish: Reflections towards a Better Understanding of the Swedish Character* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), p. 59.
6. Francis Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 352. Int. citation Urban Lundberg, *Juvelen i kronan. Socialdemokraterna och den allmänna pensionen* (Stockholm: Hjalmarson och Högberg 2003), pp. 1–6.
7. Ibid., p. 307.
8. Deborah Orr discusses the salience of exploring such a system's challenges in 'Can Scandinavian crime fiction teach socialism?': 'The socialist left and the liberal left have little in common, with Blairism a shining example of how difficult it is to "triangulate" them. Hard work and compromise is needed before social freedom and state welfare can be shackled together. Even then, perhaps, the resulting beast is an impossible chimera.' http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/24/can-scandinavian-crime-fiction-teach-socialism.
9. Sejersted notes how, 'The demand to adapt was considered by many in the immigrant communities as a lack of understanding of the needs of

immigrants to maintain their own identity. If there was anything that the former emigration countries of Sweden and Norway ought to have understood, it was the need of the immigrants to retain their own culture [...]. Equality and freedom thus emerged once again as possible contradictions'. Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, p. 403.

10. Ibid., pp. 185–188.
11. Alan Pred, *Recognizing European Modernities: A Montage of the Present* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 217.
12. Austin, *On Being Swedish*, p. 9.
13. Mankell presents a characteristic scenario in the novel *One Step Behind* (*Steget Efter*), as the murderer makes his move through the expansive woodlands surrounding the town Ystad: 'He stepped out and shot each of them once in the head [...]. It was over so quickly that he barely had time to register what he was doing. But now they lay dead at his feet, still wrapped around each other, just like a few seconds before. He turned off the tape recorder that had been playing and listened. The birds were chirping. Once again he looked around. Of course there was no one there. He put his gun away and spread a napkin out on the cloth. He never left a trace', Henning Mankell, *One Step Behind,* trans. Ebba Segerberg (London: Vintage Books, 2008), e-book, Kindle Location 194.
14. For example, *Roseanna* was made into a Swedish film for cinematic release in 1967, dir. Hans Abramson, starring Keve Hjelm as Martin Beck (Minerva Film AB). It was then remade for cinema and television as part of the *Beck* series in 1993 as a German/Swedish co-production, dir. Daniel Alfredson (later the director of the final two *Millennium* films), starring Gösta Ekman as Beck (Nordisk Film and TV Fond; Rialto Film; Svensk Filmindustri).
15. *The Laughing Policeman* (also known as *An Investigation of Murder*), 1973, dir. Stuart Rosenberg (Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation).
16. *De gesloten kamer*, 1993, dir. Jacob Bijl, starring the famous Belgian actor Jan Decleir as Martin Beck (Film Case, Prime Time).
17. *Der Kommissar und das Meer*, 2006–2010, dir. various, starring Walter Sittler as Detective Superintendent Robert Anders (Network Movie Film und Fernsehproduktion).
18. For example, *Carambole* (full title *Nesser's Van Veeteren: Carambole*) was filmed in 2005, dir. Daniel Lind Lagerlöf, starring (as all the films do) Sven Wollter as Detective Chief Inspector Van Veeteren. The film and series (or TV series of films) is a co-production between Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Norway and Finland (ARD Degeto Film, Canal +, Degeto Film, Film på Gotland, Svensk Filmindustri, TV2 Norge, Yleisradio).
19. For example, Kurt Loder opines that 'The bad news about the movie is that it's not well-made. It's a chopped-down Swedish TV movie, and it looks it. Niels Arden Oplev, who directed the first film, is here replaced by its second-unit director, Daniel Alfredson, who brought along a new writer and cinematographer, too. The picture

is flat and disjointed.' http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1643297/girl-who-played-with-fire-middling-by-kurt-loder.jhtml.

20. Yellow Bird's industrial status is also indicative of the flow and impact of globalisation. The company was acquired in 2007 by the Swedish production group Zodiak Television. Alongside Yellow Bird, Zodiak bought media companies from other countries, including the Netherlands, Belgium, Russia and the UK. In turn, it expanded from being a Scandinavian group into a pan-European group. In 2008, Zodiak Television was acquired by Italian media conglomerate De Agostini, merging with two other production groups: Marathon and Magnolia (from France and Italy respectively). In 2010 De Agostini also bought the UK/US-based media group RDF and merged all the companies together, becoming what is now called Zodiak media group, with the headquarters in London.
21. Mikael Wallén, CEO, Yellow Bird Productions, interviewed by Steven Peacock, Stockholm, 30 March 2011.
22. Examples include *The X Files: I Want to Believe* (dir. Chris Carter, 2008), *Sex and the City* (dir. Michael Patrick King, 2008) and *In the Loop* (dir. Armando Iannucci, 2009, based on the BBC comedy-drama *The Thick of It* 2005–ongoing). This pattern is different to a growing (if still niche) marketing strategy of providing films with simultaneous release dates at the cinema and on digital television (for example, Ken Loach's film *Route Irish* was shown at the cinema and on Sky Television's pay-TV box-office service at the same time, in March 2011).
23. Mikael Wallén, 30 March 2011.
24. As Roberta Pearson explains in the introduction to *Reading Lost*, TV3 'emerged roughly from the late 1990s and is characterised by fragmented, not to say splintered, audiences, distribution through digital technologies and industry panic over audience measurement and advertising strategies'. Roberta Pearson (ed.), *Reading Lost: Perspectives on a Hit TV Show* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), p. 1.
25. See Steven Peacock, *Swedish Crime Fiction*.
26. Mikael Wallén, 30 March 2011.
27. A similar set of stylistic decisions can be seen at work in the US serial drama *House* (NBC/Universal Media Studios 2004–ongoing) and, more overtly, in serial-killer drama *Dexter* (Showtime, 2006–ongoing). As I note in *Dexter: Investigating Cutting Edge Television*, 'Some of the most compelling designs of the series stem from the way the surface materials of the external world – settings, decor, landscapes, look – reflect Dexter Morgan's synthetic sensibility.' Steven Peacock, '*Dexter*'s Shallow Designs' in Douglas L. Howard, *Dexter: Investigating Cutting Edge Television* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), p. 49.
28. Henning Mankell, *The Pyramid: The Kurt Wallander Stories*, trans. E. Segerberg and L. Thompson (London: Harvill Secker, 2008), p. 115.
29. Shane McCorristine, 'The Place of Pessimism in Henning Mankell's Kurt Wallander Series', in Andrew Nestingen and Paula Arvas (eds.), *Scandinavian Crime Fiction*, p. 81.

30. Ibid., p. 78.
31. Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö, 'Kriminalromanen som samhällsskildring' (1967), press release from Norstedts reprinted in *Brottslig blandning* (Stockholm: Svenska Deckarakademin, 1978), p. 98.
32. Mankell provides a striking example in the novel of *The Man Who Smiled*, carried across into the UK version (but not the Sveriges Television TV movie). The initial set-up of the story has Wallander travel to a neighbouring (but different) country, to escape past woes and 'be alone', only to be dragged back into police matters in Ystad 100 pages (or ten minutes on TV) later: 'So Wallander when to Denmark again and set out once more on his walks along the beach. It was late autumn and the sands were deserted. He seldom encountered another human being [. . .]. He ought to have screamed and yelled and cursed the fact that he had gone back to duty, that Sten Torstensson had been to see him in Skagen and dragged him into a murder investigation he should never have been involved in' (p. 170). Henning Mankell, *The Man Who Smiled*, pp. 18–19, 170. The UK TV *Wallander* has Branagh as Wallander play the scene staring out to sea in a hooded top pulled tight, like a straitjacket stifling private pain.
33. Paul Britten Austin, *On Being Swedish*, p. 58.
34. Mankell, *The Man Who Smiled*, p. 288.
35. Francis Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, p. 347.
36. Ibid., p. 219.
37. Karsten Wind Meyhoff, 'Digging into the Secrets of the Past: Rewriting History in the Modern Scandinavian Police Procedural,' in Andrew Nestingen and Paula Arvas (eds.), *Scandinavian Crime Fiction,* p. 70.
38. Mankell, *The Man Who Smiled*, p. 391.
39. Ibid., p. 1.

6

The Girl in the Faroese Jumper: Sarah Lund, Sexual Politics and the Precariousness of Power and Difference

Janet McCabe

Who killed Nanna Birk Larsen? It was a question that gripped audiences of the Danish crime thriller, *The Killing* (*Forbrydelsen*, 2007), but none was more obsessive in the pursuit of her killer than the ever-mournful Detective Inspector (DI) Sarah Lund (Sofie Gråbøl) of the Copenhagen homicide unit. The series begins with Nanna (Julie R. Ølgaard), terrified, bloodied, dressed only in a torn slip, running for her life through a forest at night. Urgent, pounding music is overlaid with her panting, capturing further the sheer terror of the (sexually) vulnerable, lone female pursued in the woods after dark. Lund awakens suddenly from a dream, gasping for breath. It is as if the nightmare of the latter-day Red Riding Hood had been conjured deep from inside Lund's own unconscious: a spectre of being devoured. It soon transpires, however, that this is no night terror. Similar to what Lisbeth Salander experienced at the hands of Advokat Nils Bjurman ('She felt him putting something around her ankles, spread her legs apart and tie them so that she was lying there completely vulnerable'),[1] Nanna is raped repeatedly and abused for several hours. However, unlike Salander, the 19-year-old student dies. Her battered, sexually violated body is discovered in a car, registered to the mayoral campaign of Troels Hartmann (Lars Mikkelsen), dredged from marshland on the outskirts of the Danish capital. The first to look with a silent, contemplative and penetrating

gaze at Nanna's corpse – her hands and feet tightly bound with plastic restraints – is, of course, Lund.

Distinct categories of victim and heroine may blur, but the sprawling case – involving sex crimes and murder, political intrigue and the machinations of power, patriarchal authority and individuals at the margins – brings forth a female investigator that challenges beliefs and attitudes toward representing femininity and the feminine; but nonetheless, at the same time, she makes visible the precariousness of modern sexual politics and the fragility of speaking truth to power. What is peculiar to Lund and her Scandinavian crime sisters like Salander is how they eloquently speak of our continued, troubled, age of emancipation. Our female sleuth from Copenhagen represents what has rarely been seen before on our television screens, she defies old (generic) rules and promises 'the coming age of a different law'[2] for representing the female self differently; but uttering the new is no easy matter, whereby Lund finds herself continually subjected to opprobrium (the law and police authorities, her family) or reduced to silence (with her voice quite literally censored or rendered invalid).

Generic traditions, sexual politics and gender (in)equalities

The hunt for the murderer of 19-year-old Nanna, which slowly unfurls over 20 days in October and November, translates into 20 hours of (subtitled) television drama that allows its characters to breathe. The Danish crime thriller plunges us deep into the dark, cavernous depths of the human psyche: it is a complex, nuanced, messy, complicated and often highly unsettling experience. Over the intense, claustrophobic 20 days, which hold more plot twists than stitches in Lund's now legendary cream-and-navy Faroese jumper, every delicate turn and subtle shade of a character is explored – and still there is more to mine. As Nanna's bereaved mother Pernille Birk Larsen, Ann Eleonora Jørgensen 'brittle, contained, silently screaming',[3] for example, offers us a finely drawn and unflinching study of silent grief and parental guilt; but it is Gråbøl's portrayal of Lund in raggedy knitwear that lies at the series' pulsating dramatic centre.

Like a lot of modern Scandinavian crime fiction, including the *Millennium* trilogy and *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow* (1992), *The Killing*

has a psychologically complex, bold and intriguing female investigator who forms the cornerstone of its story, which simmers, startles and slowly unravels. There is, of course, nothing particularly new about the smart and ever-resourceful amateur female sleuth. She has long been a staple of the modern crime genre, from Lois Cayley (1899) and Hilda Wade (1900) to Agatha Christie's Miss Marple (1926), and more recently Smilla Jaspersen and Lisbeth Salander. Lund also shares a television ancestry with other female TV cops and her character has absorbed the influences of these shows with their groundbreaking sexual politics. Like Detective Sergeant Christine Cagney (Sharon Gless), Lund has honed a resolute mistrust to survive in a male-dominated police precinct; like Detective Mary Beth Lacey (Tyne Daly), she holds down a demanding job while raising a child; and like Detective Chief Inspector Jane Tennison (Helen Mirren), she has an almost instinctive empathy with the murder victim, which fuels her all-consuming pursuit of the killer. Still, Lund marks a gendered departure (of sorts); a representational type more complex, more nuanced and inherently more contradictory because this textual character is produced *in* and *through* a storytelling form busy defining new rules for talking about gender, identity and power. Contradiction and paradox are no longer the preserve of theoretical inquiry but embedded right into the very forms that represent women like Sarah Lund.[4]

The Killing, similar to other Nordic noirs, advocates a very Scandinavian approach to gender equality mixed with politics and social justice. Long has there existed a tradition of social commentary implanted into Scandinavian fiction, especially the police-procedural novels. Assessing the inherent difficulties of social democracy, balancing individual freedoms with state regulation, is part of what we have come to expect from the genre. Starting with the Martin Beck series, created in 1965 by two Swedish writers from the political left Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö, Scandinavian crime fiction interwove realism with a radical political agenda in order to critique society and analyse the state of a nation. Modern crime writers like Henning Mankell continue in the Beck tradition and Stieg Larsson has succeeded in stimulating precisely the kind of debate, among feminists at least, that Sjöwall and Wahlöö anticipated.[5] Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen describes this politicalisation of the fictional form thus:

> I think the success of the genre at home and abroad has something to do with the social engagement, with their interest in the struggles of their characters amidst changing social conditions, and the everyday struggles of ordinary people in Scandinavia trying to be dynamic and independent individuals, finding their place in society with all the uncertain challenges and responsibilities that this entails.[6]

The Killing is actively concerned with social-political debate, but, and in keeping with this modern Scandinavian crime-fiction tradition, this is in terms of locating forms of power and what channels the implementation and exercise of power take in our society.

As soon as Nanna's body is found in a car linked to city hall, politics and the political are never far from the surface of the storytelling world. A local politician battling a hard election campaign to become mayor of Copenhagen is soon implicated, but it is this backdrop of municipal politics that places the individual firmly within affiliations of power (societal, political, the familial). Even though Hartmann and his team are cleared of any direct involvement in the murder, the investigation into the abduction, rape, torture and death of 19-year-old Nanna weaves with other discursive strategies of power, including uneasy personal alliances as well as the ideological compromises of coalition politics. Shot mostly in the dark (at twilight or at night), with its heavy use of harsh shadows and chiaroscuro lighting, *The Killing* provides a mise en scéne of political and sexual intrigue, in which the action takes place on Copenhagen's near-permanently rain-soaked streets, behind closed doors in crepuscular city-hall offices, windowless police interrogation rooms or around claustrophobic family dining tables. In this social world where the mechanisms of alliance predominate, the exercise of power and its policing encloses everyone, and representations are saturated with (political) ambiguity and the messy compromises that inevitably emerge.

On the professional level at least, gender is irrelevant. Accomplished women are everywhere: inside city hall and in the council chamber, from Hartmann's political adviser (and lover) Rie Skovgaard (Marie Askehave) to the chair of his party, Lisbeth Hansen (Helene Egelund); the legal practitioners, from Forsvarsadvokat (Vibeke Hastrup), acting for Theis Birk Larsen (Bjarne Henriksen), to Advokat

Magnusson (Lane Lind) representing Hartmann; and of course, there is Lund, the homicide detective – one of Copenhagen's finest, in fact. There is an implicit assumption that women have achieved professional equality and career parity with men. This representation of women in the workplace, however, doesn't simply adhere to a liberal feminist ideologue about lifestyle choice; but neither does it speak to the central tenets of power feminism[7] or post-feminism, in which 'the gains forged by previous generations of women have so completely pervaded all tiers of our social existence that those still "harping" about women's victim status are embarrassingly out of touch'.[8] It is almost as if the equality debate is beyond feminist theory while remaining deeply political nonetheless. There is never any discussion about women *not* having it all and the right for women to work is not ever in question: it is, in fact, normal for a woman to work, often combining a demanding career with motherhood. *The Killing* shares with the *Millennium* trilogy this basic assumption. No one ever questions the abilities of Erika Berger as the best person to run *Millennium*; and despite Salander's lack of social skills (more of which later), it is generally agreed that she is the best at what she does. It is a matter of skill and accomplishment, but never gender.

When sexism does, however, emerge it is as someone else's problem – and that someone else is invariably male. From *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2008) through to *The Killing*, it is the murderers, sexual perverts and social psychopaths who split the world according to sexuality and select victims according to gender. It is more often than not the very person society has assigned to protect the 'vulnerable' that wields the most devastating power and uses it in the most despicable way as a consequence. The violators of the social rules – the rapist, the sadistic tormentor, the brutal defiler of innocence – are those who bring to bear a type of gendered power on the body and on sex. It is the invaluable, trusted old family friend, Vagn Skærbæk (Nicolaj Koperniku), who abducts and repeatedly rapes (vaginally and anally) Nanna, someone he has known since she was a child. (Vagn leaves Nanna to drown, locked in the car boot, because he is unable to kill her outright – 'She was afraid, and I knew that you would never understand if she told you what had happened' he confesses to Theis.) It is the bourgeois lawyer Bjurman the courts appointed as Salander's guardian who holds her captive and rapes her repeatedly for several hours. It is the socially upright Martin Vanger, CEO of

the respected family firm, Vanger Corporation, who abducts dozens of vulnerable women (prostitutes, women with drug habits, immigrants), tortures them in his purpose-built basement and kills them, before dumping their bodies at sea. Vanger coolly confesses to Mikael Blomkvist

> If I do an intellectual analysis of my condition, I'm more of a serial rapist than a serial murderer. In fact, most of all I'm a serial kidnapper. The killing is a natural consequence, so to speak, but because I have to hide my crime.[9]

So finally we know. Yet these themes of rape and sex crime, torture and exploitation, gender and power enter into the sex wars, but also give rise to a 'society of blatant and fragmented perversion'.[10] How these 'respectable' men are allowed to perpetrate such misogynistic violence undisturbed for hours on end, how they get away with their abuse of power over the most vulnerable for so long, emerges as the true terror. Vanger and Bjurman select women at the social margins, those with no credible voice whatsoever, who no one will miss, care much about, let alone believe what they have to say; and Vagn, the jilted boyfriend of Mette Hauge, is responsible for her death 15 years ago, but his crime goes completely unsuspected for so long because the authorities do not seem to care enough to find the missing girl – until Lund, of course.

One of the many questions *The Killing* asks is: how far are sexual crimes an expression of discord among men and women? For sex and sexuality, 'born of a technology of power that [...] originally focused on alliance',[11] is where gendered inequalities appear strongest. Sex always has a way of discrediting or even silencing the woman, leaving her often without credibility or reputation. In *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, for example, it is easy for the authorities and media to identify Salander as the murderer of Bjurman, Dag Svensson and Mia Johansson once she has been labelled a sexual deviant – a prostitute, bisexual, a lesbian with perverse sexual habits. Once analysed, qualified as mad and disqualified, her female body is 'thoroughly saturated with sexuality'[12] and, during her teenage years, 'integrated into the sphere of medical practices'[13] and exposed unreservedly to endless examination by Dr Peter Teleborian, as part of a broader conspiracy of silence involving the law and medicine.

Charged with lesser crimes, Rie Skovgaard in *The Killing* loses her government job and lover because of alleged sexual indiscretions. She provides Hartmann with a false alibi for his lost weekend; she is loyal and his lover, but it is not enough to insulate her. If anything her sexual relation with Hartmann results in an intense focus of constraints. Her flirting with Paul Dessau (Jakob Cedergen), advisor to Hartmann's opponent, Paul Bremer (Bent Mejding), in exchange for information is used as evidence of an adulterous affair with the married colleague. For all that supposed workplace equality, she is dismissed. Rie gives a detailed account of herself, but Troels does not believe her despite earlier lying to her over his whereabouts. She used sex to get what she wanted; the betrayal is too much for Hartmann and he tells Rie that 'it makes him sick' to look at her. Rie is a red herring, of course. It is Troel's other political advisor Morten Weber (Michael Moritzen) who proves the more pitiless and ambitious of the two. It is Weber who saw the state of the flat, cleaned the stairs and door, and discharged the plumber – without ever establishing the guilt (or not) of his boss. He blackmails Hartmann into not going to the police about the matter. 'We've waited for a change in the political system for years, should I let that go because a jerk killed a girl?' Weber unflinchingly asks. His actions cost Hartmann his lover – but Weber never atones for his deliberate smearing of Rie, disregarding her as not 'the right woman for you'. In power, Hartmann accepts the deal and is attended by Rie's replacement, yet another attractive and highly efficient advisor. Bracketing her with Therese (Linda Laursen), ex-aide and erstwhile lover from the first episode who Rie replaced, these smart, professionally accomplished women become interchangeable, an exchange of sexuality and alliance, sex and power. It is their sexuality codified that gives, quite literally, a body to the rules of political alliance, which, in turn, is used against them.

No wonder Lund wants to detach her sexuality from the system of alliances, political and familial. She is seen in a romantic clinch with her fiancé Bengt (Johan Gry) in the first episode (but he remains peripheral thereafter) and the attraction with would-be mayor Hartmann resisted. Quoted in an interview, the actress playing Lund says: 'You get the sense that there could have been a relationship between Sarah and Troels but there isn't – and the whole beauty of *The Killing* is that it's held back – that we don't give the audience

all the usual fast food of sex scenes, love stories, car chases [...]. It's a long seduction.'[14] With Lund, *The Killing* moves beyond sex; or, as Gråbøl remarks: '[*The Killing*] tells of a woman who has so much confidence in herself that she doesn't have to use her sex to get what she wants. She's herself.'[15] This continued refusal of sex and sexuality defining Lund, however, proves instructive. Sex distracts, because the circuit of sexual partners subjects her to certain rules of alliances in which she finds it hard to separate and even define a sense of self differently. Her fury at Bengt's interference in the investigation, when he visits Hauge's father posing as a policemen to prove his serial-killer theory, is less about ethics and protocols as much as destabilising her authority. Bengt was angry with her, which is why he took the information to Lennart Brix (Morten Suurballe) and not her. It is about her exclusion and his inclusion; it is about personal sensibilities over professional judgement, his authoritative voice over hers.

There is no evidence of a flexible-hours work culture at the office, which may explain why Lund is the only woman in the team. She does not do the work/life balance. She appears at crime scenes at 3 am to shuffle about in the dark, inspecting the lesions on bodies dredged from the marshes, or demolishes a basement wall searching for DNA evidence. It means that everyone else – her family included – gets pushed away. Lund starts the series involved in a serious relationship with the criminologist Bengt, with whom she is meant to leave Denmark, migrate to Sweden and marry. She has a 12-year-old son Mark Lund (Eske Forsting Hansen) from a previous affair; she obviously loves him, but her job distracts from remembering details of his life: the invitation to Magnus's party, the name of his ice-hockey club. Driving home in the rain, their flight to Stockholm only hours away, mother and son talk about the move as if for the first time. Shot in gloomy shadows, in and out of focus (with faces blurred by the rain-soaked windows), the two never quite share the same space despite sitting next to each other. Lund cares for him, and does hear what he says, but she does things her way. And then there is her mother, Vibeke Lund (Anne Marie Helger): silence and disappointment, opprobrium and defiance shade this complex, but nonetheless rather tender relationship. There is no doubt that Lund loves her fiancé and family in her own unique way, but her indifference to almost anything other than solving the case reveals her intangible limits. Yet, it is from their perspective that we get to know Lund

(the endless complaints about her absenteeism, the forgetting to buy milk). She is someone never entirely outside of the family jurisdiction and is perennially pulled back into those alliances – living with her son, on the phone to her fiancé, visited by her mother. But, at the same time, she never quite belongs either. When Mark moves out Lund gives him a sad smile. The soundtrack fills the emotional void. As soon as they drive away her partner DI Jan Meyer (Søren Malling) appears. He quips that everyone leaves her but, never responding to the personal, she immediately talks about the case. The point is that Lund's character emerges as isolated and at the limits precisely because she is often being represented within familial alliances that demand something else from her.

Like Salander, Lund excels in areas generally considered to be male-dominated; despite her difficult relationship with her replacement Meyer, there is no doubt that he respects her abilities as an investigator – as he tells Brix, her instincts are invariably right. It is against the more impulsive, often impatient Meyer that Lund seems cooler, more serious and more detached. In the woods, at the start of the investigation, Meyer wanders over with something wrapped in plastic. She is having a difficult phone conversation with Buchard (Troels II Munk) about her extending the search without official approval. Buchard keeps talking, but Lund is not listening, her gaze firmly locked instead on what Meyer is holding, until he reveals a dead fox. Meyer gives a wry smile; she, however, remains impassive and walks away. Later when she sits with Meyer's wife in the hospital corridor, following Meyer's shooting, Lund probes her for information about what Meyer has said to her rather than offering sympathy. Gråbøl says that it was her choice to take Lund in an unsociable direction. 'I said I wanted to play an isolated person, unable to communicate and I'd like her to be at peace with that, so she's not even reaching out.'[16]

Lund is solemn and distant, introverted and hyper-intuitive, and shares similar solitary and reticent characteristics with other Nordic noir heroines like Salander and Smilla Jaspersen. Silences hang, Lund stares: she has a 'feeling' for a crime scene; it is not instinctive, but rather based on hard investigative work and an uncompromising ability to take her time and piece together the bits of the puzzle. There is a stillness to Gråbøl's performance that compels, but which gives little away about the inner life of the character. Often Lund

remains alone and isolated in the shot, the background faded out to suggest her ability to shut out any distraction. More extraordinary still is how a terse, monosyllabic and uncompliant character compels, in part because it speaks eloquently of a forceful resistance, as well as a strong response, to the machinations of power and its system of alliances.

Silence emerges as an empowering strategy of resistance for the female investigator. Salander decides not to speak, her thirteenth birthday gift to herself to defy her tormentor and retain power over her body and self; but so does Lund. She doesn't speak unless she is sure (or as sure as she can be), unlike Meyer, who is forever articulating his thoughts and ideas about the crime. His promise to the family to find Nanna's killer and inability to stop speculating result in Theis, along with Vagn, abducting Nanna's teacher Rama Kemal (Farshad Kholghi). In protecting the anonymity of a Muslim girl he is helping escape from being forced into an arranged marriage, Rama has kept quiet about what he knows about Nanna. His silence and ethnicity have rendered him suspicious and Theis beats him to within an inch of his life. Theis is arrested; Rama, now proved innocent of Nanna's murder, hospitalised; and the case is nowhere. Lund and Meyer are told that Buchard, 'ripped apart by the commissioner', wants to see them. Meyer sits gloomily: 'I'm not taking the fall for this. I refuse.' Lund is not listening; she has moved on in her mind. She has more information (the elimination of suspects) and stares intently at the photographs, looking for new clues and fresh connections. Her refusal to explain herself, while doggedly pursuing the investigation, speaks of her ability to block out criticism and ignore warnings (unlike Meyer); but it is a strategy of empowerment, which allows her agency without too much interruption and interference.

Even when she does speak the imminent termination of her job is never far away. Following the fatal shooting of Jen Holck (Jesper Lohmann), a prominent local politician and Nanna's erstwhile older lover, Lund remains unconvinced that Holck is the culprit – and this despite him holding her hostage and threatening to kill her. The authorities believe the case is closed. Brix tells Lund that it is over, but she voices doubt. There is something connecting Nanna with the missing girl, Mette Hauge, from 15 years ago. Brix tells her to go home and relax, work things out with her boyfriend: in short, to become reabsorbed into matrimonial relations and familiar

obligations. 'That's what you all want, isn't it? For me to shut up,' Lund shoots back. She confesses to knowing she is under surveillance. Brix immediately asks for her identification and car keys. Next to her towering, over-six-foot boss, Lund appears physically small and professionally outranked. Her badge is later returned to her when she is proved right, only to be taken away again after Meyer has been shot with her gun and the district attorney's office start to investigate Lund.

Others read her obsession differently, defining it instead as a sign that she may somehow be psychologically unstable or mentally ill. Driving her home following her dismissal, Meyer tells Lund her theories are 'too far-fetched. It's just a theory,' he frustratedly exclaims. She is the only one who does not understand that the case is over. 'You should talk to a psychologist or something.' She says nothing, but asks only to be let out. Lund works best in silence and going it alone; but in having to give a detailed account of what she knows, when she is obliged to speak, 'the agency of domination'[17] no longer belongs to her. Following Meyer's shooting Lund is imprisoned; but it is Bengt's faux psychological report on a 'traumatised' Lund that gets her released from jail. Later she is picked up by her colleagues, but when the district attorney's office demands that she return, she pulls a gun off the driver and steals the car. 'Annexed to mental illness',[18] her actions are explained and obsession pathologised. Pleasure thus comes from watching how she evades the exercise of power that seeks to question, monitor and restrain her.

Lund may have made the connection with Vagn in episode 16, but it is the authority of the one who listens and says nothing like Brix, and later the officious District Attorney, Bülow (Kim Bodnia), that guarantees the veracity of what she has to say. Vagn is released; but Lund knows the answer has something to do with a mover. No-one is listening; other centres of power require protest and her quiet discretion is demanded. The scene involving her and Vagn alone in the Birk Larsen basement is electrifying precisely because she is so isolated from anyone who could validate what she knows. Vagn zips up his hoodie and reveals 'Sara', '84', the lines used to incriminate Lund, and it simply becomes a scene of menace. Not to mention ominous: 'So we agree that it's over, right?' It is *only* when Brix gives his authority to Lund's theories and sanctions her actions that the culprit is identified.

Limits of gendered discourse and ways of speaking are not only residing in the text, but also present in its press reception. Critical reception, while excited about Lund, also struggled to make sense of what made her character so different, so compelling.[19] Asked to explain how she created Lund, Gråbøl has spoken about how she 'turned to male actors for her inspiration: the lone wolf Clint Eastwood character, but is there also something of the shambolic-seeming Columbo as well'.[20] Although in the same interview, the actress talks of how she regretted telling the press that she based Lund's 'walk on a male director's. "I shouldn't have, because it's like looking at the actor's toolbox; you shouldn't see the tools. And, to me, [Lund] is extremely feminine and it annoys me that people perceive her as a man [...]. I think some of the boxes that we put women/men traits in are totally outdated." '[21] Style was also never far away from any discussion of Lund. So popular was her Faroese sweater that it inspired various semiotic analyses[22] and had audiences from here to Copenhagen captivated – with the *Radio Times* even publishing its own 'killer knitwear' pattern. What intrigued about the jumper was how it somehow articulated a softer, more emotional side to Lund. Nonetheless what emerges from this press discourse is the continued difficulty of talking about difference and the limits of our language to explain a woman like Lund that doesn't fit the norm.

Similar to Salander and Smilla Jaspersen, Lund does not function in any one society, which, in turn, allows her to move around the city, almost unnoticed at times. But this is also partly because these women evade any easy definition. They busy themselves evading established systems of alliance and defying various centres of power – the law, medicine, the political. The more these characters challenge those who would define them, the more these women make visible how modern society remains itself gendered perverse.

Notes

1. Stieg Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (London: MacLehose Press, 2008), p. 224.
2. Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge. The History of Sexuality: 1*. Trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 7.
3. http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and radio/tvandradioblog/2011/feb/16/the-killing-bbc4.

4. Deborah Siegel, 'Reading Between the Waves: Feminist Historiography in a "Postfeminist" Moment,' in *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*, ed. Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2003), pp. 55–82.
5. Donna King and Carrie Lee Smith (eds), *Men Who Hate Women and Women Who Kick Their Asses: Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy in Feminist Perspectives* (forthcoming).
6. Barry Forshaw, *Death in a Cold Climate: A Guide to Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 164.
7. Naomi Wolf, *Fire With Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st-Century* (New York: Random House, 1993).
8. Deborah Siegel, 'Reading Between the Waves', p. 75.
9. Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, p. 402.
10. Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge. The History of Sexuality: 1*, p. 47.
11. Ibid., p. 108.
12. Ibid., p. 104.
13. Ibid.
14. Ginny Dougary, 'The Cult of Sarah Lund', *Radio Times*, 19–25 November 2011, p. 20.
15. http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/2011/mar/13/the-killing-sofie-grabol-sarah-lund-interview (accessed 20 February 2012).
16. Ibid., p. 31.
17. Foucault, p. 18.
18. Ibid., p. 36.
19. http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/tvandradioblog/2011/mar/10/the-killing-sophie-grabol-sarah-lund.
20. Ginny Dougary, 'The Cult of Sarah Lund', p. 19.
21. Ibid., pp. 19–20.
22. http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2011/feb/21/jumper-is-star–the-killing.

7

Storytelling and Justice in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*; Or, In Defence of Inquisitorial Criminal Justice

Sarah E. H. Moore

The courtroom proceedings at the end of the novel *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* give us a rare insight into the inquisitorial system of criminal justice favoured by much of continental Europe. The trial offers justice and vindication to Lisbeth Salander: those entrusted by the state with her care and protection – namely Dr Teleborian and Advocat Bjurman – are revealed to be corrupt, sadistic characters; the official version of her life and character is rescinded; and her own version of events is finally heard and found credible. This chapter argues that the distinctive features of the inquisitorial system of criminal justice help make possible these revelations and revisions. I also want to suggest that the novel helps extend criminological understanding of the courtroom experience as well as the benefits of the inquisitorial system. In this respect the essay contributes to criminological debates about the comparative benefits of the inquisitorial and adversarial systems of criminal justice and the process of 'status degradation' in the courtroom.[1] To be clear, I do not wish to suggest that the novel is a rhetorical argument in favour of a particular model of criminal justice; I simply wish to note and then account for the relationship between the distinctive courtroom victory and judicial proceedings in the novel. In this sense the essay is an exercise in assimilating criminological argument and literary analysis. I believe that this sort of exchange can enrich both

the reader's appreciation of the novel and the criminologist's understanding of criminal justice. Indeed, I first came to the novels as an avid reader of crime fiction; I hope that those who share this passion find something here that enriches their understanding of the book, and particularly the distinctive form of justice served to Salander.

Salander's victory in the courtroom is made sweeter by the fact that almost all previous official verdicts on her character have been marred by prejudice, unquestioned acceptance of expert opinion, and an unwillingness to listen to Salander's version of events. Storytelling, veracity and credibility are important themes across the three novels. The action of the first novel starts with Mikael Blomkvist convicted of libel for writing an unsubstantiated (but nonetheless accurate) exposé of Hans-Erik Wennerström, a leading Swedish industrialist. Employed to find the ending to the 'long, dark story' of the great Vanger family mystery – with the promise of a verifiable story of Wennerström's misdemeanours – Blomkvist discovers that Vanger has obtained an unvarnished and scarily accurate version of his own life-story, authored by Lisbeth Salander.

If we take a broader look at the trilogy, too, we find a deep concern with the tone, bias and politics of storytelling. Take, for example, Larsson's interest in journalistic accounts, not just Blomkvist's writing, but the work of the leftist *Millennium* magazine team, the conservative reporting of the newspaper *SMP*, and the erroneous media-spun image of Lisbeth Salander. The many official stories about Salander – guardian, police, psychiatrist, social work and court reports – are no less problematic in the *Millennium* series; we quickly learn that their formal tone belies their content. That Salander chooses to write her defendant statement in the style of an official report, and is ridiculed for it, is therefore deeply meaningful. Her eventual vindication is a salutary lesson in the need for social authorities to look beyond the way a story is packaged (in reading both official reports given by experts and testimony given by defendants or victims).

Through all of this the novels ask us to think about the relationship between storytelling, power and justice. They make plain the special credence given to stories told by social authorities, and the risks of corruption therein; they reveal the degradation in having state officials document the details of one's life; and they show us that the failure of official agents of the state to listen to an individual's

version of events can have grievous consequences. Larsson is clearly interested in how and why certain stories are suppressed. Women's untold stories are of especial significance to him, whether it is that of Harriet Vanger's sexual abuse or Lisbeth Salander's rape. Larsson wishes, of course, to make something of a political point here: the suppression of stories of female embattlement is done in the maintenance of patriarchal social control. Larsson's agenda is clear just by looking at the excursus that start each of the four sections of *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*, all of which focus on the unwritten history of female warriors. Take, for example, the excursus that begins Part Four of the novel:

> Despite the rich variety of Amazon legends from ancient Greece, South America, Africa and elsewhere, there is only one historically documented example of female warriors. This is the women's army that existed among the Fon of Dahomey in West Africa, now Benin.
>
> These female warriors have never been mentioned in the published military histories; no romanticized films have been made about them, and today they exist as no more than footnotes to history.[2]

Salander's story, too, is one that has been systematically marginalised. Larsson explicitly asks us to think about the relationship between her untold story and women being written out of the annals of history: when we return to the action of the novel after the opening excursus we find *Millennium*'s art director, Malm, finishing the layout of the book that will reveal Salander's victimisation.

Given Larsson's interest in storytelling and power, the publication and verification of Salander's life-story as part of the criminal trial at the end of the third novel may well strike the reader as a particularly powerful form of justice. To those interested in legal matters, Salander's defendant statement is notable for the further reason that it would not be accepted as a pre-trial defendant statement in many countries, including the UK. For one thing, the model of criminal justice employed across the three jurisdictions of the UK requires that pre-trial statements only contain information that is directly related to the case. Moreover, these statements are official reports, told to and recorded by the police.[3] In the case of Lisbeth Salander, of course,

there is a quite reasonable distrust of this type of process for producing testimonial accounts, hence the fact that she produces her life-story without any official guidance.

More generally, the courtroom proceedings at the end of *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* could not occur within the UK's legal system, and that is because the criminal justice system as it appears in Larsson's novel is much more akin to an inquisitorial, rather than an adversarial, model. Mainland Europe tends to make use of the former system, whilst the UK and the USA make use of the latter. In fact, the two systems are best thought of as belonging at either end of a spectrum: most judicial systems make use of some features of both models and none are 'purely' inquisitorial or adversarial. With this caveat in mind, we will think of the models as 'ideal types' here, and then consider the judicial system as it appears in Larsson's novel. What I want to argue, toward the end of this chapter, is that *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* provides a rare insight into a more inquisitorial system of criminal justice – but, more than this, that it extends criminological understanding of the benefits of that system.

Before we turn to such arguments, though, we need to consider what distinguishes the two systems of criminal justice. In the adversarial (or accusatorial) system judicial proceedings are characterised by two legal experts doing battle with one another. In fact, the lawyers for the prosecution and defence lead proceedings in the adversarial courtroom. As Asimow observes:

> Adversarial procedure leaves most critical pre-trial and trial decisions such as discovery, the framing of issues, the choice of witnesses, the questions directed to witnesses, and the order of proof in the hands of the lawyers. The central precept of the adversary system is that the sharp clash of proofs presented by opposing lawyers, both zealously representing the interests of their clients, generates the information upon which a neutral and passive decision maker can most justly resolve a dispute.[4]

The guiding principle in the adversarial model is precisely that of Aristotle in *The Art of Rhetoric*: the truth is best served by rhetorical argument and counter-argument.[5] Hence the other key characters in the adversarial courtroom are a presiding judge, who acts as a referee and enforces strict rules concerning the admissibility of evidence, and

a jury of lay-people who are responsible for deciding which argument is most persuasive. The organisation of the courtroom reiterates the status and role of participants. Witnesses stand to give testimony in a raised dock; the jury, the only ones allowed a side-view of proceedings, are positioned as spectators; the defence and prosecution teams inhabit clearly demarcated but adjacent spaces and stand to deliver questions or objections; all have to crane upwards to see the judge. Legal advocates take it in turn to examine a witness; they can only be interrupted by an objection made by the judge or opposing advocate. The witness has no influence over the questions asked by the opposing legal advocate or the direction questioning takes. They must answer questions directly and provide only the information specified in the question.

This is a system of criminal justice with which most of us are deeply familiar; after all, it is the Anglo-US model of criminal justice that most frequently forms the backdrop to artistic and media renderings of the courtroom. The inquisitorial system of criminal justice, on the other hand, is far less frequently depicted, to the extent that it would be easy to presume the adversarial model to be universal. There is good reason for the dominance of the adversarial model in popular culture. The battle of wits in the adversarial courtroom is particularly suited to the convention of reverse-angle cutting used frequently in Hollywood films.[6] Moreover, the inquisitorial system, as we will see below, lacks the intrinsic drama and conflict of the adversarial courtroom. This might explain why the courtroom scene from Larsson's *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* has reportedly been dropped from the Hollywood film adaptation.[7]

Before we detail the inquisitorial system there is an important caveat to be made: the Swedish model of criminal justice, as well as that used in Larsson's novel, does have some adversarial elements (for example, witnesses are cross-examined, legal advocates lead the questioning, and there is a witness box). Nonetheless, both have features we would associate with the inquisitorial system. In this model judicial proceedings are part of a 'thorough and official inquiry'.[8] Here the criminal investigation becomes a collective endeavour wherein participants collaborate to determine what really happened. Hence Sybille Bedford's observation, in his brilliant *The Faces of Justice*, that the Swiss criminal courts 'work in terms of clock-making'; 'you prize up the case, look inside and try to set it back'.[9]

Bedford's metaphor is pertinent: courtroom proceedings in many continental European countries do indeed attempt to 'rewind the clock' and are analytical in their consideration of the details of a case. It is a system in which judges, as opposed to sparring lawyers, often take centre stage, even leading the questioning of witnesses (though this isn't the case in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*). Whilst the defendant does have a legal advocate, the latter's job is not primarily to form a competing version of events to that put forward by the prosecution; rather it is to share in the process of information-finding and analysis. There is often no jury in an inquisitorial criminal courtroom. Instead, it is usually a set of judges or 'assessors' – some professional judges, others randomly selected lay-people – who reach a verdict about the defendant's involvement in events.

In those countries that have a criminal justice system that is highly inquisitorial the defendant is not subject to a precise charge and there is no plea of guilty or not guilty at the start of proceedings. The aim is simply to find out what took place and to punish accordingly. This means that the inquisitorial criminal court has a broader remit than its adversarial counterpart, and a wider range of evidence can therefore be admitted. Documentary, as opposed to oral, evidence tends to be prioritised – Salander's autobiography would be a case in point. Moreover, it is relatively rare to strike something from the record. As a consequence, exchanges often lack the staccato articulation of those in the adversarial courtroom, as is evidenced in the comparison below of court proceedings in an English Crown Court and those in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*. Admitting a broader range of evidence also means that there can be a far more probing scrutiny of the defendant's life. As Van Koppen and Penrod have it, when 'technicalities of fair play threaten to get in the way of finding the truth, they are put aside' in the inquisitorial courtroom.[10]

Overall, judicial proceedings in more inquisitorial systems are rather informal compared to those based upon an adversarial model: there is less grandstanding and less reliance on legalese. Take, as a counterpoint, Sybille Bedford's description of a case tried in an English Crown Court – his observations, made originally in 1961, remain pertinent to adversarial courtrooms in the UK today:

> Above the dias, the ornate chair, the robe, the still head of the Judge rises above the court as if suspended.

> [. . .]
> 'My Lord, we will establish to the satisfaction of the members of the jury –' Resonant and deliberate, it is the Crown, a massive Treasury Counsel, florid, bursting with self-possession, speaking up-right from the well of the court, rocking himself to and fro in front of the advocates' bench.
> 'With respect –' Another gowned figure has leapt to his feet. 'My learned friend is perfectly aware that the cheeses were never found.'
> 'I would invite your Lordship's attention to Count Two, Count Two of the Indictment.'
> 'The apples?' The voice of the Judge is disincarnate; but audible enough to those in practice.
> 'I respectfully submit that the apples have been traced.'
> '*Res ipsa loquitur*?'[11]
> 'Quite so, my Lord'.
> The jury shift a little[12]

Note the distinctive courtroom locution, the rapid, mechanical to-and-fro of legal exchange, and the advocates' perfunctory politeness. The whole episode feels formulaic. The courtroom atmosphere in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* is, in sharp contrast to this, much more informal and, at times, convivial. Take, for example, the way in which the appearance of Salander's previous guardian, Palmgren, is treated:

> Judge Iversen banged his gavel at 12.30 and decreed that district court proceedings were thereby resumed. He noticed that a third person had appeared at Advocat Giannini's table. It was Holger Palmgren in a wheelchair.
> 'Hello Holger', Judge Iversen said. 'I haven't seen you in a courtroom for quite a while'.
> 'Good day to you, Judge Iversen. Some cases are so complicated that these young lawyers need a little assistance'.
> 'I thought you had retired'.
> 'I've been ill . . . '.
> 'I see'.
> Giannini cleared her throat . . . .[13]

Elsewhere in the novel we are informed that courtroom participants are seated at adjoining tables. This, too, is characteristic of the inquisitorial courtroom. Participants are either seated in this manner or else at one large round table, such arrangements being more conducive to open discussion. It also indicates the collaborative and egalitarian nature of the relationships between the judges, legal advocates, victim and defendant. For Giannini, Salander's lawyer, this arrangement is rather unsatisfactory; she complains about 'the Swedish tradition of carrying on court proceedings informally while sitting around a table, almost as though the occasion were a dinner party'.[14] Larsson notes her unusual gesture of standing to speak; in doing so Giannini aims to alter the mood to that more often found in the adversarial courtroom, where such a gesture is customary. The atmosphere of easy exchange is, though, generally conducive to Giannini's case. As we'll see below, the defence benefits particularly from the conversational discussion of evidence, something that is, again, a distinctive feature of the inquisitorial model. That witnesses do not need to be sworn in to contribute to a discussion is especially important in promoting a free and full debate.

As we would expect, there has been much written within legal studies and criminology about the relative benefits of the adversarial and inquisitorial systems, though much of it is aimed at students. While this body of literature can alert us to the deficiencies and merits of these systems, these are generally enumerated in a rather abstract and antiseptic fashion. Students are taught that while the adversarial system might be lawyer-dominated, it adheres to rules of due process. The inquisitorial system, they are told, might be bureaucratic and offer fewer protections to the defendant, but it is one in which the truth of a situation is more likely to emerge. Familiar aphorisms are recited, most frequently Blackstone's argument, made in defence of the adversarial model, that 'it is better that ten guilty men go free than one innocent man be convicted'.[15]

Beyond textbook accounts of the two systems, there has been a recent growth in academic interest in the benefits of continental European models of criminal justice. There have, for example, been a number of excellent analyses of how the US might assimilate certain features of such systems.[16] These studies approach European systems of criminal justice as a source of ideas for how to improve the US system and, as such, they contain a more nuanced and

detailed discussion of the inquisitorial model as it operates in a given national context. The inquisitorial system comes off very well in these accounts: the various agencies of criminal justice appear better integrated, better designed for impartiality, and dispute resolution seems to be easier. In this respect, the general bent of this essay is by no means unusual. What is novel here, though, is the idea that a literary work can enlighten us as to the distinctive features and benefits of an inquisitorial system of criminal justice. Artistic renderings of the judicial process can illuminate what it means to, for example, discuss evidence in the round, or have a legal expert carve out a canny defence. This is why many university law courses require students to watch Hollywood trial movies: Otto Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder*, for example, is taken as a very fine illustration of the difficulties of legal defence in a criminal case, one that is far more nuanced and in some senses instructive than anything provided by legal scholars.

In turn, *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* is one of the most vivid depictions of the inquisitorial system; it helps us to understand more fully the consequences of adopting this particular judicial process. In particular, and as discussed below, it urges us to recognise that being able to tell one's story in full is a powerful form of justice, particularly for those who may have been subject to repeated failures on the part of social institutions. Moreover, the novel gives us a chance to think about the meaning of courtroom proceedings in terms of a defendant's overall life experiences, and it does this in a way that very few empirical studies do (or, indeed, could).

Quite apart from this, it gives us an excellent insight into what the socio-psychologist Harold Garfinkel described as the 'status degradation' of defendants and victims in the courtroom, that is, the character assassination that goes on in serious trials.[17] The aim of court proceedings, Garfinkel argued, is to completely erode the credibility of the defendant, not just in terms of individual testimony, but in such a way that we question his integrity and right to be treated as a fellow human being. 'Status degradation' is, then, a dual process involving a debunking of the defendant as a defendant *and* as a member of society. We might add here that this type of denouncement is necessary if we are to accept quite extraordinary forms of punishment as justice.

Garfinkel outlines the conditions for a successful denunciation: the perpetrator and crime must be framed as out-of-the-ordinary;

an opposing position, that of the moral majority, must be forcefully asserted; the denouncer must appear neutral and authoritative, act explicitly on behalf of the group, and have been 'invested with the right to speak'; witnesses must be made to feel their sense of difference from the perpetrator. Finally,

> the denounced person must be ritually separated from a place in the legitimate order, i.e., he must be defined as standing at a place opposed to it. He must be placed 'outside', he must be made 'strange'.[18]

There are ways of resisting status degradation, the easiest of which is, for want of a different phrase, to 'play the system': that is to say, acquiesce to the institutional view of the 'appropriate defendant' (or victim) and dress, speak and act accordingly. This helps guard against persistent suggestions that one is deviant in character, not just deed. Of course, this, in its own way, involves degrading oneself; it certainly means that one must master and present an appropriate 'front'. It means the female victim of sexual violence must dress demurely, the defendant charged with being anti-social must exhibit his knowledge of appropriate social conduct.

Salander, of course, refuses to take this path and, in turn, the prosecutor attempts precisely the type of status degradation described by Garfinkel. We can see this in the following extract – here the prosecutor is discussing Salander's claim that she was raped by her former guardian, Nils Bjurman:

> there was nothing in Advocat Bjurman's past to support the credibility of Lisbeth Salander's account [...].It is also my duty to remind the court that Lisbeth Salander has been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. This is a young woman with a documented violent tendency, who since her early teens has had serious problems in her interactions with society. She spent several years in a children's psychiatric institution and has been under guardianship since the age of eighteen [...]. Discussing a young person's mental state is an innately disagreeable task. So much is an invasion of privacy, and her mental state becomes the subject of interpretation. In this case, however, we have Lisbeth Salander's own confused world view on which to base our

> decision. It becomes manifestly clear in what she has termed her 'autobiography'. Nowhere is her want of a foothold in reality as evident as it is here [. . .].[19]

This is a masterclass in status degradation, as conceived by Garfinkel. Note, for example, that the prosecutor refers to Salander by her full name and Bjurman by his surname and official title. The effect is not simply to emphasise the latter's status and authority, but to suggest to courtroom participants something about the nature of the relationship between Salander and Bjurman – that it is akin to that of the student and teacher or patient and doctor. Notice, also, the use of the third person to produce a sense of distance between the courtroom participants and Salander: 'we' can 'base our decision' on her bizarre testimonial account.

What's also interesting is the structure of the prosecutor's speech. He swiftly gains the position needed to confidently and completely discredit Salander as a defendant, and he does that by first indicating that he is performing the denouncement in an official capacity ('It is also my duty to remind the court'). He then reiterates his own sense of delicacy, caution and moral compunction: he is unwilling, he says, on both ethical and scientific grounds, to offer up a moral judgement on Salander. He then argues that Salander has *forced* a moral judgement simply by virtue of telling her story. She is, it seems, both originator and author of her guilt. This rhetorical move frees him up to speak of her wrongdoing in rather loose, informal, more emotive terms: his early, and neutral-sounding, description of her as having a 'documented violent tendency' is replaced by the rather more forceful and careless description of her as 'wanting a foothold in reality'. All in all, it is an extraordinary denouncement, one all the more violent because its aim is to completely silence Salander. It is not simply that *individual details* of her story are to be questioned, the prosecutor asserts, her autobiography is to be entirely rejected as the crazed ravings of a madwoman. In this sense, the trial reiterates Larsson's more general concern that those in power seek to suppress inconvenient stories told in the 'wrong' tenor and by the socially powerless.

Salander manages to resist such attempts in the courtroom to degrade and debunk. How does she do this, considering the force of the attack and the means available to the prosecution to discredit

her story? The defence's case hinges upon demonstrating Salander's sanity and credibility; invalidating the testimony of expert witnesses is Giannini's central means of achieving this. Giannini's task is made more difficult by the fact that many of the experts testifying against Salander have contributed to her previous indictments. In other words, their interpretation of the defendant reflects a long-standing professional opinion that she has a criminal temperament. To return to Garfinkel, this means that Giannini's exposition must focus on *undoing* the ritual separation of Salander from the legitimate social order. Looked at in this way the trial is simply one in a long line of 'status degradation ceremonies' for Salander;[20] indeed, as we have seen above, the prosecution's case rests on the idea that previous denunciations hold true.

Garfinkel neglects to examine the distinctive nature of a degradation ceremony involving an already dispossessed individual; *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*, on the other hand, shows us that it is in these situations that the risk of 'status degradation' is particularly pertinent. In cases such as these, the court has a particular duty to consider the possibility that the defendant has been the victim of systematic failures on the part of social institutions. How this duty is to be met and monitored is of serious public and academic concern. It is worth noting that England and Wales' Court of Protection, the court that decides whether an adult should be made a ward of the state, remains the only court in the land to which the media has no access. This means that we have limited means of assessing whether the British state is fulfilling its duty of care towards defendants passing through this court. It is this set of people for whom the problem of 'status degradation' is most pressing: a successful defence here, as in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*, means both resisting *and* undoing 'status degradation'. I want to argue that being tried in an inquisitorial system means that Salander is better placed to achieve these two aims. Two features, intrinsic to this model, strike me as particularly important here: the possibility of discussing evidence in a conversational manner and the opportunity for witnesses to present an autobiography in full and in an idiom of their choice. The former is neatly illustrated by an extract from the book in which Salander's lawyer Giannini has just started questioning Dr Teleborian, the psychiatrist in charge of Salander at St Stephen's Children's Hospital:

'[. . .] has Lisbeth Salander ever injured herself? Yes or no?'

'As psychiatrists we must teach ourselves to interpret the overall picture. With regard to Lisbeth Salander, you can see on her body, for example, a multitude of tattoos and piercings, which are also a form of self-destructive behaviour and a way of damaging one's own body. We can interpret that as a manifestation of self-hate'.

Giannini turned to Salander.

'Are your tattoos a manifestation of self-hate?' she said.

'No,' Salander said.[21]

Giannini's sarcastic tone and point-blank questioning are in stark contrast to Teleborian's use of an official idiom. The effect is to show up both the phoniness of therapeutic language and the inaccuracy of Teleborian's extrapolation (tattoos = bodily harm = self-hate). What really punctures Teleborian's testimony, though, is the deferral to the defendant: Salander's succinct dismissal of the doctor's wordy conjecture not only denies the validity of Teleborian's statement, it threatens the very basis of his credibility as an expert witness.

Instead of proceeding in the customary fashion of calling another expert witness to counter Teleborian's assessment of Salander, Giannini continues her exposition by questioning the intellectual basis for the psychiatrist's judgement. In the following exchange Giannini has just asked Teleborian to expand on his analysis of Salander's sexual relationships as a teenager. Giannini challenges his suggestion that Salander accepted money for performing sexual acts, and he retorts:

'She was never arrested for prostitution.'

'And could hardly be arrested for it since prostitution is not a crime in our country.'

'Well, yes, that's right. In her case this has to do with compulsive neurotic behaviour.'

'And you did not hesitate to conclude that Lisbeth Salander is mentally ill based on these unverifiable assumptions? When I was sixteen years old, I drank myself silly on half a bottle of vodka which I stole from my father. Do you think that makes me mentally ill?'

'No, of course not.'[22]

Giannini's reference to her own teenage transgressions here serves to make her challenge to Teleborian's professional neutrality particularly pointed. Moreover, in reframing Salander's behaviour as youthful exuberance – as 'something that we've all done' – Giannini artfully deflects the prosecution's suggestion that 'we' are nothing like the defendant. I, at least, Giannini means to say, am *just* like the defendant.

It is worth emphasising here that the techniques used by Giannini above to corrode Teleborian's authority would be unavailable to a defence team in an adversarial courtroom. For one thing, Giannini's informal story about 'drinking herself silly' would not be in keeping with the tone of debate or the accepted conduct of legal advocates. It would most likely elicit an objection from the opposing advocate concerning its relevance; even if this wasn't upheld, the rhythm of the conversation would be disrupted enough for Teleborian's response to be somewhat lost. Lastly, deferring to the defendant (or any witness not sworn-in) would be impossible in the adversarial system. Yet, as the exchange above demonstrates, such interjections can offer useful correctives to experts' evidence and help guard against such testimony becoming definitive in its characterisation and explanation of defendant behaviour. All this is particularly important given that the majority of criminal trials in economically advanced countries make use of this sort of testimony and juries tend to find expert analysis highly persuasive.[23]

There are other significant benefits to allowing defendants and victims to contribute to the discussion of evidence pertaining to them. It means that they have the opportunity to intervene in the process of 'status degradation' and gain control of the dominant interpretation being formed of them in the courtroom. What might also help in guarding against 'status degradation' is allowing the victim and defendant the opportunity to present a full story of events in their own voice. Dressed 'as herself and no one else',[24] Salander elects to present her autobiography in a 'plain, unvarnished' fashion, and in 'crackingly terse prose'.[25] In other words she in no way cedes to the institutional conception of the credible defendant or appropriate defendant statement. The evidence vindicates her as a defendant; that she achieves this acquittal without reformulating or polishing her appearance and story means that she is also vindicated *as a person*.

That she chooses the tone, style and medium of her witness statement is, of course, important in this, not simply because it allows for a direct relaying of events, free from institutional gloss, but because it gets round the problem that Salander has given up speaking to those in authority. This situation – where a dispossessed individual loses trust in social authorities and becomes uncommunicative – is a relatively common one within the English criminal justice system.[26] Allowing someone to tell his story without official mediation may well, in certain cases, be the only way of accessing a personal account of what happened. Again, this is something that the adversarial system doesn't allow for. Nor does it allow for a defendant or victim to provide a *full* autobiography; most of the detail would likely be considered irrelevant to the case. Reading *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* reveals how important it is for a defendant to be able to provide a full account of her life-experiences. Recognising the credibility of Salander's autobiography, both the prosecutor and judge are forced to acknowledge that she is not only 'not guilty', but that she is deserving of restitution (that she is – however much she might hate the term – a victim). We rarely manage to achieve this sort of insight in adversarial systems: this model, unlike the inquisitorial system, simply does not provide the stage for messy stories of long-term neglect. This, we might reasonably surmise, not only compounds the sense of powerlessness felt by people with these sorts of biographies, it demonstrates the role of the adversarial courtroom in helping to suppress inconvenient stories of social harm.

Notes

1. The inquisitorial and adversarial models are discussed in numerous textbooks, including Eamonn Carrabine and Maggie Lee, *Criminology: A Sociological Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2009); Mike Maguire et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. 4th Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Alan Tarr, *Judicial Process and Judicial Policymaking*. 5th Edition (Boston, MA: Wadsworth Press, 2010). There is also a body of empirical work that compares European and US systems of criminal justice (see, for example, Frase's work, discussed below). The phrase 'status degradation' was developed by the socio-psychologist Harold Garfinkel to refer to ceremonies of public denunciation.
2. Stieg Larsson, *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* (London: MacLehose Press, 2010), p. 555.
3. See Code C of the (UK) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

4. Michael Asimow, 'Popular Culture and the Adversary System', *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review*, 40(2), 2007, p. 653.
5. Aristotle's famous treatise on rhetoric is centrally concerned with methods of persuasion in public oratory. He argued that knowledge alone is not enough to convince someone of the truth since not everyone has the ability to grasp abstract ideas. Rhetoric should, Aristotle goes on, be employed in a dialectical fashion, that is as argument and counter-argument, so that we should be aware how the case stands. To be clear, he by no means sees rhetoric as a cynical attempt to manipulate. For Aristotle, the truth is *best served* by rhetorical argument. As he sees it, right and true ideas are 'more easily argued' than false ones. This means that the advocate with truth on his side has an advantage. It also means that if a judgement is made in favour of a false argument, fault lies with the opposing advocate in not successfully deploying rhetorical techniques. The adversarial model of criminal justice employs a similar model of argumentation and Aristotle frequently uses the example of courtroom debate to discuss the art of persuasion.
6. We can see a reliance on this convention in such Hollywood trial movies as *Anatomy of a Murder* (dir. Otto Preminger, 1959), and, to rather less good effect, the numerous film adaptations of John Grisham's novels, such as *The Client* (dir. Joel Schumacher, 1994) and *A Time to Kill* (dir. Joel Schumacher, 1996). I am indebted to Alex Clayton for these observations.
7. http://www.wmagazine. com/celebrities/2011/02/ rooney_mara_girl_ with_the_dragon_tattoo_film.
8. Peter J. Van Koppen and Steven D. Penrod, *Adversarial Versus Inquisitorial Justice: Psychological Perspectives on Criminal Justice* (London: Springer, 2003), p. 3.
9. Sybille Bedford, *The Faces of Justice* (London: Faber, 2011/1961), p. 259.
10. Van Koppen and Penrod, *Adversarial Versus Inquisitorial Justice*.
11. The phrase refers to the common law doctrine that 'the facts speak for themselves' – a fact is so compelling as to not need further argument. In this instance '*res ipsa loquitur*' presumably refers to the finding of the stolen apples on the defendant.
12. Bedford, pp. 13–14.
13. Larsson, p. 263.
14. Ibid., p. 637.
15. See, for example, Malcolm Davies et al., *Criminal Justice* (Edinburgh: Pearson, 2010), p. 265.
16. See, for example, Raneta Lawson Mack, 'It's Broke So Let's Fix It: Using a Quasi-Inquisitorial Approach to Limit the Impact of Bias in the American Criminal Justice System', *Indiana International and Comparative Law Review*, 7(1), 1996, pp. 63–94; Richard Frase and Thomas Weigend, 'German Criminal Justice as a Guide to American Law Reform: Similar Problems, Better Solutions?' *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review*, 18(2), 1995, pp. 317–360 for a comparison of the German and US systems; and Frase Richard, S. Frase, 'Comparative Criminal Justice as

a Guide to American Law Reform: How Do the French Do It, How Can We Find Out, and Why Should We Care?', *Californian Law Review*, 539, 1990, pp. 539–683 for a comparison of the French and US systems.

17. Harold Garfinkel, 'Conditions of Successful Status Degradation Ceremonies', *American Journal of Sociology*, 61(5), 1956, pp. 420–424.
18. Ibid., p. 421.
19. Larsson, pp. 620–621.
20. Salander's previous experience of 'status degradation' ceremonies include the district court judgement that resulted in her being placed in a secure psychiatric unit at the age of 13 and a later court hearing that eventuated in her being made a ward of the state. By then, 'her casebook was filled with terms such as *introverted, socially inhibited, lacking in empathy, ego-fixated, psychopathic and asocial behaviour, difficulty in cooperating, and incapable of assimilating learning*', Stieg Larsson, *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* (London: MacLehose Press, 2008), p. 143.
21. Larsson, pp. 621–622.
22. Ibid., p. 659.
23. Cf. Ric Simmons, Ric, 'Conquering the Province of the Jury: Expert Testimony and the Professionalization of Fact-Finding', *University of Cincinnati Law Review*, Vol. 1, No. 74, 2005, pp. 1013–1066.
24. Larsson, p. 612.
25. Ibid., p. 466.
26. Kinsey, Lea and Young's 1984 sociological study of Merseyside (Liverpool, UK) residents was one of the first to demonstrate the extent of inner-city, working-class communities' distrust in the police (*Losing the Fight Against Crime*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). They found that this hostility often involved a refusal to offer eye-witness accounts and report crimes to the police. The second report of the 2007 Select Committee on Home Affairs (paragraphs 190–198) draws attention to a similarly negative attitude towards the police amongst young, working-class black men, leading to a reliance on informal 'street justice' (paragraph 196). See Home Office 'Police and Criminal Evidence Act: Code C – Code of Practice for the Detention, Treatment, and Questioning of Persons by Police Officers', 1984. http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/operational-policing/pace-codes/pace-code-c?view= Binary.

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Interview Transcripts

Steven Peacock, Mikael Wallén, Erik Hultkvist, Johan Theorin

Interviewees: Mikael Wallén (**MW**) *CEO, Yellow Bird Productions, and Erik Hultkvist* (**EH**) *Business Development, Yellow Bird Productions*

Interviewer: Steven Peacock (**SP**)

Conducted at Yellow Bird Productions, Stockholm, Sweden, 30 March 2011

SP: Yellow Bird is now part of one of the biggest global media conglomerations [in the world]; could you tell me about the connections to different companies?

EH: Yellow Bird was acquired in 2007 by Zodiak Television, which was a listed Swedish production group and, alongside Yellow Bird, Zodiak bought a lot of other media companies from other countries, including the Netherlands, Belgium, Russia, the UK – so expanded from being a Scandinavian group into a pan-European group. In 2008, Zodiak Television was acquired by De Agostini, which is an Italian media conglomerate, and we merged with two other production groups called Marathon and Magnolia (from France and Italy). So those three organisations – Zodiak, Marathon and Magnolia – merged into one big media production group, and then last year [2010] De Agostini also bought RDF media group which was quite a big UK/US media production group and merged all together, becoming what is now called Zodiak media group, with the headquarters in London. There is also the connection to UK-based production company Touch Paper, which was part of RDF previously.

MW: Depending on how you are counting it, it is part of the third largest group in the world, in TV.

SP: Looking at your website, the tagline is 'We turn bestsellers into blockbusters'. So there is a niche market for adaptation – is that right?

MW: Absolutely. The company started in that way, as a joint venture between the writer Henning Mankell and the producer Ole Sondberg. They started the company in that way, and also started to acquire some rights, to make the first 13 Swedish *Wallander* movies and we've kept doing that; even if we look into doing other things, about 95 per cent is books, and about 80 per cent is bestsellers. As most bestsellers [in Sweden] are crime, that means we predominantly produce crime drama. It doesn't have to be crime, but it is easiest with crime [...] we are also working with Henning Mankell's other books; the most recent example is *The Italian Shoes* that we are trying to develop into a feature film ... together with Left Bank [Productions] in the UK.

SP: You mention the importance of Henning Mankell in setting up the company. Was there a determination, then, from the beginning, in terms of adapting *Wallander*?

MW: Yes, that was the whole idea behind the company.

EH: I think it was started with the sole focus of one project, which was: turn the Wallander character into a franchise, making films based on the character.

MW: At that time, they had already produced [for television] all the novels in the Swedish language.

EH: So the idea was to make a series of films based on the Wallander character, and to finance that internationally .... The company has grown organically from there.

MW: Ole [Sondberg] was a producer of these sorts of films before *Wallander*; he made *Beck* – that was a franchise too; he took the Beck character and made more films out of that.

SP: The *Millennium* and *Wallander* series are extraordinarily successful across the world; before we talk about the global success of your productions, could you tell me about the Scandinavian success – was that in place before the interest from Europe and America? How popular were the *Wallander* series and *Millennium* series in Scandinavia?

MW: The *Wallander* films have been around since 2005–2006 in terms of the franchise, and even before that as the first films based on the books were out in the nineties. Wallander has always been a well-known character and a successful character on film and TV. But of course in Sweden, *Wallander* has been more aimed at DVD/TV, not feature films, and is very strong on DVD/TV. Sixty to 70 per cent of the Swedish population know about the Wallander character and a lot have read the books. But they are not successful in the same way as the *Millennium* series. When we put a *Wallander* movie out as a cinema release as we do from time to time, maybe we will get 150–200,000 admissions in Sweden, and there is not a market for it in the rest of Scandinavia on cinema, but when we launched *Millennium*, it was a totally different thing. Of course, it was a different kind of success. In such a short time, [Larsson] sold so many books in Scandinavia – he sold close to 10 million books in Scandinavia in two or three years.

EH: Wallander has been very strong on TV and DVD ever since we started making them. Every time we [or previously, our co-producing partner] put up a *Wallander*, even if it is pay-TV and DVD before going to free-to-air TV, they have a 50 per cent share [of the audience]; it's a habit to watch a *Wallander* or *Beck* movie on a Saturday or Sunday night on TV4 in the 'crime slot'.

SP: Was Yellow Bird involved in the original *Wallander* films?

MW: No, it was before Yellow Bird's time.

EH: But Ole [Sondberg] was involved in the *Beck* series.

MW: At that time, *Wallander* was sold to Sveriges television (SVT) and the first film was actually an in-house production.

SP: Were you surprised by the enormous success of the *Millennium Trilogy*?

MW: We hoped for Swedish success, even if the numbers were more than we had thought, and the Scandinavian success was a surprise to us because Swedish films are not usually that successful here or in Denmark; even the Scandinavian success was beyond our expectation. And of course, the success outside Scandinavia, was just unbelievable. We would have been satisfied had we sold the TV series and movies to 20 countries around the world, and if one or two of the countries gave them a cinema release, we would have been glad. And then suddenly we sold them to 60 countries, with many giving all three films cinema

releases: well beyond our expectations . . . . On cinema and DVD it is a different sort of exposure when it is three movies instead of one. Of course, a lot of it is based not only on the quality of the films but also on the success of the books . . . . It is clear that people outside Scandinavia see these films in a different way to us – they are considered more like art-films, and we see them more as traditional thrillers.

EH: We received better critical acclaim abroad, than in Sweden. This goes for the *Wallander* films as well.

MW: For example, the Swedish *Wallander* films are considered only as 'industrial TV' in Sweden, but when shown on the BBC, we got hundreds of emails from British viewers saying how fantastic they are.

EH: It seems that a lot of Swedes view the BBC versions of *Wallander* as better, whereas it almost seems to the opposite in the UK. It seems harder to win your 'own' audience.

SP: Why do you think that the *Millennium* and *Wallander* series are so popular?

MW: Of course people start watching them, or buying them on DVD, or go to the cinema because they know about them beforehand; otherwise it is difficult to market Swedish films abroad . . . . I guess part of it is because of the Swedish 'touch' to the films in some way, or the Scandinavian 'touch'.

EH: I think as well it has a lot to do with the main characters; the Wallander character is very compelling, and the Salander character is equally compelling – I think it has a lot to do with that, that there is something about them and their qualities that differentiate the films from a lot of other crime drama.

MW: Sometimes the stories are quite dark, and they offer some criticism of Swedish society and the Swedish way of living – elements you don't see that often in other crime dramas.

SP: There seems to be this real sense of excitement, internationally, about 'Nordic noir' right now – could you say why it is happening now?

MW: In Germany it has been there for many years.

EH: They have always been very interested in Sweden and Swedish culture.

MW: In the English-language countries it has always been a problem with subtitles. In Germany you don't have that problem as they dub everything, and still they are, have always been, close

to our Swedish culture – they have always been close to us as people. With the dubbing, they don't have the problem of subtitles like in the UK. In other 'dubbing' countries like Spain and Italy and France, they have previously perceived Swedish programmes as 'something strange'; it is only recently that they have started to become interested in them.

SP: Can we talk a little bit about the relationship between film and DVD, and television and film because, especially with Yellow Bird's productions (and this may be a wider production pattern in terms of Sweden), you release some *Wallander* films to the cinema, some to DVD, and then to television. Then there is also the question about the cinema/television releases of the *Millennium* trilogy.

MW: The whole *Wallander* concept was based on the investment made by TV broadcasters in Sweden and Germany. The whole project has been designed such that the broadcasters are satisfied, and such that we can produce the movies in decent quality. And we still have a strong DVD market in Scandinavia. So we adapted that concept to the best way of financing the films: that was – giving the German broadcaster rights for Germany, and in Scandinavia the rights to release the first one in cinemas to market the new series of films, especially for the DVD sales. So: the first film is released at the cinema, setting the way for DVD sales. Then, a month later or so, the second film is released straight-to-DVD. So you release them on DVD about once a month.

SP: So you would show the first episode in the new TV series at the cinema, and that would be directly related to DVD sales?

MW: Yes, that is the marketing tool for the new series on DVD. You have your ordinary cinema-release window of 4–6 months, and then the first goes to DVD, and the next month the second one goes to DVD, and so on. And then you have the ordinary window for pay-TV, and then free TV. That is the model for *Wallander*.

EH: It's easier to look at the productions as a TV series, rather than as feature films. But they are 90 minute films.

MW: So 12 out of the 13 in a series are direct-to-DVD movies, but in Sweden you don't have only direct-to-DVD movies, you will first start with the cinema release as the first point of financing.

This is the model for well-known characters like Wallander and Beck.

SP: It's a different model to Britain, for example for a series like *A Touch of Frost* or *Lewis*, you don't show the first episode on the big screen, in the cinemas . . .

MW: And you don't release them on DVD before showing them on TV . . .

SP: Exactly, so that's very different. With that in mind, do you put more money into the production of the first episode?

MW: Yes, usually it has around 50 per cent more money, the first one, at least; sometimes it has 100 per cent more money, actually.

SP: And do you frontload the marketing campaign towards that?

MW: Yes, of course when you have a feature film, you have a feature-film marketing campaign; when you have it on DVD, it is just some ads in some papers. But, when it's a feature film, it will mean posters around the towns, that sort of thing. Absolutely – [there is] a lot more money in marketing the feature films.

EH: In the first *Wallander* series, more than one film was released at the cinemas.

MW: Three out of thirteen . . . partly because of the success of the first one, and also it was the first series when they launched the *Wallander* franchise – the first movies without being based on any books – so they thought it needed more than one feature film release.

SP: In the case of [the *Wallander* episode] 'Mastermind', it has a cinematic quality.

MW: We put more money in 'Mastermind', and 'Before the Frost' was the first one. And we used other directors – people who usually do feature films.

SP: Is it correct that only the first film of the *Millennium* trilogy was produced for a cinema release?

MW: Yes, because the series – as with the *Wallander* series – was financed by different sets of broadcasters – German broadcasters, Swedish broadcasters, with the first one set for release at the cinema. The only difference was that because the first book was so extensive, we planned on doing two sets of 90 minutes on each book, so in the end, the series would be six 90-minute films for TV. That was the plan.

EH: With the first film released at the cinema as a shorter version of the 'two times ninety'.

SP: So, did the 'two times ninety minute' shooting schedule happen?

MW: Yes, they were filmed in that way, and they were broadcast on all Scandinavian channels and in Germany as the 'six times ninety' TV series, and really successfully so, in Germany especially. And in some markets they released the TV series on DVD rather than the feature films, quite successfully . . . . But in the UK and US they are more traditional [in their models]. In Belgium and Luxembourg for example, six months after the initial cinema release, and when they were supposed to release the feature films on DVD, they actually released the 'two times ninety' versions instead, as a 'deluxe, extra-long version' . . . and people were buying even more DVDs than just the feature film. So in some countries, they really played with the options, because there are a lot of options when you have this kind of series. But, most countries are traditional; distributors in this business are traditional. So usually they keep the TV series, maybe to sell it to a TV channel or maybe release it as an extended version a year or two after. That's the most common way of doing it.

SP: So the longer series is available on DVD in some countries, and was shown on TV in Sweden . . .

MW: And in Norway, and Denmark, and Finland, and Germany. France – Canal Plus – bought the TV series in the very early stages, even before we knew it was going to be three feature films, and it was released on Canal Plus before it was in the cinema.

SP: Are Britain and America interested in taking the DVD of the longer series?

MW: In most other countries, it's a 'distributor thing', because the distributor buys all the rights and can use them as they please. And in terms of Music Box in the States, and Momentum in the UK, they are doing it in a more traditional way. They are both planning on releasing the 'six times ninety' versions . . . . The TV series has been sold to the BBC along with the feature films . . . it is all a question of what they release first, and a matter of timing schedules with the broadcasters. For BBC Four to schedule it for the same slot as *The Killing* or *Wallander* it should be easier to show the 'six times ninety' versions in that way. Instead of

releasing the three 'extra-long' movies, it seems more suitable to show the series in this way.

SP: What about the relationship with the BBC, when you made the co-production of *Wallander*? How did that work?

MW: It was in a way a three-part co-production [of six films] between Left Bank, Kenneth Branagh and Yellow Bird . . . . We are in pre-production of three more films this fall. In Germany, they were able to put the British/Swedish films on a different time slot [due to Kenneth Branagh's star status], because they could market it as an 'American movie' or something like that. They put it on prime time, whereas our Swedish ones are on late prime time. Around the world, of course, it's easier to sell the British one to English-speaking countries – they've been sold directly to Australia, Canada, the US, South Africa, and other English-speaking countries. But in other countries the Swedish one has been easier to sell. From the beginning, it was easier to sell them to southern Europe – in some ways, perhaps the British version has suffered as a result, because certain channels have already bought the Swedish one. For a broadcaster, it can be complicated to have a series with the same name: a bit strange! The British version has been sold to the US by BBC Worldwide; BBC Worldwide have made it a co-production. They have a special slot – Masterpiece – on all the public service broadcasting (PBS) channels in the States, so they were in it from the beginning, buying from the BBC . . . . The Swedish one is sold to a small broadcaster in Washington . . . . We are doing a deal with Music Box – the same distributor as for the *Millennium* series – so they will probably buy all the *Wallander* mysteries – including the Swedish ones, and then they will sell it to TV and release it on DVD. It's not until the *Millennium* series that there has been any interest from the States.

SP: One of the things I notice about the British/Swedish version of *Wallander* is that it was one of the first series screened in Britain in HD [high definition].

MW: When we made the first 13 *Wallander* films in 2003, 2004, 2005, they were produced using old-style cameras: 16 mm. Then when we were starting work on the later 13 Swedish films and these three [the first three British/Swedish films], it was in the middle of that shift from analogue to digital. We were quite lucky with some of the DPs [directors of photography] on the

first series – including Anthony Dod Mantle who has won an Oscar for *Slumdog Millionaire*.

SP: What current or future productions are you working on?

MW: We are filming Liza Marklund – another Swedish crime writer – six of her books.

EH: We recently finished a feature film in Norway, based on Jo Nesbo's book *Headhunters*. It's a stand-alone thriller that Jo Nesbo has written. We produced that together with a Norwegian production company. This is the first Scandinavian production for us not in the Swedish language. This is not part of the Harry Hole series . . .

EH: And then we shoot six-times-ninety films in Gothenburg based on the *Irene Huss* books by Helene Tursten, together with a Gothenburg production company. We have already produced six.

SP: There is quite a close relationship between Yellow Bird and certain authors.

MW: Yes, and we are encouraging them to have more influence than they may have been used to in the past, in most cases. We give them approval, we give them insight and access into all the rushes, if they want to. We listen to them and their views.

SP: Is there an interest in Sweden in British crime drama?

MW: Yes, for a long time. In the beginning, they were running on SVT, and then TV4 started to show some of them. Now they don't receive the same ratings as before, though. It used to be that they would receive enormous ratings, as there were not that many of them. Now they have started to show more, and to show them on niche channels: channel 9 is the niche channel for channel 5; TV4 has TV4 Plus, TV3 has TV6, so they are putting British crime drama on their smaller channels. There is still an interest, but before it used always to be an event: a *Morse* would receive 1.5 million Swedish viewers.

Interviewee: Johan Theorin (**JT**)

Interviewer: Steven Peacock (**SP**)

Online interview, 18 August 2011

SP: There is a huge recognition of, and current fascination with, Scandinavian crime fiction. The form has a rich history, but why,

in your opinion, is the genre particularly popular now, and on such a global scale?

JT: Well, I hope it partly is because we writers produce crime novels of high quality. But of course there are other explanations. One is that the interest is just part of a bigger wave of recognition and popularity of things Scandinavian in the world, such as Ikea, Volvo, H&M, the Swedish and Norwegian Royal families, the music of Abba, the Danish films of Susanne Bier and Lars von Trier, etc., which has been growing and growing in the last 20 years or so. There is a curiosity about these countries and their culture, and more and more foreign visitors come to Sweden each year, according to statistics I just heard. Having said that, I also think that the Scandinavian crime writers have done one thing well, and that is to write about their own countries and fellow countrymen, nothing else. I get the feeling that too many writers in countries like Spain, France and the UK dream about making it big in the United States, and therefore set their stories in America, or at least Americanise their own countries too much in their novels, turning them into weak imitations of US thrillers.

SP: How much is the genre particularly suited to exploring matters of Sweden's national identity? To what extent do they reflect a 'Swedish-ness' in terms of a national social and cultural disposition? Are there other themes and matters examined particularly closely in works of Scandinavian/Swedish crime fiction?

JT: I am too close to Sweden to answer questions about our identity, I think. A book called *Fishing in Utopia: Sweden and the Future that Disappeared* [London: Granta, 2009], written by an English journalist [Andrew Brown] who has spent many years in Sweden, was an eye opener because it made me look at Sweden from a new perspective while reading it last year. But the silence of the landscape and of the characters are culturally very Scandinavian in the crime fiction, I think. The terse rhythm of the language in our novels is another feature, perhaps inspired by the old Norse and Icelandic prose poems.

SP: What are your thoughts on the legacy of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's *Beck* books? And of Henning Mankell's *Wallander* mysteries?

JT: Sjöwall and Wahlöö were the two crime authors who (to paraphrase what someone wrote about Dashiel Hammett) took murder out of the parlour and put it in the alleys of Sweden where it belongs. They made Swedish crime and police work feel real.

Before them, Swedish crime fiction had been elegant, bourgeois and non-political, 'Agatha Christie-stories' if you like by writers such as Maria Lang and Stieg Trenter, but Sjöwall and Wahlöö brought a gritty realism and a leftist perspective to their crime stories. They were a huge influence on later Swedish crime writers such as Mankell, Åke Edwardson, Leif G.W. Person, Kjell Eriksson, Roslund and Hellström, to name a few. I like the Sjöwall and Wahlöö novels and the *Wallander* mysteries very much, but I wrote my Öland novels almost as counter-reaction to their novels. I did not want my stories to be realistic city-police procedurals.

SP: What do the books (in this genre) say about local matters: regional, or in relation to the links between Nordic countries?

JT: Again, I think I'm too close to this region of the world to say much about this. But of course, the Scandinavian countries are very highly organised. We expect the police to show up when a serious crime has been committed, and do their jobs without taking any bribes. We have relatively few guns here, or at least few handguns. That is why tragedies like the Palme assassination in 1986 or the Oslo terror attacks this summer [2011] are such national traumas. We think they can't happen here.

SP: How much translates to a global audience, i.e. tapping into global (rather than local) concerns?

JT: Well, we are all people in the world. We should basically all have the same concerns for ourselves and others. Fear and hate and grief and love and trust are universal things, and also the conflicts between cities and rural areas. I write about those things, and it is a pleasure to know that my books will be sent overseas and might end up with some reader in America or Japan or Brazil and perhaps connect with them.

SP: Many historians suggest that Sweden is a country in constant tension between its 'isolationist' past and its place in a transnational era (in relation to say, membership to the EU). Would you agree with this assertion?

JT: I'm not sure we ever have been very isolationist. Sweden has always been influenced by larger countries; France in the 1700s, Germany in the 1800s and now England and the US after the Second World War. But I think there has been both an arrogance (bad) and idealism (good) in us Swedes, because we have gone

abroad in the last 50 years and tried to help smaller and poorer countries to become more like Sweden.

SP: How much of an impact on Swedish culture and society would you say the shooting of Prime Minister Olof Palme had, and, in turn, on the development of the crime drama as a format?

JT: I think the Palme assassination was crucial for the writing of Swedish crime fiction, because it destroyed our innocence and we had to deal with this trauma somehow – one way was to write and read crime stories in much greater numbers and of a higher quality than we had done before. Just a few years after Olof Palme was shot, Henning Mankell came along with his socialistic policeman Kurt Wallander who quietly longs for the return of the welfare state. The *Wallander* novels quickly became best-sellers in Sweden – after previous crime novels in the early 1980s had not – and I don't think that is a coincidence.

SP: Does the model of the welfare state remain a mainstay of contemporary Swedish life (in terms of collectivism and solidarity), and/or how is it reflected in the works of crime fiction?

JT: The Swedish welfare state has dwindled the last 20 years or so, but I think it can be found as a certain optimism in our crime fiction, where there is an underlying assumption that if the police and the politicians and teachers and social workers just organise things well enough and take good care of everyone from the cradle to the grave there will be no more crime in Sweden.

SP: One of the aspects I admire most of your own work is the way they reveal a clear understanding and handling of generic conventions (of crime drama and horror/the supernatural), and how they combine elements (of for example the police procedural, the detective thriller, the ghost story).

JT: Well, I have read these different genres all my life, and I like them all. For me it was fun to try to write crime stories and weave in strands of folklore and the supernatural. But Selma Lagerlof did the same thing a hundred years ago – and [Arthur Conan Doyle's] *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is also a combination of genres – so it is nothing new.

SP: Are there particular writers (Swedish, Scandinavian, or further afield) that you class as being particularly influential to your own works?

JT: I have read a lot of the crime fiction of Ruth Rendell and Karin Fossum, who both explore human relationships in their novels, and I like their work and try to care as much about my characters as they do about theirs. I also like the novels of Peter Straub and Shirley Jackson, who do the same thing as Fossum and Rendell in the supernatural genre.

SP: To what extent do you think the qualities of crime fiction can be translated into visual form for film and television, and how many are 'medium-specific' (singular to the written form of the novel)?

JT: Film and television stories are like express trains where everybody must get aboard at point A and leave at point B and things must run very smoothly for the whole journey and be very clearly presented. Crime movies tend to be loud and aggressive, with very little room for character studies and subtle details. (Still, when they work they are great – I like crime films like *The Usual Suspects*, *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, *Sea of Love* and *One False Move* very much.)

SP: Are you involved in any plans regarding the adaptations of your novels for film or television? Would this be something you would be interested in?

JT: The film rights have been sold to the same company [Yellow Bird] that produced the three films based on the Stieg Larsson books.

SP: Your books reveal a particularly skilful handling of time (in terms of narrative structure) and memory, as well as an interest in the act of storytelling. If possible, please could you expand on these elements a little.

JT: I think we live our whole lives in the past, present and future simultaneously – and also in our dreams and nightmares – and I try to show that in my fiction. Also, I have discovered a lot of things about the past of my own family on Öland when I have written these novels, when people have told me memories of my dead relatives – not just good memories, because there was a lot of poverty on the island, and some of my relatives seem to have been rather mean – and that has affected the stories as well. But of course we seldom remember things correctly. And I would like to write more about distorted and untrustworthy memories, but this is very hard to do without completely confusing the reader.

SP: How much of your exploration of the professional groupings of the police and of journalism/the news media (such as the Ölands-Posten) are regionally and/or nationally minded, and how much are universal in their analysis of these two interconnecting professional institutions? Do you draw on your own previous experience as a journalist? Is there a particular freedom of the press in Sweden and/or Scandinavia?

JT: I worked as a journalist for 20 years, but have so far never used a journalist as a main character – perhaps because it has been so popular for other crime writers to do so. The freedom of the press is solid here in Scandinavia. But there are other concerns – I think a journalist always has to grapple with reality, because he or she can only catch small bits of it in their articles. That always bothered me as a journalist – all the small things that have to be left out – and I am much happier making things up as a novelist.

SP: Would you consider your novels to be politically minded? In what ways? The events of the Second World War are particularly resonant in *Echoes from the Dead* – how much of this reflects or comments on Sweden's own past?

JT: No, I don't think they are political. At least not party political. I am interested in politics as a person and think it is important that we all vote and protect our democracy, but as an author I don't have any particular political message in my novels, and I don't put the blame on any system, capitalistic or socialistic, for the criminal activities of individual persons. I had enough of political messages and propaganda in the Swedish children books of the 1970s, which were read to me when I was little.

SP: Certain themes and motifs are patterned across your novels in particularly striking ways: the family, childhood and generations; specifics of the landscape (such as rock formations, fog and the water) and island life; the outsider (against an insider community); transformation (of nation and of the individual). What draws you to explore these particular areas?

JT: This is the landscape of Öland where my mother and her family comes from, and I have been to this island in the Baltic sea ever since I was a baby, but always as a visitor. As an adult, I can sense myself as a child there and see the landscape with both new and old eyes. I try to use this in my novels.

SP: You set the quartet on Öland, and state (on your website), that 'The goal was to write a novel for each of Öland's seasons – an Öland quartet where the weather and the atmosphere of the landscape affect the characters of the story.' Please could you expand on this structural decision, and how it affected the poetics and themes of the novels.

JT: I just got the idea for two novels which I realised had to take place in the autumn (*Echoes from the Dead*) and in the winter (*The Darkest Room*) and thought; Well, why not make it a quartet then? The island of Öland changes so much between the season when it comes to the weather and the population (few people in the winter, many tourists in the summer) that I thought a seasonal approach would make the four novels very different from each other. A year on Öland in four installations. I enjoy writing about landscapes, and how they are perceived by people. But when I started this four-seasons project, I found out that the British writer Ann Cleeves (who is a keen Scandinavian crime-fiction reader, by the way) was doing the same thing on the Shetland Islands. Great minds think alike!

SP: Revelations of truth (in terms of plot) are essential to most crime novels – how do you decide what and when to make the reader aware of particular pieces of information, and when to withhold?

JT: Revelations of hidden and painful truths are a powerful thing in a novel, and a thing that makes me enjoy both reading and writing crime stories. The revelations in *The Murder of Roger Aykroyd* or in *A Kiss before Dying* for example – they shook me deeply when I read them in my teens. I think it is great fun when a surprising twist can be pulled off, but it can also become very contrived and the twist shouldn't be the main goal of a crime story. I don't write whodunits.

SP: In connection to the above question, narrative agency and access to characters' thoughts (especially of the killer and the detective or investigating protagonist) is equally key in the mapping of a crime fiction. Please could you talk a little about your decisions in this area, too.

JT: In a whodunit, you can of course never present the killer and his thoughts to the reader. At the same time you have to make

the reader understand sooner or later what the motive of the murderer is, usually by having the detective give a lecture at the end. It is hard to vary this model. As I said, I don't really write whodunits – but the art of exposition is always a challenge in crime novels. Not too much, not too little.

SP: How do you decide on the 'modus operandi' of the killer, and how much is the (particular) act of murder integrated to the thematic concerns of the novel?

JT: I am actually not interested in the murders at all. *Se7en* was a good film 15 years ago, but these days I am sick of all novels and films about serial killers who try to devise new ways of killing and torturing their victims – almost as if the authors were in a gore competition. I'm just interested in the mystery and the consequences of a murder, not the technical details. Most real murderers don't have a modus operandi anyway – they just kill a person with the nearest available weapon and will have to live with that sudden move the rest of their lives.

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Filmography/Teleography

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The American (2005) dir. Anton Corbin, UK/USA.
A Time to Kill (1996) dir. Joel Schumacher, USA.
Absolutely Fabulous (1992–ongoing) dir. various, UK.
All the President's Men (1976) dir. Alan J. Pakula, USA.
Anatomy of a Murder (1959) dir. Otto Preminger, USA.
Borgen (2010) dir. various, Denmark.
The Bourne Ultimatum (2007) dir. Paul Greengrass, UK/USA.
The Brave One (2007) dir. Neil Jordan, Ireland.
The Bridge (2011) dir. various, Denmark.
Bullitt (1968) dir. Peter Yates, USA.
The Client (1994) dir. Joel Schumacher, USA.
Colombiana (2011) dir. Olivier Megaton, USA.
Coogan's Bluff (1968) dir. Don Siegel, USA.
The Da Vinci Code (2006) dir. Ron Howard, USA.
Death Wish (1974) dir. Michael Winner, UK.
De gesloten kamer (1993) dir. Jacob Bijl, Belgium.
Der Kommissar und das Meer (2006–2010) dir. various, Germany.
Die Hard (1988) dir. John McTiernan, USA.
Die Hard 4.0 (2007) dir. Len Wiseman, USA.
Dirty Harry (1971) dir. Don Siegel, USA.
Doss House (1933) dir. John Baxter, UK.
Dr. No (1962) dir. Terence Young, UK.
Each Dawn I Die (1939) dir. William Keighley, USA.
Enemy of the State (1998) dir. Tony Scott, USA.
Forbrydelsen (2007) dir. various, Denmark.
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The French Connection (1971) dir. William Friedkin, USA.
The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest (2010) dir. Daniel Alfredson, Sweden.
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The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (2009) dir. Niels Arden Oplev, Sweden.
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (2011) dir. David Fincher, USA.
Goldeneye (1995) dir. Martin Campbell, UK.
Good Night, and Good Luck (2005) dir. George Clooney, USA.
Hackers (1995) dir. Iain Softley, UK/USA.
Harry Brown (2009) dir. Daniel Barber, UK.
Hotel Rwanda (2004) dir. Terry George, USA.
House (2004–ongoing) dir. various, USA.
In the Loop (2009) dir. Armando Iannucci, UK/USA.
The Insider (1999) dir. Michael Mann, USA.

Judith Therpauve (1978) dir. Patrice Chereau, France.
Jurassic Park (1993) dir. Steven Spielberg, USA.
Justice (2011) dir. Roger Donaldson, USA.
The Killing (2011) dir. various, USA.
The Laughing Policeman/An Investigation of Murder (1973) dir. Stuart Rosenberg, USA.
Law Abiding Citizen (2009) dir. F. Gary Gray, USA.
Lethal Weapon (1987) dir. Richard Donner, USA.
Licence to Kill (1989) dir. John Glen, UK.
Making a Living (1914) dir. Henry Lehrman, USA.
The Matrix (1999) dir. Andy and Lana Wachowski, USA.
Mission Impossible III (2006) dir. J.J. Abrams, USA.
Mr and Mrs Smith (2005) dir. Doug Liman, USA.
The Net (1995) dir. Irwin Winkler, USA.
The Paper (1994) dir. Ron Howard, USA.
Public Enemy (1931) dir. William Wellman, USA.
Roseanna (1967) dir. Hans Abramson, Sweden.
Route Irish (2011) dir. Ken Loach, UK.
Scarface (1932) dir. Howard Hawks, USA.
Se7en (1995) dir. David Fincher, USA.
Sex and the City (2008) dir. Michael Patrick King, USA.
The Silence of the Lambs (1991) dir. Jonathan Demme, USA.
Sneakers (1992) dir. Phil Alden Robinson, USA.
Swordfish (2001) dir. Dominic Sena, USA.
Taxi Driver (1976) dir. Martin Scorsese, USA.
The Thick of It (2005–ongoing) dir. Various, UK.
Untraceable (2008) dir. Gregory Hoblit, USA.
Wallander (1994–2004) dir. various, Sweden.
Wallander (2005–2010) dir. various, Sweden.
Wallander (2008–ongoing) dir. various, UK/Sweden.
War Games (1983) dir. John Badham, USA.
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