

CHAPTER VII

THE ENDING OF THE NOVEL

What the detective story is about is not murder but the restoration of order.

—P.D James

You want every last piece of the jigsaw puzzle in place. Because people are like that. Reality is different.

—Karin Fossum

When the politics of crime fiction is questioned, critics have remarked on the conservative leanings of crime fiction. A typical story in crime fiction begins with a crisis which destabilizes the peace of a community. This crisis is eventually averted due to the presence of the detective and the law keepers in case of the police procedurals. Though the protagonist may face many challenges along the way, order is reinstated towards the end. The narrative may be about the most horrible crimes but the readers have solace that stability will be restored eventually. It is significant that Fredric Jameson in *Raymond Chandler: The Detections of Totality* writes that—“the moment of violence, apparently central, is nothing but a diversion: the real function of murder [...] is for order to be felt more strongly” (7). This emphasis on order reveals the innate need readers have for a happy ending even from a novel which deals with chaos.

This idea is also reflected in “The Guilty Vicarage”, where W. H .Auden compares his love for this genre to an addiction—once he started reading a detective novel he states that he is unable to put it down. The reason why he keeps reading it is to reach the end which provides all answers to the questions raised throughout the course of the novel. He also states that if he finds

out that he is rereading a particular detective novel he is unable to continue. P.D James in *Talking about Detective Fiction* echoes a similar thought—"we are presented with a mystery at the heart of the novel and we know that by the end it will be solved. Very few readers can put down a detective story until it is solved" (140). Since crime fiction typically is a page turner it loses its appeal once the readers are aware of the ending where the criminal is unmasked.

So when the crime novel is a vehicle of socio-political critique and when the focus is on the dark underbelly of crimes in a utopian state, is there a possibility for a happy ending? The answer can be found in the study of Scandinavian crime fiction. The resolution which is part of the appeal of crime fiction is destabilized by the Scandinavian crime novelists. The influence of the Noir tradition can be felt strongly in the way the Scandinavian crime novel ends. Lee Horsley in her introduction to Noir thriller writes that it—"is one of the most durable popular expression[s] of the kind of modernist pessimism epitomized in *The Waste Land*" (1). Noir thriller captured the fragmented narratives of the world where disorder was rampant. While the alienation of the individual is reflected in the figure of the central protagonist, a direct influence of this tradition can be felt on the ending of the Scandinavian crime novel. The pessimism which is the hallmark of the Noir tradition is found in Scandinavian crime fiction where the promised order at the end of a crime novel is deferred. This chapter scrutinizes the ending of the novels written by five Scandinavian crime novelist discussed in the previous chapters to explore how Scandinavian crime fiction subverts the characteristic optimism of a crime novel to reflect the harsher realities of life as well as emphasize the failures of the state.

As mentioned earlier, Crime fiction feeds curiosity that is one of the basic human traits. Everyone enjoys a good mystery and feel a sense of satisfaction at a clear resolution. A good crime novel works like a jigsaw puzzle where the players are given all the pieces but they have

to piece it together to build a coherent picture. Many times the author will provide clues which might lead the readers to a different path but the readers continue with a belief that in the end it will all come together and make sense. This guarantee of a satisfying end is even more important in a world where the moral order is always in a state of constant flux. This is a thought espoused by Bercht in his article titled 'On the Popularity of the Crime Novel' where he compares the crime novel to a crossword puzzle praising the structural rigor of a genre whose riddle is resolved through the meticulous process of gathering data and eliminating hypotheses that are revealed as false. This scientific investigative method demanded close attention which Brecht praised as superior to the emotional intensity of dramatic catharsis. In contrast to the dramatic form, the genre of crime fiction requires a higher attention to details and perception on the part of the reader remaining vigilant for possible clues no matter how trivial it may seem. Hence, truth-seeking takes center stage in the crime novel since it comes with the assurance of the final revelation of truth. It's a reassurance of a belief that human beings can conquer all evil through sheer perseverance. The morally corrupt is purged from the society and good is restored.

The appeal of crime fiction thus lies in the satisfaction of the mystery being solved. Readers often try to read into the various clues and solve a crime along with the detective. The revelation of the criminal becomes a moment of triumph for the detective as well as the reader who is in pursuit of the killer. The process of the solving of the crime takes added importance in the light of the fact that the crime is solved due to human intelligence as opposed to luck and divinity. Crime fiction in this reading can also be looked upon as escapist reading. While real life is full of chaos and disorder, a reader of crime fiction can always rely on neat endings provided by the mystery writer. This is reassuring at the face of burdens that come along with

life reaffirming the belief that human beings can surmount all trials and tribulations. It also reassures the readers of the presence of a moral universe where relying on human rationality can restore order out of any form of chaos.

One feature stands out in this reading of the genre—the crime novel is supposed to give a resolution; Auden concludes his seminal essay “The Guilty Vicarage” suggesting that a crime when resolved allows us: “the fantasy of being restored to the Garden of Eden, to a state of innocence”. P.D. James uses a more pointed terminology for Auden's return to innocence. she has compared the mystery with a modern morality play which restores order out of a disorder providing a sense of catharsis to the readers (Careless 1). Both Auden and James express the commonly held British view of the place of crime and its resolution in society. The society represents a natural state of order; crime is a momentary anomaly, a corruption. Once the detective solves the crime and the criminal is brought to justice, the natural order of society is restored and with it, that sense of innocence is regained. This corollary is the foundation of the traditional school of detective fiction founded by Edgar Allan Poe and advanced by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The one sub-genre which rejects this is Scandinavian crime fiction which does not provide clear cut answers. As mentioned earlier, Scandinavian crime fiction follows a tradition of featuring morally complex characters. Therefore, it is not a fairy tale story of a wrong righted. None of the characters can be classified as “good” or “bad,” but they are all real. As a result of the novels’ moral ambiguity, the story never reaches a clear resolution. The trend of uncertainty and malaise that has entered this genre is also reflected in the way the novel concludes. There’s an element of darkness and a sense of melancholy, just as there are observations of society and political comments. No longer is there a space for the little grey cells of Poirot. Instead in a

murky world, the crimes are solved by accident in a world where logic and reason no longer provide clear answers. This has led to an entrance of the element of ambivalence into this genre as there is no clear sense of resolution—no neat endings. Sometimes no justification of the crime is provided as the novels become more realistic in nature presenting a complex relationship between fact and fiction.

This is reflected in the fact that the best of crime fiction is born out of difficult times—"it is particularly popular in times of unrest, anxiety, and uncertainty, when society can be faced with problems which no money, political theories or good intentions seem to be able to solve or alleviate"(James 2009: 141). This is perhaps why the Scandinavian version become popular as the social welfare system was failing in these nations. Initially, written to serve the purpose of social criticism the Scandinavian crime novel is taking a darker turn and this is highlighted in the ending of the novel. A look into the growth of each crime series shows a distinct change in the presentation of clarification in the end. While the initial Martin Beck series provides clear resolution the novels which are flooding the markets in the past few decades are not so clear cut anymore. The final resolution at the end of the novel which provides a neat tying up of all loose ends is often missing in the contemporary Scandinavian crime fiction reflecting the changing times in a world where neat endings are no longer possible.

This is particularly seen in the evolution of the lead character in the Wallander series. Inspector Wallander is introduced to the readers in *Faceless Killers*, divorced and in his early forties plagued with various ailments like diabetes. Yet there is no denying that the Inspector is a brilliant detective as he manages to solve some of the most difficult cases. His keen sense of observation is one of his assets when it comes to detection. As the series progresses we learn much about Wallander-his loneliness and existential concerns but his success at crime solving

remains the one constant throughout the narrative as the readers are assured that justice will be served.

Therefore, when the tenth and final book of the series *The Troubled Man* was unveiled it led to an unprecedented feeling of uneasiness. In *The Troubled Man*, Wallander investigates the disappearance of a retired naval officer which may have ties to the cold war. Since this is the last book of the series we are presented with a character who is sixty years old—"a diabetic, slightly overweight. He didn't pay as much attention to his health as he should, didn't exercise enough, drank too much, ate what he shouldn't, and at irregular times" (*The Troubled Man* 256). Wallander is no longer the same man we met in *The Faceless Killers*, he is on serious medication eating seven pills at a time to control his various ailments and is suffering from an illness which is diagnosed only at the end of the narrative.

At the beginning of the narrative, Wallander has an episode of memory loss which leads him to take a vacation. It is when he is on a holiday that he is called to investigate a disappearance of a person by his daughter Linda. Wallander is no longer the same detective as introduced in *Faceless Killers*. Instead, the readers get the impression of an old man who grapples with a number of unanswered questions. Though the title of the story is a reference to the disappeared man it can equally be applied to the lead protagonist too. Throughout the novel, we feel a sense of things coming to an end especially when Baiba is killed in an accident though Wallander has a sinking feeling that it could be a suicide. Wallander feels the need to slow down as he writes—"for the first time, I have to acknowledge the limitations imposed by my age and my depleted strength [...] I've never done that before. I'm not forty years old anymore and I have to reconcile myself to the fact that time past will never return" (*The Troubled Man* 228).

Like most of Mankell's books, the actual crime does not really take center stage as the readers are more caught up with the character of Wallander. Eventually when the crime is solved after Wallander has been misled through a series of convoluted twists and turns there is no sense of resolution—"he had never found explanations for some of the loose ends" (*The Troubled Man* 497). The idea of justice being served which is so crucial to the crime novel is also missing here. Readers are denied a neat ending and instead end up with a number of unanswered questions. The truth that Wallander uncovers is never really put out in the open and there is a lingering doubt that even when the truth will be out, it will be met with disbelief. The dead like Baiba takes some secrets along with them in this book.

The most disturbing parts of *The Troubled Man* deal with Wallander's occasional loss of memory—"what worried him most was his forgetfulness. He would write a list when he drove to Simrishamn or Ystad to do some shopping, but when he entered the shops he would realize he had forgotten it. Had he in fact ever written one? He couldn't remember" (57). These blackouts become more frequent and occur for longer durations as the narrative progresses. Knowing that Wallander's father suffered from Alzheimer's disease, there is a nagging suspicion that Wallander may suffer from the same disease. The novel ends with a terrifying account of Wallander unable to recognize his own granddaughter Klara running over to him—

"It was as if everything had fallen silent. As if all colors had faded away, and all he was left with was black and white.

The shadow grew more intense. And Kurt Wallander slowly descended into darkness that some years later transported him into the empty universe known as Alzheimer's disease.

After that, there is nothing more. The story of Kurt Wallander is finished, once and for all. The years—ten perhaps more—he has left to live are his own. His and Lind's, his and Klara's; nobody else's" (*The Troubled Man* 501).

Mankell's depiction of a beloved character in his final book leaves the readers with a deep sense of gloom. The slow deterioration of Wallander's body becomes a symbol of the political and moral decay of the state with no sense of hope. Plagued by many ailments, it is the disease of the mind that breaks him. Moreover, his descent into dementia ensures that Wallander will never be the sharp and astute detective anymore. With his memory gone his keen sense of observation which helped him bring closure to many cases becomes useless. This is significant because it emphasizes the fact that there will be no clear answers anymore. In *The Troubled Man*, the clarity of answers and neat endings which is a guarantee of the crime novel is robbed from the readers leaving behind an 'empty universe'.

Like *The Troubled Man*, *Strange Shores* the final book of the Reykjavik mysteries is a haunting story where Detective Erlendur tries to come to terms with his past. This book is a reflection on how a single traumatic event can shape and affect your entire life. As mentioned earlier Erlendur is caught in a snowstorm along with his younger brother Bergur which shapes his life. While he is found after a harrowing search in the snow-capped hillside, his younger brother is never found. This leads to a lifelong obsession of missing persons on the part of the character of Erlendur. Hence, it is significant that Erlendur's final case is that of a missing person who disappeared on the same mountain where he lost his brother. *Strange Shores* follows the footsteps of the lead protagonist who camps in his dilapidated home and visits the hillside and the moors where he lost his brother. His pilgrimage-like journey into the cold Icelandic fjords

sheds light into several key aspects of Erlendur. His brooding personality which overshadows all his relationships can be sourced to the single traumatic event he experienced as a child.

Past and present merges in this narrative as Erlunder is determined to unravel the mystery of Matthildur, a young woman who gets lost in the cold icy moors during the Second World War. A chance remark by one of the old fox hunters piques the curiosity of the detective and he begins by questioning the locals who lived during the time of her disappearance. A picture slowly begins to emerge of a strong possibility of Matthildur's disappearance being a cold-blooded murder. Every day after exhaustive questionings and hunt for clues Erlendur returns to his abandoned former home where he recalls his past vividly. His guilt at having lost his brother and the ensuing torment allows him to empathize with the people who loved Matthildur. He knows firsthand what a death of a beloved person can do to you especially in case of Bergur and Matthildur whose dead bodies are never found. Robbed of any sense of closure Erlendur has devoted his life to finding some sense of closure for people around him through his cases—

"He longed to know more[...]someone had told him it did not matter anymore, that the passing years and time's destructive power had erased all need for any investigation[...]but Erlendur knew better. When a loved one went missing time changed nothing. Admittedly, it dulled the pain, but by the same token, the loss became a lifelong companion for those who survived, making the grief keener and deeper in a way he couldn't explain" (280).

Parallel to Erlendur's search for clues regarding Matthildur's past is an unraveling of his own past. Erlender traces the effect of Matthildur's death on the people who loved her, caught in a single moment Ezra is unable to move forward with his mind full of unanswered questions.

Unable to forge any other relationships, Erza ends up living a lonely life. Detective Erlendur with his keen sense and persistence is able to find out the truth about the death of Matthildur who was murdered by her husband and the discovery of the location of her dead body is revealed as a solace for Erza. However, on finding the remains of Matthildur Erlendur's reaction is revealing as he experienced—"no sense of triumph, no satisfaction with what he had achieved. Instead, he was filled with sadness" (285).

On one of his investigative visits, he finds a toy car which was found in a fox cave. Erlender believes that this toy car is the one which his brother was carrying in his glove when he got lost in the blizzard. He eventually discovers bones which belong to a human child. Though fully aware that he can visit the forensic lab for answers he follows his own conviction that these are the bones of Bergur and decides to bury them in his mother's grave, however—"the discovery of his bones brought Erlendur no fresh insights[...] what remained was a feeling of emptiness more desolate than anything he had ever experienced" (275-276). After all these years there is a sense of old memories being put to rest but the closure that Erlunder has longed for eludes him.

The readers are faced with a truth that there never is truly a closure when it comes to such traumatic events. Though Erlendur delves into his suppressed memories to evoke the moments leading to the disappearance and accepts his guilt, there is no escaping the trauma. Throughout the narrative the readers are witness to the effects of this disappearance—his family is torn apart never to recover and function as a unit again. His father's silence and depression become haunting as is his mother's forced cheerfulness and positivity. Throughout the narrative, there is a dreamlike description of Erlendur freezing and feeling the effects of hypothermia. In his dream-like state he can hear his brother and the novel ends on an ambiguous note of Erlunder

and Bergur holding hands and walking together—" he raises his eyes to the crags[...] mild now and benign in their summer guise. Then he takes Bergur's hand in his and together they walk along the river into the bring morning" (295-296). This is a baffling way for the series to come to an end but perhaps a fitting end to Erlendur's story.

Karin Fossum, on the other hand, uses a different technique to challenge the resolution that is the highlight of the crime novel. Fossum's unique style lays focus on the character's rather than the plot. They are thrillers that expose human flaws which leads people to embrace evil. As she delves in human psychology the readers are provided with information on motivation and human behavior. But it is her endings which makes her work so memorable. She challenges the very notion of how a crime novel should end. Her narratives do not follow a clear structure of a beginning, middle and an end. Instead, the readers are presented with multiple threads in the narratives which may or may not come together in the end. Each of the work leaves the readers with multiple unanswered questions but as the crime series progresses these questions take a darker turn.

Don't Look Back was the first book of the series to be translated into English and thus reached a wider audience. The novel begins with apparent child abduction but shifts to the central crime which is the murder of a teenage girl. The dead body of the young girl is found in the woods near the lake and this propels the hunt for the murderer. The novel is a study of the impact a crime has not just on the family but the entire community. The lies hiding beneath the perfect façade of a peaceful community is revealed as families grapple with shock, loss, and grief. Towards the end, Inspector Sejer is able to solve the case and find the murderer but this does not really give a sense of resolution. The aftershock of the crime is felt by everyone leaving the people uneasy along with the reader. But it's the final scene that leaves the readers with an eerie

moment of *déjàvu* —"everyone was in their backyards, preoccupied with planting and weeding, tying up their roses and the clematis.[...] he put the van in gear. The little girl was sitting excitedly on the seat beside him. He whistled happily and looked around. Nobody had noticed them" (*Don't Look Back* 434). The narrative comes to a full circle to reach at the starting point again suggesting that disorder and chaos can never be purged from society.

Fossum shocks her readers from any sense of complacency they may feel leaving behind a sense of disquiet. As the Inspector Sejer series progresses it enters darker recesses of the human mind. Fossum presents characters who stumble into the world of crime and her stories often have multiple plots. One such deeply disturbing book is *The Caller* where children are the victims as well as the perpetrator of pranks with a sinister twist. Karsten and Lily Sundelin's perfect life collapses when they find their child covered in blood. This is just the beginning of a series of pranks by Johnny Beskow, a seventeen-year-old boy who lives with his alcoholic mother. Initially motivated by a desire to shake his victims out their security, things escalate out of control where the lines between the victim and the victimizer quickly get blurred—"no one should take life for granted, he thought.[...]everyone dies. I'll show them, damn it" (*The Caller* 41-42). Fossum makes it clear in her portrayal of the young boy that he is too immature to understand the consequences of his actions. Only Inspector Sejer realizes how dangerous things could turn into if the pranks continued. This is reinforced in a postcard he receives which says—"hell begins now".(27)

As predicted by the lead detective the pranks soon go out of hand leaving behind a wake of destruction. A young boy is brutally torn to pieces by a pack of dogs and the poisoned food meant for Johnny's alcoholic mother causes the death of Henry, his grandfather who is the only character who showed concern for Johnny. Johnny is eventually caught and taken in for

questioning. His interrogation is conducted by Sejer who concludes that—“the justice system would let him off easy, because he was young and had no prior convictions, and because his upbringing had been of the unfortunate variety” (286). This does bring resolution to the sinister pranks but Fossum continues the narrative. Johnny ends up drowning possibly killed by his previous victims. As Sejer looks at his dead body he remarks—“he’s taking some secrets to the grave[...] where they won’t be disturbed’ It’s very possible someone helped over the edge[...] I can think of a few people with a good motive. But you know what? We’ll never be able to prove it” (295). This murder is not solved as the ending of *The Caller* leaves a number of unanswered questions and there is a suggestion that the killers of Johnny will never be brought to justice. The death of Theo too never reaches a satisfactory end because the identity of the person who let the pack of dogs out is only hinted at but never confirmed.

Likewise, *The Water’s Edge* has a subplot of a couple who find a dead body of a little child on their walk. Fossum parallels the investigation of the murder with an insight into the relationship between Reinhardt and Kristine. As the narrative unfolds the readers learn that a pedophile is on the loose and the hunt begins before another child is hurt. The subplot also unfolds to shed light into the character of the husband and the wife and the nature of their relationship. The story of the domineering husband and the submissive wife make for a sad read until the moment when Kristine decides to walk out of the marriage for good. But this is the only positive thing about the ending of this novel. Fossum in *The Water’s Edge* has written one of the most disturbing endings of a crime novel. After the case is solved by Inspector Sejer and his team, things come to an end. The final page of the novel shifts the focus to Reinhardt who learns that Kristine has left him. Filled with violent rage he aimlessly walks in the rain and reaches a park—

“He felt a violent need to vent his rage[...]the rain trickled down the back of his neck and his shoes were letting in water, but he stayed where he was. Things would turn out the way he wanted them to, sooner or later. A little girl would emerge from the trees, she would be wearing a red raincoat, and he would get up from the bench and flash her a dazzling smile” (226-227).

After reading an entire book which describes the psychology of the pedophile and how he loses control which results in the death of a little child, this description in the last few lines of the novel have a chilling effect on the reader as we are left haunted by the image of another pedophile on the loose.

Like Fossum, Matti Joensuu who writes psychological thrillers often leaves his readers with a deep sense of unease at the end of his narrative. As his story progresses there is a build up of emotions and tensions which are not necessarily resolved in the end. *The Priest of Evil* presents a serial killer on the loose who brainwashes troubled children to follow him to their death. A religious fanatic, the priest believes that he has to sacrifice people to please the earth spirit. In his own twisted way, he believes he is getting rid of greed and other human vices. The subplot of the narrative is about a once successful writer who is struggling to write his next book. His son who lives with his abusive mother is chosen by the priest to carry out a suicide bombing. The novel also delves into the lead detective's personal life especially his relationship with his wife which is presented as a safe haven for Detective Harjunpaa. As the story progresses Joensuu converges all these multiple threads to present an unexpected end.

The plan of suicide bombing fails because the trigger alarm clock starts ringing at the wrong time. The priest then hypnotizes Leena to go into the underground tracks and hold a live electric

cable resulting in her death. The police force fails miserably when the priest escapes from the station due to the negligence of the officer on duty and a blast occurs later due to a technical error that the priest had made while building the bomb. It is assumed that the priest of evil has died in the blast though it is not proved in the narrative. The novel ends with Detective Harjunpaa coming home to find his wife Elisa on the floor—" he took a step towards the hallway but was struck by a stinging fear[...] that if he left Elisa now he would lose her for good, and at this he fell to his knees, laid his head beside his wife's head and sobbed. And he felt so profoundly small, and so alone-never before had he felt so small and so terrible alone" (204). This last scene has a profound effect on the readers leaving them feeling sorrowful at the condition of the central protagonist. It is an unlikely end for a crime novel. The fate of the priest is only hinted at obliquely and his mind-controlling abilities are never explained even though it leads to the death of Leena. The novel ends on a note of loneliness and pessimism which leaves the readers deeply disturbed.

To Steal her Love ends on an equally baffling note. A crime novel where no murder really takes place, the author narrates the story of Tweety named because he has a small body and a big head. Written mostly from the perspective of Tweety the story navigates the strange world of the character who sees colours of the internal mechanisms of locks that he picks. He has his own names for different things in his life like each of his feet. Working with a shoemaker during day time, Tweety spends his night stalking different women for whom he has special names. He picks the lock of their apartments and enters their home to mostly watch them sleeping. He is part of a group who is planning a bank heist. Tweety's method of winning over the girl he loves goes haywire as does the bank heist. Towards the end both the crimes are never truly solved and Tweety escapes—"the eagle owl stuck the tubes under his arm, listened for a

moment, and when the coast was clear he fluttered into the air, flew towards the gap in the hedge, skimming the tall grass as he went, and made his way through to the path. Then he disappeared somewhere to the left” (306).

Like the crime series of Fossum and Joensuu, Department Q is an ongoing series by Jussi Alder Olsen featuring the cold case unit led by Carl Morck. Since Olsen writes the more straight forward variety of crime fiction most of his novels end with the main case being solved. Yet following the tradition of Scandinavian crime fiction, all things are not clarified in the end but instead are left for the readers to deduce. *The Purity of Vengeance* which deals with the forced sterilization of women has a subplot of the death of Carl's uncle. As a teenager, Carl had accompanied his uncle and his cousin Ronny on a trip when the death of the uncle occurs. As an adult Ronny claims to have killed his father and claims he did it with the help of Carl. Though an important part of Carl's teenage years this incident is not pursued by the author and the readers are only given vague clues. Likewise, *The Conspiracy of Faith* ends with the reuniting of Mia with her son Benjamin but this moment is tinged with uneasiness. Benjamin does not recognize Mia and there is a looming grey cloud over this happy moment suggesting that their lives will never be the same again. Though Olsen tries to end each of his novels on a positive note with justice being served and successful rescue missions he is unable to bring clarity in the lives of his three important characters. Carl's involvement in the death and paralysis of his colleague is still kept vague while Assad' background gets murkier as the series progresses. Though Rose's personal life is revealed in *The Scarred Woman* the author makes it clear that Rose will always have to battle her psychological demons. There is a sense of the past catching up on these characters which have never been fully revealed to the readers.

The one mystery that haunts the lead detective throughout the series is the case which leaves one of Carl's partner dead and the other paralyzed. Department Q which has been solving the most unlikely cases which have remained unsolved for more than twenty years does not bother to look into this case which has changed the life of Morck forever. This reluctance on the part of Carl to look into this case is a bone of contention between him and Hardy. But on a deeper note, there is a sense that Carl is afraid of what he has to face with this resolution. On questioned by Hardy, Carl replies—"...you're physically paralyzed, and I'm mentally paralyzed. I just *can't* cope with that case" (*The Hanging Girl* 383). Carl suffers from post-traumatic stress due to this event and his reluctance to go anywhere near this case reflects a possibility that this case will be never be resolved. Department Q has the highest success rate in solving crimes but this case remains a shadowy presence throughout the series. Hence, a clear sense of resolution is deferred time and again as the series progresses.

It can be concluded that the ending of the story plays an important role in the crime series as discussed above. The final unveiling of the truth is central to the narrative but many times there no single absolute truth. This moment of resolution is also no longer accompanied by a triumphant detective like Sherlock Holmes who unveils the truth with a great flourish much to the amazement of the readers. Instead, there is a sense of poignancy and loss which subverts the idea of a restoration of order which was a part of the traditional crime novel. In all the novels discussed here, the moment of victory for the detective and his team goes hand in hand with a sense of loss and regret that has become a part of the crime novel of the Scandinavian variety as reflected in Carl's final thoughts in *Disgrace*—"for a long time he sat in his car, staring out across Roskilde Fjord. Lights from the city showed out over the dark water. Under other circumstances, it would infuse him with calm, but just now there was none to be found" (500).

This thought is echoed by all the lead protagonist of the five crime series who realizes that in reality there can be no neat endings.

Therefore, these crime stories are no longer an escapist reading nor do they offer a restoration of order in society rather they are stories which haunt the readers long after they have reached the end. By showing that crime is not momentary but rather an everyday presence which can never be fully eradicated these crime novelists have illustrated that a utopian dream cannot be sustained. They do so by robbing from the readers the comfort of a clear resolution and leaving them with a number of unanswered questions and multiple versions of the truth. The fact that there is no clear resolution and no ultimate truth becomes an apt reflection of the condition of the contemporary world and becomes a clear indication of the state of affairs even in nations which has long been considered the 'happiest of nations'.