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THE SPECTRES OF GOTHIC LITERATURE IN JO NESBØ'S *THE REDBREAST*

Gothic literature is characterized by its focus on mysterious and often supernatural elements, as well as an exploration of psychological and emotional extremes. And although Gothic fiction appears to be dissimilar from crime fiction, there are similarities between those two subgenres of fiction. In this attempt of discovering elements of Gothic literature in crime fiction, the Norwegian Jo Nesbø's literary oeuvre emerges as an outstanding field of investigation of possible juxtapositions. The objective of the article is the analysis of Jo Nesbø's *The Redbreast* focusing upon the detective Harry Hole's struggle with both criminals in Norway and his inner demons and the presentation of Gothic elements in the novel. The analytical approach will focus upon such concepts as dark and mysterious settings; complex characters, evil criminals; themes of madness, crime, and malevolence; a psychological exploration of the wicked, and the elements of the supernatural.

Keywords: Gothic, crime, evil, madness, the supernatural, the setting.

1 Introduction

Catherine Spooner in her article "Crime and the Gothic" asserts that "Gothic narratives are driven by crime, whether the misdeeds of earlier generations, the sins of the secret self or the aesthetic murders of monstrous hero-villains. Crime can be presented as 'Gothic' through the themes of the returning past, the psychologically unstable protagonist, the celebration of excess, and the emphasis on surfaces" (2010, 257). While pondering upon this assertion, I started to ask questions whether the reverse situation can be possible, can crime narratives be driven by Gothic narratives and elements that constitute this subgenre of fiction; can crime fiction be embedded with Gothic conventions, motifs, and tropes? I asked those questions and resolved to undertake research if conventions pertaining to Gothic literature could be unearthed in crime novels by one Jo Nesbø, "Norway's most popular crime author today" (2016, 243) called "today's king of Nordic crime writing" (330), as claimed by Mitzi M. Brunsdale. Accordingly, I conducted my research analysing the content of the first novel belonging to the Oslo Trilogy, *The Redbreast*, and, expectantly, my research revealed a plethora of Gothic elements in this novel, confirming thus an assertion that there is a powerful intertextual "mobility of genre", which, as the editors of *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, Jesper Gulddal and Stewart King remark, highlights "the experimental and transgressive aspects of crime fiction and in particular locates the dynamism of the genre in a constant tension between the affirmation and negation of genre norms" (2020, 17). Additionally, my conviction that there is a potent intertextual symbiosis between the Gothic and crime fiction was enhanced by another statement voiced by Spooner in her book *Contemporary Gothic* where, while referring to the contemporary Revival of Gothic, she asks the significant question: "In what other ways can the contemporary Gothic revival be said to relate to those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?" (2006, 26) to which she offers the

following answer: “Inevitably, the form has changed over the course of the last 200 years. It has spawned other genres, like science fiction and the detective novel; it has interacted with literary movements, social pressures and historical conditions to become a more diverse, loosely defined set of narrative conventions and literary tropes [...] Thus Gothic motifs, narrative structures or images may arise in a variety of contexts – from pop music to advertisement” (26) and even crime fiction. She adds that “the Gothic’s dependence on the concept of revival may provide a means by which we can understand Gothic in its myriad contemporary forms” (11).

Being additionally motivated by a few affirmations, one being voiced by Gulddal that “crime fiction, far from being static and staid, must be seen as a genre constantly violating its own boundaries” (2019, 1), the second by Spooner that “[t]here are traces of Gothic in most crime narratives, just as there are crimes in most Gothic novels” (2010, 246), the third voiced by Ascari who affirms that “crime fiction had actually never lost contact with the everyday brutality of street violence, as shown by the American hardboiled. [...] Nor had crime fiction lost contact with its Gothic roots [...] [D]ue to an accelerating process of cross-pollination between crime, the Gothic and horror” (2020, 24, 26) and “that the genre has its roots, at least in English, in the Gothic or sensational fiction” (2007, xi), the fourth by Sussex who claims that the Gothic fiction can be regarded as “a Pangea of genre literatures, containing within it the future continents of horror, science fiction (as with Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*) and crime writing” (2010, 18), the fifth uttered by Black in his article “Crime Fiction and the Literary Canon” that “the artistry of criminal-centred crime fiction tends to lie in Gothic sensationalism and psychological analysis” (2010, 81), the sixth voiced by Duerre Humann that “[w]hile it is true that genres are always in flux, storylines about crime and its consequences tend, particularly in the twenty-first century, to combine features of different genres to such an extent that they can best be understood as hybrid narratives” (2020, 57) confirming the fact that “crime fiction has always been an elastic literary form [...] both malleable and responsive to changing times, thus ultimately contributing to the increasing hybridisation of the genre” (58), the seventh issued by Stougaard-Nielsen that “[c]rime fiction is arguably the most internationalised genre of popular literature; its basic conventions are recognisable across time, space and media, but also rich in local variations and cultural contexts. This confluence of transnational forms and local specificity makes crime fiction a pre-eminent vehicle for exploring the mobility of literary genres, cultural practices and social values across national borders” (2020, 76), the eighth expressed by Maher and Bassnett in their article “The Translation and Circulation of Crime Fiction” who, while referring to Jo Nesbø being appointed by the Hogarth Press to produce a novel based on the Shakespearean *Macbeth*, acknowledge that this 2018 commission “is testament not only to Nesbø’s popularity but also to the growing perception of crime fiction as a global genre that travels back and forth across international literary borders” (2022, 46 – 7) and the ninth issued by Bloom who claims that “other genres owe much to gothic concerns and neither detective fiction nor science fiction can be separated in their origins from such an association” (1998, 2), it is my intention to present the article whose aim is to show and analyse Gothic elements, conventions, motifs, and tropes that can be unearthed in Jo Nesbø’s crime novel *The Redbreast* as the tangible evidence of the cross-pollination between crime and Gothic fiction, testifying to the fact of hybridity of literary genres. In my article I wish to indicate a number of affinities, shared by those two subgenres of literature that at their inceptions were not regarded with due gravity and seriousness, that materialize and co-exist in Nesbø’s novel, which, treated as a unity, can confirm a much more intimate relation between those two genres of fiction, a correlation that is unlikely to be explained away as a mere coincidence. Therefore, I wish to demonstrate how the crime novel *The Redbreast* epitomizes the often unacknowledged ways in which Gothic fiction and crime fiction conventions, tropes and

symbols amalgamate. In many respects, Jo Nesbø's novel, as well as his other crime novels, take recourse to the generic archetypes and crime fiction conventions while also implementing tropes commonly found in Gothic fiction. Particularly on account of his treatment of Gothic-like and mysterious setting, the psychology of crime and criminals and the centrality of a criminal act that has to be unearthed and examined so as to restore peace, an analysis of the constituents of the darker side of humanity such as evil, revenge, or hatred, an exploration of dissociative disorders such as split personality or Multiple Personality Disorder, an exploration of the supernatural and the uncanny, an exploration of the past that influences the present, and finally female exploitation and submission to male tyrants and their partial ability to overcome male submission, Nesbø's novel comes across as a hybrid text incorporating conventions, tropes and symbolism belonging to both crime and Gothic fiction.

While basing my assertion upon research I conducted I arrived at the conclusion that Gothic fiction and crime fiction, while often perceived as distinct subgenres, share numerous thematic and structural similarities that reveal a profound interconnectedness between those two subgenres of fiction. Both delve into the darker aspects of human nature, exploring fear, suspense, and the moral ambiguities of society. In this article I wish to examine the shared characteristics and narrative techniques that link Gothic fiction with crime fiction, highlighting how these subgenres often converge in their exploration of the human psyche and societal anxieties resulting from both the loss of values during modernity and expanding globalisation. In my analysis, I would like to point to thematic and structural areas in which Gothic and crime fiction intermingle in Jo Nesbø's crime novel that, on account of implementing topics that are both appropriate and controversial, testifies to the Norwegian's eagerness to call into question the social order in Norway while at the same time bringing to light twenty-first-century concerns, anxieties, apprehensions and controversies, in the similar manner to Gothic fiction narratives that played the similar cathartic and revealing function at the end of both the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Redbreast by Jo Nesbø is a gripping crime novel featuring Detective Harry Hole, a complex and determined investigator working for the Oslo Police Department. The narrative is intricately woven, alternating between events from World War II and the present day. In the contemporary timeline, Harry Hole is reassigned to surveillance work after a high-profile mistake during a visit by the U.S. president. While on this relatively mundane assignment, he stumbles upon a case involving the illegal importation of a rare type of rifle, a Märklin. This discovery leads him into a deeper investigation that uncovers connections to Norway's past, specifically to events during World War II.

Parallel to Harry's investigation, the novel delves into the wartime experiences of Norwegian soldiers who fought on the Eastern Front for the Nazis. The narrative follows a soldier named Daniel Gudeson and Gudbrand Johnson and his comrades, exploring themes of loyalty, betrayal, and the lasting impact of their wartime actions.

As Harry digs deeper, he uncovers a web of old secrets and resentments that have deadly consequences in the present. His investigation reveals that the imported rifle is linked to a plot involving a vengeful war veteran, Gudbrand. The narrative builds to a tense climax as Harry races against time to prevent further murders and unravel the mystery linking the past and present.

The novel is renowned for its intricate plotting, rich historical context, and the depth of its protagonist. Harry Hole emerges as a deeply flawed yet compelling hero, driven by a strong sense of justice and haunted by his personal demons.[1] The novel is the third in the Harry Hole series and is credited with cementing Jo Nesbø's reputation as a master of Nordic Noir.

[1] Harry Hole, a gifted FBI-trained police officer, being, as asserted by Fister, "a man at war with the world, including himself" (qtd. by Brunsdale 2016, 331), suffers from a few addictions, primarily alcoholism that haunts his professional and private life. However, it is important to add here that the figure of a police officer

2 Setting

One of the most striking similarities between Gothic and crime fiction is their emphasis on setting. Jerrold E. Hogle asserts that Gothic fiction, characterized by its eerie, foreboding atmosphere,

> usually takes place (at least some of the time) in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space – be it a castle, a foreign palace, an abbey, a vast prison, a subterranean crypt, a graveyard, a primeval frontier or island, a large house or theatre, an aging city or urban underworld, a decaying storehouse, factory, laboratory, public building, or some new recreation of an older venue, such as an office with old filing cabinets, an overworked spaceship, or a computer memory. Within this space, or a combination of such spaces, are hidden some secrets from the past (sometimes the recent past) that haunt the characters, psychologically, physically, or otherwise at the main time of the story (2015, 2),

the spaces that create an ideal backdrop for the unfolding of sinister and criminal plots. Similarly, crime fiction often employs dark, urban environments, isolated rural places and buildings, and even the whole cities that contribute not only to a tense and suspenseful atmosphere, but function as the places where crimes take place and where criminals are chased by the authorities or detectives. Henry Sutton maintains that "crime series are dependent on place and identity [...] Crime writers and their series characters become synonymous with certain cities, territories, terrain" (2023, 101) and Stewart King in his article "Place" asserts that "place is arguably the most important feature in crime fiction. While it is not the defining feature – that, of course, is the presence of a crime – place gives the crime meaning. For in crime fiction, nothing makes sense without place" and he adds that "crimes are place-specific in the sense that they are rooted in the particular physical, cultural, political, economic, environmental, social and, of course, legal circumstances of the place where the crime is committed" (2020, 211). Significantly, the settings in both genres are not just passive backdrops but appear to be active elements that enhance the narratives' emotional impact and heighten the readers' sense of unease and suspense. Location, therefore, is constructed as of greatest importance and significance for the overall portrayal of activities undertaken by a host of characters that permeate the narrative structure. Eva Erdmann emphasizes that the importance of location is so crucial that "[t]he surroundings where the investigations take place are portrayed with increasing inventiveness, to the extent that the crime itself appears to be at best merely a successful stunt. It almost seems as if the inventories of criminal motives and case histories have been exhausted so that crime fiction's primary distinguishing characteristic has become the *locus criminalis*" (2009, 12). And even the translator of Jo Nesbø's books, Don Bartlett, points to an exceptional importance of setting of his crime novels and he "sees location as just one factor that has contributed to the success of the Norwegian writer" (Maher, Bassnett, 2022, 52).

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haunted by their inner demons triggered by their addictions is a common phenomenon in global crime fiction. For instance, in Éva Cserháti's novel *The Fourth Murder: The First Case of the HAND,* the readers can encounter a tormented and lonely DI Lajos Korda who is akin to Hole in many aspects. One of the visualization of his struggle with alcoholism and loneliness could be as follows: "His bed was waiting for him, unmade. [...] The mornings were the worst. Not the awakening when he still hoped for a better day. He stayed motionless in bed for several minutes. He knew that the moment he moved his head, the peace would be broken. The liquid in his skull would start sloshing about and stir up the dirt that had settled during the night. He called it the rotting mash. The splashing could only only be calmed down if he started the day with a drink. [...] Drinking was simpler because it gave him a good excuse to be an outsider" (2023, 103-4).

In Jo Nesbø's *The Redbreast,* the reality and potency of setting is visualized in the references to, and portrayals of, three diverse aspects of spatiality, namely the nature, the city of Oslo, and the combination of those two spatial entities. As for the nature surrounding the city, it is very often characterized not only by its enchanting mysteriousness and sublime, as indicated, for instance, in the following quote: "The blocks of flats gave way to half-timbered houses, vineyards and finally the garden deciduous forest, with the afternoon sun playing on the leaves and creating a magical atmosphere as they sped along avenues lined with beech and chestnut trees" (Nesbø 2006, 512 – 13), but also by its being dark, sinister, filthy, muddy, freezing, and inaccessible, enhancing that way its resemblance to the presentations sketched in Gothic fiction. At the begging of the narrative the readers are informed that the main criminal of the story, Gudbrand lived in the area of "the dales [which] were broad and some were deep, deserted and dark" (53) and this reference to Gudbrand's place of birth tinged with ominous aura plays a significant role since this spatial indication subliminally indicates the personality of the criminal that, throughout the narrative and mostly at the end of the novel, is unearthed as corresponding to this murky description of the place. The place of this origin marked with mysteriousness and darkness, therefore, indicates his sinister and murky personality. The nature in the novel, mostly in those parts presenting the Second World War activities, is characterized as being devoid of sun and its warming rays giving life, as indicated, for instance, in the reference to another protagonist's, Sindre Fauke's place of birth: "His face was almost merged with his camouflage uniform and the small, close-set eyes stared out into the dark. He came from a remote farm high up in the Gudbrandsdalen region, probably some narrow enclave where the sun didn't shine since he was so pale" (54). Therefore, very often nature is characterized by its shattering freezing conditions, enhancing its Gothic-like and sinister aura, as visualized, for instance, in the following portrayal: "It was cold in the machine-gun post. Gudbrand was wearing all the clothes he possessed. Nevertheless, his teeth were still chattering and he had lost the sensation in his fingers and toes. The worst was his legs. He had bound new rags around his feet, but that didn't help much [...] The thermometer showed minus twenty-five. Last winter they'd had minus forty-five several nights in a row. Gudbrand consoled himself with the thought that the lice were less active in this cold" (63 – 64). Nature, presented as a witness marked with its mysteriousness, silence, darkness, and isolation, playing a potent function during the war, is constructed as an opposition to horrid moments that soldiers have to face during the war: "Gudbrand awoke with a start. He blinked a couple of times and saw only the outline of the row of planks in the bunk above him. There was a smell of sour wood and earth. Had he screamed? The other men insisted they were no longer kept awake by his screams. He lay there, feeling his pulse slowly calm down. He scratched his side – the lice never slept" (78). Moreover, similarly to protagonists escaping from their persecutors in the iconic Gothic novels (e.g. Ann Radcliff's *The Romance of the Forest)*, nature and forests in the novel are visualized as spatial entities that offer protection, like a sanctuary, to people taking part in the war: "Some days Helena found it incomprehensible that a war was raging outside. Perhaps it was because the forest, the tight rows of spruce trees, closed out all the things they didn't want to see" (146).

The city of Oslo constitutes the subsequent level of comparison between Gothic and crime fiction in Jo Nesbø's novel. Eric Sandberg in his article "Crime Fiction and the City" asserts that significance "of urban spaces in crime writing may thus seem inevitable, given the demands of the literary form and the conditions that prevail in the urban environment" (2020, 335) and he adds that "[O]ur concept of the city encompasses many contradictory notions – extreme poverty and economic opportunity, freedom from traditional social relations and the confinement of close spaces, personal anonymity and the presence of the crowd – but it almost always includes a sense of danger" (355); a menace that unites and permeates both

Gothic and crime narratives. As far as Jo Nesbø's portrayal of Oslo is concerned, it is an amorphous spatial entity that is either packed with people who very often behave absurdly, illogically, and criminally or it is utterly isolated and deserted. On one hand, Oslo is marked with "the cacophony of cars, trams [and] the beeping sounds" (2006, 20), taxis which "were shooting back and forth under the neon lights, and crowds of people [who] were drifting up and down the pavements" (111); people with "the panic in the eyes [...] dashing along with the pavements in search of last-minute Christmas presents" (142) who very often have "distorted, bizarre features too, like in crazy mirrors at the fair" (96); "lots of strange people at Schrøder's" (454); full of people who rush to celebrate the National Day of Independence: "The Palace Gardens were right in front of him and the path up to the Palace was black with people" (583), and likewise brimful with prostitutes: "The woman still stood by the wall; she had pulled her skirt back into the place and lit a cigarette which glowed in the dark when she inhaled. [...] [she] began to walk down the muddy path round the fortress and back to her 'office' in the streets around Norges Bank" (496).

On the other hand, it is the place contaminated by "the toxic March Oslo air" (Nesbø 2006, 320) that is very often utterly isolated and secluded, as indicted in the following quotes referring to the policewoman Ellen being followed and later on murdered: "Ellen tried to do as he instructed. Breathing evenly and concentrating on the traffic in front of her. She took a left off the roundabout down Vahls gate. Saturday evening, but the streets in this part of town were practically deserted" (316); "The lighting here was frugal and the pavements deserted. Out of the corner of her eye Ellen saw small squares of light flit across his face" (319); "Then Ellen put the cloth over the cage, said goodbye, turned off the light and let herself out. Jens Bjelkes gate was still deserted as she hurried towards Thorvald Meyers gate, which she knew would be teeming with people at this time on a Saturday night. [...] It struck her how little distance there was between a seething mass of people and total desolation in a large city" (333); "Sverre had loped after her, but he didn't catch up until they were in the dark street" (337). Therefore, due to its intrinsic seclusion and desertedness that encourages criminals to undertake their criminal activity believing in their success, on one hand, and its periodic influx of people allowing criminals to take cover and protection in the mass of undistinguishable people, on the other, the city of Oslo as presented by Jo Nesbø is all the time prone to criminality and violence, as confirmed by many instances in the novel, and one of those being the horrendous murder of the above-mentioned Ellen or an instance of the corpse being found in the bin: "'One of the cooks in Herbert's Pizza found Dale in the back alley. He was lying between the large rubbish bins with his throat cut. The crime scene people found *nada.* The doctor who did the autopsy, by the way, thought that the cut around the throat was just fantastic. Surgical precision, he said'" (277); "'The killing was efficient and there were no clues left behind, but the scene of the crime was a poor choice. He could easily have been seen from the street or in the back alley" (282).

However, apart from criminality as an intrinsic feature of Oslo indicating a strong affinity of Jo Nesbø's crime fiction with Gothic literature, there is still another element that confirms that intertextual similarity between them. The city of Oslo is presented by Nesbø as a gloomy, windy, rainy and freezing spatial entity full of narrow, isolated and silent intersecting paths ("Harry walked up Holbergs gate and turned left into Sofies gate. Most of the properties in this narrow street were workers' flats dating back to the turn of the century and not in the best condition" (Nesbø 2006, 156)); shabby streets with some buildings bearing resemblance to Gothic architecture of fortresses or even cathedrals[2]; shapeless cars as if taken from the sort of

[2] One of those is Akershus Fortress in the centre of the city "the WWII Wehrmacht prison [with] [t]he internal section of the fortress area [...] closed for the night" (Nesbø 2006, 494) and the tall edifice of the hotel Radisson SAS in Holbergs Plass, from the highest floor of which the criminal Gudbrand plans to assassinate the Crown

psychedelic film and black, gloomy, ugly, very often tiny, dilapidated houses[3] where corpses are to be found with vomit all around them: "'One of the people on your list, Hallgrim Dale, was murdered last autumn. In the alley where he was found there were also, among other things, the remains of vomit" (407).

3 Exploration of human psyche, morality, and human tendency towards evil

Both genres delve deeply into the complexities of the human psyche and moral ambiguity focusing upon the darker side of a person's nature and conduct. Gothic fiction frequently explores themes of madness, obsession, revenge, evil, and the supernatural, questioning the boundaries between sanity and insanity. Characters in Gothic fiction often grapple with inner demons and moral dilemmas, reflecting the genre's preoccupation with the darker sides of human nature. As asserted by Hogle,

> the Gothic has also come to deal, as one of its principle subjects, with how the middle class dissociates from itself, and then fears, the extremes of what surrounds it; the very high or the decadently aristocratic and the very low or the animalistic, working-class, underfinanced, sexually deviant, childish, or carnivalesque, all sides of which have been abjected at once into figures ranging from Lewis's monk Ambrosio and Radcliffe's class-climbing villains to the title character in C. R. Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*" (2015, 9).

Crime fiction similarly investigates the intricacies of human mind, particularly focusing on the motivations behind criminal behaviour. In line with Gregoriou, although the criminal, "is most often defined solely on the basis of their criminality and social deviance" (2020, 168), "criminals are also assumed to be physically powerful, unrepentant and entirely blame for their actions" (168). She also adds that "[i]n contrast to criminals, the fictional detective figure is typically a positively connoted one, even if inevitably somewhat conflicted [as Jo Nesbø's Harry Hole is]. Much like criminals, detectives are portrayed as highly intelligent yet troubled and obsessive individuals, sacrificing themselves to their work, their suffering producing knowledge, insight and results (168). At one of its deepest levels, crime fiction examines the ethical grey areas and the psychological states that lead individuals to commit crimes, often presenting protagonists who are morally flawed or anti-heroes. While referring to this aspect of interconnectedness between the Gothic and crime fiction, Kotwasińska emphasizes that

> the Male Gothic, perhaps best exemplified by Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), relies heavily on the figure of a male villain, whose expulsion from the warm hearth forms the center of the narrative, and whose violent tale rarely provides the readers with a resolution in the form of a happy ending. [...] Sussex suggests that the Male Gothic could be seen as a link between the picaresque and the Newgate model, and in a way it prefigures the twentieth-century psycho-thriller, with Thomas Harris's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988) being the best-known example, with a monstrous male anti-hero usurping the main stage" (2014, 93).

Prince during the National Independence Day and from which the criminal observes "[i]n front of the balcony, out of focus, the dead oak pointed its black witches' fingers to the sky" (598).

[3] One of those descriptions could be, for instance, "[t]hey strolled down the road. It was an area with small houses, small gardens and blocks of flats at the end" (Nesbø 2006, 394) or "Harry's eyes lingered on the Olsen family's yellow house. It was smaller than the other house and it didn't have the same high hedge around it as the rest in this quiet-afternoon residential street. The other henges made this ugly, Eternit-cladded home seem unprotected. The neighbouring houses seemed to be cold-shouldering it" (396).

This shared focus on the intricacies of human nature and proneness to criminality and evil underscores the psychological depth present in both genres.

In Jo Nesbø's novel madness is brought to the fore from the very beginning of the narrative and it is often centred around the main criminal of the story, Gudbrand, and, significantly enough it is presented as having an undeviating connection with his unique symbiosis with Daniel who, despite being dead almost throughout the whole novel, is functioning as Gudbrand's doppelganger, testifying to the criminal's insanity and split personality syndrome. Chronologically, during the WWII, presented mostly in the first part of the novel, Gudbrand's insane tendencies are divulged in reference to his special treatment of Daniel whose corpse was miraculously transported from the mass grave back to the camp in the trenches. During the exchange between Gudbrand and his fellow soldiers he is accused of transporting the corpse back, which he solemnly denies. However, as the narrative is being unfolded, the readers get the glimpse of truth and the accusation appears to have been justified. At the end of the exchange Gudbrand vehemently asserts: "'Do you think I've gone mad, Edvard? What would I want with Daniel's body?'" (Nesbø 2006, 82). Obviously, it is a falsehood that is uncovered by the criminal himself during his conversion with Harry Hole many years after the event; the information passed during this conversion assumes the form of a confession and it is of significance to be incorporated here since it points not only to the criminal's insanity, but to his revenge and the state of his hell-within trigged by his negativity as well:

> 'I was obsessed by the thought of revenge, you see. I was young, and when you're young you tend to have this delusion about the ideals of justice, you think it is something we humans are born with. I was a young man with internal conflicts when I was at the Eastern Front, and I behaved like a shit to many of my comrades. Despite that, or precisely because of it, I swore I would avenge all those who sacrificed their lives for the lies they had fed up back home. I would take revenge for my ruined life which I thought would never be whole again. All I wanted was to settle a score with all those who had really betrayed our country. Nowadays psychologists would probably call it war psychosis and have me locked up immediately (268).

It is therefore the criminal's confession to his unfaltering yearning towards revenge that will eventually materialize in the shape of full-blown criminality and brutality that will be implemented by Gudbrand, being very often stimulated by his sinister partner in crime, Daniel, upon everyone whom he regards as traitors of his nation. This criminal approach is meticulously analysed not only by Harry Hole and his team of police officers who are presented as utterly perplexed, and, for instance Halvorsen avers that it "is beginning to look more and more like the work of someone unhinged. So we need an expert" (475), but also by an experienced police psychologist, Aune, who, while pondering upon this complicated case, offers an authorial and sophisticated analysis of this particular type of criminal. After having been asked whether the person in question is sick, he gives such an elucidation:

> 'Sick is a relative concept, We're all sick. The question is, what degree of functionality do we have with respect to the rules society sets for desirable behaviour? No actions are in themselves symptoms of sickness. You have to look at the context within which these actions are performed. [...] If you or I suddenly began to kill, there is a good chance we would become sick. But that is not necessarily the case if you are a contract killer or a ... policeman for that matter.' [...] 'So he must feel he is still fighting a war?' 'Put simply, yes. But supposing that is the situation, he can continue killing without being sick in a

medical sense. No sicker than any normal soldier, at any rate. Then it is just a matter of divergent sense of reality, and now we're all skating on thin ice' (476).

Nevertheless, Harry Hole adds that "even confused people usually have a motive in their madness" (533) and the officer is utterly cognizant of the fact that Gudbrand's motive, although being triggered by a genuine and commendable stimulant to protect his nation and appropriately punish those who are deemed responsible for its disintegration, has to be unavoidably flawed since his conduct has been motivated by negative emotions such as revenge, hatred, evil and criminality, and as such, this vigilante is ontologically undistinguishable from the traitors and criminals whom he wants to punish. Hence, in this context Gudbrand stand in line with criminals from Gothic fiction (e.g. Manfred form Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* who upon hearing about his son's Conrad' mysterious and untimely death, decides to divorce his loyal wife and marry diseased Conrad's fiancée Isabella in order to beget a son, thanks to whom Manfred, the usurper of Otranto, would escape the consequence of the prophesy claiming that he would lose his power and authority if he did not have a male child to continue his line) that, believing in the praiseworthiness and laudable necessity of their conduct, eventually follow the path of evil and crime and fall.

4 The psychology of crime and the centrality of a criminal act that has to be unearthed and examined so as to restore peace

Spooner in her article "Crime and the Gothic" claims that Horace Walpole's Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* sets the pattern for the next generations of Gothic fiction and that pattern is as follows:

> crime is the preserve of charismatic and powerful men; crime has peculiar resonances within the family; crime takes place at one remove, in the past, but has continuing and visceral effects within the present. The criminal is tormented by self-reflection, which eventually leads to his undoing; the legacy of the crime disrupts the proper social order and shadows the onward march of progress and modernity (2010, 245).

And, similarly, Crime fiction primarily revolves around the detection and solving of crimes very often committed by "ideal criminals," as asserted by Gregoriou, who "are strong, evil and blameworthy" (2020, 169), during the procedurals that involve emphasizing logical reasoning and justice. And Pyrhönen, while referring to significance of intellectual pursuits in Crime fiction, affirms that "the functioning of a chronological and linear plot that starts with a violation of order, depicts the attempts to restore it, and ends once this aim has been achieved. It also demonstrates the importance of closure, as the conclusion represents a definitive ending, which reveals the logical, causal, and temporal connections among the events" (2010, 50); the closure that is possible to be achieved thanks to the intellectual endeavours exercised by police offers or detectives. However, the genre also delves deeply into the psychological motivations behind criminal behaviour. Authors like Edgar Allan Poe, considered a pioneer of the genre, often infused their narratives with Gothic elements, blurring the lines between sanity and madness.

In Jo Nesbø's crime novel the reality of crime is introduced and portrayed at two different temporal and spatial levels. The first level focuses upon criminal activities conducted during the WWII at the Eastern Front and Vienna, revolving mostly around atrocities conducted by soldiers who are perceived as those who are conditioned to behave and react in such a manner, as indicted in the following quote:

> The wounded soldiers with their mutilated bodies and their battered psyches brought war home to them. To begin with, she [Helena] listened to their stories, practically convinced that with her strength of mind and her faith she could help to lead them out of their misery. Yet they all seemed to tell more of the same nightmare story about how much man can and has to endure on earth, and about the degradation involved in simply wanting to live. Only the dead escape unscathed. [...] She could read suffering in the pale, boyish faces, brutality in the hardened, closed faces and a longing for death in the pain-contorted features of one man who had just found out that his foot would have to be amputated" (Nesbø 2006, 146 – 47).

The second spatial and temporal level, one the other hand, deals with crimes conducted 55 years later at the turn of centuries in modern Oslo, with a few additional spatial and transnational references to atrocities in Africa and Sweden. However, as with the previous sections in this article, the figure of Gudbrand acts as a nexus or hub of criminal activity uniting those two diverse temporal and spatial levels of criminality. In truth, Gudbrand functions as the mysterious and enigmatic character about whom Sindre Fauke (the character whose personality Gudbrand will assume after killing him during the war) asserts that "[w]ho would have thought that nice, gentle Gudbrand had such ferocity in him?" (59). He is an enigmatic person who is presented as an expert at cutting people's throats with a chirurgical precision: "Gudbrand had only seen his silhouette, but he knew instantly it was an enemy when he saw the outline of a Mosin-Nagant rifle being raised. With just the blunt bayonet Gudbrand sliced the Russian's neck so expertly that he was drained of blood when they carried him out into the snow afterward" (59 – 60), the procedure which will be implemented by the criminal a few times as the narrative unfolds and one reference to this atrocious ability is brought to the fore by Harry Hole who, while being at the party organized by the members of his Department, ponders upon the criminal's modus operandi: "*Who would be capable of cutting someone's throat so quickly and efficiently that he could do it in broad daylight in a back alley in the centre of Oslo?*" (313) and the subsequent one could be as follows: "the point is that the killer wasn't using a knife for the first time. According to the pathologist's report, it was a perfect surgical cut, which only someone who knew what he was doing could have carried out" (408).

Apart from being presented as an expert at cutting people's throats with an exceptional precision, Gudbrand is implicated in many criminal situations during which he implements his criminal skills in order to fulfil his objectives chiefly associated with the above-mentioned yearning for revenge upon those whom he regards traitors of his nation. One of the most brutal examples revolves around both his murdering his fellow soldier, Sindre Fauke, whose personality Gudbrand assumes (by means of stealing his documents) in order to avoid being caught for this murder and later on killing of all members of Sindre Fauke's family only to prove to the members of the Resistance movement that he is brave enough to accomplish such an appalling deed and, more significantly, murder those who could reveal his true identity. The information about Gudbrand's killing of Sindre is revealed many years after the actual event when Harry Hole discovers Gudbrand's manuscript, constructed in the shape of the confession that not only shows his entire life and his conduct, but in which he also tries to justify his criminality. In the section disclosing Sindre's murder, Harry reads that

> *he* [Sindre] *would also betray us* [him and his doppelganger Daniel]. *I took a swift pace back, so that I was behind him, seized his forehead and swung the bayonet. You have to be fairly deft to get a deep, clean cut. I let go as soon as I had sliced him for I knew the job was done. He turned round slowly and stared at me with those small piggy eyes of*

his; he seemed to want to scream but the bayonet had severed his windpipe and only a whistling sound came from the gaping wound. And blood" (558).

However, the information about Sindre's (Gudbrand's) murder upon his whole family is spread by members of the Resistance movement:

> 'We hid him in a hut, away from both us and the Germans. Someone suggested that we should order him to eliminate one of his brothers in the *Nsjonal Samling.* The main idea was to see how he would react. He didn't say a word when we gave him the orders, but the next day he was gone when we went down to his hut. We were sure he had backed out, but two days later he reappeared. He said he had been to the family farm in Gudbrandsdalen. A few days later we received reports from our people up there. One brother had been found in the cowshed, the other in the barn. The parents on the sitting-room floor" (253 – 54).

However, despite atrocity associated with those murders, Gudbrand later on, while talking to Harry Hole, asserts that he did this simply because as a soldier he had been conditioned to kill upon receiving his orders: "'I know what you're thinking,' Fauke said. 'But I was a soldier who had been given orders to kill. If I hadn't been given the orders, I wouldn't have done it. But this I do know: my family were among the ranks of those who cheated our country'" (269). Therefore, Gudbrand is regarded as only a tiny element in the machine of criminality that reigned not only during the horrid times at war, but, quite surprisingly in the seemingly peaceful Scandinavia that, in line with international surveys such as the World Happiness Report or the OECD Better Life Index "rank the the Scandinavian countries amongst the happiest in the world" (2017, 5), as asserted by Stougaard-Nielsen in the book *Scandinavian Crime Fiction.*

Although, as declared by Harry Hole, "[t]he statistical probability of being murdered in Norway was about one in ten thousand" (Nesbø 2006, 286), the ubiquitous criminality in the city of Oslo is introduced into the narrative by many examples of graphic violence and brutality conducted not only by Gudbrand, but also by people belonging to diverse walks of life, confirming thus this ubiquity of crime; there is a young junky, the renowned and experienced police officer, and the high-powered politician. As for the omnipresent criminality in Oslo the aforementioned portrayal of a corpse being disposed of near the rubbish bins in the back alley: "[t]he cause of death was obvious. The smiling red wound in the neck showed where his throat had been cut. Even though the blood was only trickling now, it had clearly pumped out at first because the man's red Icelandic sweater was soaked and sticky. The stench of refuse and urine was overwhelming" (129) could be a convincing portrayal of this status-quo. Beside this example of murder, the city of Oslo is literary swarming with diverse groups of criminals, as asserted by Harry during the investigation: "'In fact, I was going to suggest that to Møller when I saw how many names there were. Most of them used knives, guns or fists. I should have a new list ready in a few hours" (373).

It is therefore a place, like a beehive, where various sorts of criminals, like Gothic villains, interact and act. Some of them, like Olsen, are ordinary criminals who commit their crimes – such as, for instance, furiously killing with a bat a female police officer – without any deeper ideology behind; they are poor and under-privileged and therefore easily influenced and manipulated by more powerful and authoritarian criminals; some of them belong to the international groups of criminals who commit crimes on the large, international scale dealing mostly with illegal guns or drugs such as, for instance, a corrupted police officer Waller called the Prince; some of them engage in criminality to fulfil their various desires such as, for instance, the crooked, cunning and devious politician Brandhaug – functioning in the novel as

either a modern version of Dracula who preys upon innocent victims to satiate his sexual lusts or Ambrosio, the satanic monk from Mathew Gregory Lewis's novel who, thanks to Matilda discovers his unrealized and inhibited sexuality and satiates and fulfils it in many abhorrent ways – who asserts that "'Some men crawl through life with their noses to the ground and are content with the scraps. The rest of us up on two legs, walk to the table and take our rightful place. We are in the minority because our lifestyle demands of us that occasionally we have to be brutal, and this brutality requires strength" (Nesbø 2006, 431). And there are, obviously, serial killers such as Gudbrand – functioning in the novel as a modern reincarnation of, for instance, Sweeney Todd, a barber from Fleet Street, who murders his customers with a straight razor and gives their corpses to Mrs. Lovett, his partner in crime, who bakes their flesh into meat pies, a villain from the penny dreadful *The String of Pearls* written by James Malcom Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest or the infamous Jack the Ripper – who, blindly believing in their objectives and yearning for revenge, are capable of killing with a cold blood a lot of people, mostly those whom they regard as the traitors of their country: "'I regret to say that I am not sure I can help you much, he said. 'The only thing I have to work on is the message on the mirror. It's reminiscent of a calling card and it is quite normal for serial killers, especially after several killings when they begin to feel secure enough to want to up the ante by provoking the police" (475), acknowledges Aune to Harry Hole during the investigation.

Moreover, it is of importance to assert here that although deeply ingrained in the Norwegian affairs and criminal intricacies, Jo Nesbø's narrative offers innovative textual strategies such as shifts from individual crime implemented by ordinary criminals such as Olsen to entangled webs of sociopolitical crimes committed by the high-powered politicians or police offers, and also from a local or national focus to a transnational one, visualized in the narrative by means of a shift from the Norwegian perspective to criminality and brutality prevalent not only in the neighbouring Sweden but mostly in Africa where prevailing criminality ("we're losing the fight against criminality, and particularly here in Jo'burg where everything is completely out of control" (Nesbø 2006, 212), says the policeman Isaiah to Harry) and the procedure of implementing tortures in order to extricate confessions from convicts is common and it is represented by the figure of Andreas Hochner, "Ex-mercenary in the Congo and South Africa, probably involved with arms smuggling since the mid-eighties. At nineteen he was one of seven men accused of murdering a black boy in Kinshasa" (194).

5 Exploration of dissociative disorders such as split personality, Multiple Personality Disorder and the supernatural

Spooner asserts that

> If the return of past upon present is the narrative feature that most closely links Gothic and crime fiction, then the unstable protagonist is another, particularly in noir. When Gothic and crime fiction coincide, the protagonist is often racked by guilt, obsession, paranoia, or other psychological disturbances, or his or her identity is misplaced or disguised. The protagonist's instability places the pursuit of knowledge enacted by the detective narrative under question, often surrounding the process of rational and moral judgment with doubt" (2010: 250).

She also adds that "the myth of an outwardly respectable scientist who discovers a means of unleashing the criminal part of his self has provided a convenient narrative for popular accounts of criminal psychology, from Jack the Ripper to suburban killer Fred West. Similar models of a double life proliferate through *fin-de-siècle* Gothic crime fictions" (250 – 51), including Jo Nesbø's novel where the readers are provided with the portrayal of

Gudbrand/Daniel's double identity, symbiosis, and partnership in crime, similar to the above-mentioned symbiosis between Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett. Central to Gothic narratives is the exploration of the human mind, particularly the conflicts between reason and irrationality, sanity and madness. Classic works such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* or James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* epitomize this focus. For example, in the latter which, as claimed by Sienkiewicz-Charlish in "Gothic Crimes: Rebus and the Ghosts of the Past", "contains elements of the gothic novel, psychological mystery and religious satire. It can also be seen as an early example of a crime thriller" (2018, 85), the readers encounter the ambiguous Gil-Martin – who turns out to be the devil himself and the character that has a detrimental influence upon a staunch Calvinist, Robert Wringhim who firmly believes that he is justified in killing those he believes are already damned by God (an analogous situation happens in Nesbø's novel where Gudbrand is influenced by Daniel to murder all those whom Gudbrand considers traitors of Norway) – who claims that "by looking at a person attentively, I by degrees assume his likeness, and by assuming his likeness I attain to the possession of his most secret thoughts" (1990, 89).

Similarly, in more contemporary crime fiction, the exploration of MPD has become a compelling narrative tool. This disorder, characterized by the tangible presence of two or more distinct personality states within a single individual, is frequently utilized to create complex, multifaceted characters whose actions are unpredictable, mysterious, and often horrifying. It challenges the binary perception of good and evil, positing a more nuanced understanding of human behaviour. Undeniably, the thematic convergence of Gothic and Crime fiction becomes most apparent in their treatment of split personality or MPD. Both genres use this psychological phenomenon to question the integrity of the self and the boundaries of human consciousness. In Gothic fiction, the split personality often serves to externalize the inner turmoil and hidden desires of characters. This externalization is typically dramatized through supernatural or exaggerated means, heightening the sense of horror. Crime fiction, while grounded in more realistic settings, uses MPD to explore the complexities of criminal behaviour and the nature of identity. Works like Thomas Harris's *Red Dragon* and *The Silence of the Lambs* delve into the fractured psyches of their antagonists, offering a chilling examination of how trauma and psychological fragmentation can lead to extreme and violent actions. The narrative tension often arises from the detective's struggle to understand and predict the behaviour of such multifaceted criminals.

As for Jo Nesbø's novel, it is in the ambiguous, uncanny and mysterious presentation of Gudbrand Johansen / Daniel Gudeson's cooperation and criminal symbiosis that the supernatural erupts with full force that spans the whole body of the narrative. This motif, thematically visualized at a number of points in the narrative, is eventually explained away (like in, for example, Ann Radcliff's Gothic fiction) at the final sections of the novel when Harry Hole stands a chance of reading memoirs written by Gudbrand, discovered by the police officer in a manner similar to that one described in Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest*. Significantly, on account of the fact of the discovery of those memoirs, thanks to which Harry is offered a valuable glimpse into intricacies of the criminal's psychology and both conscious and unconscious desires and intentions, the readers of the novel, who are encouraged to actively participate in the process of decoding the criminal's yearnings and motivations, are in a privileged position to stand side by side with the police officer and engage in the investigations with him, trying to break into the inner core of the criminal's reasoning. While pointing to this exceptional position of the readers of crime fiction, Heta Pyrhönen asserts that

> [t]his emphasis on suspicion as a guiding principle of reading is inscribed in the genre, because by inviting readers to solve the crime, it encourages them, not only to think like a detective, but also think like a criminal. If readers are able to think like a criminal, then they may be able to imagine committing crimes under certain circumstances. The genre asks that readers pry and peep into matters related to crime under the guise of detection. This attitude endows the investigation with a voyeuristic quality, rendering this activity guilt-free and making reading pleasurable" (2020, 129).

This overspanning motif, so heavily imbued with Gothic overtones, appears to be of a crucial significance for the criminal activities in the narrative that the first reference to this disorder is brought to the fore just at the onset of the novel where the readers are informed of an unheard-of occurrence that the President of the United States may have had it: "'I read that a well-known American psychologist thinks that the President has an MPD,' Ellen said. 'MPD?' 'Multiple Personality Disorder. Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. The psychologist thought his normal personality was not aware that the other one, the sex beast, was having relations with all these women. And that was why a Court of Impeachment couldn't accuse him of having lied under oath about it'" (Nesbø 2006, 4). However, more important in the narrative is the occurrence of this disorder in Gudbrand who, throughout the whole body of the novel, is presented as having a special symbiosis with the diseased Daniel who functions as Gudbrand's partner in crime but also "idol and big-brother surrogate" (271), very often perceived as plummeting Gudbrand towards criminality but also functioning as a scapegoat upon whom the burden of, and responsibility for, atrocities can be safely located. Significantly, as asserted by the police psychologist Aune, this sort of "disorder could also be caused by extremely traumatic experiences later in life. Another personality is created to flee from problems" (522). However, this symbiosis, characterized by Aune, "as the existence of two or more personalities in an individual which take turns in being the dominant partner. As with Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" (519), is so strong and seemingly invincible that although "there can be bitter clashes between the personalities because they have different goals, perception of morality, sympathies and antipathies with respect to the people around them" (521), the criminal union between Gudbrand and Daniel is an unshakable monolith.

The entire scope of uncanny and mysterious criminal cooperation between Gudbrand and deceased Daniel is illuminated thanks to Harry's discovery of Gudbrand's memoirs – assuming in the narrative the cathartic function for the author of the text: "I needn't have told you about it, but I did so because I cannot afford to duck the issue. That is also why I'm writing this book. I have to go through it every time the topic is brought up, explicitly or implicitly. To be absolutely sure that I am not hiding from it. The day I hide, fear will have won its first battle. I don't know why it's like this. A psychologist could probably explain it" (Nesbø 2006, 270) – in which the officer reads about the onset, and the continuous deployment of this outlandish symbiosis. As for the beginning of this outlandish union, Harry reads:

> *But the last night when I was on watch I had to undertake the boldest operation so far. Gradually I had come to realise that I couldn't leave Daniel's body buried in the snow. [...] I decided to dig up the body and have it put in the mass grave [...] I felt that Daniel was with me, yes, that he was in me. And when I had finally manoeuvred the corpse on to the ammunition boxes and was about to ties the sack around the head, he smiled. I know that lack of sleep and hunger can play tricks with your mind, but I did see his rigid death-mask change in front of my very eyes. The extraordinary thing was that instead of frightening me, it made me feel secure and happy* (560).

And the very first cooperation between Gudbrand and Daniel is murder upon the doctor Christopher Brockhead, the prospect husband of Helena, the woman whom Gudbrand loves very much:

> *The thoughts raced through my mind as I sped along roads which were as tortuous as life itself. But Daniel was in command of my hands and feet. ... discovered I was sitting on the edge of his bed and gave me a look of disbelief. 'What are you doing here? he asked. 'Christopher Brockhard, you are a traitor,' I whispered. 'And I sentence you to death. Are you ready?* (563 – 64).

The break in this presentation is significant here since it indicates Gudbrand's passing out during which Daniel takes utter control of Gudbrand's body, as done by Mr Hyde upon Dr Jekyll, embedding even more the narrative of this crime novel into the intricacies of Gothic conventions. The subsequent example of this uncanny symbiosis is offered with the reference to the above-mentioned murdering of all members of Sindre Fauke's family committed by Gudbrand:

> *I walk around chewing on these things, and my surprise was therefore immense when today they gave me orders to liquidate one of my own (Fauke's)* Nasjonal Samling *brothers. [...] Daniel and I almost burst out laughing – it is as if we had discovered the idea ourselves. They actually asked me to get rid of the people who could blow the whistle on me!* (569).

The later examples of their mutual criminal symbiosis revolves around situations that take place 55 years later in the modern City of Oslo, as indicated, for instance, in this graphic presentation of their killing of Even's dog and their forcing him to commit suicide:

> *When the policeman left, I set to work immediately. [...] I held a knife to his throat and assured him that if he made one false move I could slice him up as easily as I had done his dog. [...] We went upstairs to his bedroom where he readily allowed me to place him on the chair. He tied the dog lead to the ceiling hook. [...] Afterwards, I wiped off my fingertips and put the bin bag containing the dog in the freezer and the knifes in the cellar. Everything was in place and I was just giving the bedroom a last check when I heard the crunch of gravel and saw a police car in the road. It was parked, as if it was waiting for something. I knew I was in a tight corner. Gudbrand panicked of course, but fortunately Daniel acted swiftly* (591 – 92).

And the final cooperation between them focuses upon the attempt of assassinating the Crown Prince during the National Day of Independence: "*I can see him*, Daniel whispered. *One o'clock, on the balcony right behind the dead tree*" (596).

Apart from the supernatural and uncanny elements focused in the figure of the deceased Daniel and the disorder-like and criminal symbiosis between the living and the dead centred in Gudbrand who is constantly shrouded in mysteriousness: "'Our job is to chase ghosts after all" (Nesbø 2006, 198), "'You're looking for a ghost, Inspector Hole'" (479) who is "chasing wartime ghosts" (290), there are other invocations and materializations of the supernatural in the novel, confirming thus an assertion voiced by Chandler in his *The Literature of Roguery* who asserts that "there has been a constant tendency to rise from the sensational to the analytical; and from a combination of the two a third type has resulted. Its purpose is to gratify the reader's taste for the ghastly, the tragic, or the criminal, and at the same time to propose a mystery whose solution shall exercise all his intellectual ingenuity" (1958, 532), the

fact further confirmed by Ascari who, while referring to the nineteenth-century crime fiction and, by extension to modern crime fiction, acknowledges that "the enjoyment of readers depended precisely on the interplay between natural and supernatural elements, which engendered a fruitful tension between the domain of the intellect and that of the emotions" (2007, 10), a pleasurable strain that can emerge due to the presence of supernatural that "plays a central role in postmodern crime fiction, where it fulfils a variety of roles, including, of course, parody and deconstruction" (13).

At times Jo Nesbø presents random people in Oslo as if they were ghosts with eerie appearance: "They had distorted, bizarre features [...] like in crazy mirrors at the fair" (Nesbø 2006, 96), very often driving in "shapeless cars [that] slip by, as in a psychedelic film" (98). At times Gudbrand's victims are presented as shadows that are destined to be annihilated, as it was done with, for instance, Signe who was murdered by the criminal: "The old man turned towards the back seat where the gagged woman stared at him with the same petrified eyes he had seen when she became conscious after being given diethyl ether. [...] He rolled the window half-down and rested the gun on it. When he looked up he could see her gigantic shadow dancing on the yellowish brown sixteenth-century wall. The shadow had to be visible all the way across the bay from Nesoden. Beautiful" (497). And, significantly, the old soldiers who spend time doing nothing are likewise presented as the living dead: "'Do I look dead?' [...] 'No, you don't look dead. Sick, yes, but not dead.' He stretched out an enormous, grimy hand and the old man recognized the sweet stench of sweat, urine and vomit. 'What's up? Don't you want to shake an old comrade's hand?' His voice sounded like a death rattle" (125 – 26). However, the most dramatic indication of the supernatural appears to be associated with the character of Sverre Olsen's mother who emits hysterical and infernal sounds upon being informed about his son's death: "when I got out of my car I heard a terrible howling noise. At first I thought there was a dog somewhere in the neighbourhood. As I walked up the gravel path, however, I knew it was coming from the inside the house and that it wasn't a dog. It was human" (392).

Importantly, Gothic and crime fiction, through their exploration of split personality and MPD, reflect a shared fascination with the dualities of human nature. These genres probe the depths of the psyche, revealing the tenuous balance between order and chaos, sanity and madness. By portraying characters with fragmented identities, both genres offer profound insights into the human condition, questioning the very essence of what it means to be whole. This thematic overlap not only enriches each genre but also underscores their enduring relevance in literature, as they continue to captivate and unsettle readers by holding up a dark mirror to the complexities of the self. Eventually, as asserted by Sussex, it was the Gothic fiction that supplied the crime fiction with the concept of a mystery and uncanny which "by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries [...] connoted the Gothic" (2010, 18).

6 Exploration of the past haunting the present

Spooner asserts that "In fact the two forms, detective fiction and the Gothic, share a similar structure in their preoccupation with the return of past upon present" (2010, 248) and she adds that this principle "whereby the present is overdetermined by past events, and where the detective's activities inevitably function to reveal the secrets of the past even when he or she has been hired to preserve them, is a fundamental feature of noir. However, it is also a determining feature of all detective fiction" (248). This supposition is additionally enhanced by Skenazy who claims that "Both Gothic and detective fiction [...] share common assumptions: that there is an undisclosed event, a secret from the past; [...] that to know the secret is to understand the inexplicable and seemingly irrational events that occur in the present. Both forms bring hidden experiences from shadow to light" (1995, 114). Spooner adds that "the generic boundaries between Gothic and detective fiction are irrevocably

blurred" (2010, 248) since both subgenres explore the past and bring to the fore the mysteriousness associated with the past that can haunt the present. Spooner likewise points to "The genre's preoccupation with all kinds of revenants and returns from the dead" (2006, 10) by asserting that "Gothic is inherently concerned with the incursions of the past into the present" (12). She also adds that "In Gothic texts, the past returns with sickening force: the dead rise from the grave or lay their cold hands upon the shoulders of the living" (18), and "In Gothic texts, therefore, the past is a site of terror, of an injustice that must be resolved, an evil that must be exorcised" (18). Kotwasińska asserts that "the fixation on the mystery which requires protagonists to search for clues, investigate (family) histories and find solutions is yet another shared feature of crime and Gothic fiction" (2014, 91), and it is obvious that for such a search to be successful, one has to dig deep back to the past, no matter how hard and threatening it might be. The analogous situation occurs in Jo Nesbø's novel where Daniel seemingly comes back from the grave and Harry Hole stands a chance to discover and read memoirs written by Gudbrand in which he not only presents his vision of the past but also clarifies his motives standing behind his criminal and revengeful activities perceived as a reaction to his experienced past and trepidation associated with it. Therefore, it it is of importance to quote here Stougaard-Nielsen who asserts that "[t]he fears represented in the Scandinavian crime novel around the new millennium are, not surprisingly, preoccupied with memories and the past – a past that appears at times rootless, slippery and menacing as the clay, water and snow of the 'hyperlocal' crime scenes" (2017, 114 – 15) and adds that "Scandinavian crime novels [...] registered the individual and social consequences of societal bent on 'consuming' their way out of the past" (116) that is stigmatized with the overwhelming anxieties and uncertainties associated with the loss of values in the era of globalization; concerns delineated, analysed, assessed and vivisected by "crime novels that seem not only bent on investigating the effects of late-modern amnesia but also virtually obsessed with the past, with national histories, personal and familial traumas [and] [...] present anxieties and violent crimes [which] are often linked to uncomfortable pasts, which need to be excavated to make sense of present conflicts" (117). Hence, the crime fiction assumes a privileged function of presenting direct and at times graphic and brutal delineations of, and confessions to, the crimes that are visualized and assessed as if initiated by the past that constantly haunts the criminals and plummets them towards criminality additionally fuelled by the unquenchable yearning for vengeance, as experienced by Gudbrand.

7 Female exploitation and submission to male tyrants and their partial ability to overcome male submission

Mills in her article entitled "Victims" asserts that "Nineteenth-century Gothic and sensation fictions are preoccupied with the vulnerability of the virgin and the threat of the sexually active woman; this spotlight on women's bodies and behaviour continues in the victimization of both virgins and sexually active women in twentieth- and twenty-first-century fictions of crime and horror" (2020, 154). However, although a variety of forms of victimization of women seem to abound in Crime fiction, Gavin notes that despite the fact that Gothic fiction is brimful with heroines who are victimized and very often incarcerated, a number of them are able to arrange their "escape through proto-detective methods" (2010, 259) by implementing procedures that are both rational and commonsense, coping with and even defeating that way vehement and irrational conduct exercised by male tyrants. While analysing the modern functions and possibilities of crime fiction, Roy acknowledges that "crime fiction has become one of the most apposite forms for engaging with contemporary contexts and many writers use the genre for a searing analysis and critique of the rot in inherited institutions like the police, judiciary and state bureaucracy" (2020, 123), and those institutions are sadly often presented as not protecting, but rather exploiting and abusing women as, for instance, Lisbeth

Salander from the *Millennium* series by Larsson. The examples of horrendous treatment of women by men, permeating the narrative of Jo Nesbø's novel, can be roughly divided into two realities of female exploitation and submission to male tyrants, the first one revolving around the concept of male intimidating influence and power, both emotional and physical, over women, additionally enhanced by trepidation and fear, and the second one comprising the first reality additionally connected with male vicious brutality that ends with female suffering and death.

As for the first reality associated with female exploitation and submission exerted by men, Helena is the first woman in the chronological flow of the novel. Helena, who was working as a nurse in a hospital during the war, is sexually desired by dr Christopher Brockhard who is additionally enhanced by his father who likewise sees a lot of possibilities and benefits for his son upon his marrying Helena. However, Helena is madly in love with another man, Gudbrand, who calls himself Uriah at that time. Christopher Brockhard's influence upon Helena materializes in his right as a doctor to either send wounded Uriah to the Front immediately or issue an additional certificate that the soldier is in fact unable to fight for three months. The devastated woman, upon whom Brockhard's influence is additionally motivated by the fact that she is poor and she needs money for her sick mother, is fully aware of her and her lover's deplorable situation:

> 'My dear Helena,' Brockhard wore an expression of concern, 'don't you understand that this is up to you?' 'Up to me?' [...] 'I could provide him with a medical certificate for another three months, and who knows if there will be any Eastern Front in three months' time?' [...] I wouldn't dream of sending your heart's desire to the front if he was not fit enough. [...] She could hardly believe her ears: he wanted to use Uriah to force his way into her bed. How long had he spent working this one out? Had he been waiting for weeks for just the right moment? And how did he actually want her? As a wife or a lover? [...] Her head was racing as she tried to find a way out of the labyrinth. But all the exits were closed. Naturally. Brockhard wasn't a stupid man. As long as he had a certificate for Uriah, as a favour to her, she would have to obey his every whim (Nesbø 2006, 153).

Significantly, in the very similar situation the readers encounter, after 55 years, another exceptional woman, Rakel Fauke – she was working as an interpreter in Brandhaug's department for two years at the Norwegian embassy in Moscow and while working there she married a young Russian professor of gene technology and became pregnant with her son Oleg – who is forced to obey every whim of the corrupted politician, Brandhaug, who appears to be only one person capable of stopping the legal procedure of legal custody of Oleg issued by a child's father who appeared to be a tyrant predisposed to alcoholism and brutality and whom, in a consequence, Rakel immediately left. Brandhaug who, similarly to Brockhard, sexually desires his inferior and goes to any lengths possible to achieve his objectives:

> [t]he next call, to Rakel, was an invitation to dinner, no pretext this time, and upon her friendly but firm refusal he dictated a letter addressed to her, signed by the head of the legal department. The letter, in brief outline, told her that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since the business had dragged on, was now attempting to reach a compromise solution with the Russian authorities on custody 'out of humane consideration for Oleg's Russian family'. That would require Rakel and Oleg to appear before a Russian court and comply with the court's ruling (367).

It is just the beginning of the lengthy process of exploitation and sexual submission that Rakel has to experience to save her child. This exploitation obviously finishes with Rakel's reluctant agreement to be sexually exploited by Brandhaug:

> She was leaning against the wall with her coat unbuttoned. She was wearing a red woolen dress underneath. He had asked her to wear something red. Her eyelids were heavy and and she gave him a wry smirk. [...] 'A drink? He asked 'Yes, please,' she said, her speech slurred. 'Or would you rather I stripped off immediately?' [...] But the most important thing was that she succumbed to his desires. He was too old to believe in humanity's romantic motives. The only thing that separated them was what they were both after: power, career or custody of a son. [...] 'I apologise, but I have to have you (430 – 1).

The third female character who is subject to a plethora of forms of male subjugation and dominance is the policewomen Ellen who is under the horrendous influence of his superior, Tom Waaler, the criminal boss and gun dealer in disguise, and who is later on murdered by Sverre Olsen who obeys Tom's orders to the letter:

> Waaler settled in Harry's old office chair, which screamed in protest. Their eyes met. Damn! Why hadn't she said it was a private call? Now it was too late. Did he know that she had stumbled on to something? She tried to read his expression, but she she seemed to have lost the ability since the panic had seized her. Panic? Now she knew why she had never felt comfortable with Tom Waaler. It wasn't because of his coldness, his views on women, blacks, flashers and homosexuals or his tendency to grab every legal opportunity to use violence [...] With Tom Waaler, though, there was something else and now she knew what it was: she was scared of him (318 – 19).

Ellen is victimized by those two men and her life finishes in the brutal death while being beaten with the bat by Olsen. In Christie's *Evil Under the Sun*, Poirot comments: "You do not comprehend, Captain Marshall. There is no such thing as a plain fact of murder. Murder springs, nine times out of ten, out of the character and circumstances of the murdered person. *Because* the victim was the kind of person he or she was, *therefore* was he or she murdered!" (2008, 111 – 12; emphasis in original). And just because Ellen heard the recorded speech that confirms her suspicions that Tom Waaler is in fact a brutal and cunning criminal, she has to be murdered:

> Suddenly all she could hear was the gurgle of the river and the sound of snow groaning beneath her boots. And it was late to rue taking the short cut when she became aware that it was not only her own steps she could hear. Now she could hear breathing too, heavy, panting. Frightened and angry, Ellen thought that, no, she knew, at that moment her life was in danger. She didn't turn, she simply started to run [...] She was directly under the light when the first blow hit her shoulder and knocked her sideways into the snowdrift. The second blow paralysed her arm and the gas spray slipped out of her unfeeling hand. The third smashed her left kneecap; the pain obstructed the scream muted deep in her throat and caused her veins to bulge out in the winter-pale skin of her neck. She saw him raise the wooden baseball bat in the yellow street light. [...] The first blow to the head destroyed the optic nerve and now all she saw was the pitch black night (Nesbø 2006, 333 – 34).

8 Conclusions

Concluding, Gothic fiction and crime fiction, while often perceived as distinct subgenres, share numerous thematic and structural similarities that reveal interconnectedness between them. In *The Redbreast*, Jo Nesbø masterfully integrates elements of Gothic literature, bringing to life an intricate tapestry that explores the darkest corners of the human psyche and the sinister undercurrents of society. Through its setting, character psychology, and thematic depth, Nesbø's novel encapsulates the essence of Gothic fiction, making it a contemporary masterpiece within the genre.

Firstly, the setting in *The Redbreast* plays a pivotal role in establishing the novel's Gothic atmosphere. The cold, often bleak Norwegian landscape mirrors the internal desolation of its characters and the overarching themes of isolation and despair. This setting not only grounds the story in a tangible reality but also enhances the eerie, foreboding tone that is quintessential to Gothic literature. Nesbø's choice of environment serves as a silent yet powerful character, influencing the narrative and the actions of those within it.

Secondly, Nesbø delves deep into the human psyche, exploring the complex interplay between morality and the inherent tendency towards evil. His characters are multifaceted, often grappling with inner demons and moral ambiguities. This exploration highlights the fragile nature of human virtue and the ease with which it can be corrupted. The portrayal of such psychological depth aligns with the Gothic tradition of exposing the hidden, often malevolent aspects of human nature, thereby creating a chilling narrative that resonates with readers.

Thirdly, central to the novel is the psychology of crime and the necessity of uncovering the truth behind a criminal act to restore societal peace. Nesbø presents crime not merely as an external act of defiance but as a manifestation of deep-seated psychological turmoil and an indicator of evil and corruption deep in the Norwegian society. The meticulous unraveling of the crime in *The Redbreast* reflects the Gothic preoccupation with mystery and the pursuit of truth, emphasizing that understanding the criminal mind is crucial for achieving justice and restoring order.

Fourthly, the exploration of dissociative disorders, such as split personality and Multiple Personality Disorder, adds a layer of psychological horror to the narrative. Nesbø's depiction of these conditions blurs the line between reality and the supernatural, evoking a sense of dread and uncertainty. This theme, deeply rooted in Gothic tradition, challenges readers to confront the terrifying possibility that the greatest horrors may reside within the human mind itself.

Fifthly, one of the most compelling aspects of *The Redbreast* is its examination of the past's persistent influence on the present. Nesbø expertly weaves historical events and personal histories into the fabric of the narrative, illustrating how unresolved issues and past traumas continue to haunt individuals and society. This motif of the past haunting the present is a cornerstone of Gothic literature, serving as a reminder that the shadows of history are never truly banished.

Sixthly, the theme of female exploitation and submission to male dominance is poignantly addressed in *The Redbreast*. Nesbø portrays the struggles of female characters that endure and, in various degrees, overcome male oppression. Their resilience and partial triumphs underscore the ongoing battle for gender equality and the breaking of patriarchal chains. This theme resonates with the Gothic tradition of highlighting societal injustices and the enduring human spirit.

Finally, Jo Nesbø's *The Redbreast* is a profound Gothic narrative that transcends conventional crime fiction. Through its evocative setting, psychological depth, and exploration of dark themes, the novel offers a rich, haunting experience that lingers long after the final page. Nesbø's ability to blend Gothic elements with a contemporary crime story not only revitalizes the subgenre but also provides a poignant commentary on the human

condition, making *The Redbreast* a seminal crime novel that artfully incorporates Gothic conventions. By examining these similarities, the readers are able to gain a deeper appreciation for how these subgenres, despite their apparent differences, often tread similar thematic ground, revealing the universal human fascination with mystery, fear, and the supernatural.

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