The Ideological Recontextualisation of Modern Fatherhood in Scandinavian and British Nordic Noir Crime Series

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ABSTRACT

Nordic Noir crime series have enjoyed much popularity and positive critical attention in Britain, as have many other aspects of Scandinavian ways of life, and the extent and nature of this cultural curiosity in the years following the international release of the originary *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007) deserves further analytical attention. This article investigates one important manner in which culturally specific and ideologically charged content was received and negotiated in Britain in this period by comparing how conceptions of modern fatherhood are expressed in Scandinavian crime drama and British adaptations of the Nordic Noir crime genre. Nordic Noir series based in both cultures can be seen to share a strong thematic focus on fatherhood, especially centred on characters that embody features associated with openly affectionate and hands-on fatherhood, or "modern dads". However, there are notable differences in how the figure of the modern dad is represented in Scandinavian crime drama and British series that appropriate key genre features of Nordic Noir, which suggests that the construct has undergone what is termed "ideological recontextualisation". The Scandinavian modern dad characters tend to be heroes, their capacity for involved, selfless love and care for their children unproblematised and uncontested within the story worlds, while their British counterparts are far more suspect entities. Their seemingly close and loving interaction with children may be potentially sexually motivated, immaturely or selfishly handled, or even serve to mask their criminal intent, and they typically turn out to be the villains of the stories. The Scandinavian ideology connected to modern fatherhood appears, then, to have been an object of both fascination and contestation in British culture in this period, and may have been more resistant to undisputed cultural importation than female main characters with attachment issues and woolly jumpers.

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A British visitor to Norway recently asked: "Why are there so many male nannies here?" It took a while for her hosts to understand what she was asking about, before they realised that she was referring to the many young men walking around town with babies in prams and papooses. Where they saw fathers, maybe on a several-months-long paternity leave, caring for their children, she had seen employees doing paid work. They were so accustomed to the sight of men with babies that they hardly noticed them, but for her they stood out as unusual, unnatural, and worthy of note. Such culturally distinct responses are indicative of just how powerful deeply held beliefs and conceptions may be in shaping interpretations of the same or similar acts in a given context. They are part of a culture's ideological framework for conceptualising, mediating, and sanctioning given traits and behaviours. There are internal cultural and ideological differences within both Scandinavia and Britain—between various groups, classes, countries, and regions, for instance—but certain culturally distinct values, thought systems, and naturalised beliefs appear to be found only on one or the other side of the North Sea. Ideology, then, is often context-specific.

Although they are not all-pervasive, and they are often contested, ideological frameworks for understanding are naturalised and shared views that form the basis for intuitive assumptions and interpretations, and ideology can be seen as "a *vision of the world* shared by many speakers and potentially at least, by a whole society" (Bianchi 111). "'Ideological' is not synonymous with 'cultural'", as Terry Eagleton notes, but rather denotes "the points at which our cultural practices are interwoven with political power" and the workings of "socially conditioned" ideas (11, 5–6). Despite internal pressure, development, and debate, there is a tipping point where commonly held views in different contexts diverge and where a form of cultural interpretive reflex comes into play. Narratives, whether factual or fictional, rely on such interpretive reflexes for their communicative effectiveness, and are thus fundamentally anchored to a specific ideological context. When narratives travel, they therefore undergo ideological recontextualisation: they cross tipping points of ideologically based interpretive reflexes and have to adapt to the new ideological context.

Ideological recontextualisation is among the many levels of recontextualisation that are at work as cultural products are adapted and appropriated, for example through transposition across linguistic, medial, and generic borders.[1] Although less immediately apparent than other forms of cultural transfer and transformation, the significance of the recontextualisation of ideologically based content in cross-cultural processes of adaptation and appropriation is important enough to merit further analytical attention. And as with other forms of cultural transfer and transformation, studies of ideological recontextualisation are also studies of negotiations between distinctly national and transnational features, where a text that has crossed a border may be found to be "not so much communicated as domesticated or, more precisely, assimilated to receiving intelligibilities and interests" (Venuti 11; see also Agger 134). A point Mats Jansson makes in relation to a similar form for cultural exchange, translation, is equally relevant here: "the transgressing of boundaries involved [...] could be seen as a recognition of the fact that boundaries exist" (142).

The British appropriation of what has become known as the Nordic Noir crime series format is an effective example of how different regions' and/or cultures' understanding of given phenomena and constructs may be ideologically and culturally distinct at heart, and of how the study of the ideological recontextualisation at work may reveal inherent tensions and ambivalences attached to such understandings. Focusing on how ideological recontextualisation takes place across a border in this way may be said to obfuscate the inherently transnational and transgeneric nature of Nordic Noir and belie the status of crime fiction as world literature. Crime fiction, either in the form of literary or other texts, is part of a "transnational flow [...] in the globalized mediascape of contemporary popular culture", where the exchange of themes, motifs, and textual features is inherently complex and dialogic, but where "creative transformations of transnational plots and motifs in very different local settings around the world" can also be charted (Nilsson et al. 2; see also e.g. Badley et al. and Allan et al.). To borrow the words of Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen, it is precisely the "confluence of transnational forms and local specificity [that] makes crime fiction a pre-eminent vehicle for exploring the

1 Some of these levels of recontextualisation and the notion of adaptation and translation as recontextualisation are addressed in more detail in Annjo Klungervik Greenall and Eli Løfaldli. "Translation and Adaptation as Recontextualization: The Case of *The Snowman*." *Adaptation*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2019, pp. 240–56.

mobility of literary genres, cultural practices and social values across national borders" ("World Literature" 76). And as Stewart King notes, when regarded from this viewpoint, crime fiction texts function as "windows onto specific cultures and societies" (14). Among the aspects to which crime fiction on page and screen provide access are different national ideologies and their transnational transfer and exchange.

In the years following the international release of *The Killing* (*Forbrydelsen*) from 2007 and *The Bridge* (*Bron/Broen*) from 2011, the resultant British fascination with all things Scandinavian included the aesthetic and thematic properties of what had become a clearly recognisable brand, Nordic Noir. Although itself influenced by other forms of crime fiction, the Danish *The Killing* came to mark the arrival of a new genre of TV crime series (see e.g. Hansen, "Nordic Noir" 123; Agger 138; Badley et al. 2; Kääpää 113). British versions of the format (here entitled British Nordic Noir) were also produced shortly after *The Killing* and *The Bridge*, most notably the first season of three series that all came out in 2013: *The Tunnel*, a remake of *The Bridge*, *Broadchurch*, and *The Fall*, which also appropriated the Nordic Noir format. These series included such central genre traits of Nordic Noir as "a dimly-lit aesthetic", "a slow and melancholic pace, multi-layered storylines and an interest in uncovering the dark underbelly of contemporary society", and the inclusion of a focus on the internal lives of characters and the consequences of crime for individuals, families, and communities (Creeber 22–3), along with a strong visual anchoring in a particular place, typically achieved through "dark settings and intensity of on-location shooting" (Hansen, "From Nordic Noir" 280). It is also commonly noted that Scandinavian Nordic Noir tends to address pressing cultural and societal concerns (e.g. Forshaw 1, 2, 13, 107, 190; Peacock 98–117), and this is another, and significant, genre trait emblematic of the early Scandinavian series that British Nordic Noir series have tended to incorporate.

Yvonne Griggs has argued that "Nordic Noir TV crime series translate to other national, geographical, and cultural frameworks with ease" (278).[2] In contrast, the following analysis of the Scandinavian and British Nordic Noir series suggests that there are still significant aspects that do *not* translate with ease. One element imbued with ideological significance that was recontextualised from Scandinavia to Britain, has to do with notions of fatherhood. Nordic Noir crime series based in the two cultures can be seen to share a strong thematic focus on fatherhood, both in the series discussed in detail here and in many other later TV series.[3] It is an example of an expression of ideological content and emblematic of a "prevailing cultural and social climate" (McFarlane 135) that adaptations typically are shaped by, and that contributes to the wider trend of the function of crime series to express and engage with wider concerns, typically both "determining and determined by the wider ideological context" (McCaw 5).

The theme of fatherhood in this context is especially centred on characters that embody features associated with openly affectionate and hands-on fatherhood, or the "new" father or "modern dad", a construct that is intuitively understood by audiences in both cultures. In both Britain and Scandinavia, this new model of fatherhood includes taking on practical and emotional tasks and responsibilities that are alien to more traditional forms of male parenting, and modern dads in both cultures are typically seen as more "nurturing and emotional, and sharing the parenting and domestic work with their partners" to a greater extent than earlier models of fathering entailed (Podnieks 2). However, despite the apparent similarities of the construct, there are "national variations and images of new fatherhood" in different contexts, such as Britain and Scandinavia (Johansson and Andreasson 7). There are signs that the shift from practices where fathers "care *about*" their children to ones where they "care *for* them, looking after their emotional and physical needs consistently as a primary or co-carer" appears to be less widespread in Britain than in Scandinavia, as is the perceived significance of "direct childcare" as a component of involved fatherhood (Jordan 30, 32; see also Hobson and Morgan; Lewis; Locke).

2 Griggs goes on to argue that they are "what Hutcheon would term 'travelling stories', able to 'adapt to local cultures' and 'local environments' with relative ease (2006: 177)" (284).

3 The Norwegian crime series *The Third Eye* (2013), *Mammon* (2014) and *Borderliner* (2017), for instance, all focus extensively on fatherhood, as do British series such as *The Guilty* (2013), *Happy Valley* (2014) and *The Level* (2016). All these and similar series display the same difference in the ideological framing of fatherhood identified in *The Killing*, *The Bridge*, *The Tunnel*, *Broadchurch* and *The Fall*.

In contrast, despite some national variation within the region, such care work is generally expected of Scandinavian modern dads and involved fatherhood has become the dominant ideal, Sweden spearheading the trend to the point where this form of fatherhood is not only seen to be the hegemonic masculinity in the country, but also constitutive of a national identity and an "important element in 'gender-equal Swedishness'" (Henriksson 39). In addition, the Scandinavian understanding and ideal of involved fatherhood goes beyond fathers contributing to childcare and other domestic tasks. As Thomas Johansson and Jesper Andreasson state: "The Nordic family model has also changed, from one that encourages men to support the mother in caring for the children, to one that stresses the importance of shared responsibility [...] it is just a matter of semantics, but as such it highlights parents' equal opportunities to work and care for their children" (8). Such seemingly subtle distinctions also lie at the heart of how the practices and properties of modern dads, otherwise a shared construct, may be understood differently in different ideological contexts.

Gender policies and practices usually seen as more progressive are among the ideological features of Scandinavian societies that have had a particular appeal abroad (e.g. Marklund), suggesting that they would be subject to "easy" importation into British culture in the manner that Griggs proposes. However, as the following analysis of the modern dad figure in the first seasons of the Scandinavian Nordic Noir series *The Killing* and *The Bridge* and the British *The Tunnel*, *Broadchurch*, and *The Fall* will show, there are notable differences in *how* this figure was represented in the two contexts in this period, implying that close attention to the ideological recontextualisation of the construct may reveal greater differences between the two cultures and their ideologically based interpretive reflexes and storytelling practices than initially meet the eye. Some aspects of the dominant Scandinavian gender ideology appear to have been unable to travel across the North Sea between 2007 and 2013.

THE KILLING (*FORBRYDELSEN*)

The consistent focus on fathers in Nordic Noir series started already in *The Killing*, and can be seen as one of the many aesthetic conventions and genre traits that the series established. Much attention has been devoted to the female protagonist of the series and the specific articulation of womanhood and motherhood that she exemplifies (see e.g. McCabe, Griggs). The image of the distant and inexpressive Sarah Lund in her woolly jumper has become emblematic of the series and the genre wherever the series has been broadcast. However, from a gender-ideological point of view, the portrayal of the various male characters in *The Killing* is equally, if not more, striking. In addition to the two main male characters, Jan Meyer and Theis Birk Larsen, there are many other minor characters that are explicitly marked as fathers and who embody a caring and empathetic form of fatherhood and manhood.

The dominant traits of one central modern dad character in the series, policeman Jan Meyer, find expression through their contrast to those of his colleague and superior, Sarah Lund. Her familial and romantic relationships are fraught or fractured; he is a loving husband and father in a close-knit family. She is emotionally distant; he senses how others think and is attuned to their emotional and other needs. Sarah Lund is consumed by work to the point of parental and familial neglect; Jan Meyer is happy to let his family intrude on his work life through visits and phone calls, but resents intrusions on his home life from work. It is in one of the instances when she makes him stay at work rather than go home—he wants to go home to care for his sick child—that he is killed in the line of duty in episode 18. The concern he has previously voiced to Sarah Lund that her life is collapsing because her inability to balance the demands of work and family is alienating her from her family, assumes a proleptic quality in retrospect, but not quite in the way he predicts: ironically enough it is *her* imposition of her priorities on him that takes *him* away from his family.

Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen also notes this contrast of "ambivalently gendered detectives" and the inclusion of "feminized male colleagues, who are emotionally intelligent and primarily devoted to their [...] fragile nuclear families" as a contrast to the female protagonists with traditionally masculine traits in *The Killing* and *The Bridge*, which he sees as an expression of a more sustained exploration of a "family crisis" in the two series (*Scandinavian Crime Fiction* 181; see also Creeber 23–4). However, Jan Meyer is not merely a "feminized male", but also exemplifies a form of manhood and fatherhood that is positively valorised in the series and presented as essential to the happiness of his family: the crisis in his family happens when he dies.

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The murder victim's father, Theis Birk Larsen, is the other major example of how normative fatherhood is typically represented in *The Killing*. On the surface, he might be an unlikely modern dad—he is a big and burly working-class man with a violent past—but his character traits are otherwise in full conformity with the expectations connected to modern notions of involved fatherhood. He is equally comfortable in an apron, with a child on his knee, or dealing with the sale of their house or fixing the dishwasher with duct tape, and the authority he enjoys at work is not undercut by his role in his family. Theis is both a fixer and a carer, and the domestic responsibilities in the Birk Larsen household are quite equally distributed between him and his wife. He cooks, does the school run, packs lunch boxes, does the dishes, and caters to everyone's needs at family functions. Theis also appears more attuned to his children's needs than their mother during the devastating process they are undergoing.[4] While his wife's focus mainly is on their dead daughter Nanna and the investigation into her murder, Theis remains attentive to the needs of her younger brothers, comforting them, caring for them, and making sure that their interests are taken into consideration. His interaction with the boys is close, intimate, and emotionally literate. Central to this intimacy is his close physical interaction with his sons: he strokes their hair, cuddles, hugs and kisses them, and puts them on his lap. This physical intimacy is never shown as problematic or suspect, but rather as a sign of a natural and close relationship between a father and his children.

The notion that fatherhood may serve as a protective bar against violent impulses and acts is a running theme in *The Killing*. Jan Meyer keeps asking male suspects whether they have children, and he treats fatherhood as an indication of their probable innocence. In like manner, one suspect uses the fact that he is about to become a father to argue for his innocence, and none of the other suspects in the case are primarily or predominantly marked as fathers. Similarly, Theis Birk Larsen's past may have been characterised by violence and crime, but he was reformed by fatherhood, progressing from aggression to empathy as he turned his life around. Relatedly, it is precisely the fact that a child is taken from him that unlocks his capacity for violence again. "You have lost a daughter", Meyer tells Theis's wife to explain why Theis may have kidnapped an early suspect in order to beat him in episode 9, suggesting not only that grief may have made him mad, but also that the protection fatherhood offers against the ability to do evil acts is one that may disintegrate as parental responsibilities disappear.

However, and significantly, the real danger to the Birk Larsen family is shown to have come from outside the family unit: their daughter's killer is an immature surrogate uncle figure who has inserted himself into the family. As Bruce Robbins argues, Vagn is "as close to being a member of the family as anyone can be without benefit of blood and marriage" and is an "almost-family member" (53), but he is neither part of the family proper nor presented as a father figure. Trying to explain to Theis why he killed his daughter in a Western-style confrontation in the season finale, he presents himself as the family's saviour, acting in desperation to protect the family by keeping the rebellious daughter in check—an explanation belied by the sexual sadism involved in her murder and his track record of having killed women before. He taunts Theis, egging him on to get him to kill him to avenge Nanna's death, using the father's emotional connection with his daughter to effect a sort of suicide by father, which he accomplishes. The real threat to the family—the impostor uncle from without—is thus finally neutralised. However, this is seen only to add to the tragedy rather than alleviating it, since it leaves another gap in the family: now the father will be missing from it, too. Rather than rectifying the initial loss of Nanna through the avenging of her murder, the consequent removal of a loving, caring contributor of emotional and domestic tasks overshadows any potential triumphs of retribution. As Theis is taken away in the police car at the end of the first season of the series, wiping his snot with big, handcuffed hands, and his wife takes the remaining two children into their home with her, the underlying message is that his absence from the family will be profound, and deeply felt.

THE BRIDGE (*BRON/BROEN*)

The other trendsetting Nordic Noir series, *The Bridge*, also has a sustained focus on fatherhood in different guises in all four seasons. Both the individual mysteries and the storylines concerning the two central male detectives revolve around issues connected to modern fatherhood. The

4 This is another genre-defining thematic innovation where the focus is not only on the family having to come to terms with the loss of a daughter and sister, but also on the intrusive and destructive effects that the ongoing police investigation is shown to have—a feature that is imported into many British Nordic Noir series.

modern dad is presented as a representative, "normal", and even normative figure throughout the series. Selfless fatherly love is a given, and the loss of a child is shown to affect fathers as much as mothers. This ideologically founded thematic pattern was established already in the first season, which abounds with male characters clearly marked as modern dads, which in turn is portrayed as a trait which enables empathy and disables evil in equal measure. Moreover, in this example of Scandinavian Nordic Noir, too, the killer comes from outside rather than from within the family. The focus on fatherhood is echoed in the season's interconnected storylines and in its main male character, the detective Martin Rohde. Rohde, like Meyer, is a modern dad who is juxtaposed with a less emotionally astute female counterpart, the (in)famous Saga Norén. As Gunhild Agger notes, he is "depicted as a kind, considerate man, endowed with the gift of empathy" (149). It is Rohde who has to step in to translate and convey to Norén what people may actually mean, feel, and think in given situations: he has the emotional and social skills that she lacks. His emotion-driven nature is also his Achilles heel: it has led him away from partners and children in the past and threatens to do the same now. As viewers first encounter him, he has recently undergone a vasectomy, which in this context is presented as an ambiguous image, simultaneously suggestive of virility and emasculation, perhaps pointing to a similar equivocality in the construct of the modern dad itself.

Like Jan Meyer, Martin Rohde allows his domestic responsibilities to bleed into his work life, and he shares the responsibility for childcare and domestic chores with his wife, who, like him, works outside of the family home. He arranges for his oldest son August to help with childminding when he is unable to leave work, and when his infidelity has banished him from home, he not only keeps asking how the children are doing in his absence, but also keeps coming back to check on them and pull his weight at home. He is close to his children, especially the younger ones, and covers for August and defends him when his stepmother complains that he does not contribute enough to their domestic duties. Rohde appears to have evolved as a father between his several "clutches" of children, and has progressively become more of a modern dad in later years. His younger children, a noisy, boisterous lot who eagerly run to greet him when he comes home, have grown up with a thoroughly modern dad, who is happy to give up his place in his bed to them when they have fallen asleep there, himself going to sleep in their bunk bed.

His relationship with August is more complicated, since he left the boy's mother for another woman when August was young, and the two subsequently had little contact. Rohde tries to rectify the consequences of his abandonment of his son and to repair their relationship throughout the season. He accepts responsibility for his shortcomings, agreeing with August that he has "been a bad father" during a confrontation in episode 6. Father and son have open, emotional, and direct conversations about their past and their relationship, and Rohde shows his affection for his son by being physically close to him, often caressing and stroking him. He keeps trying to interact with him and improve their relationship, and although August refuses his advances for a long time and criticises and opposes him, Rohde does not give up, and his son becomes progressively more open to contact.

The tragedy of the first season of *The Bridge* lies precisely in the fact that father and son are not allowed to complete the process of drawing as near to each other as both would have liked. In order to avenge what he sees as Rohde's role in the loss of his own son, the killer goes for the detective's jugular, and that is Rohde's son. As Saga suggests in episode 10, the killer wants Rohde "to suffer as much as he has suffered", taking his son for the loss of his own. When Rohde asks him to let his son go and punish him instead, the matter-of-fact response is that "I thought that was what I was doing", implying that punishing a father through his child is the worst form of punishment imaginable and that he has identified the point where his opponent will be hurt the most: his fatherly love. It is significant that he has exploited the weakness in Rohde's fathering in the exacting of his eye-for-an-eye revenge: he has gained August's trust by plugging the gap left by Rohde's inattention to his son's need for closeness which was brought about by the policeman's desertion of his first family.

Although the detective is far from a perfect father, the depth of his love cannot be questioned. In the words of his son in episode 10: "He knows full well that he isn't perfect. But he is as good as he can be". He may be a flawed modern dad, but that still remains the norm and ideal upheld by the Scandinavian series, and he is punished severely for those flaws. His son's brutal murder, shown in graphic detail as he is left to suffocate to death, with his father as a powerless

bystander who can do nothing to save him and is forced to listen to his killer's taunts: "You'll never know if he suffered. If he was scared. If he cried. If it was a long and painful death. You'll never have a body to bury". And as the series' first season draws to a close, the devastating consequences of the father's loss are brought to the fore: Rohde is shown howling in emotional pain in a hospital, his grief raw, visceral, and guilt-ridden.

In both these Nordic Noir series, the figure of the modern dad is consistently portrayed in a positive light. He is the embodiment of an uncontested ideological ideal, and has incorporated with ease and success character traits and tasks traditionally associated with women: he is an equal participant in the domestic sphere and takes his familial duties as seriously as he does his work life and he has the capacity for empathy and smooth social interaction. His selfless love for his children is never seriously called into question and typically finds expression through close physical contact with his children, a contact which is portrayed as both natural and devoid of danger. And, importantly, the modern dad never turns out to be the killer in the Scandinavian Nordic Noir series. Instead, the characteristics that make him a modern dad, portrayed as innate rather than enforced upon him, are precisely those that prevent violence, abuse, and murder.

THE TUNNEL

The Tunnel is one of the remakes of *The Bridge*, recontextualising it from Denmark/Sweden to Britain/France. As tends to be the case with such adaptations, the new version does not stray far from the plot lines or characters of the original series. The character pair of the socially adept and emotion-driven male detective and the insensitive and hyper-rational female detective is kept, and the modifications of the plot lines are not extensive. In addition to the framing of the main male character as a modern dad, the central trope of the clashing of two national cultures is also retained, but recontextualised. The distribution of domestic responsibilities between men and women as portrayed in the two versions is a pertinent example of the ideological recontextualisation the remake nonetheless effects: the British norm as articulated in the British/French series is distinctly different from the corresponding Scandinavian norm as it finds expression in both *The Bridge* and *The Killing* (and other Nordic Noir series). The picture painted of British society is one in which there is no room for children in fathers' workplaces: there are no fathers who take their sick children to work, the implication being that children belong in the domestic sphere, presumably with their mothers, whose work life in turn is shown to be tailored to fit around the needs of the children. In *The Tunnel*, it is only mothers who are shown to accommodate childcare and integrate their home and work lives, fathers being free to focus on work alone during the day—or, seen from a different perspective, being barred from the position of primary caregiver for their children and seen as less essential members of the household—and then chip in if necessary at home when the work day has ended. They may participate in the running of the household and contribute to childcare, but the British fathers represented here, unlike the Scandinavian dads, are portrayed as *helping out* rather than *doing their share*, and this seemingly small detail points to profound differences in the ideological underpinnings and understandings of modern fatherhood in Britain and Scandinavia.

Given the close adaptive relationship between an original and a remake, it is not surprising that there are many similarities in the representation of Martin Rohde in British guise, modern dad Karl Roebuck. In fact, several of the traits associated with involved fatherhood are magnified in Roebuck; he comes across as a softer and gentler man, mild-mannered and physically less imposing and less obviously virile (despite the fact that he, like Rohde, has had a vasectomy). Predominantly marked as a father in the same way as the main male characters in the Scandinavian version, he differs from them by the fact that it is his kindness that is consistently presented as his distinguishing feature and main characteristic. As Adam, his oldest son and the equivalent to the Danish August, is dying in the series' final episode, for instance, he not only says that he has always loved his father, but pinpoints "his kindness" as his main trait, whereas August, in contrast, is unspecific about what is good about his father, saying only that there are "some very good things" to say about him. Roebuck is also a more involved father with his third "clutch" of children, phoning and visiting them during his separation from his wife, offering to help when she is ill and comfortably expressing his love for them and playing with them.

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Roebuck does not achieve the same level of intimacy with his firstborn, however, and their father-son relationship contrasts with that portrayed in *The Bridge*. Unlike in the Scandinavian original, it is his new wife who mediates between father and son, it is the son rather than the father who takes the initiative for them to connect on an intimate level, and Roebuck fails to see his son's need to engage with him physically and emotionally. "My dad doesn't really do touchy-feely", Adam succinctly explains in episode 9. Roebuck's expressions of love are indirect and masked, often taking the form of affectionate banter rather than explicit and unambiguous declarations of affection—the function of "stupid bastard" as a term of endearment arguably being more common in Britain than in Scandinavia.

Paradoxically, the British modern dad and his eldest son are never closer than as the latter is dying, and after his death. This is often shown via depictions of their memories of Karl's bedside reading of Adam's favourite book, and they both remember, reference, and re-enact this potent symbol of parent-child intimacy, thus emphasising their shared longing for their early, uncomplicated, and loving attachment. This is echoed in the fact that after Adam's death, Karl sleeps in his bed, which hints that he longs for a physical and emotional intimacy that was lost between them for many years and that they will now never have again. Karl Roebuck's grief is also framed in more romantic or melancholy terms than was Martin Rohde's: the Danish father's animalistic howl from a hospital bed is replaced by the British father lying in his dead son's bed while his bedtime reading session is heard in voiceover. Moreover, Adam's death is depicted in less graphic and violent terms than was August's; rather than being shut into a wall and left to suffocate, as August was, Adam's death is occasioned by the killer giving him morphine to "put him to sleep", and he is said not to "have suffered at all". Even the killer's mode of engagement with the son he murders in order to avenge the death of his own is altered in the same direction, and this plot twist receives a particular significance when seen in the light of the ideological recontextualisation of fatherhood: he also re-enacts a scene of parental love by cuddling and comforting his adversary's son as he is dying, achieving a form of paternal physical intimacy by proxy. As a result, intimacy and closeness are now not only shown to be central to fatherhood, but also to be potentially imbued with danger. The conceptualisation of physically intimate interaction between men and children appears to have crossed a tipping point as *The Bridge* has become *The Tunnel*.

BROADCHURCH

Broadchurch charts the search for the killer of eleven-year-old Danny Latimer, and the series explores how what is described in episode 4 as a "Quiet estate. Idyllic market town. The definition of normal" is shaken to its core through intimate portrayals of the ramifications of the murder for Broadchurch's individuals and families. It is mainly this sustained, intimate, and drawn-out focus on the *effects* of murder that affiliates it with the Nordic Noir crime series, most notably *The Killing*, and this British series also conforms to the televisual aesthetics of the Scandinavian generic precursors through the use of such elements as a dramatic score, the interweaving of many individual storylines, and the strong visual presence of the physical surroundings. As such, it undergoes a form of cultural and aesthetic recontextualisation in which the generic properties are kept and relocated, but where themes, characters, and plots are associated with the new context. Unlike remakes like *The Tunnel*, however, series like *Broadchurch* and *The Fall* are what John M. Desmond and Peter Hawkes would label loose adaptations of Nordic Noir series (3), or, to use Julie Sanders's framework for understanding, *appropriations* of the genre (35–6). The gender-related ideological content of the Scandinavian series is also recontextualised to allow it to speak to a British audience, and most characters in the series arguably conform to a more traditional gendered distribution of attributes and responsibilities than is represented in the model displayed in Scandinavian Nordic Noir series. This applies to the main characters too: DS Ellie Miller and DI Alec Hardy do not disrupt gender-based expectations relating to their qualities and actions in the same way that the two Scandinavian detective pairs do. Miller's work and domestic identities are blended throughout, and the border between her work life and her private life is porous, the one constantly bleeding into the other. Hardy's private life, on the other hand, is consistently kept out of view for the main bulk of the first season of *Broadchurch* and is not in focus until he has been firmly established as first and foremost a policeman.

A key theme of *Broadchurch* is the exploration of the potentially predatory nature of the modern male caregiver. Echoed and mirrored in other subplots and characters, it is especially central to the character of Joe Miller, DS Miller's husband and prototypical "new man" and modern dad, who in the season finale is revealed to be Danny's killer. Joe is the only modern dad in the series, and he is marked as such from the outset and portrayed in that light throughout, exhibiting many of the traits associated with nurturing fatherhood. He gave up his job as a paramedic when his youngest son was born and has been a stay-at-home dad since then. Throughout the series, he is shown as the primary caregiver in the household; he cooks, cleans, cares, and multitasks, and serves as the practical and emotional mainstay of the family while his wife attempts to climb the ranks of the Dorset police. Caring and empathetic, he appears to be a natural in the role of modern dad. It is only in retrospect that his actions appear suspect, although the scoring of otherwise innocent situations may subtly suggest otherwise, such as when the act of gently stroking his son's hand is accompanied by the sound of heartbeats in the second episode or when dark music is heard as he stands alone by the skateboard rink where his son plays after having spoken innocently and generally to his wife about being under suspicion in episode 6.

It is also striking that it is precisely his capacity for caring fatherliness that brings him in close contact with his young victim. Part of the reason for their evolving closeness has to do with the fact that modern dad Joe can provide what Danny's own, more old-school, father cannot: he comforts and cares for the boy when his father has hit him, and their relationship becomes more intimate as a result. He thus rectifies a shortcoming in Mark Latimer's model of fatherhood by offering Danny more physical and emotional closeness than his father can. At the same time, however, the new model of fatherhood that Joe represents is also shown to have shortcomings of its own, such as the inherent other-orientedness of the role of primary caregiver: "I wanted something that was mine", he says in the series' eighth and final episode, further explaining that "Ellie has her job. Tom does his own thing. But Danny ... I felt like he needed me". Whether it is being needed or Danny himself that is the "something" that is "mine" remains an open question, pointing to further ambivalences in the representation of Joe's version of fathering.

The main problem in Joe's dealings with eleven-year-old Danny is the ambiguity of the physical side of their relationship. It is revealed in the season finale that the two have had an arrangement where they "meet up and hug" in secret, and it is when Danny wants to stop doing this and threatens to tell his father about what they have been doing that Joe desperately tries to silence him. The situation escalates further when Danny refuses to promise not to tell and confronts Joe with the sexual desire that he thinks is masked by their hugs, and Joe shouts as he strangles him that he "should not say those things about me! I helped you! And you won't spoil it! You do not spoil it!" in response to indirectly being labelled a paedophile. "I am not that man!", he vehemently protests as he silences a voice that he does not want to hear. The phrase "that man" points to another culturally significant masculine (stereo)type central to British culture and *Broadchurch* alike, namely that of "the paedo". Joe resists the identification with this construct to the point of murder, and he insists that his feelings for the young boy were romantic rather than sexual in nature. The main focus of the other characters appears to be to ascertain whether he has sexually abused Danny, and his refusal is generally met with disbelief. "That's not me, I only ever cared for him", he protests when confronted, and the double meaning of the phrase "cared for" is inescapable, injecting as it does a sense of inappropriate bonding into the practice of caretaking.

Determining whether Joe Miller is "a paedo"—whether he is indeed "that man"—becomes the main target of Hardy's interview with him after his arrest. The attempt to define the relationship between the boy and the grown man becomes a project of establishing the borderlines between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact in order to ascertain to which side of the demarcation line Miller belongs. Central to this endeavour is determining the nature of their hugs, going into minute detail to try to make sense of them, where such things as whether they happened standing up or sitting down become key. The preoccupation with the nature of hugs between adults and children is not an isolated phenomenon, but is a subtheme that runs throughout the series and finds expression in relation to several characters. Importantly, suspicion connected to the nature of physical intimacy between adults and children is a distinctly gendered phenomenon: the potentially suspect hug is one that takes place between a man and a child, not a woman and a child, indicating a similar mistrust of male physical

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intimacy with children more generally which contrasts with the Scandinavian depiction of such interaction as inherently asexual and unproblematic.

This finds succinct expression in the juxtaposition of two otherwise similar characters: Beth Latimer, Danny's mother, and Jack Marshall, an early suspect of Danny's murder who has also lost a young son. They both ask to hug other boys, using them as stand-ins for their own lost sons, but while Beth's hug with Tom is only seen as a poignant reminder of the need to fill the void left at the loss of Danny, Jack's hugs are seen as far less innocent by other characters. This gendered distinction is part of the ideological framework for understanding that the series' creators play into—and play with. Jack may protest that he is "not that kind of man", echoing Joe Miller's professions, and his hugs may be exactly the same in kind as Beth's, but they will not be understood as such from the outside: "They say I wanted to hug the boys because I'm a paedophile. It was never that. I missed my boy. I missed touching him, holding him. I miss my boy every day. What sort of world is this, Mark, where it's wrong for a man to seek affection?" Jack asks in episode 5, simultaneously rhetorically asking the audience the same question. His pointed observation that the mistrust surrounding his dealings with young boys is nothing more than a way of "seeing depravity in perfectly normal behaviour" is eventually proven right. The general belief that a man's hugs are inherently suspect is thus implicitly criticised, a point emphasised by Jack's tragic suicide in the face of a media frenzy and "Hugs for the boys" tabloid headlines.

However, this problematisation of the attribution of sexual motives to male intimacy is undercut by the plot resolution. As modern dad Joe is revealed to be the killer, the cultural anxiety connected to the modern dad and the form of nurture he represents comes to the fore, completing the process of ideological recontextualisation of the construct. Whereas in *The Bridge* and *The Killing*, the danger was seen to come from outside the family unit, the threat to the family and its children here comes from within, the modern dad himself, even when, as in *Broadchurch*, the killer is a substitute father figure to his victim. Echoing the subtle alterations made in *The Tunnel*, moreover, physical intimacy between men and children has become potentially dangerous as the construct of the modern dad has travelled from Scandinavia to Britain. A hug that is innocent in one context is suspect in another, and the culturally and ideologically determined expected response to an image of a man hugging a child also changes as a result, one ideological context predominantly framing as a sign of potential "depravity" what in another is understood as "perfectly normal behaviour".

THE FALL

The Fall also appropriates the Nordic Noir format and shares several of the thematic preoccupations and aesthetic tropes of Scandinavian crime series, most notably *The Bridge*. Set in a dark and violent modern-day Belfast, the first season of the series centres on the villain, modern dad Paul Spector. It shows in graphic detail his sexualised and murderous assaults on women which take place alongside a seemingly happy family life. Unlike in the series discussed above, there is no detective character pair with contrasting qualities in *The Fall*; the glamorous, cold, and unattached DSU Stella Gibson mainly works on her own. With some exceptions, such as Gibson and the grieving father of one of the victims, characters tend to act in accordance with traditional gender patterns, and the Belfast portrayed is a place where women and men tend to keep to their separate spheres, forming a backdrop against which the modern dad as exemplified by Paul Spector stands out.

The ideological recontextualisation of the modern dad is taken a step further in *The Fall*: the construct has progressed from being seen as an uncontested norm in the Scandinavian Nordic Noir series to having become a dual figure with a dangerous dark side in this example of British Nordic Noir. Prone to what in the series is termed "doubling" in episode 5, what Spector presents on the surface is distinctly different from the evil that lurks beneath the modern dad façade—he is away on murderous rampages when he is supposed to be minding his children at night and his caring and empathetic front masks thoroughgoing sexual sadism. As Glen Creeber notes, he is "an unlikely serial killer, a handsome, happily married bereavement counsellor who appears devoted to his two young children" (30). His identity as a serial killer is revealed at the very outset of the series, the focus instead resting on describing who he is and what he does, the plot consequently becoming more a game of cat and mouse than a whodunnit. The

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premise of his dual nature and the conflation with the role of modern dad thus frames the season as a whole and remains a key feature throughout.

Paul Spector is a prototypical British modern dad. Although his wife appears to have the overriding responsibility for the running of the household, despite also working outside the home, he does contribute to a much greater extent than is common in a more traditional family: he takes the children to school, makes them lunch, bathes them, and engages with them both through loving banter and direct physical and verbal expressions of love. His job as a bereavement counsellor and his volunteer work on a suicide hotline can also be seen as stereotypically feminine, relying as they both do on care work and empathetic involvement. Underneath this layer of respectability and caring and involved fatherhood lies a monster—a sexual sadist who repeatedly and remorselessly engages in extreme violence, sexualised torture, and murder. The modern dad killer oscillates between the two sides, or layers, of his character with apparent ease. He lovingly winks at his daughter in the rearview mirror of the car as they drive past the scene of one of his murders, and he watches news stories about the murder while she is drawing in the same room.

Spector's dual nature—and, by extension, the inherent ambiguity of the construct of the modern dad—is emphasised in scenes showing how not only his character, but also his language, is layered: the doubling of his personality is echoed by a form of rhetorical doubling. One of the scenes in the first episode where the integration of verbal and thematic doubling comes to the fore takes place at night. His daughter has been taken into the parental bed after waking from a nightmare and, having helped console her, he goes to her bed to go to sleep. The attic, where he stores a diary with drawings and writings connected to his crimes, is accessed from her room, and he often goes there as she is sleeping to hide or collect his murder paraphernalia. He gets the diary and brings it to the child's bed to work on it, slipping it under the pillow as his wife enters the room. As she asks him what he thinks is going on in their daughter's mind, his response has an obvious dual reference for viewers, if not for her: "No one knows what goes on in someone else's mind; life would be intolerable if we did". A further irony is that it is his diary and other murder-related paraphernalia that have occasioned his daughter's persistent nightmares, serving as one of many indications that his two opposing sides—caring father and cold murderer—are intertwined and affect each other, his dark side continuously infecting areas of innocence.

The intrusion of Spector's innate darkness into his daughter's bedroom is a recurring image throughout the first season of *The Fall*, and the perforation of the boundaries between his good and evil sides is often shown in relation to his daughter (his younger son is a far more peripheral figure in the series). This is shown in scenes where his dark thoughts and memories intrude into otherwise innocent situations where she is involved. In a scene where he bathes his daughter in episode 2, for instance, he smiles sweetly as he washes her hair in a way that mirrors the way that he has previously bathed a dead victim, he holds her close to him and gifts her a pendant that he has taken as a souvenir from the murder scene, and persistent cross-cuts to the autopsy of one of his victims also contribute to turning what could have been an idyllic scene of care and intimacy into something altogether darker. His removal of the pendant from his daughter's neck to avoid incrimination in episode 5 also occurs in a situation of equal parts intimacy and danger, as it happens when he discovers that she has crept into his bed and fallen asleep snuggled close to his blood-spattered face.

Moreover, Spector often uses his good side—his role as an involved and caring father—as a means to cover his dark deeds. A trip with his daughter to the Botanic Gardens is motivated by his desire to spy on a prospective victim, and his perfect conformity to the role of the modern dad enables him to get close to her and even bring an admiring smile to the face of her sister. He also uses his role as modern dad as an alibi when confronted by the police in the season finale, claiming that he "was with the children"—"Fed them, bathed them, put them to bed"—at the time of one of the sadistic attacks. However, his dark side never quite disappears, and the duality of this modern dad is emphasised in the final scene of the season: as he, having narrowly escaped arrest, drives away with his family in their Volvo, the children happily singing in the back seat, we see flashbacks to images of his killing spree as he starts singing along.

The modern dad as depicted in the three British series displays some distinct differences from his Nordic counterpart: the hero of many Scandinavian Nordic Noir series has now become a villain; close interaction and loving intimacy have gone from being a positively valorised, innocent component of fathering to being imbued with danger; involved fatherhood no longer serves as a shield against violence, but instead provokes or enables criminal acts of violent and sexual transgression. If seen in terms of the degree to which the concept is reworked, ambivalences and ambiguities connected to modern fatherhood were introduced in *The Tunnel*, and the potentially suspect nature of the modern dad was thoroughly explored in *Broadchurch*, but *The Fall* takes this even further: the modern dad goes from having a potential shadow side to being a complete Jekyll and Hyde-style dual figure. The underlying assumption seems to be that the male heart cannot be completely pure, and that the potential for violence and aggressive sexuality is so embedded in men's inherent nature that it cannot be overwritten by new expectations of care work and emotional and physical closeness. Stella Gibson may voice still-prevalent understandings of men's nature in her comment to Paul Spector at the end of the first season of *The Fall*: "You're a slave to your desires. You have no control at all. You're weak". Similarly, viewers are perhaps indirectly asked to treat the modern dad with the same degree of suspicion that Alec Hardy asks of Ellie Miller when he tells her not to trust anyone, but which she does not apply to the sight of her husband's protective arm around their son in their bed immediately afterwards in the second episode of *Broadchurch*. Men, forever slaves to their desires, are not to be fully trusted around children. This ideological premise, which is not present in the Nordic crime series, may go some way towards explaining why the modern dad is portrayed so differently in British and Scandinavian Nordic Noir series.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the contrasts between the presentations of the modern dad in the Scandinavian and British crime series in the period between 2007 and 2013 demonstrate, they articulate very different ideological bases for conceptualisations of manhood and fatherhood. As the televisual format of Nordic Noir was appropriated, typical themes, plot lines, and character types underwent ideological recontextualisation. In this process, the representation of the construct of the modern dad especially has been transformed, which suggests that despite an apparent cultural fascination for the Scandinavian construct, certain elements central to it did *not* travel to Britain in this period.

A central premise for this discussion is the view that TV series, like novels and other art forms, can be seen to represent cultural realities and address pressing concerns in the contexts in which they are produced. It goes without saying that they are not perfect reflections of their complex and manifold surroundings: not all men in all Scandinavian countries embrace new forms of fatherhood without resistance and not all men in Britain are faced with the same set of cultural expectations of what fatherhood might be. Still, they do represent a given version of an ideological context that needs to be distilled enough to work within the series format and recognisable enough to be immediately understood by their primary audiences; images like those of a man hugging a child, a dad in an apron, or a father and child sharing a bed rely on shared assumptions of what they mean, both when they are used to confirm expectations and to subvert them. As such, they are representations of their ideological contexts, the contents of which become more visible as ideologically founded constructs and aspects are recontextualised. Studying such processes of ideological recontextualisation through comparative analysis may ultimately serve to make implicit cultural assumptions more explicit. Investigating what does and does not travel fosters an increased awareness of what is often taken for granted within a given culture: precisely which behaviours and characteristics are typically associated with caring and involved fatherhood in Scandinavia and Britain become clearer when respective representations are seen in comparison to each other in the otherwise similar generic and medial surroundings that the Nordic Noir crime series format has engendered.

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