

Loss of the Swedish Idyll and Xenophobia: Criminal Detective Kurt Wallander in Henning Mankell's *Faceless Killers*

Joydeep Bhattacharyya

Abstract

Swedish crime fiction writer, Henning Mankell, introduces his police detective Kurt Wallander in the first novel of the Wallander series, *Faceless Killers*. This paper studies the issue of xenophobia in the Swedish context, and how it affects the protagonist of the novel, criminal detective Kurt Wallander, who, although maintains his apolitical worldview, laments the loss of the Swedish idyll. The first section, titled 'Swedish Nationalism and the "Other"', focuses on the aspect of the postcolonial "other" in Mankell's *Faceless Killers*. The second section, "Xenophobia and a Scathing Criticism of the Right-Winged Nationalism", expounds on how Mankell, through his criminal detective, Kurt Wallander, criticises hardcore and headstrong nationalism supported by the right-winged populace. The third section of the paper, "Kurt Wallander, Xenophobia and loss of the Idyll" exposes how for Wallander, the political upheaval and the social chaos ultimately lead to the loss of the idyll that he has been associating with the Swedish countryside. The "Concluding Remarks" of the paper expound upon Wallander's way of coping with the changing notion of the idyll.

Keywords: Henning Mankell, Faceless Killers, Kurt Wallander, Xenophobia, Idyll.

Introductory Remarks

Henning Mankel's *Faceless Killers* is the first novel of the Inspector Kurt Wallander series. Mankell published the novel in 1991 as *Mördare utan ansikte* and was first translated in 1997 by Steven Murray. The novel is set in the town of Ystad and its surrounding areas, which are sparsely populated, and the villages are occupied by old Swedish farmers. A recently divorced policeman, Kurt Wallander, lived in Mariagatan in Central Ystad (Mankell 2002, 8) and is the forty-year-old "criminal detective in Ystad who had the most experience"

Joydeep Bhattacharyya (joydeep174@gmail.com) teaches at the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITM), Noida.

(ibid., 16). As Barry Forshaw notes, “Mankell unflinchingly exposes the deep divisions in the society of that country, along with a variety of seemingly ineradicable social problems and the darker recesses of the psyches of his fellow countrymen and women.” (Forshaw 2013, 15)

Literature Survey

An inquiry into the available literature on Henning Mankell and *Faceless Killers* reveals that though not many scholarly essays exist on this topic, certain scholars working on the genre of Scandinavian crime fiction have produced some seminal works regarding the concerned writer and his novel. To begin with, in the introduction of *The Crime Fiction Handbook*, Peter Messent attempts to locate Henning Mankell within the genealogy of detective fiction writers. He writes that the modern form of detective fiction is derived from a few stories by Edgar Allen Poe, whose French detective, Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin, provides the model for Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes. However, it is Doyle and his creation Holmes who popularised the genre. In his footsteps are writers like Agatha Christie, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Georges Simenon, Patricia Highsmith, Henning Mankell, and Stied Larsson (Messent 2013, 4). In another scholarly work, while commenting on Henning Mankell and his corpus of works, Stafford Hildred notes that in 1989, after Mankell returned to Sweden followed by a long stay in Africa,

The passionate humanitarian was horrified by the rising xenophobia that seemed to have gripped his homeland while he had been away. Sweden had long had a proud record of warmly welcoming refugees from all over the world but Mankell detected a growing resentment against all immigrants. He wanted to write about this disturbing change in attitudes and he decided that, as xenophobia was a crime, he needed a police officer to take action. (Hildred 2010, xii)

In a similar tone, Barry Forshaw in “Sweden’s Trojan Horse: Kurt Wallander” expounds upon Henning Mankell’s popularity as a crime fiction writer. He quotes his meeting with Mankell himself, who tells him, “I have no complaints – it might be said that the crime fiction I’ve written has acted as a kind of locomotive, dragging the wagons of my other writing along behind.” (Forshaw 2013, 20)

Furthermore, few scholarly works comment specifically on Kurt Wallander and *Faceless Killers*. Importantly, Slavoj Zizek notes the structure of the crime novels featuring Henning Mankell’s Kurt Wallander and draws a relation between the novels and immigrants. He writes,

Most of Mankell’s police stories—set in the southern Swedish town of Ystad, with Inspector Kurt Wallander as their hero—follow the same formula: they start with a

brief prologue set in a poor Third World country, then the novel proper moves to Ystad. The Other of today's World History, poor Third World countries, is thus inscribed into the universe of the Wallander novels; this big Other of World History has to remain in the background, as the distant Absent Cause. (Zizek 2006, 128)

Additionally, in his comparative study on Henning Mankell's *Faceless Killers* and Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen comments on both the creator and his immortal creation. He writes that whereas Mankell's intention regarding the Wallander series was to initiate an investigation into the deterioration of social consciousness in Sweden (Stougaard-Nielsen 2017, 90), "Kurt Wallander is a Swedish everyman, whose anxiety about this new age, an age he repeatedly admits he does not understand, makes him a reflector for a wider national confusion about morality and solidarity in the multicultural society" (ibid., 91). Later, he goes on to add,

There seems little doubt that Mankell intended the readers of *Faceless Killers* in early-nineties Sweden to explore this connection between widespread xenophobic fears of the subjective violence of immigrant Others and the systemic violence of xenophobic policies that are turning a formerly and famously progressive solidaristic and humanitarian nation into a peripheral, anxiety-ridden anachronism. (ibid., 96)

About Kurt Wallander, Barry Forshaw, in "The Cracks Appear: Henning Mankell", notes that Mankell's dyspeptic detective is one of the "signal creations of contemporary crime fiction: out of condition, diabetes-suffering and with all the headaches of modern society leaving scars on his soul" (Forshaw 2012, 21). Furthermore, regarding Wallander, Shane McCorrstine, in "The Place of Pessimism in Henning Mankell's Kurt Wallander Series", writes, "The figure of Wallander was created, therefore, out of an ideological urge, as an agent of criticism with which Mankell could probe Swedish attitudes towards the place of non-Swedes and thereby diagnose the broader path of Swedish society with the aid of a hard-boiled and frequently cynical foil" (McCorrستine 2011, 78). Interestingly, while quoting Lundin's idea of 'Ulcer School', Katarina Gregersdotter observes that a specific sub-genre of Swedish crime fiction has been termed 'Ulcer School' which suggests that the concerned police investigators are physically and psychologically affected by the society. She considers Kurt Wallander as one of the representatives of the 'Ulcer School' and adds that "he could be seen as a typical workaholic, but his never-ending internal monologue concerning the state (and health) of society taken together with his physique invites the interpretation that his body can be seen as a metaphor for the society in which he lives and works" (Gregersdotter 2013, 84). Lastly, commenting on the geospatial setting of the novel, Anna Westerståhl Stenport argues that the locale used by Mankell is highly problematic as it is accessible both by the Baltic seashore as well as by the east European countries. Furthermore, the location used by Mankell is inhabited by Swedish xenophobic groups and Neo-Nazis. (Stenport 2007, 4-5)

Swedish Nationalism and the “Other”

“Other” and “Othering” refers to the process of distinguishing the self. In a postcolonial context, these terms fundamentally critique the construction and validation of the normative, leading to an alternative knowledge system. In *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin expound upon these two terms and note, “In general terms, the ‘other’ is anyone who is separate from one’s self. The existence of others is crucial in defining what is ‘normal’ and in locating one’s own place in the world” (Ashcroft et al. 2007, 154). About “Othering”, they note, “Othering describes the various ways in which colonial discourse produces its subjects” (Ashcroft et al. 2007, 156). Furthermore, in the Preface of *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, Leela Gandhi notes that even in the current global discourse, there is an ongoing trend of rendering non-Western knowledge and culture as the ‘other’ due to the non-conformity of the oriental knowledge system to the constructed normative of the occident. She further adds that the ‘other’ derives its validation about the ‘self’ and, “Rarely does it engage with the theoretical self-sufficiency of African, Indian, Korean, Chinese knowledge systems, or foreground those cultural and historical conversations which circumvent the Western world” (Gandhi 1998, ix-x). In the context of Sweden, Tobias Hübinette writes, “In contemporary Sweden, being white means being Swede and being non-white means being non-Swedish regardless if the non-white person is culturally Swedish and was born or grew up and lived most of her life in Sweden” (Hübinette 2012, 45). In Mankell’s *Faceless Killers*, there is an omnipresent dichotomy between the self and the other. Throughout the novel, there is a dominating and recurring notion that argues that the self and the other are different. Since the foreigners are the others, their otherness ought to be maintained by not allowing them to amalgamate with the self, where the self represents the homogenous Swedish identity.

To begin with, there is a widespread distrust brewing against the political asylum seekers. There is a rampant feeling of xenophobia against the “other” who posit a danger to the Swedish identity. This aspect is revealed by two factions—one consisting of extreme nationalists, like Valfrid Strom and Rune Bergman, who retort to open violence against poor asylum seekers and brutally murder a Somali man with nine children. The other faction consists of some of the common people of Sweden, and, in one instance, after recognising Wallander (probably from television), the doorman of a restaurant confesses that he thinks that the political refugees need to be kept under surveillance, and adds, “keeping those damned niggers on a short leash. What kind of shit are we letting into this country, going around killing old people? I’m with you, we should kick ‘em all out. Chase ‘em out with a stick.” (Mankell 2002, 137)

In the wake of globalisation, the State is expected to be liberal humanist in its political outlook. But a close look at the composition of the police force of Ystad police station questions the same philanthropic motives that the State is expected to uphold. One such representative of

the State is the chief of the Ystad police station, Bjork. Although he tries to be a liberal State representative, he fails to take into consideration the differences between the asylum seekers. To begin with, for Bjork, all European identities outside Sweden are rather homogeneous in nature, and he confuses the chief eye-witness as a Yugoslav woman instead of a Romanian national. (ibid., 206) This callous attitude is not expected from the chief of the Ystad police station, especially when he is aware that the Romanian woman is the sole eyewitness to confirm the identity of Rune Bergman, an accomplice in the murder of the Somali migrant. As the narrative voice notes, Bjork (though not exceedingly sharp as a policeman) is concerned about the reputation of the police force, and even in the current context, he is not lax in any sense. But his inherent failure to realise and understand the difference between the identities of both the victim and the eye-witness forces one to re-think if State representatives like Bjork really believe in the Swedish government policies and how sincere is he in upholding the same. This becomes even more apparent, as even the Somali victim is just another Negro for him. Interestingly, both Bjork and Wallander's father, Wallander senior, refer to the Somali refugee and Mboya (Linda's apparent boyfriend) as negroes, giving more importance to race than nationalities. It is only Wallander who, throughout the novel, maintains their nationalities, never confuses them, and later in the novel, refers to Mboya as the "Kenyan medical student" (ibid., 254) (though initially, as long as he didn't know Mboya personally, he was a "coal black man") (ibid., 136). In retrospect, though the cantankerous octogenarian Wallander senior (Kurt's father) can be excused (he was respectful while describing Mboya), one needs to think about Bjork.

Also, this all-pervading presence of the foreign is felt by Wallander, and this aspect is tactfully captured through Wallander's dreams. Though he is divorced, he repeatedly dreams of a Black woman who gratifies him sensually (ibid., 7). Later in the novel, the third person narrative voice notes, "He wondered why it was that in his dreams he had an erotic obsession that was so different from his experience with Mona" (ibid., 119). In this context, Shane McCorristine also writes, "Wallander's repression of his politically incorrect beliefs finds expression in the dream of sexual transgression with the black woman at the start of *Faceless Killers*." (McCorristine 2011, 79)

Xenophobia and a Scathing Criticism of the Right-Winged Nationalism

Commenting on migrants in general, Phyllis Marie Jensen notes that the "migrants coming to newlands may evoke mixed emotions in residents, ranging from idealisation to paranoid anxiety. There are three levels of migrants' reception: government, society, and community, and three possible responses: exclusion, passive acceptance, and active encouragement (Jensen 2020, 4). In a similar fashion, Kelly McKowen and John Borneman opine that "the most critical long-term issue posed by migration to and across Europe is not the multiplicity of diversities, however, but the confrontation with particular forms of difference that challenge the integrity of extant social bodies and create the possibility for reconfiguring circuits of

mutual belonging” (McKowen and Borneman 2020, 2). Taking this cue further, in his blatant criticism of right-winged nationalism, Alex Sager, in his “Introduction”, writes that nationalism is innately associated with preconceived biases, in which movements of migrants are either ignored or tagged as abnormal (Sager 2018, 3). Borrowing from De Genova and Peutz, he argues that these biases consider “migration as an unfortunate response to poverty or to violence that should be prevented if possible” (ibid., 4). Sager further states that the State has “erected walls, intercepted ships, built detention centers, restricted criteria for asylum, and partnered with foreign governments to keep people in their place” (ibid., 4). Later, he adds that nationalism assumes that the society is “bounded by impermeable national borders” and that leads to a situation where the mobility of immigrants is restricted, and “they find that their ethnicity or their legal and economic status confines them to or excludes them from neighbourhoods and public spaces” (ibid., 6).

Similarly, blatantly and openly, Mankell criticises the right-wing nationalists in *Faceless Killers*. The right-winged nationalists are against immigrants and consider them a hindrance to the smooth running of the State. Within the continuous interplay of the past and the present, the novel establishes that there is a substantial fraction of the population who rejects the liberal idea of acceptance of refugees within the host country. National identity is important for them, and after learning about the involvement of some foreigners in the murder of the old couple, they create a ruckus. It is also revealed that they have been openly hostile towards immigrants in the past as well. The third-person narrative voice notes,

There was one thing he was quite sure of. The threat had to be taken seriously. In the past year, there had been too many incidents that confirmed that these were well-organised factions that would not hesitate to resort to open violence against foreigners living in Sweden or refugees seeking asylum. (Mankell 2002, 82-83)

Wallander self-reflects that the local Swedish population has been vocally resenting and registering their displeasure at the setting up of the refugee camp in the old castle of Hageholm since they consider that the castle is a part of their cultural heritage, which they are highly reluctant to share with the “other” or the non-Swedes and, as a result, “hostility to refugees was flaring up” (ibid., 42). In the present, there are constant attacks or attempts of attack on immigrants by the right-winged nationalist faction. While some of the attacks on immigrants are ultimately futile, one of them ruthlessly murders a Somali immigrant who dies, leaving behind his nine children and his wife at the mercy of the State. The right-winged nationalists suffer from an acute sense of xenophobia and can go to any extent to avenge the deaths of their dear white Swedish compatriots.

At present, the right-winged factions create commotion by harming the innocent immigrants living in the camps specially designed for them. They set fire to the refugee camp, and though there is no apparent loss of life, Wallander is badly injured. As readers, we are aware

that the extent of damage could have been much more in the absence of the coincidental presence of Wallander himself. A close study of the text compels one to question that though the immediate and apparent danger of the fire in the refugee camp is averted by Wallander and the fire brigade, is the danger averted? Unfortunately, one of the policemen stationed at the Ystad police station, Svedberg, observes, "By the way, we have a number of tip-offs indicating that it was a gang of youths who set the fire here in Ystad." (ibid., 227). If it is a gang of "youths" who had set the camp on fire, even in the near future, such attacks might recur, as these youths are bound to run the country in the future. Additionally, the fear of the foreign "other" makes some miscreant attack a Lebanese old man with a bag of rotten turnips, hitting him on the head (ibid., 98). Though this attack proves to be non-fatal, yet such an action on an innocent old man demands severe reprimand.

Apart from minor attempts to harm the immigrants, hardcore nationalists are driven by their thirst for vengeance, resulting in the ruthless murder of a Somali refugee. This heinous crime is conceived and executed by Valfrid Strom and Rune Bergman, about whom the chief of Ystad police station, Bjork, notes, "It seems as though these two gentlemen were members of some sort of Swedish Ku-Klux-Klan movement." (ibid., 209) Also, it is revealed that Rune Bergman "has been engaged in nationalist movements since the 1960s. First in something called the Democratic Alliance, later in much more militant factions" (ibid., 207). It is the inherent militancy that makes them take such a drastic step to avenge the death of the old farmers. Interestingly, Bergman himself is an ex-policeman who, instead of upholding the State laws, engages in anti-human activities. These two characters, both members of some nationalist movement, are mere embodiments of the tip of an iceberg. It becomes apparent when during the trial of Bergman, the rest of the iceberg consisting of other nationalist political bodies also emerges, and though Bergman is condemned and penalised for his heinous crime, one really fails to fathom the depth of these movements garnered by the sentiments of the common populace. This claim becomes irrefutable when the third person narrative voice notes,

Bergman still refused to talk, even though the evidence against him was overwhelming. Various extreme nationalist movements tried to take credit for the crime. The press and the rest of the media became involved in a violent debate about Sweden's immigration policy. Although all was calm in Skane, crosses burned in the night outside various refugee camps in other parts of the country. (ibid., 232)

Lastly, even detective Kurt Wallander is affected and is personally threatened by unknown members of some right-wing group. He keeps receiving anonymous phone calls, where he is continually threatened for safeguarding immigrants. After the gruesome murder of the Somali immigrant, the newsroom in Sydsvenskan receives an anonymous call claiming that the male Somali man has been killed to avenge the murder of Johannes Lovgren, and the next victim shall be a woman to avenge the death of Maria Lovgren. (ibid., 158)

Kurt Wallander, Xenophobia and loss of the Idyll

As one progresses through the novel, it becomes imperative to locate Wallander's position in this political unrest. It becomes clear that he is neither rightist nor a leftist. He takes his profession rather seriously and leaves no stones unturned in identifying the culprits, and he tries to understand the agony of immigrants. At times, although it seems that he might be right-wing oriented to some extent, in his capacity as a policeman, he does everything to ensure justice to the butchered Somali refugee, even though he has to risk his own life for that. His confusing position is revealed when he engages with Anette Brolin. It can be observed that for Wallander himself, Sweden is dealing with political chaos resulting from the confusing immigration policies of the State.

It becomes clear when he confides to Anette that he understands the dominant sentiment of the country, where the common people are confused, and gradually enormous insecurity has developed regarding immigrants, who are waiting to be granted citizenship. He says that people are even more afraid of immigrants in their immediate geopolitical location, which is mostly crowded with farming communities. Though the reasons for the increasing fear regarding immigrants within the old farming communities are not clearly revealed, there is a possibility that the old farming Swedish community is not only afraid of the "other" immigrants but is also reluctant to accept the change associated with this new order. Wallander further argues that it is the support of such fear which legitimises the presence and function of the right-wing political entities, and adds, "You'll soon find out that there's a big hero right now at this end of the country. A man who is applauded behind the curtains. A man who saw to it that there was a municipal vote that said no to accepting refugees." (Mankell 2002, 213-214) Devoid of any biases, it seems that Wallander truly portrays the lived reality of both the Swedes and the political asylum seekers to the readers and Anette Brolin, who hails from Stockholm, and is, therefore, unable to understand the geopolitical realities of rural Sweden. Instead of blaming the chaos on any political ideology, Wallander clearly states that it is the lack of clear policy and stand of the State on the issue of immigration that has led to the utter chaos and the ensuing political and social unrest. He notes,

It's precisely the absence of a clear policy on refugees that creates chaos. Right now we're living in a country where anyone for any reason can come across the border in any manner. Control has been eliminated. The customs service is paralysed. There are plenty of unsupervised airfields where the dope and the illegal immigrants are unloaded every night. (ibid., 214)

This social position of Wallander is re-iterated when Mrs. Maria Lovgren is dead, and her dying word is "foreign", compelling the investigating team, headed by Wallander, to conclude that the deadly assaulter must be some foreigner, with Wallander self-reflecting, "I hope that the killers are at that refugee camp. Then maybe it'll put an end to this arbitrary, lax policy

that allows anyone at all, for any reason at all, to cross the border into Sweden” (ibid., 44). This statement of Wallander throws more light on his right-winged position. Supporting this claim, while exploring Wallander’s positioning within the political scenario, Stafford Hildred, in his chapter on *Faceless Killers*, writes, “Mankell knew that if he gave Wallander his left-of-centre political views the novel would not work so well. He tried to make his hero a sort of ‘Everyman’ figure with no fixed political agenda, apart from a firm belief in the importance of the rule of law.” (Hildred 2010, 81)

Now, one should ask that if Wallander does not fit into the political scenario, how to locate him within the geopolitical chaos of Sweden? As Hildred argues, “If there is a single quality that shines through the pages from the very start of the literary life of Kurt Wallander then perhaps it is dedication” (ibid., 79-80). As readers, we also witness his devotion, loyalty, and diligence towards his job. For Wallander, it is uncontrolled and unsystematic immigration, which creates chaos and difficulty for the police force to handle and maintain order in society. He is not xenophobic, and neither is he against immigrants, but he is critical of the lack of State policies regarding accommodation of the migrant influx. In other words, he is critical of the State for two reasons. First, the lack of a clear immigration policy. Second, the State doesn’t know how to accommodate immigrants per se, and so Wallander observes that this glitch or shortcoming within the State policy promotes crime. At one point, he complains to Anette Brolin, “The open borders and all the ferries coming in are like candy for the underworld” (Mankell 2002, 131). Delving a little deeper into the character of Wallander, one realises that for him, with this unabated influx of immigrants, the old-world order and the ensuing idyll are compromised. The lost idyll resurfaces throughout the novel. Wallander remembers that the last time he had taken out his gun was three years ago (ibid., 202). Also, Lovgren’s younger son-in-law, who is a policeman in Canada, wonders why Swedish police do not carry guns, to which Wallander self-reflects, “In a few years we probably will” (ibid., 110).

While Wallander grew up in the Swedish countryside, Anette Brolin is from Stockholm. The changing geopolitical regime of Sweden is revealed when these two characters are pithily pitted against each other. While Anette considers the Swedish countryside to be far more idyllic, with fewer violent crimes when compared to Stockholm, Wallander argues that the difference between the urban and rural landscape is gradually changing. In the wake of globalisation, even the Swedish countryside is becoming morally and socially corrupt, and the idyll of the geospatial location has been compromised over the years. The chasm between urban and rural Sweden is vanishing fast, and Wallander stresses that in this process, the innocence and the idyllic charisma of rural Sweden is vanishing. To Anette, he laments,

Soon the entire Swedish countryside will be nothing but suburbs of the big cities. There were no narcotics here 20 years ago. Ten years ago drugs had come to towns like Ystad and Simrishamn, but we still had some control over what was happening.

Today drugs are everywhere. When I drive by one of the beautiful old Scanian farms, I sometimes think: there might be a huge amphetamine factory hidden in there. (ibid., 131)

This lamentation of Wallander can be heard when a little later in the novel, he strolls in Vallgatan, where he was posted 20 years ago. He analyses the minor past crimes when he was posted there, the pitiful condition of the present and laments “that world doesn’t exist anymore, he thought. It’s gone, and we’ll never get it back” (ibid., 135). To conclude, Wallander might be apolitical, but he is aware of the loss of the idyll of the Swedish countryside. This notion is also captured by Katarina Gregersdotter, who, in “The Body, Hopelessness, and Nostalgia: Representations of Rape and the Welfare State in Swedish Crime Fiction”, writes,

throughout the series (1991–2009) Inspector Wallander observes contemporary Sweden, and the novels can be seen as a contemplation of the transformation of the welfare state. Wallander himself embodies a longing for a country that used to be. It is only in the final novel, which carries the appropriate title *The Troubled Man* (2011), when Wallander is diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, that he can no longer feel nostalgia. (Gregersdotter 2013, 82-83)

Concluding Remarks

As it has been already pointed out, Wallander is strictly apolitical, adhering to none of the dominant ideologies. While his father, Wallander senior, has painted over seven thousand paintings of grim and uninviting autumn, Kurt portrays in our minds the grim political chaos that affects both the Swedes as well as immigrants. The lax policy of the State has led to a condition of utter confusion, which is revealed during the investigation process. The policymakers, the police, and the immigration service officials are all puzzled by the changing dynamics of social realities. Wallander accepts that the police, as an integral part of the State machinery, have been using immigrants or the “other” as a scapegoat on many occasions. He agrees, “When we don’t have a lead, we usually say it’s Finns” (Mankell 2002, 66). Worse is the case of the Immigration Services, where after fire breaks out, Wallander finds out through the director that “the Immigration Service’s records were hopelessly confused” (ibid., 103). Lastly, the Head of the Immigration Service blames the police for the mishap, accuses the police of being racist in nature, and blames that the police are callous in dealing with the matter (ibid., 120). Such political instability fractionalises even the State agencies, leading to a chaotic situation, which serves as the backdrop of the novel.

Thomas Nail, in his seminal work, *The Figure of the Migrant*, notes that there are four figures of the migrant; the nomad, the barbarian, the vagabond, and the proletariat (Nail 2015, 125). A close study of Nail’s postulations reveals that migrants being dealt with in Manell’s *Faceless Killers* (specifically, Lothar and Andreas) are surprisingly the proletariat

(to use Nail's terms), "which is both a migratory surplus expelled by the elastic force of the economy and a figure that breaks free from the driving forces of oscillation" (ibid., 156). He adds that the proletariat is essentially propertyless and, as a result, is in motion (ibid., 156). Also, from a sociological point of view, Peter Tinti and Tuesday Reitano write, "Sweden and Germany, for example, not only provide some of the most generous packages of support to refugees, they are also the only two countries in Europe that offer family reunification, making them the most coveted destinations for asylum seekers" (Tinti and Reitano 2017, 28). One needs to question how much of their observations are reflected in Mankell's *Faceless Killers*? The novel expounds upon the sorrowful state of affairs of migrants. The investigating team discover various facets of the lives of asylum seekers. To begin with, Wallander finds that the refugee camp is similar to a concentration camp and notes that "the camp consisted of huts in long rows in an open field. Floodlights lit up the green-painted structures.... He looked at the camp. Put a fence around it and it'd be a concentration camp, he thought" (Mankell 2002, 99-100). In their detailed investigation, another policeman Hansson discovers some migrant workers illegally working and earning their livelihood in Sweden. There is an Algerian pipefitter, Kurdish bricklayers, and Polish manual labourers, who, as Hansson notes, are "making the same wages as kids with summer jobs. They have no insurance. If there's an accident, the companies will say that the workers were living without permission at the sites." (ibid., 267) As policemen, they are highly critical of the Swedish employers who, instead of ensuring a better workplace for the employee as guaranteed by a welfare state, are busy exploiting cheaper labourers. Their condition is reminiscent of Toby Shelly, who argues that in a capitalistic market, migrants' lives are traumatic in general, and one should think about what forces them to make themselves available in the marketplace, which is "compelling and traumatic" (Shelly 2007, 2). Moreover, given their social and political location, most of the time, migrants are forced to accept "non-negotiable wages and conditions on offer or travelling in order to find work that offers a sustainable life" (ibid., 4). He further adds that most migrants readily accept the low wages of the host country, as it is more than the wage offered in their own country (ibid., 6). Economic exploitation of migrants is also discussed by Aziz Choudry and Mondli Hlatshwayo who explain,

Migrant and immigrant workers around the world continue to organise in the face of exploitation and oppression, and often find themselves on the frontlines of struggles against precarity, austerity and other forms of capitalist exploitation which impact all working people. Indeed, their struggles continue to highlight ways in which capital exploits workers through immigration status and the social relations of race, gender and class across the world. (Choudry and Hlatshwayo 2016, 2)

At the same time, it becomes impervious to question, are immigrants totally guilt-free? One must not forget that, as the novel reveals, the murder of the Lovgren couple, in reality, has been committed by Lothar Kraftczyk and Andreas Haas, both immigrants from the Czech Republic, waiting for political asylum. Additionally, the novel also expounds that the asylum seekers are not guilt-free themselves, and apart from some of them being caught red-handed

while breaking into a farm machinery business (Mankell 2002, 42), the third person narrative voice notes, “it turned out that there were exhaustive statistics on overseas-born citizens who had either committed or been suspected of committing crimes in Sweden.” (ibid., 76) The crimes of migrants are recalled by two different directors of the camps. One of the camp directors, Modin, agrees that these two immigrants from the Czech Republic, Lothar and Andreas, might have been misusing the resources of the camp for some antisocial activities. He says that refugees often resort to ethnic persecution as the reason for demanding political asylum in the host country, that Lothar had claimed to be a gypsy in the Czech Republic, and further adds, “Refugees who know they don’t have a strong enough case to be permitted to stay in Sweden quickly learn that one excellent way to improve their chances is to say that they’re gypsies” (ibid., 269). Larson, the second camp director (the director of the refugee camp, Celsius House) that Wallander talked to, also points out that refugees often engage in illegal ways of earning their livelihood in the host country, taking advantage of the relaxed economic policies of host countries like Sweden. He tells Wallander,

If you only knew how many people lived here without residency permits. More than you can imagine. They live together, forge their papers, trade names with each other, work illegally. You can spend a lifetime in Sweden without anyone checking up on you. No-one wants to believe it. But that’s the way it is. (ibid., 272)

Wallander grows as a human throughout the novel, and by the end of the novel, he realises that the loss of the idyll is an ugly truth, which he has to accept and change himself accordingly. He has to adjust to the ever-changing geopolitical scenario of the late twentieth century, a time marred and characterised by post-modern disorientation in a world of multicultural complexity. He needs to prepare for the unforeseen future, where the line between the self and the other is bound to create more complexities, as he self-reflects, “The new era, which demanded a different kind of policeman. We’re living in the age of the noose, he thought. Fear will be on the rise.” (ibid., 280)

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