

THE ROLE OF THE BODY IN FORENSIC CRIME FICTION

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Forensic fiction is a subgenre of crime fiction that depicts the work of forensic anthropologists, crime scene investigators and other specialists whose work includes analysing physical evidence. The focus on physicality allows to explore the role of the body in forensic fiction, and to ask whether physicality correlates with an advantageous or disadvantageous position in the narrative, what is the role of descriptions of forensic science procedures, what kind of relationship between the mind and the body forensic fiction represents, and whether it is in any way different from early examples of crime fiction.

KEYWORDS: forensic fiction, body, contemporary crime fiction, mind-body dualism, reactive body.

Crime fiction is an immensely diverse genre, and the attempts to classify crime novels, while quite useful in a broad sense, often fall short when faced with a particular example. The definition of the genre itself – a fictional work with a focus on crime – seems to encompass too many pieces of literature (such as Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*), but, if made more specific – a fictional work that focuses of the investigation of a crime – fails to include many works of fiction considered as examples of the genre today. In any case, the presence of at least one crime in the narrative is necessary for a story to be classified as a work of crime fiction. The crime in question, except in the early stories and more experimental contemporary works, will almost always

be murder¹. The presence of at least one dead body is normally necessary for a narrative to unfold.

The diversity of a genre prompts us to limit the analysis to a specific subgenre, which, in this case, will be forensic fiction. Forensic fiction is a subgenre of crime fiction which depicts the work of forensic

¹ Willard Huntington Wright in his 'Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories' points out that 'There simply must be a corpse in a detective novel and the deader the corpse the better. No lesser crime than murder will suffice.' *The American Magazine*, [online], 1928, <<http://www.thrillingdetective.com/trivia/triv288.html>>. Although he points out that most of the rules apply mainly to detective fiction of the Golden Age rather than contemporary novels, the importance of at least one murder remains. Moreover, the fascination with serial killers that had begun approximately in 1970 still continues in contemporary crime fiction, increasing and not diminishing the necessary count of dead bodies in the narrative.

anthropologists and crime scene investigators, among others. A commonly held view is that the appeal of forensic fiction rests mainly on allegedly realistic descriptions, which include contemporary technologies and procedures of gathering and interpreting evidence (such procedures as searching for blood traces with fluorescent light, DNA matching, analysing miniature fibres found in a crime scene, making and using databases, etc.). It posits the importance of the body for the following reasons:

- it is the body of a victim that is being analysed by forensic anthropologists;
- it is the traces of the body of a criminal that are being searched for;
- finding physical, bodily evidence (fingerprints, semen, traces of the criminal's whereabouts) often means discovering the identity of a criminal.

The most prominent authors of forensic fiction include Patricia Cornwell, Jeffrey Deaver, Kathy Reichs and others. Further observations will be based on the following works: *Predator* by Patricia Cornwell, *The Bone Collector* and *The Vanished Man* by Jeffrey Deaver, and *Death du Jour* by Kathy Reichs.

Joy Palmer in 'Tracing Bodies: Gender, Genre and Forensic Detective Fiction' offers a feminist critique of Cornwell's novels, concerning the depiction of gender. According to Palmer, Cornwell adopts rather than questions or subverts the masculine gaze, traditionally employed in crime fiction². Linda Mizejewski in 'Illusive Evidence: Patricia Cornwell and the Body Double' explores the parallels in bodily identification and sex / gender controversy between the main character in Cornwell's novels and the public persona of Cornwell herself³. The role of the body as a signifier has been

explored in Gill Plain's book *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction: Gender, Sexuality and the Body*⁴. Katharine and Lee Horsley's article 'Body Language: Reading the Corpse in Forensic Crime Fiction' explores the relationship between the corpse and the forensic pathologist, focusing mainly on later novels by Cornwell.

By contrast, the approach of this paper is more narrative-related, focusing on the tension between the thematic roles of the criminal, the victim and the investigator. In contemporary crime fiction these roles tend to become more fluid and interchangeable, examples of the tendency being the following: the investigator is in danger of becoming a victim, the victim tends to become a criminal due to vengeance or psychological disturbance, and the psychological similarity between the investigator and the (especially serial) killer is often explicitly stated. Despite the fluidity of thematic roles, the narrative tension they constitute remains – the investigator must stop the criminal from harming another victim and avoid becoming a victim himself / herself. In a sense, the investigator and the criminal constitute a pair of opponents and their 'conflict' (virtual at first, but usually becoming real towards the end) is one of the main plot-driving forces. The Greimassian narrative grammar postulates three different levels of analysis: the discursive level (space, time and actors), the narrative level (concerning the dynamic relationship between actants) and the semiotic level (the deepest level concerning the relationship between values)⁵. The investigator-criminal dynamics, which will be the focus of this paper, will mostly be limited to the discursive level with brief references to the narrative level.

This paper will address the role of the body in the investigator-criminal-victim dynamics in forensic

Hopkins University Press, 2001, p. 6–20.

2 Joy Palmer, 'Tracing Bodies: Gender, Genre and Forensic Detective Fiction', in: *South Central Review*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001, p. 54–71.

3 Linda Mizejewski, 'Illusive Evidence: Patricia Cornwell and the Body Double', in: *South Central Review*, Baltimore: John

4 Gill Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction: Gender, Sexuality and the Body*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001, p. 32–34.

5 Algirdas Julien Greimas, Joseph Courtés, *Sémiotique: Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*, Paris: Hachette, 1979, p. 331–332, 381–383.

crime fiction. Firstly, the role of the descriptions concerning the body will be examined, attempting to answer the question whether they correlate with an advantageous or disadvantageous narrative position. Secondly, we will examine the role of the forensic procedures characteristic of the genre in establishing the dominant position in criminal-investigator confrontation. Thirdly, the element of demystification in contemporary forensic fiction will prompt a comparison with the early examples of the genre containing the most gothic elements – the short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle. Finally, conclusions about the change of the role of the body will be made.

1. OWNING A BODY

The descriptions of scenes or the appearance of the characters may have little influence on the way the narrative unfolds, but they can correlate with the more or less advantageous position in the course of the narrative. In the Greimassian narrative grammar it is assumed that the expressions and words, rather than being accidental, depict the relationships and values present in the deeper levels. Therefore, the aim to uncover the role of the body in forensic fiction includes asking the following questions: in which cases the narrator engages in descriptions of the body? What events precede or follow these descriptions in the narrative? What is the importance of knowledge about the body in the narrative?

1.1 Body of a victim

The first and the most obvious case of mentioning the body in forensic fiction is when referring to a dead victim. The word 'body' itself is usually employed as a synonym of the word 'corpse': the victim is *reduced* to being nothing more than a body – he or she is objectified, not only by the criminal, but also, in a way, by the investigator. The Greimassian narrative grammar describes

the subject as capable of not only having qualities, but also carrying out acts and choosing one's own narrative path, while the *object* lacks this kind of agency.⁶

In the case of a serial killer, the victim is only a means to certain ends (be it the achievement of a goal or a subconscious repetition of a trauma). Instead of being a principal object of value (not to mention a *subject*), it is merely a secondary object that helps achieving other goals. Sometimes, as in the case of *The Bone Collector* by Deaver, violent actions towards the victim are performed in order to prompt the action of an investigator. However, objectifying victims provides a criminal with a certain challenge, at least while they are alive and refuse to be objectified. In Cornwell's *Predator* the criminal gets furious after discovering that one of the victims has hanged herself instead of being killed by the criminal. In Reich's *Death du Jour* the leader of a murderous cult is infuriated when she finds out that some of the members have chosen not to participate in a mass suicide. The acts of violence performed by criminals are not only a way to *kill* the victims, but also a way to dehumanize them by denying them control over their own bodies. A victim stating her own will demonstrates humanity and therefore invokes the frustration of a criminal.

The investigator also uses the victim as a means – at least to a certain extent. The body of a victim is a way to gather knowledge about the criminal and, by doing this, prevent other murders from happening (saving potential victims). Therefore, the body of a victim is of a secondary importance both to the criminal and to the investigator. However, the latter expresses his / her humanity by admitting the humanity of the victim, often by means of empathy. By imagining what the victim might have been feeling, and what he / she was *like*, the investigator can gather more information about the case. Moreover, empathy provides

6 Algirdas Julien Greimas, Joseph Courtés, *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 320.

investigators with a certain righteous fury, which helps their motivation. After examining the bodies of two young children, the protagonist of Reichs's *Death du Jour* is more motivated to catch the criminal: 'Grief and anger merged in my mind. "I want this son of a bitch." I looked up into Ryan's eyes.'⁷ However, the success of the investigator's task depends on her ability to engage and disengage at will: at one point she can tremble with fury by imagining the victim's suffering, and at another moment she can cut the victim's body open to examine it.

The criminal aims to objectify the victims, to disengage and leave only a disposable body devoid of mind and will. Some narratives of crime fiction emphasize the difficulties of using a person as a tool: the criminal aims to turn a live person into an object (a subject into an object) and faces resistance. The investigator, even if performing actions similar to those of a criminal, mentally performs an opposite procedure: he or she reconstructs the victim's mind, empathises but disengages when necessary.

1.2 Body of a criminal

If the body of a victim is a message that the criminal leaves and the investigator aims to decipher, it seems that they are engaging in an exceptionally one-way communication. How can the investigator catch the criminal, if the criminal is always one step ahead, leaving messages for the investigator to decipher? One way to catch up with the criminal is to find out additional information from the 'message', information that the criminal did not intend to leave. Since the 'medium' – the victim's body – is physical, traces left on it are also physical: the traces of a body of a criminal. Unlike the victim whose vulnerability is related to physical harm, the criminal's vulnerability is related to the information the body can provide. The necessary condition

for a criminal to keep their thematic role (to remain a criminal) is to stay either free, or anonymous, or both. Anonymity and the ability to change the qualities that were supposed to be constant (appearance, fingerprints etc.) constitute the advantage for a criminal, and the loss of anonymity is threatening and should be averted.

In the previous section we have compared an individual's *humanity* with the mind and agency (which the victims are robbed of). It is a temporal process orientated towards goals and concerned with actions. By contrast, one's *identity* is punctual, localized in time and space, and concerned with information – it is an ability to make an equation between a body and certain data (name, address, etc.). If a criminal's identity becomes known at any point in time – for instance, a fingerprint is found and a connection is made, – it might considerably limit the scope of actions that can be performed by the criminal. To make the investigator's job of pinpointing the criminal's identity harder, the latter aims to confuse the investigator by means of different illusions: sometimes unintentional, sometimes rather literal, as in the case of Deaver's *The Vanished Man*, in which the criminal is an illusionist.

In Greimassian semiotics, veridictory modalities describe immanence / manifestation dichotomy without claiming any metaphysical position on truth and falsehood⁸. The semiotic square is composed of interaction of two axes: the immanence axis (being) and the manifestation axis (seeming). Their interplay comprises such components as 'truth' (being and seeming), 'lie' (seeming and not being), 'falsehood' (not seeming and not being) and 'secret' (being and not seeming). The veridictory modalities play an important role in crime fiction, and sometimes even are layered on top of one another. It *seems* that some truth is uncovered at some point, but later it turns out that it was just another *seeming*, the truth hiding beneath it, or perhaps just another appearance.

7 Kathy Reichs, *Death du Jour*, New York: Pocket Books, 2000, p. 94.

8 Algirdas Julien Greimas, Joseph Courtés, *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*, p. 151.

In *The Vanished Man* by Deaver, the criminal is so proficient in creating illusions and disguises that nobody even knows what he actually looks like. When his identity is finally revealed and he is brought to prison, it appears that it was part of the criminal's clever escape plan and his identity is finally revealed to be different than previously established (in order to succeed in this illusion, the criminal was using a mask and fake fingerprints). Therefore, the criminal's identity goes from being *secret* to being a *lie*, until his *true* identity is finally discovered. The criminal's ability to *transform* his body makes him unidentifiable, but this ability requires perfect timing and perfect *control* of his body.

In Cornwell's *Predator*, there *seem* to be multiple people somehow connected to various crimes – an attractive girl seducing one of the protagonists, a homeless-looking violent man, a girl who disappeared after her mother was killed etc. The investigator seems surrounded by different people slipping through her eyes unnoticed, until it appears that it was actually a single girl with multiple personality disorder. Although her personalities seem to work in accord with each other, not a single one of them is 'in control', and therefore the girl breaks down when discovered.

The tension between the truth and illusion in the narrative is further strengthened by the operations of engagement – for instance, when the narrative (usually told from the investigator's perspective) is intercepted by paragraphs told from the criminal's perspective, sometimes even in the first person. In Deaver's *The Vanished Man*, some episodes are told from the criminal's perspective, where he tries to summon the spirit of a loved one. Based on the previous information, it is entirely legitimate to assume that he is a once-famous illusionist, thought to be dead, who is trying to summon the spirit of his wife. However, later it is discovered that the old illusionist *is* dead and the criminal is his pupil, who was trying to summon the soul of his mentor. The narrator of a crime fiction novel is not to be trusted.

The ability of a criminal to hide his / her own body in different ways seems to create a certain mystical atmosphere, which is sometimes strengthened by religious themes in the discourse. The act of finding out who the real criminal is (and how many of them there are) has a certain quality of demystification, which will be discussed at the end of the paper.

1.3 Body of an investigator

In contemporary crime narratives, it is common for an investigator to become a potential victim of a criminal (possibly a legacy of 'hard-boiled' detective fiction). If the criminal's body can betray him / her by leaving unexpected traces, the investigator's body can 'betray' him / her by failing to function properly in a critical moment, facing the danger of becoming a victim. It can be argued that a normal, healthy body is the one which is almost unnoticeable to its 'owner'. In his treatise about the concepts of normality, abnormality and health, Georges Canguilhem notes that one begins to notice the normal functions of the body only after one loses them: 'Disease reveals normal functions to us at the precise moment when it deprives us of their existence.'⁹ Therefore, we can speculate that perceiving one's body in crime fiction would mean certain deficiencies in its functioning and thus would correlate with becoming more vulnerable.

The investigator's perception of his / her body in the analysed crime fiction novels can be divided into two states, roughly corresponding with the feelings of *hot* and *cold*. Referring to the metaphorical uses of words and connotations surrounding each of the utterances, we can expand this dichotomy to encompass more than only the physical reactions of the body to its surroundings.

We will argue that *cold* temperatures are usually connected to the domain of knowledge and detachment.

⁹ Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, New York: Zone Books, 1991, p. 101.

Firstly, the examination of the bodies in the morgue implies low temperatures because of their role in slowing down decomposition. When a forensic pathologist is 'in her element', by definition she feels colder than normal. In Cornwell's and Reichs's novels the coldness of the morgue is reflected by low temperatures outside and, in Reichs's case, in the crime scene as well. Despite being cold, the investigator gets so immersed in her job that she almost forgets physical discomfort: "How long have you been down there?" I looked at my watch, no wonder I was hypothermic. One-fifteen. "Over four hours."¹⁰ The coldness of their surroundings often reflects the perceived emotional coldness of the characters. In Cornwell's *Predator*, the protagonist is accused by her friend of being unapproachable. The investigators, even though mostly unperturbed by their cold surroundings, still crave warmth – both in the physical and emotional sense. In Reichs's novel, the protagonist dreams of sunny beaches and sundresses. In Cornwell's novel, the investigator cares deeply about her niece, and is sometimes overwhelmed by the guilt of not being able to express her emotions properly. The notion of *coldness* is being employed to describe criminals as well – cold voice, 'eyes flat and cold' etc., – but they express no wish of moving towards warmth themselves, and only inflict upon their victims the 'punishment' of *heat*.

In the analysed crime fiction novels the notion of *heat* is usually connected to pain. In Deaver's novel a policewoman has arthritis that causes hot, throbbing pain in her joints. After being buried alive by the criminal, she describes feeling 'Uneasy. Tense. Hot.'¹¹ Heat is also connected to the loss of air, dangerous both to the investigators ('My lungs burned, my pulse pounded and I slipped in and out of consciousness'¹²), the criminals (a serial killer in Cornwell's *Predator* being

scared of suffocation), and the victims (the second victim in Deaver's *The Bone Collector* being burned to death by hot gas). The feeling of uncomfortable heat is a sign of danger, while the feeling of uncomfortable cold might be just a necessary prerequisite for gathering information.

Although heat correlates with danger, the notion of cold in the analysed crime fiction is ambiguous. It constitutes detachment, necessary both to gather knowledge (the investigator) and to perform violent actions (the criminal). However, the investigator's ability to long for warmth constitutes an advantage for the investigator allowing him or her to feel empathy with the victim and to imagine the criminal's mindset.

2. FORENSIC PROCEDURES

In spite of the ability to empathise and to be more mobile in the hot-cold semantic axis, the investigator may seem to get off to a rather bad start as compared to the criminal. The investigator is already *late* to stop the first murder, and the following one has not happened yet. While the future of the criminal is strictly planned (a thorough plan is necessary in order to avoid leaving traces and getting caught), the future of the investigator is full of uncertainty. However, the investigator has a seemingly great advantage: forensic knowledge and technologies. In order to read *more* than the criminal has intended to tell, investigators need equipment, which would expand their knowledge.

The domain of forensic knowledge is mainly related to the body and its surroundings: matching partial fingerprints, traces of saliva or semen, analysing the fibres found in a crime scene, creating and using databases. Forensic procedures allow the investigator to expand his / her knowledge to cover greater expanses of space and time. In *The Bone Collector* by Deaver, an older crime scene investigator instructs a young policewoman about the crime scene search, thus expanding her field of vision: 'You've only just

¹⁰ Kathy Reichs, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

¹¹ Jeffrey Deaver, *The Bone Collector*, New York: Dutton, 1998, p. 225.

¹² Kathy Reichs, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

started, Amelia. Crime scenes are three-dimensional. Remember that. What you mean is there's nothing on the floor. Now search the walls.¹³ Forensic procedures help to pinpoint the time of the murder and to gather data about places and people, thus making the investigation easier.

In Horsley's article 'Body Language: Reading the Corpse in Forensic Crime Fiction', the act of forensic research is equated to the acts performed by a criminal, despite a forensic pathologist presenting 'herself as engaged in an effort to restore human dignity.'¹⁴ According to the authors, such acts result in the fragmentation of the mind of pathologists themselves, as some kind of archaic punishment for venturing into a forbidden territory.

In this paper, I would like to propose two different levels of examining the body, each with its own connotations, the levels roughly corresponding to the examination of the flesh and bones. The examination of the flesh, from a Y-shaped incision to examining wounds, is invasive and is often accompanied by negative emotions on the part of the investigator. The policewoman examining the crime scene in Deaver's *The Bone Collector* is overwhelmed by the feelings of horror and disgust: 'Then, like a slap she realized what she held and she gave a short scream. It wasn't cloth, it was skin.'¹⁵ By contrast, examining the bones is more detached. In Reichs's *Death du Jour* the examination of the scattered bones of a victim does not elicit the kind of fury that the investigator feels when examining the flesh wounds of a child: 'Slowly, I exposed more and more bone, carefully inspecting the displaced debris, collecting it for later screening.'¹⁶ I would argue that this difference is caused by the distinction of *flesh vs bones* rather than *child vs adult* (a grown victim's

exposed flesh elicits similarly negative emotions) and *old vs recent* (the victim of whom only the bones remained died at approximately the same time as the kids or two other adults). Examination of the bones can even provide the investigator with a certain archaeological passion, as in the case of Reichs's protagonist: 'Slowly, the skeleton emerged. <...> The arrangement reminded me of archaeological sites I'd excavated early in my career. <...> I'd loved archaeology. Still did.'¹⁷ The archaeological passion is not limited to investigators – criminals have it too. In Deaver's *The Bone Collector* the criminal enjoys polishing a bone 'which he'd carefully detached from the radius and ulna last night.'¹⁸ But while the criminal enjoys *detaching* the bones, the investigator *gathers* and *reconstructs* them.

Therefore, we can expand our opposition of *flesh vs bones* to *criminal* (flesh, deconstruction) *vs investigator* (bones, reconstruction). If a criminal engages with bones, it is in order to deconstruct them even further. And an investigator has to overcome his / her aversion to the deconstruction of flesh in order to reach a level where reconstruction is possible. Similarly, if a criminal uses the tools of investigators, it is with the aim to disrupt and plant confusion. Criminals get hold of forensic procedures by breaking into the databases of investigators (Reichs's *Death du Jour*), planting false evidence (Cornwell's *Predator*), allowing themselves to get caught only to escape again (Deaver's *The Vanished Man*), or having someone from the police to help them (Cornwell's *Predator*). A criminal and an investigator in a way 'share techniques': an investigator *dissects* in order to *reconstruct*, and a criminal uses databases (meant to help in recovering truth) in order to confuse, etc. At this point it is possible to notice that, despite the posited importance of the body, the main 'battle' between the criminal and the investigator has to do more with *outsmarting* one another.

13 Jeffrey Deaver, *The Bone Collector*, p. 146.

14 Katharine and Lee Horsley, 'Body Language: Reading the Corpse in Forensic Crime Fiction', in: *Paradoxa: Terrain Vagues*, Vol. 20, 01. 2006, p. 7–32.

15 Jeffrey Deaver, *The Bone Collector*, p. 158.

16 Kathy Reichs, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

18 Jeffrey Deaver, *The Bone Collector*, p. 169–170.

3. DEMYSTIFICATION

We have already noticed that although the importance of the body is always emphasized in forensic fiction, it is the *minds* of the criminal and the investigator that decide the winner of the 'final battle'. On the investigator's part it often involves unmasking the bodily excessiveness of the criminal and pinning it down to one place, one time and the correct number of persons. Moreover, the ability to empathise and disengage at will provides the investigator with an additional advantage over the criminal. On the criminal's part, it is being one step ahead of the investigator and attacking, while his / her attention is directed elsewhere (for example, focused on a false suspect). The word 'attacking' has been chosen because the actual, physical fight between the criminal and the detective is extremely common in contemporary crime fiction, forensic fiction included. The importance of the mind and the element of demystification present in contemporary forensic fiction prompts us to ask whether the reliance on reason in contemporary forensic fiction differs substantially from that of the early examples of the genre, also known for the heavy usage of the element of demystification (crime stories by Poe and Doyle). In the following paragraphs we will attempt to examine the similarities and differences of the mind-body distinction in early crime narratives and forensic fiction.

In the detective stories by Poe and Doyle the crime around which the narrative unfolds is not necessarily a murder. At times there is no corpse, only a series of strange and seemingly mystical occurrences that require logical explanation. Sherlock Holmes – or Auguste Dupin – do not normally produce more evidence: they only put the existing one into a meaningful narrative. In Doyle's fiction Sherlock Holmes often explicitly disengages from the crime scene and solves the case from his home, only by writing several telegrams or placing an announcement in a newspaper. Classical detective stories normally contain no 'competition' between a

criminal and an investigator¹⁹ – the investigator only makes sense of the deeds done by the criminal. There is rarely a physical fight, and if it breaks out, it is foreseen (along with all the other things) by the investigator. One of the main sources of pleasure in reading early detective stories is less related to revealing a certain criminal's identity than to the rationalist pleasure of demystification. The narrative contains things that seem strange and bizarre – a white face in the window of an abandoned house, a low whistle in the middle of the night, a murder in a locked room – this sense of supernatural is 'borrowed' from one of the predecessors of crime fiction – gothic novels. These strange occurrences are later explained using mostly logic (or so it is claimed), and for this reason Poe himself called his own detective stories 'tales of ratiotination'.

Certain demystification is present in contemporary forensic fiction as well. Firstly, it is connected to the forensic procedures themselves: the science of revealing the most private and the most physical aspects of the body. Secondly, demystification in contemporary forensic fiction appears when the illusions created by the criminal are unmasked and the criminal is 'pinned down' to a single body, a single space and a single time. Although the world of forensic fiction is rational, the abilities of the criminal to disguise and enter 'forbidden' places are often presented as scary and chilling: in Deaver's *The Vanished Man* a policewoman, while gathering evidence in a public place, feels uneasy, as she does not know what the criminal looks like, because of his ability to disguise himself. The pleasure of rationalisation present in early crime narratives remains in contemporary ones as well, even though in a slightly different form.

19 The only two 'worthy' rivals of Sherlock Holmes in Doyle's stories are professor Moriarty and Irene Adler. Despite the fact that they were mentioned in only three of Doyle's stories (one in the case of Irene Adler, two in the case of Moriarty), these characters are the main focus of contemporary cinematic adaptations of Doyle's stories.

The difference in demystification in early crime narratives and in contemporary forensic fiction lies in *how* it is made. If crime solving in classical detective stories was analytical and disengaged, contemporary forensic fiction tends towards *reactive* and *involved* thinking. We have already mentioned the importance of physical fight in contemporary crime fiction, which, at least in the form of confrontation with a criminal, exists in forensic fiction as well. This confrontation usually takes place where and when the final solution of the case happens. For instance, in the narrative climax of Deaver's *The Bone Collector* the criminal enters the home of a paralysed investigator, whose doctor he has been all along. The investigator suddenly notices a small scar on the criminal's finger (which he inferred before, when analysing forensic evidence) and quickly outsmarts him by faking a seizure and biting the criminal's neck when he bends over him. In Reich's *Death du Jour* the main character gets captured by the criminals, but sees help coming and stalls time by talking to the leader of a sect. In Cornwell's *Predator* the disguised criminal enters the prison to participate in an experiment and help another criminal to escape. The investigators make a sudden connection, inferred from previous evidence, and impede the criminal from carrying out her plans, although the main character gets captured for a while. Although all these cases involve some previous information about the criminal, the confrontation is a moment when 'everything suddenly makes sense' and the investigators have to act quickly in order not to get harmed: *thinking* and *acting* are inseparably connected.

Therefore, the pleasure of demystification in forensic fiction is connected to the pleasure of winning a physical fight. During the narrative, the investigator's own body tends to betray and the criminal's body tends to deceive the investigator (and, in some cases, betray the criminal). However, the important thing is that the body works in accordance with the mind when it matters the most – in a potentially fatal accident, where identities are being revealed and fights are being won.

CONCLUSIONS

After analysing the role of the body in several most prominent novels of contemporary forensic fiction, *Predator* by Patricia Cornwell, *The Bone Collector* and *The Vanished Man* by Jeffrey Deaver and *Death du Jour* by Kathy Reichs, we have distinguished several functions that the representations and descriptions of the body provide for the course of the narrative and the dynamics of the characters. They can be summarised as follows:

- Although the investigator and the criminal perform similar actions (invasive into the victim's body), the investigator's ability to empathise and mobility along the 'hot-cold' and 'engaged-disengaged' axes constitute his / her advantage over the static emotional landscape of the criminal.
- Greater control over one's body constitutes an advantageous position in the narrative, while the criminal aims to rob the victims of it.
- Unmasking the illusions created by the criminal in order to hide his / her body induces a similar pleasure of demystification to that of the early examples of the genre (stories by Poe and Doyle).
- Contemporary forensic fiction, like early crime stories, attaches greater importance to the mind than to the body. However, towards the end of the narrative of forensic fiction, a certain reactive body appears, where the body works in concordance with the mind, determining the final outcome of the narrative.

The appearance of a reactive body composed of reasoning, cunningness and physical action constitutes the main difference in the role played by the body in contemporary forensic fiction, as opposed to classical crime stories.

This paper is but an introduction into the problematics of the role of the body in crime fiction. The

discussion of the hard-boiled detective tradition, which has a lot to do with physical action, is not included here – it is possible that the examples of hard-boiled novels contain a similar expression of a reactive body to that of forensic fiction. Gender issues, which also are an important topic in discussing the role of the body, are not included here either. Finally, the topics of the limits of the body or the implications of the mind-body duality usage, while briefly touched in the paper, are worthy of a more lengthy discussion.

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KŪNO VAIDMUO TEISMO EKSPERTIZĖS ROMANUOSE

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SANTRAUKA

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: teismo ekspertizė, kūnas, šiuolaikiniai kriminaliniai romanai, reaktyvus kūnas.

Teismo ekspertizės romanai (angl. *forensic fiction*) yra kriminalinių romanų tipas – tai kūriniai, kuriuose pasakojama apie teismo medicinos ekspertų, nusikaltimo vietas tyrėjų ir kitų specialistų, kurie susiję su įkalčių analize, darba. Fiziškumo, materialumo akcentavimas šiuose romanuose leidžia kelti klausimą apie kūno vaizdavimą juose. Straipsnyje pateikiamos mintys, kilusios panagrinėjus šiuos teismo ekspertizės romanus: Patricios Cornwell *Grobuonis*, Jefferio Deaverio *Kaulų kolekcionierius* (angl. *The Bone Collector*) ir *Išnykęs žmogus* (angl. *The Vanished Man*) bei Kathy'ės Reichs *Dienos mirtis* (angl. *Death du Jour*).

Siekiant pastebėti kūno vaizdavimo įtaką tyrėjo–nusikaltėlio–aukos dinamikai, būdingai kriminaliniams romanams, minėti kūriniai buvo analizuoti atsižvelgiant į nusikaltėlio ir tyrėjo santykius su aukos kūnu, aptartas teismo ekspertizės procedūrų vaidmuo, šiuolaikiniuose teismo ekspertizės romanuose aptinkamas demistifikacijos elementas palygintas su randamu ankstyvuosiuose žanro pavyzdžiuose.

Analizės rezultatus būtų galima susumuoti taip: nors nusikaltėlis ir teismo ekspertizės tyrėjas su aukos kūnu atlieka panašius veiksmus, tyrėjo gebėjimas empatizuotis ir mobilumas kategorijų „karšta–šalta“ bei „įsitraukimas–atsiribojimas“ atžvilgiu suteikia pranašumo prieš nusikaltėlio statišką emocinę raišką. Didesnė savo kūno kontrolė reiškia palankesnę poziciją naratyve – aukos galimybę kontroliuoti savo kūną nusikaltėlis apskritai atima. Panašiai kaip ankstyvuosiuose detektyviniuose apsakymuose, šiuolaikiniuose teismo ekspertizės romanuose postuluojuama proto svarba – protas turi valdyti kūną, vis dėlto šiuolaikinių romanų pasakojimo gale paprastai pasirodo reaktyvus kūnas, kai dėl greitos reakcijos, gudrumo ir pastabumo tyrėjui pavyksta laimėti prieš nusikaltėlį.