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Shifting Identities through Various Places: Perceptional and Spatial Geographies of Horror Literature and Andreas Roman's *Mörkrädd* and *Vigilante*

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The word "geography" refers to the relationship of an individual, human or other, and its interactions with the environment around it, allowing one to recognize realities, spaces, boundaries, and the interplay between them, on a scientific or a cultural fashion (Pattison 1964, p.202) In this way, concepts of identity and space can be explored in detail and depth, for instance physical space vs. psychological space. In the physical space, one could describe and make sense of a physical landscape, i.e. the Rocky Mountains that stretch from western Canada all the way to southern Mexico, but in the psychological space, one could discuss the manner in which a mental landscape affects the worldview of an individual, like how a Scotsman and a Chilean would not view the world in the same light. In the "geography" of literature, these same ideas apply, and specifically in horror literature, where they can be used to make better sense of fear, safety, and existence, which work to inform one of a better sense of themselves, resulting in a clearer distinction between reality and illusion. According to Spanish scholar Manuel Aguirre, 'horror literature in so far as this genre endeavors to express what we are, what we are not, what we may be,'

(1990, p.3), which requires consideration into a closer look at "geographies". Therefore, in utilizing horror literature as a method by which to examine these permutations of identity, it can more clearly define realities versus illusions. Looking at these senses and feelings of identity and the boundaries and construction of spaces, this article investigates some of the literary ways that these items are examined, first in theory using examples from the horror genre, and then in two recent Swedish pieces, Andreas Roman's *Mörkrädd* and *Vigilante*.

Science fiction author J.G. Ballard once remarked of the horror genre, that it 'confront[s] the terrifying void of a patently meaningless universe by challenging it at its own game, to remake zero by provoking it in every conceivable way' (1977, p.130). According to this logic, the genre attempts to take us outside of ourselves to a new 'arena' without the same rules as the world in which we live, therefore allowing new scenarios to be played out and contentious themes to be explored. Usually, the genre incorporates themes of fear, danger, and ultimately death, in an attempt to point out cultural constructions that define the way that we, as humans, live our lives. For example, one recurring device involves a vampire losing his zest for life and becoming bored with himself because of his own immortality, hence losing the value in each and every one of his actions and interactions, from the mundane to the extraordinary. This general example reflects the vampire's dilemma, but it also mirrors itself in application to human life, teaching us to appreciate all the thoughts and feelings we experience in our lives over time.

Additionally, Yvonne Leffler, in *Horror as Pleasure* (2000), argues that horror can even be pleasing—it has an appeal to satisfaction that explains its popularity and usefulness. In this sense, possibly a terrible monster who violently attacked the innocent townspeople is eventually driven out and destroyed by the wit and action of a hero, so the

audience feel a satisfaction in the solution to the conflict originally set forth by the monster. So, in what ways do we derive pleasure out of terror and fear? As author Mark Jancovich writes in his survey of the genre, *Horror*:

> 'The pleasure offered by the [horror] genre is based on the process of narrative closure in which the horrifying or monstrous is destroyed or contained. The structure of horror narratives are said to set out from a situation of order, move through a period of disorder caused by the eruption of horrifying or monstrous forces, and finally reach a point of closure and completion in which disruptive or monstrous elements are contained or destroyed and the original order re-established' (1992, p.9).

Therefore, the foundational pieces in the genre give us a problem involving evil or discomfort: an introduction to conflict. As a result of this disruption of order, complications arise to exacerbate the severity of the situation. Through this heightened period of tension and conflict-grappling, the victims devise a resolution to the issue and confront the evil force or adversary. Through the expulsion or destruction of this adversary, the world can then return to the safety of order. In the film, *Jaws*, a man-eating shark terrorizes a beach-town, first brought on by the discovery of a victim's body washed up onshore. Soon after, during a summer carnival, more bodies pile up and the fear of the water spreads. Then, the town sheriff, a shark hunter, and a scientist venture into the water to defeat the shark. The shark is killed, and the island returns to its previous state of order. This journey from point *a* (order before the conflict) to point *b* (order after the conflict's resolution), regardless of the specific circumstances in which the journey travels, be it the defeat of a giant shark or the apprehension of a criminal or so on, involves movement through physical and psychological spaces within the story-world. Thus, in the movement through these spaces, we are exposed to various identities

along the way, which allow one to construct a model of reality and illusion within this story-world, and their complementary realities and illusions in the existing human world. As argued by Gina Wisker, horror literature 'acts as a vehicle for exploration of the mind and for exposure of the conflicts and contradictions in society' (2005, p.26).

Simply put, the Oxford English dictionary defines identity as 'the fact of being who or what a person or thing is,' (Oxford 2011), leaving open the suggestion of existence by the verb form "to be." Therefore, what does it mean "to be" and if you are, is it necessarily a fact and if so, from what perspective? Due to these questions, the concept of identity is not constructed purely by scientific terms, but rather by a combination of cultural and emotional factors. The sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, states that 'humans are free to self-create. What they are is nota no-appeal-allowed verdict of providence, not the matter ofpredestination,' (2001, p.123), meaning that a person can relate to whomever or whatever they wish, and there is no greater outside force that requires them to be one way or another. Similarly, Aguirre believes that 'Man is the measure of all things… [therefore] as man places himself at the fulcrum of the universe, everything is to be measured by reference to him' (1990, p.63). In this way, the universe does revolve around the beholder. Yet, in both of these statements, Bauman and Aguirre advocate the idea of a person's self-assertion and self-realization, or in other words, the ability to choose one's own identity and to form an image of that identity as one's own, rather than one projected onto him by the outside. Therefore, reality is self-constructed, not defined by others, but both authors leave open a door to allow for outside influences. Thus, reality itself is not an objective certainty which can be viewed from an outside eye and to which all individuals subscribe consciously or unconsciously, but instead reality remains within mind of the individual. As Bauman believes, identity

exists within the 'new era of flexible realities' (2001, p.123), which suggests that realities are multiple, individual, and self-constructed due to a combination of emotions and outside influences. As we will see in Roman's novels, both protagonists develop their own concept of reality through their mind's construction, but due to the changes in physical and psychological landscapes through which these protagonists wander over the course of their respective narratives, these conceptions of reality shift and posture over time.

Take the case of the character of the 'monster,' typified by an evil adversary to the hero in a horror novel. Who is supposed to be the monster in horror literature, and who really is the monster? Usually, we find a positive, good-natured hero, who forms a foil compared to the evil and negative monster. As is common in most fairy tales, surely the fire-breathing dragon that prevents the knight-in-shining-armour hero from rescuing his princess must be the monster at the root of the conflict. But at the same time, what must be said of the "hero" himself, who resorts to violence to slay the dragon for his benefit: to marry the princess? These simple questions provide even more insight into definitions of identity for the characters in any work. In order to form a more comprehensive concept of identity, a factor like "purpose" must be considered. Judith Halberstam, in her piece, *Skin Shows*, poses that 'Monsters produced and were produced by an emergent conception of the self as a body which enveloped a soul, as a body, indeed, enthralled to its soul' (1991, p.1). As well,

> 'The monsters body is a machine that [...] produces meaning and can represent any horrible trait that the reader feeds into the narrative. The monster functions as monster, in other words, when it is able to condense as many fear-producing traits as possible into one body' (1991, p.17).

So, in order to better examine the identity of the monster, one must take into consideration the perspective by which both the monster

operates, and the characters around him see it. In the case of Marcus in *Vigilante* and David in *Mörkrädd*, we will see how the formation of identity plays a key role in their development, specifically upon the purpose and perspective of these characters. Marcus develops a keen sense of justice in his perspective of Gothenburg, Sweden, and David assumes a position of fear in order to push the evolution of his perspective of the northern Swedish wilderness.

In addition to conceptions of identity, spaces and their positioning figure to provide an insight into realities and their opposite illusions. More specifically, geographers and literature scholars alike have pointed to the existence of physical space and psychological space within the realm of a novel, allowing for an arena for which relationships of identity and spaces can affect realities. For instance, in Gothic horror, exotic locations and faraway places stood for novels' settings, providing a layer of safety between the meaning of the story and the reader due to the distance of the familiarity of the locale. Aguirre writes that:

> 'At the heart of the literature of terror lies one ruling symbol. It manifests itself in haunted buildings, in labyrinths and prisons, catacombs and caves; in borders and frontiers, thresholds and walls; in the terror of the shuttered room and the protection of the magic circle; in the promise and dread of the closed door; in journeys of discovery, feats of transgression and flights from retribution. The world is defined in horror literature as *space* and, furthermore, as a closed space. (1990, p.2)

Consider the instance of the catacombs, noted by Aguirre. Catacombs lay below a city, under the surface of everyday life, in a space where no light reaches the environment, and absorbing all of the excrement of the world above. On top of the physical nature of the catacomb, the cultural perception of the catacombs also described it to be a place of low class, a place where crime and illicit activities run rampant, and lastly a place of despair and death. Thus, in Gothic horror, unfamiliar

locations and places were used to first incite an unpleasant feeling and disgust in the reader, but deeper down, they do not strike the reader quite so strongly, as the physical space in which it occupies is less familiar to the reader. For instance, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), largely uses underground caves and church dungeons as locations for secretive conversations where furtive motives and conspiratory plotting are revealed. Additionally, the climatic action of the destruction of the vampire in Le Fanu's *Carmilla* takes place in a graveyard below an abandoned church (1872).

To get a better concept of space, one can look to definitions of perception to find a perspective. In Yi-Fu Tuan's book, *Topophilia*, '*Perception* is the both the response of the senses to external stimuli and purposeful activity. *Attitude* is primarily a cultural stance, a position one takes vis-à-vis the world. It has greater stability than a perception and is formed of a long succession of perceptions, that is, of experience' (1974, p.4). In essence, Gothic horror fiction utilized the perception of specific places and spaces in the physical world to generate the desired feeling of dread and detachment. For most, a dungeon full of human bones immediately sparks a sense of fear and terror. Continuing in this pattern, modern horror continues to utilize the same device, as 'Horror use[s] settings of dungeons, attics, corridors, and terrifying and unpleasant spaces. Horror disturbs our sense of where is comforting and where is normal' (Wisker 2005, p.8). For instance, in King's *'Salem's Lot*, the haunted house in which the vampire Marlow hides, is an abandoned mansion left untouched for a number of years. Due to the perception of the place, nobody in the adjacent town dares go inside, and it becomes even more frightening once the vampires start to consume the area. Wisker goes on to explain exactly how it works, saying that horror 'uses spaces that are dangerous, at the edge, such as cellars, dungeons, attics, and haunted castles, illustrating and enacting

how we push worrying elements of our life into safe, distant places' (2005, p.26). But, physical location does not comprise the only attention to which space must be given.

Additionally, space can be considered in time, as suggested by Gelder (2001). In his horror criticism, *The Horror Reader*, he notes that 'But "the field of horror" is a fractured, many-faceted thing, and critical dispositions depend not only on what is being looked at, and when, but will *determine* what is being looked at and what is deemed inappropriate, irrelevant, and so on in the first place' (2000, p.4). Gelder's criticism is double-layered: first, one must consider the time in the space of the world within a work, but also, the way in which we as readers will perceive and understand a work also can change over time. Thus, for our purposes, he demonstrates that a ghost story allegedly took place one hundred years ago may hold less power over listening ears than a similar story set only a couple weeks ago. Gelder quickly implies that perception and memory of events can change over time. Thus, reality, as witnessed by an individual, could give way to illusion due to the way it was originally perceived, and archived into one's memory. In essence, the time and context of space are factors that may affect the way in which reality is defined by an individual, and thus again begs the question: what is reality and what is illusion?

On the other hand, and to much more debate, space and its meaning within a novel can also take the form of psychological space. Here, a character can create his own space in which to think and interact. For readers, the easiest way to understand psychological space is the first-person narrator because we receive first-hand the thoughts and opinions of a character. However, psychological space is not limited to only a first-person perspective, as psychological space is interpreted through characters's actions and perceptions about the

environment of their existence. Aguirre suggests that, in reference to the mental landscape, that

> 'the physical world turns into appearance—an appearance which may well correspond to a reality: things may be well be what they seem; only we do not know whether this is so, but have to find out. Out of this break between illusion and fact, a new concept enters the philosophical arena, the concept of existence' (1990, p.49).

Thus, in the psychological space, the world according to Batman might involve the political struggle of who gets what in Gotham City, what is best for the attitudes of its people, and finding ways to keep them safe, while the world according to Pip from Dickens's *Great Expectations*, is about how to grow up to be an adult and find a way in the world. So, existence is a more powerful method by which to define identity and reality. One first adopts an identity, then forms a self-constructed reality about the features of that identity, which then lends itself to a greater structure, that of existence and purpose.

Of the best outside interpretations on psychological space, criminologist Mark Seltzer describes serial killers as living in their own psychological space in his essay, *The Serial Killer as a Type of Person*. The 'breakdown of the distinctions between the inside and the outside and between the private and the public – this bordering of the social on the psychiatric – is the malady' (1998, p.101). As such, Seltzer comments on the method by which serial killers cross the boundaries of the psychological space to the physical space. He notes that they are the 'the kind of person who traumatically experiences himself as nothing deeper than a social construction' (1998, p.99).

Seltzer's real-life studies can be applied to the realm of literature and horror fiction. A killer in a horror novel likely lives and exists within his own "mental" world; the physical world as he perceives it in his mind. Therefore, the psychological landscape of a monster includes

a vastly tainted image of the realistic world, thus eliminating the typical rules of the realistic world. In this, the laws of man, the laws of morality, and even the laws of culture do not hold power, and instead, the psychological space is controlled by the character himself. Modern psychologists like to call this space, the 'liminal' space, which 'refers to in-between situations and conditions that are characterized by the dislocation of established structures, the reversal of hierarchies, and uncertainty regarding the continuity of tradition and future outcomes,' according to Horvath et. al. (2009, p.1). In this liminal space, the world exists outside the typical rules of our physical and social reality, instead founding itself upon a conception of identity and a perspective of a self-constructed reality, which again does not adhere to an objective reality of the physical and psychological worlds. Wisker compiles all of these aforementioned sentiments in a sweeping, summarizing statement about the genre: 'Horror is a perfect fit, a fantasy space for our needs, for our exploration of such contradictions and for projection of new possibilities. Horror is the ultimate creative, imaginative, and subversive mode' (2005, p.28).

In Roman's *Mörkrädd* (*Afraid of the Dark*), David, in his middle 30s, is severely frightened by darkness and he makes an honest attempt to exorcise his fears by staying in an isolated cabin in northern Sweden for a whole winter by himself. Thinking he can sort out his psychological problems, the character, David, in Roman's book essentially becomes a case study of the mind of a paranoid man. Right from the start, moving a character's location, or in other words, the action of putting David out of his element in the wilderness as opposed to the city, represents a new space. Physically, David is no longer interacting with a familiar world, and psychologically, David has left a place of uneasiness to attempt to cope with problems that he associated with his life in the city. Wisker details the meaning of this change as a

form of defamiliarization, saying it 'preys upon our need for secure identities, body wholeness, safe families and neighborhoods, continuity of identity and self, and shared realities—'life as we know it'' (2005, p.146-147)

> 'Vi har träffat massa läkare. Psykologer...*experter*. Inget hjälper. Dom bara säger att det här måste få ta tid (We have met many doctors. Psychologists…*experts*. Nothing helps. They only say that this must be given time),' (2008, p. 66)[1]

He says, forcing himself to revert to his own psychological therapy to confront and attempt to solve his problems via the cabin in the woods.

One could also suggest that the isolated space is also like that of a Gothic horror setting. As Jones suggests, in his article, *Species of Spaces*: 'In horror literature, the narrative quality of buildings is made literal in the form of the 'haunted house': the house with a story to tell' (2000, p.75), signifying that a building can have its own personality, or more so, its own identity. Therefore, in having an identity, the cabin almost becomes a character of its own. In context, many Swedes would view the space of the cabin as that of peace, quiet, and relaxation: a place where one would want to spend a vacation, away from the here-and-now of everyday life. At an event in Edinburgh in March 2012, Ellen Rees described how the Scandinavian cabin itself is a symbol of a connection to nature. The cabin represents the natural world and a connection to rural, human living: a shared past among all Scandinavians and all people in general (2012). Ironically, David is helping to create an identity for the cabin, only instead of escaping his psychological trauma to a relaxing vacation from city life, he specifically comes to the cabin to confront his dilemma. Therefore, Roman employs the perceptual theory put forth earlier by Tuan, but instead of simply allowing David to escape to a location associated with safety and

[1] Roman's two novels have yet only been published in Swedish language. In order to make them accessible, I have provided my own English translations.

serenity, Roman distorts this image by using it as a location of tension and distress.

Once he has arrived at the cabin, David begins to notice noise from the outside of the windows during the night, which raises his suspicions that an evil force of nature is out to hurt him. In the ensuing psychological struggle to discern between an objective reality and a psychological projection, David chooses to tell himself that the perceived noise must only be elk rattling his antlers upon the glass.

> 'Den verkar inte se mig, tänkte David. Lurar jag mig själv? Är det kanske en älg eller ett björn? Om jag tittar noga... Den stannade. Vände sig mot honom. Tittade på honom. Han såg inga ögon. Inga drag. Egentligen ingenting. (It doesn't seem to see me, thought David. Am I fooling myself? Is it maybe an elk or a bear? If I watch for it…It stayed. I turned myself to him. Watched him. He saw no eyes. No personality. Finally nothing)' (Roman 2008, p.112).

Here, David believes that any force on the outside of the window cannot get to him, and that using the window and the wall as a boundary, he is safe. Therefore, the window and the wall symbolically represent boundaries by which David spatially determines safety and danger within his own reality. However, from another perspective, one could also find that the window and wall act as a doorway between the physical world outside and psychological world inside David's mind, illustrating the significance of perceptions of spaces. For instance, the window and wall physically keep out animals and cold air, but by doing so, they act as a doorway for fear of the outside, and all the possibilities of danger that come with it, enter into David's paranoid mind, rather than letting him experience the noises and possibilities of danger outside in the wilderness itself. By keeping out the physical danger, he lets in the psychological stress.

In this vein, David encounters a number of other manifestations of fears of which we learn he has repressed over his years, including that of sexual relationships, familial relationships, and even career-related stress. In these manifestations, he again imagines danger in the form of darkness to attack him at any time that he leaves the safety of the cabin's interior. 'Jag har varit ensam i den här stugan omgiven av det här kompakta mörkret, ute i skogen. Och det har funnits något annat. (I have been alone in the forest, surrounded by the compact darkness. And there has been something else)' (Roman 2008, p.119). Thus, we can see how his psychological perception of the world has taken over an objective reality in the physical world as seen from an outside eye, as it would be apparent to Nina, his acquaintance at a nearby hotel, but not to him. Like Seltzer proposes in his studies of subjects with multiple psychological constructions, 'Interior states become merely the subjective synonym of the objective fact of the object's construction,' (1998, p.100), meaning that David only perceives what he projects from his mind within the objective reality of the physical world, not David's self-constructed reality in which he perceives that he operates. Considering that this projection is fueled by fear and manifested in bodily danger and mental anguish, there is no limit to what he imagines, and it is 'the mere tip of an unfathomable iceberg of shadow, whose threat infinitely exceeds anything given to our experience' (Aguirre 1990, p.86). Here, David exists within the liminal space between the physical world that an outsider like Nina would experience, and the mental world that he himself experiences. Every time the darkness falls, David again approaches the threshold of the liminal space as he manifests his fears in that psychological space, but his body only interacts with the physical material world of the inside of the cabin.

Similarly, in *Vigilante*, Marcus projects his own persona of that of an avenger. Marcus lives what seems to be a stable lifestyle—he has a car, a girlfriend and a flat; however he begins to notice petty behaviours of others around him that irritate him. He lives inside the city, and interacts with other humans in close space everyday, typical of a city, and as one would expect, he meets people from all backgrounds and cultures, hence many identities. Soon, these feelings of annoyance become so strong that Marcus chooses to act on impulse to "fix" things to how they should be, or how he believes they should be. Marcus acts to fix problems in the physical world that bother him in the psychological capacity. His irritations, and the behaviors of others that spark it, perform the duties of the doorway connecting the two worlds. For instance, Marcus assaults a man who verbally insults his girlfriend in a queue to the entrance of a nightclub. As a result, he acts in an attempt to "right" the perceived problem: he walks up to the man, confronts him about his behavior and then, without waiting for any response, attacks him.

> 'Jag låter honom komma nära, greppar hans högerarm när han anfaller, sliter hårt så att han tappar balansen, ger honom ett knä i bröstet och sedan ett slag över knacken. (I let him come nearer, grabbed his upper arm when he attacked, ripped him hard so he lost his balance, gave him a knee to the chest and then a sort of blow)' (Roman 2006, p.87).

However, Marcus's work becomes more and more violent and dangerous as the novel proceeds, to the point where ultimately, Marcus sees himself as a vigilante, and one who is out to right evil with his own evil. Herein, his construction of identity swiftly changes from that of the stable Marcus we first meet, to Marcus the vigilante. For him, the impulse to avenge, drawn from his perceptions of others as based on multiple experiences, drives him to carry out his own acts of violence, a reality which Marcus constructed, and then continues to project, even though that reality, while completely rooted in reason to

him, might seem only an illusion to another. Similarly, in another situation,

> 'Han får en slag i magen och faller på knä. Snön biter i hans händer, röda droppar stänker ner det vita. Spark i huvudet. Stövel i ansiktet. (He got a punch in the stomach and fell to a knee. The snow bit into his hands, red drops splashing onto the white. A kick in the head. A boot to the face)' (Roman 2006, p.177).

However, Marcus's acts do physically affect others in objective reality, whereas he is unaffected by them in his own perspective of himself. In this, Marcus suffers no psychological repulsion from what he does, but instead finds a lack of the expected remorse, so in essence, his psychological world is changing. As Tuan mentions, 'Truth is not given through any objective consideration of the evidence. Truth is subjectively embraced as part of one's total experience and outlook' (1974, p.61). Thus, Marcus sees his attitudes and perceptions of the physical space and identities around him changing based on his own psychological view of the outside world. His activities as an avenger are only his own quest for truth, but it is a truth that only he can mold to his own needs so then the concept of "truth" is only a cultural attachment. As per common perception, we are then led to question Marcus's moral fiber and his meaning for truth, as in the question of whether he is right to rid the world of some evil in his own quest for integrity, or is he simply just another bully acting out of his own mindset?

At this point, it is also important to bring up the context within which both *Mörkrädd* and *Vigilante* play out. Sweden is a welfare-state, meaning that its people are protected financially by the government and provided many social services like health care, retirement, and job support to name a few. As Mary Hilson points out in *The Nordic Model*, Scandinavian countries were the 'socialist utopia' (2008 p.12)

with 'collective conformity' (2008 p.13). Due to the economic order and governmental structure of Sweden, it is possible to assume that the country has assimilated into a fairly homogenous culture of tradition and behavior, thus signifying the existence of behavioral norms and taboos. Andrew Brown, in *Fishing in Utopia*, mentions that 'the capitalist prosperity of social democratic Sweden seemed to have come at the expense of all sorts of human kindness. Everything old and wooden and ramshackle had been remade," (2008 p.30), suggesting that the order imposed by the government simultaneously reduced variation to tradition, like expression through architecture, for instance, and instead moved the people toward a more narrow, yet homogenous culture.

Thus, in application to Roman's novel, knowing that these economic and governmental structures limit variance in culture, might a behavioral norm and taboo also pervade the cultural sphere of behavior and attitude in Sweden? For instance, when Marcus acts out, he can be seen as consistently breaking taboos upon which readers might feel he borders on the immoral. For instance, is he right to berate a woman whom he feels is speaking too loudly and obnoxiously into a mobile device while waiting in line at a market, or should he act politely to show respect for another's private business? On one hand, the noise invades the space of others, forcing them to listen to a voice, but on the other hand, one must consider that the noise emits from a public space? As well, what level of noise might border on the upper limit of the threshold between which Marcus must act or otherwise shrug it off? Thus, the examination of these questions as to Marcus's purposes and perspectives, once again harkens back to conceptions of reality versus illusion, where reality strives to be grounded in an objective set of facts and illusion seems more tailored to perceptions of this objective reality.

Between the two works, the themes of identity and space recur to challenge beliefs of culture, taboos, and ultimately fear. By examining the texts under this light, we can strengthen our ideas and concepts of identity and space. *Mörkrädd* and *Vigilante*'s protagonists feature physical and psychological battles, but interestingly enough, they counterbalance each other in an inverse relationship. Whereas David reacts without physical violence to psychological fear, Marcus reacts with physical violence to a psychological irritation. David lets the psychological landscape become his world without affecting the physicality around him, but Marcus does affect the physical world around him based on his psychological perception of it. Fitting into the scope of the genre, Roman's usage of the two spaces creates feelings of fear and dread, and as Rockett surmised, 'In fact, terror is always of the indeterminate and incomprehensible, of the unseen but sensed or suspected, or of the imperfectly seen. One imagines what is really there, based upon the evidence actually in one's possession, and what one imagines seems inevitably both more terrifying' (1988, p.46). Thus, what is seen and what is unseen becomes the two identities at play in horror, themselves becoming reality against illusion. Roman himself echoes this conjecture in a statement from a published interview on *Bokhora*:

> 'Temat i *Mörkrädd* är i många avseenden likt temat i *Vigilante*, vad som lockar fram obehagliga sidor hos oss och vad vi blir när den får härja fritt. Och att det inte handlar om fler personligheter, utan bara om aspekter du ännu inte låtit vakna, men som ändå är du. Du är kapabel till betydligt mer än du tror.(The theme in *Afraid of the Dark* is mostly similar to the theme in *Vigilante*, what brings out the horrible parts of us and what we are when they go free. And it is not about all personality traits, but only about aspects that you do not let wake up from inside, but you still are. You are capable of much more than you think)' (Bokhora.se)

In closing, clear definitions of identity and space can shape how one looks at Roman's world, considering perspective, purpose, and existence. The formation of an identity, and its relationship to the spaces in which it interacts, create a self-fulfilling sense of reality for an individual. However, this reality does not cross over the threshold of the collective, societal perspective, thus creating an objective reality, that is, one that is based in concrete fact and not imagination. In the case of Roman's books, the sense of identity and reality for both David and Marcus comes from interactions between psychological constructions and physical spaces in relation to their respective perspectives, which can be viewed as either a reality, from the individual, or an illusion, from the objective. Herein, this provides readers with a much more objective look into their personas, which lends insight into the creation of identity and how to view and discern spaces. Geographically, within the devices of location, context, and time, it is obvious that these identities can shift and evolve in various directions, due to interactions of oneself and our environment, only reinforcing the notion that reality is, in itself, a dynamic construction of oneself, by oneself.

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