

Anderson, Jean, Miranda, Carolina and Pezzotti, Barbara (eds) (2012). *The Foreign in International Crime Fiction: Transcultural Representations*. London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, pp. 234, £60 hardback/£18.99 paperback. ISBN 978-1-4411-2817-1.

Doing exactly as described, not only does this publication “open up new directions for scholarship on crime writing and transnational literature,” it also covers less run of the mill topics such as “national identity, immigration, globalisation and diaspora communities” within the ambit of commentary on contemporary international crime fiction. Further, since the genre of crime writing is now also seen as a new form of travel writing, this book transports its reader to some very far flung corners of the crime fiction world.

“The Foreign in International Crime Fiction” is actually a compilation of essays which spans a range of settings and backdrops including the French Pacific, Italy, Argentina, Cuba and China amongst others. Both twentieth and twenty-first century works are considered by American, European, Australian and New Zealand scholars giving the publication a truly global identity and appeal.

The book is set out in three parts namely, Part One: “Inside Out or Outside In?,” Part Two: “Private Eyes, Hybrid Eyes: The In-between Detective” and Part Three: “Where Evil Walks Abroad – Towards a Politics of Otherness.” There is however, as acknowledged in the introduction, “often a considerable overlap between these” (3).

Part One comprises five chapters. In the first, Ellen Carter and Deborah Walker-Morrison consider the implications of a text being written by an author who may be an insider or an outsider to the setting and characters contained within that text. Their consideration is based on the examples of two outsider narratives set in New Zealand namely those of *Haka* (1998) and *Utu* (2004) both by the French author Caryl Férey. In chapter two, the discussion put forward by Sabine Vanacker, focuses on the issues of “abroad,” “home,” “self” and the “foreign Other,” all within the context of a nostalgic international environment.

Chapter three reflects on how a particular setting or location has been exploited by various writers and to do this, Philip Swanson has chosen to examine the example of Cuba as a backdrop for American writers. In the fourth chapter, Luo Hui examines the insider-outsider relationship as it appears in Qiu Xiaolong’s crime fiction writing (incidentally, originally written in English) and this is done with particular reference to the use of the cosmopolitan metropolis and cultural icons of Shanghai and their translation into Chinese. Finally, focussing on the Franco-Pacific thriller, chapter five, concludes this part with a contribution by Jean Anderson

which, amongst other things, pays particular attention to “the types of concessions made to non-local readers and the use of stereotypes as a kind of shorthand (4)”.

Once again taking their readers to crime fiction pastures new, chapters six to eleven look at studies of crime fiction from different sides of the planet. In chapter six, Stewart King looks at a conflict of identities and their underlying assumptions as presented by Rosa Ribas through her character the detective Cornelia, who is central to *Entre dos Aguas*; whilst in chapter seven, France Grenaudier-Klijn delves into detective stories of a bi-cultural nature and comes to a positive conclusion that detecting duos such as those of Dominique Sylvain are aimed at promoting a more collaborative and cross-cultural way of life. Chapter eight looks at the issue of legitimacy in Australian ethnographic crime fiction as considered by John and Marie Ramsland before chapters nine and ten turn to consider less familiar topics and threads such as internalised and externalised foreignness and the exceptional Other as examined in the rather more familiar works of writers such as Fred Vargas, Stieg Larsson and Peter Høeg respectively. Chapter eleven rounds off part two of the book with Keren Chiaroni’s study of an inversion of the familiar and the foreign in Fabrice Bourland’s *Le Diable du Crystal Palace* (2010).

Part three shows itself to be just as innovative in the issues that it explores. This time, crime fiction that touches on some potentially culturally and politically sensitive and at times almost taboo issues, is analysed. In chapter twelve, Andrew Francis looks at British representations of the German character in specific spy fiction of the period 1900 – 1914. This is followed, in chapter thirteen by Carolina Miranda’s analysis of Roberto Arlt’s detective fiction as a portrait of Buenos Aires and the particular ethnographic phenomenon it experienced in the 1920s and 1930s when different nationalities, social classes and criminal behaviour all came together in an urban melting pot. Chapter fourteen takes the Italian north/south divide as the context within which to consider the issue of foreign immigration with Barbara Pezzotti focussing on the novels of Andrea Camilleri and Massimo Carlotto. In the next chapter Margaret Sutherland explores xenophobia and more taboo issues in her exploration of the “Images of Turks created in Recent Crime Fiction,” before chapter sixteen concludes this publication with Carlos Uxó’s examination of how the Chinese-Cuban community is represented in the work of Leonardo Padura and whether Padura “speaks on behalf” or “about” this particular “subaltern group.”

In short, this innovative publication does not in the least disappoint. Although not addressing translation issues as such, not only does it do exactly what one would expect from the title i.e. explore “The Foreign in International Crime Fiction” through “Transcultural Representations,” it also showcases crime fiction as a “wide-ranging forum in which to safely confront some of the tensions of globalised living (6).” It is a must read

for those who want to widen their crime fiction horizons. They should not be disappointed.

Sue Lilley

City University and London Metropolitan University

Susanlilley1@btinternet.com