CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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European crime fiction is both the sum of its constitutive parts—the national crime fiction traditions of those individual states that comprise Europe—and a broader, transnational and transcultural phenomenon that offers insights for thinking critically about Europe, its past, present and future. This book on contemporary European crime fiction follows a similar pattern: while it endeavours to examine the way French, British, Polish and Italian, to name but a few, crime novelists and crime narratives

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approach the related questions of 'What and whose history?' and 'Which politics?' within a discrete set of national frameworks, it also tries to illuminate those places or moments where the complex and at times contradictory meanings of Europe are brought into sharper focus. The starting point for our book is that crime fiction as genre is well placed to interrogate the attendant tensions. The EU's longstanding commitment to open borders, democratic institutions, social and political cooperation, and the rule of law finds its equivalences in the genre's search for justice (see Chap. 15), in its envisaging of new identities forged at the crossroads of nation, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class and religion (see Chaps. 2, 13, and 14), and through the models of trans-European collaboration necessary to bring television crime series to the small screen (see Chaps. 5, 6, 12, 13, and 15). Equally, crime narratives are adept at exploring heavy-handed policing and security initiatives and the threat of social breakdown, the exploitation of 'free' markets by commercial enterprises and organized crime (almost indistinguishable from each other) and of open borders by drug and people trafficking gangs, and the rise of xenophobic violence against perceived outsiders (see Chaps. 7, 8, and 12). The fact that this 'open borders' policy works for commodities but not for people is critically examined both by the genre and by contributors to this edition. Gulddal and King's claim that "there is no common European crime literature" is offset by their acknowledgement that "transcontinental investigations and comparisons might [...] be illuminating and reveal certain tendencies that are prominent among European crime authors from different nations" (2022: 196). We recognize their scepticism but argue that a broader European field is starting to emerge and is visible in this tension between its critical and more optimistic practices and elements.

The Internationalization of European Crime Fiction

To even talk about, let alone construct a book-length study of, European crime fiction, rather than about the distinctive and overlapping crime fiction traditions in different European countries, is a relatively new phenomenon. The University of Wales Press series on European crime fiction is a case in point: with individual volumes looking at Italian, French, Scandinavian, Iberian and German examples, only one—Andrew and Phelps' *Capital Crimes* (2013) focusing on crime fiction and the city—offers a broader pan-European focus. Certainly there have been significant and widespread moves to consider the internationalization of crime

fiction—the genre's so-called global turn—both as an acknowledgement of the genre's capacity to circulate, historically and in the contemporary, across national borders and to try to combat the perceived dominance of the Anglo-US perspective in crime fiction studies (King 2014). Edited works by Matzhe and Mühleisen, Krajenbrink and Quinn, Anderson, Miranda, and Pezzotti, Pepper and Schmid, and Gulddal, King and Rolls have made notable contributions to this internationalizing initiative.[1] The lack of critical attention paid to the specifically European dimension of crime narratives was one of the jumping off points for the DETECt research project (Detecting Transcultural Identity in European Popular Crime Narratives), funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 programme, from which this volume has directly emerged.[2] The transnational framework of DETECt is necessarily concerned with civic and ethical issues linked to the construction of new, possibly cosmopolitan European identities in crime narratives—and concerned to think about how and why crime fiction is particularly well suited to examining and producing these new transcultural identities. If there is a marked tendency for critical studies of crime fiction and the transnational or 'global turn' to focus only on representation—how these processes are represented in or by specific crime narratives—the DETECt project, and, by implication, this volume, is just as concerned to map and interrogate the possibilities and limits of transculturation practices in terms of production processes and the ways that crime texts are read and understood by diverse audiences. Of the critical works that have paid attention to the essential characteristics of European crime fiction, the most complementary in approach to our volume is Gulddal and King's chapter on European crime fiction in *The Cambridge Companion to World Crime Fiction*, and their definition stands as a useful marker for our book:

> The term 'European crime fiction' […] refers not to an actual entity that can be described and defined exhaustively, but rather to a comparative opportunity that enables us to examine crime fiction from various countries in terms of their distinctiveness as well as their shared concerns and historical experiences. (198)

Gulddal and King are right in one sense to suggest that the central problem is one of scale—caught between the privileged site of the national and newly emerging field of global or world crime fiction, the "continental scale […] has found fewer advocates" both because "it sets uncomfortably

at the halfway mark" and could be seen as trying "to resurrect outmoded European conceptions of the literary field" (196). Our transnational, comparativist approach to the crime genre certainly finds affinity with their account of crime fiction as world literature (2022; also see King 2014; Nilsson et al. 2018), that is, "to explore the international dimension of crime fiction" and to reverse a more common tendency to see the global genre as "nationally bounded" (King 8, 9). Indeed, insofar as David Damrosch proposes that a "world literature" frame "doesn't go global directly" but rather treats its subject as a "variable, contingent concept taking distinct forms in different national and regional contexts" (518), the category of Europe may actually be a more manageable proposition through which to explore the production and circulation of new identities and critical practices. For one of the central claims of this book, and of the DETECt project as a whole, is that crime fiction in Europe has increasingly worked as a driver of narrative 'glocalization' (Dall'Asta et al. 2021; Barra et al. 2021). In other words, insofar as the places of crime fiction have moved very far from the metropolitan centres to inhabit the remotest localities of the European continent, we are interested in exploring what this shift means regarding the production of new regional and indeed continental identities and the creation of reciprocal knowledge and understanding among transnational readers and audiences. Our book considers how the strains and symmetries between the national and the European can be identified at the level of representation—how these aspects are represented in particular crime narratives—but we are just as keen to investigate the different production cultures emerging across the continent and the extent to which these projects involve transnational cooperation among different media and enable what are often highly localized narratives to circulate across the entire continent (see Chaps. 5, 12, 13, and 15). This function of crime fiction in the transnational dissemination of localized narratives, however, does not operate without and beyond crucial systemic contradictions. The disproportionate power and influence of global television streaming/production giants like Netflix, Amazon and HBO has left specific regions in Europe, notably in the East (Kálai and Keszeg 2021), particularly dependent on their 'largesse'. And whereas collaborations between state broadcasters and private companies speak powerfully to a vision of Europe-wide cooperation, the failure of the EU to put into practice effective policy and financing initiatives to bridge the gaps that still exist between its larger and smaller markets in terms of opportunities for the development of the cultural industries is also noticeable.

European Crime Fiction as Political Critique

To talk about the crime genre in the first place, of course, is to recognize the inherent comprehensiveness and elasticity of a category that speaks to and contains multiple forms and sub-genres and is always on the move, "constantly violating its own boundaries" (Gulddal, King, and Rolls 1). Two of the most popular expressions of the crime genre, the detective and spy novel, have long been identified as 'sociological' in their orientation (Boltanski). As such, these forms often tackle enigmas or conspiracies that are concealed within or by states, asking searching questions about the failure of liberal democracies and their criminal justice systems to deliver fairer societies (McCann). Likewise, following the example of US hard-boiled fiction, the noir or *néo-polar* variant of the genre has also established itself as a 'literature of crisis' (according to Jean-Patrick Manchette's formula), where the shredding of official truths and of 'reality' itself ends up revealing dark political motives and in turn a bleaker set of ethical and affective interrogations. While the obvious links between the 'noir' or *néo-polar* and hardboiled traditions of crime fiction (and, e.g., between crime writers like Manchette and Dashiell Hammett[3]) suggest a US–French or even trans-Atlantic network of affiliation, we want to use this model to think about the wider European development of crime narratives, following Manchette's formulation, as an explicitly critical or political project. That is to say, as a body of work that exposes the corrupt links between states and corporations and attendant abuses of power and authority; that shines a light on the plight of the exploited and marginalized (though without any real faith in the possibilities of wider social transformation or even revolution); that shows how structural violence is embedded at the heart of capitalism; and that points the finger not at individuals who may indeed commit terrible crimes but at the larger social, economic and political systems that turn a blind eye to state and corporate malfeasance (Moretti 1983: 139). Chapters 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 think about what political commitment—as a wider European project—might look like in the face of a power that is both centralized in the practices of states and corporations and also increasingly hard to actually see insofar as it plays out in the humdrum interactions of everyday life. These interventions emphasize the work that crime fiction (as a 'literature of crisis') performs in locating and shining a light on what would otherwise remain concealed, buried or pushed to the margins.

Much work has been carried out into the political commitment, emphasizing a leftist politics and perspective, of crime fiction at a national level, that is, works that explore how the specific or individual crimes that typically set in motion crime narratives (and their investigations) end up exposing the corruption and violence at the heart of institutional and political life (see Chaps. 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, and 14). In France and Italy, the work of crime fiction as a form of political activism has been thoroughly investigated by Annie Collovald and Érik Neveu's *Lire le noir: Enquête sur les lecteurs de récits policiers* (2004), De Paulis-Dalambert's *L'Italie en jaune et noir: La littérature policière de 1990 à nos jours* (2010) and Barbara Pezzotti's *Politics and Society in Italian Crime Fiction: An Historical Overview* (2014), while Nestingen (2016) has examined the political unmasking enacted by and in Stieg Larsson's Millennium novels. Our book on European crime fiction picks up this mantle, and while paying attention to these national traditions—Amir's chapter on French noir, for example, seeks to show how this idea of political commitment has been transformed and to an extent diffused in the contemporary era—it also tries to think about whether the kind of unmasking at play in much contemporary crime fiction might be understood as a European phenomenon.

History and Trauma

What seems to motivate much of this practice, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, is a determination to unmask and interrogate the buried traumas and violence that characterize twentieth-century European history, notably in relation to World War II (see Chaps. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10). Claire Gorrara explicitly links this 'critical framing' of crime fiction to the way in which the genre "engages with the struggles to understand the social, political and moral conflicts and dilemmas that the Second World War has bequeathed to France" and indeed other European countries (11–12). We place this imperative to interrogate the recent past—to assess and revise our collective understanding of what took place in 1945 or 1968 against the so-called historical record, to better see or comprehend the conditions of the present (and vice versa)—as a key motif or theme of European crime fiction (see Gulddal and King 209–217). In this volume, then, we want to uncover the ways in which the crime fiction genre, in its multiple guises, forms and media/transmedia developments, has sought to investigate these typically concealed, sometimes little-known histories, and the complex, murky political inclinations at play in doing so. By looking at this

intersection of history and politics, and by giving our collection the subtitle *Representing History and Politics*, we do not mean to suggest that there are separate domains called 'history' and 'politics'. Just as the act of historical retrieval is an intensely political one, as it draws attention to the knotty relationship between knowledge and power (whose history?), the contestation of political ideas and the emergence of a particular set of political discourses at a particular juncture reflects on the way official history is constructed—and alludes to how it might be questioned or overturned (see Chaps. 5 and 14).

At stake here is the thorny question of how we bring an understanding of what happened in the past to bear on our sense of the present and future and in turn how this sense of presentism informs the shape of our historical understanding. Crime fiction approaches this task in a number of ways. First, what we might call, rather paradoxically, contemporary historical crime fiction seeks to recreate a particular historical moment and fashion an investigation that takes place solely within this frame (Scaggs 125). Marcin Wroński's series, set in Lublin, Poland, in the inter-war years and featuring Detective Inspector Zygmunt Maciejewski, offers a fascinating insight into the society of the Second Polish Republic (1918–1939), notably its thriving Jewish community, both as an example of historical recovery and to fill in the gaps for contemporary Polish readers, for whom the depiction of an open, vibrant, multi-ethnic society could be seen as a reflection of the ambitions of the new post-1989 Polish state (see Chap. 14). It might also be interesting to weigh up Wroński's tolerant and inclusive vision vis-à-vis the rather more conservative and indeed intolerant policies of the Law and Justice party which won the presidency and took the largest number of seats in 2015 and again in 2020.[4] Secondly, in works by Didier Daeninckx and Eoin McNamee, for example, the narratives feature the attempts of a surrogate detective in the present of the story to excavate historical crimes. In the case of Daeninckx's *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1984), translated into English as *Murder in Memoriam*, this relates to a demonstration in Paris in 1961 and the massacre of hundreds of French Algerian protestors at the hands of the police (see Chap. 9). In the case of McNamee's *The Ultras* (2005), the investigations, past and present, dig into the complicity between army personnel and loyalist paramilitaries in the murders of the Miami Showband in County Down in 1975. In both examples, this excavation work has self-evident political implications: the exposure of state involvement in the murders of those deemed to be undesirable or expendable according to the prescriptive

norms of ethnicity, class and/or religion and the suggestion that the state has an ongoing interest in hiding this involvement in the present.

The issue for crime writers and for crime fiction scholars is to think about how well the ever evolving, elastic, open-ended, multiple forms of crime fiction can excavate and do justice to a past that is not simply past but rather is characterized by trauma and unreliable memory (see Chaps. 3, 4, 5, and 10). What is at stake when we try to collectively remember and in doing so confront the horrors, and the repressed traumas, of Nazism, fascism, colonialism/imperialism, military occupation, state violence and totalitarianism? In her work on crime fiction and trauma, Cynthia S. Hamilton argues that the consequences of traumatic events and trauma theory's willingness to conceive of these events as violating and potentially unrepresentable opens a space to push against claims for the genre as conformist and ameliorating. Insofar as the violence of crime fiction—the sheer scale and reach of the violence of the Nazis, for example—"ruptures experience, precipitating incomprehension, disorientation and fragmentation" (2020: 318), there can be little expectation of the status quo being reinscribed. One consequence of this trauma, and of the disorientation and fragmentation it produces, is that it is difficult for individuals caught up in traumatic events to bear witness to them, which opens up the related concern of memory and how memory is often thematized by and in crime fiction texts as unreliable. Kate M. Quinn, for instance, considers how examples of crime fiction texts from Chile and Austria use the genre to address and prize open "historical amnesia and the hidden or silenced histories of state criminality" (2020: 310). This focus and understanding is useful for our consideration of the genre's efforts to come to terms with the buried trauma and repressed memories of World War II and its aftermath (see Chaps. 3, 4, 5, 8, and 10): what can and cannot be recollected and what is at stake for individuals and governments in trying to do so.

Europe: Past, Present, Future

Contemporary European Crime Fiction, then, looks both forward, examining new policing and criminal constellations and the emergence of new transcultural identities, and backward, at the ways that historic traumas, and repressed memories of these traumas, continue to shape our perception of Europe's present. Indeed, it is our understanding that both moves are linked and that past, present and future are conjoined, as suggested by Michel Foucault's famous formulation from *Surveiller et punir* (1975),

translated as *Discipline and Punish*: the "history of the present" (1991: 31). The willingness of contemporary crime narratives to revisit particular aspects of World War II or the political uprisings of 1968 tells us as much about presentist anxieties, fears, hopes and preoccupations as about the historical events themselves (see Chap. 9). For example, the assertion of French noir writer Jean-Claude Izzo, in *Chourmo* (1996, tr. 2006), that "Beneath the paving stones there was never a beach. There was only power" (2009: 133) is both a retort to the Situationist refrain from the late 1960s and early 1970s[5] and a contemporary belief that culture, including crime fiction, cannot be unproblematically hijacked or re-routed for politically radical ends. We argue that contemporary crime narratives *can* serve politically progressive ends (e.g. anti-capitalist, anti-racist, pro-feminist—see Chaps. 2, 12, and 13) but that these are inevitably compromised by the genre's concomitant push towards compromise and resolution. Equally, what we might see as a countermove, characterized by hope for a more open, tolerant, democratic society, typically collapses in the face of crime fiction's thematization of institutionalized corruption, inequality, and the ongoing effects of racism, misogyny and homo/transphobia.

The focus of this collection is intended to capture this emphasis on dark refraction, that is, European history and politics captured through a glass darkly of contemporary crime fiction. The comforts and reassurances that crime fiction can, at times, offer us are set against the pessimistic awareness that justice, under our current political dispensation, at a national and supranational level, may not be possible, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of arriving at definitive, clear-cut answers about the meaning and truth of historical events. In all of this, and notwithstanding the 'noirification' of European crime fiction (where the emergence of regional noir designations—Nordic, Mediterranean, Tartan etc.—speaks to the growing political crisis enveloping the continent and efforts on the part of the genre to lay bare this crisis), we remain hopeful that European crime narratives, understood as de-territorialized and polycentric, can help to foster the propagation of a transcultural ethos, promote new forms of reciprocal knowledge (and new understandings of the multiple meanings of the past), and stimulate a cosmopolitan disposition to difference and diversity among transnational audiences. At the level of representation, this is certainly the case, as the chapters in this collection will demonstrate. And looking at the production context, it is also true that transnational hook-ups between state broadcasters in order to finance TV crime series about

Europe's past speak to a model of cooperation and consensus that is echoed in or by the EU's efforts to understand its own past and plot its future.[6] However, on a gloomier note, contemporary crime fiction lays bare the crises that have threatened the construction of a humanist European identity in line with the EU's founding ideals. These narratives, therefore, deliver a powerful critique of certain political choices that have weakened the cohesion of Europe, planting the seed for nationalism and xenophobia. Likewise, the extreme fragmentation of the media market, the natural obstacles posed by European multilingualism, and the tendency to follow convenient pathways to proximity in the distribution of cultural products still hinder crime fiction's potential for the dissemination of an expansive transculturality among European audiences. The noir aspects of crime narratives tell a related story.

Contemporary European Crime Fiction: Representing History and Politics

This volume has been arranged into three distinctive sections, which hopefully makes it easier for the reader to navigate and helps to delineate the book's distinctive focus on the ways that contemporary crime narratives have sought to interrogate the 'problem' of history at a national and continental level and to engage with the political meanings of these attempts to represent this fraught and by no means agreed upon past. If the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marks one bookend of the volume, which looks forward to the opening up of Europe, east and west, north and south, and the closer economic, social and political ties between European countries and EU member states, the other bookend is the fallout of the war in Ukraine and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, even if the significance of these events for our understanding of the Europeanness of crime fiction is not yet discernible and the crime narratives about these events are yet to be written and filmed. In the first section of the book, we examine European crime narratives about World War II (and the periods immediately before and after it) in order to think about the ongoing significance of this conflict for our multiple and at times contested understandings of national and European cultures and identities in the present. Maarit Piipponen's chapter on British writer Jacqueline Winspear's Maisie Dobbs novels uses the representation of the inter-war years and Britain's geopolitical manoeuvrings to reflect both on imperial nostalgia and attempts to destabilize and remap spaces of class and gender along more

progressive lines. Piipponen persuasively argues that the series offers a fantasy of female geopolitical agency at a time when women's roles were typically a good deal more limited (e.g. secretaries and nurses rather than spies and code-breakers), and where Maisie's travels around a Europe on the brink of war work to foreclose contemporary debates about the damaging consequences of Britain's colonial practices. The complex bearing of past on present, and present on past, which is central to both histography and historical crime fiction, is used by Piipponen to think about this re-gendering of sovereignty and imperial nostalgia in light of contemporary anxieties about border security and migration—and about Britain's fraught relationship with Europe, both historically and in our contemporary moment. Through Maisie's investigations, we are invited to consider the effects of war on the individual and collective/national psyche, and to assess how or how far the novels' discourse of nostalgia shuts down opportunities to reflect on the feminization of the public sphere and the creation of new identities at and across the borders of gender, nation and class.

In his chapter on fascism and crime fiction, Eric Sandberg explores the legacies of the Nazi past as common denominator that connects European experiences across time and space, both in terms of the trauma of atrocity that afflicted many European nations during and after World War II and as an unruly and open-ended "buried history" in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century European popular culture. Specifically, Sandberg investigates how crime fiction, characterized as a genre invested or perhaps even overinvested in the past, operates as a narrative matrix through which to engage with the history and legacy of Nazism. As well as offering us a broad sense of this engagement, Sandberg focuses on the ways in which Phillip Kerr's Bernie Gunther novels think about, and think through, the problem of crime. Rather than individualizing it, as is often the practice in hardboiled fiction, crime in these novels, connected as it is to a larger set of institutional practices that ultimately lead to the multiple sites of Nazi atrocities, can barely be apprehended or discerned, let alone solved. Most significantly, rather than seeing Nazism as a delimited phenomenon, historical in character and tied to the specific practices of National Socialism in Germany from 1933 to 1945, Kerr's later works, especially the Gunther novels set in the post-World War II era, represent fascism as a spreading stain encompassing ever increasing numbers of individuals and social groups and ever larger swathes of European territory: part of a more general European past that refuses to remain buried.

Christos Dermentzopoulos, Nikos Filippaios and Lampros Flitouris also consider one of Kerr's late period Gunther novels, *Greeks Bearing Gifts* (2018), for the ways it engages with one of the darkest moments in twentieth-century Greek history: the extermination of the Thessaloniki Jews during the German occupation of Greece (1939–1944). While putatively operating as both crime fiction and historical fiction, engaging readers through the creation of suspense and filling in gaps in the so-called historical record, Kerr's novel also furthers a historiographic argument about what it means to remember, and conversely to forget, past crimes. The authors argue that Gunther's democratic and humanist perspective, informed by a particular understanding of Marxism, which Gunther openly acknowledges, sets in motion the act of historical recovery: what is to be recovered and why it is important to do so. Kerr's novel is not treated as objective or official history but rather history from below—where new understandings and accounts of what occurred in the past emerge from eyewitness testimonies to contest and overturn received understandings. This chapter situates the novel's effort to expose and draw attention to "the Greek Shoah" as part of a wider European move to think through the ongoing effects and buried trauma in the contemporary of World War II.

The final chapter in this first part of the book, by Massimiliano Coviello, examines the German European television series *Babylon Berlin* (2017–), inspired by Volker Kutscher's novels and distributed by Sky and Netflix across Europe and globally. Set during the Weimar Republic (1918–1933), this TV series speaks to the capacities of crime narratives to explore the ongoing effects of individual and collective trauma by following the life and investigations of Commissioner Gereon Rath, a man damaged by his experience in the trenches of World War I. Coviello's chapter shows us how Weimer Berlin is reimagined through its use of real-life locations and intertextual references to earlier cultural renditions of this historical period, as well as through a practice of international collaboration at the level of the production context. While Coviello argues that historical trauma is not necessarily something that can be easily overcome, he remains hopeful that the series' unwillingness to turn a blind eye to Rath's damage and the cooperation enacted at the level of production and distribution offer us a way of reckoning with the past so that we are not condemned to endlessly repeat its mistakes.

The second section of the book considers European crime narratives that focus on the post-World War II era, up to and including the political

uprisings of the late 1960s and 1970s. In doing so, the chapters collectively ask whether or to what extent the continent-wide social and political schisms that climaxed in May 1968 reverberate in the contemporary and can help us understand what kind of socio-political transformations might still be possible, in light of subsequent retrenchments by capital and the state. Gunhild Agger examines how two texts—*The Baader Meinhof Complex* (2008), a German film, and the Danish television miniseries *The Left Wing Gang* (2009)—represent domestic terrorism of the late 1960s and early 1970s but where the terrorist action is in support of the Palestinian cause. As such, the chapter asks whether or to what extent this willingness to explore the complex motivations of the protagonists allows us to expand our understanding of what constitutes crime in the first place. By offering a detailed account of the narrative scope and generic restlessness or hybridity of the texts, Agger considers the wider cultural significance of their thematizations of politics and political action, and of the complex interplay between criminal and politicized violence. Agger argues that the 'dark heritage' of European trauma and division is unearthed in these texts not just to recreate moments from our recent past but also to think about how a desire for radical political action and social justice continues to stalk our own present.

The radical potential of crime fiction—its ability to overturn commonplace generic assumptions and to develop disorientating aesthetic practices that in turn speak to the need for wider political transformation—is explored by Marco Amici in relation to the work of British novelist David Peace. Peace is the author of the Red Riding Quartet—four crime or 'noir' novels set in Yorkshire between the early 1970s and early 1980s. Insofar as these works follow the traumatic events surrounding the real 'Yorkshire Ripper' murders and use these to explore the spectre of social and political impasse or collapse, Peace offers us a bleak portrait of stagnation and decay. But Amici's framing of the Red Riding Quartet as socially engaged, following Jean-Patrick Manchette (to whom Peace owes a self-acknowledged debt), and his efforts to locate both a punk aesthetic and traces of spectrality in Peace's writing, opens up a space for thinking about the possibilities for political transformation—although one that remains a fraught, agonized prospect. As such, Amici's chapter proposes a reading of the Quartet in which the constitutive inability of Peace's writing reflects the instability of a key moment in European history when, as Franco 'Bifo' Berardi points out, the imagination of the future has collapsed into the present. Hence, beyond the immediate locality of Yorkshire and the

spectral presence of the Yorkshire Ripper, Peace is able to render a European sense of 'no future'—a politicized but undoubtedly bleak vision—which characterized the late Cold War period and whose traces can be located in our own present.

Loriano Macchiavelli's long-running crime or noir fiction series featuring low-ranking police detective Sarti Antonio is set during the same period as Peace's Red Riding Quartet and responds to a similar set of political and historical contexts, even if, as Silvia Baroni argues, there is something distinctively Italian about the so-called Years of Lead: a period from the end of the 1960s to the start of the 1980s characterized by mass protests, terrorist attacks, political violence and state repression. Baroni's chapter considers how this recent past is thematized and interrogated by Macchiavelli, both in the period itself, because the first Sarti novel was published in the early 1970s, and via practices of historical recovery, because Macchiavelli continued to write about this era up to the late 2010s. Baroni weighs up Macchiavelli's complex treatment of the relationship between fiction and history to think about the burden and responsibilities of truth-telling and how our recollection of fictional and 'real' events, even traumatic events, is dependent on the tricks of narrative. Particular attention is paid to the figures of Sarti, an inept and physically compromised detective who stands as apotheosis of the hardboiled defective übermensch, and Rosas, a police informer and undergraduate student, who uses his grasp of history to see through the absences and falsities of the official historical record, a move which in turn upsets the cause–effect dynamics integral to the crime story's push towards resolution. In line with other contributions to this volume, Baroni's chapter considers the wider European implications of the genre's move to keep certain memories and truths alive vis-à-vis official attempts to write them out of existence.

This emphasis on memory and truth-telling is central to Alice Jacquelin's account of the French noir novelist Didier Daeninckx, a seminal figure in the field of French crime writing for his project of exposing the French state's guilt in the massacre of French Algerians in the 1960s and its collaboration with the Nazi administration during World War II. As an heir of the *néo-polar*, a term derived from Manchette, Daeninckx specializes in excavating memories that officialdom would rather remain buried. Jacquelin's chapter examines Daeninckx's 2019 magnum opus *Le roman noir de l'Histoire*. This is not a novel as historical document or as historical mimesis but rather a collection of seventy-six short stories that collectively recount eleven periods in French and European history from 1855 to

2030—and where the emphasis is placed on the kaleidoscopic nature of micro-history (or rather history from below), that is, individual fragments that do not necessarily add up to a coherent whole. Jacquelin argues that Daeninckx's move from the crime novel to short stories (where crimes occur) complicates the genre's typical preference for linearity and where a single investigation is brought to resolution. As such, Daeninckx demonstrates how a (re)collection of literary snippets and snapshots and a gallery of fictional portraits can be more truthful and reliable than any historical tale or indeed any traditional crime story.

In the final chapter in this section, King and Pezzotti continue this investigation into the complex relationship between memory and trauma and the intersection between crime fiction and history, to demonstrate how and why contemporary novelists in Italy and Spain have sought to critically reinterpret the traumatic events and episodes of the continent's recent past. Their chapter offers a perceptive comparative analysis of two crime fiction series, by Carlo Lucarelli and Jordi Sierra I Fabra, set respectively during the Italian Fascist period (1922–1943) and the Francoist regime in Spain (1939–1975). It considers these novels as a response to contemporary debates about personal and collective responsibilities in the context of revisionist theories from the 1990s on fascism in both countries and the anti-Communist rhetoric of governments in Italy and the controversial Law of Historical Memory in Spain during the first decades of the twenty-first century. While this engagement with the past is conducted in the present, the resulting insights serve to construct new visions of the future. As such, memory is not fixed; it is a 'project', "an unfinished task" (Song 2016). In the context of these series, King and Pezzotti argue that in investigating past injustices, Lucarelli and Sierra I Fabra combine the past and the present with the aim of proposing an alternative political future via the construction of a democratic community (real and imagined) whose foundations are built on the recognition of past injustices and the symbolic provision of justice. This in turn speaks to a wider European hope or aspiration that new collective ways can be found to deal with the horrors of history.

The third and final section of the book focuses on crime narratives set in, and told about, the contemporary era, which is characterized both by attempts to construct new transcultural identities across national borders and boundaries of ethnicity, gender, class and sexuality, and by the spectre of social, political and economic crises that threaten European cosmopolitanism and cooperation. These chapters do not claim that crime narratives

are explicitly political in the sense that they stake out positions on, for example, the benefits of closer European integration; rather, they focus on crimes that are not easily seen, let alone resolved, and on the potential breakdown of social order, and suggest a society and justice system always under threat from within. Lucie Amir considers the legacy of political radicalism and also disenchantment, associated in France especially with the generation of 1968 and the emergence of the *néo-polar*, in contemporary French crime narratives. Her wide-ranging assessment suggests a genre or a field inhabited by disorientated, disillusioned cops and characterized by hazardous political trajectories and undecided commitments. Rather than exploring the political issues emerging from crime fiction, Amir's chapter focuses on the representation of political attitudes themselves, to better understand the ambiguous nature of political commitment and disarray in the twenty-first century. Instead of dealing with one or two case studies in detail, Amir examines a large number of novels in which protagonists have to face significant political choices to assess how or how far our European-wide understanding of politics has moved on since the 1960s and early 1970s. Her analysis suggests that an emphasis on social engagement and political commitment has been replaced by novels that explore uncertainty, anxiety, doubt, ambiguity, contradiction and failure, a move that in turn speaks to the same forces playing out in crime narratives all across Europe.

This emphasis on the way that contemporary crime narratives can interrogate complex political—and economic—ideas and data, without reducing these to straightforward good/bad, for/against positions, is picked up and developed by Thomas Morsch's chapter that looks at the global financial crisis of 2008–2009. Morsch considers how (un)successfully crime narratives have been able to lay bare the origins, complexities and consequences of this crisis and delineate how or how extensively it afflicted European societies and economies. Looking at TV crime dramas, and particularly the Danish series *Follow the Money* (DR1, 2016–2019) and the German-Luxemburg show *Bad Banks* (ZDF/ARTE, 2018–2020), Morsch asks what fiction might be able to uncover about the financial crisis that news reports or documentaries might not have captured adequately. Given the invisibility of capital, the non-sensual nature of economic processes, the abstract nature of financialization and the 'inhuman' time regime of high-frequency trading, contemporary economics pose a significant challenge to any form of representation. This chapter considers whether popular crime narratives are guilty of reducing complex economic

processes to simple stories about individual gain and failure, or whether these narratives can tease out particular aspects of the attendant crisis in ways that go beyond other forms or modes of representation.

Morsch's focus on European crime television series, and the complex mediations that such series enact or engender between representation and reality, is developed in a chapter by Elena D'Amelio and Valentina Re—even if D'Amelio and Re are more hopeful than Morsch that these "mediated cultural encounters" where "our own local reality and experience meets other European realities" (Bondebjerg et al. 2017) can help audiences to better understand what mutual understanding and cooperation they might be able to achieve. The chapter looks at how this process also influences the representation of gender identities, examining in particular the emergence of a distinctive type of female-centred crime drama in Italy in the wake of the success of similar female-led detective series in the Scandinavian countries (e.g. *The Killing*, 2007; *The Bridge*, 2011) and the UK (*The Fall*, 2013). While a 'top-down' perspective on the issue of gender equality might take the form of laws and policies underwritten by the EU's commitment to shared values, D'Amelio and Re argue that the kind of 'bottom-up' perspectives that play out in TV dramas may actually be more useful or effective for helping audiences to critically interrogate the social stereotypes surrounding gender roles and their practical implications for their everyday lives. By closely examining the case of the recent Italian adaptation of Alicia Giménez-Bartlett's series of novels focused on police detective Petra Delicado (in Sky's show *Petra*, 2020–), they argue that these new crime dramas challenge stereotypes about gender and national identities at the same time, thus realizing the transcultural potential that we have attached to the very idea of European crime fiction.

The extent to which crime narratives can help to foster and give substance to what is a rather vague concept of 'imagined community' is developed by Magdalena Tosik, though Tosik focuses primarily on a national (i.e. Polish) rather than wider European context. In her chapter, Tosik argues that Polish crime narratives, such as the Eberhardt Monk series penned by Marek Krajewski and Marcin Wronski's novels featuring Detective Inspector Zygmunt Maciejewski, tend to pursue this question through a careful examination of historical inheritance, notably a focus on the inter-war period in Poland when the country regained its independence (and before this independence was suppressed by the Polish People's Republic, 1947–1989). It is inevitable that the burdens and traumas of history would resurface after a long period of suppression, a point made by

Leder's *Przésniona rewolucja* (2014). Following Leder's careful examination of this subject, Tosik considers how the painful legacies of war, invasion and violence continue to haunt Polish crime fiction in the contemporary era and what kind of 'imaginary'—transcultural, cosmopolitan, *European*—is possible in these circumstances. Her conclusions suggest that the attendant social worlds may not be 'radical' in the sense that they are realistically depicted and that they feature middle-class characters who are by and large content with their middle-class lives. But insofar as they recreate an interwar Poland that is cosmopolitan, diverse, open and progressive, these novels fill in the blanks of history and, in doing so, open up a culturally important space for new, and indeed older, identities to come to the fore.

In the final chapter of this section and the book, Dobrescu and Waade map and interrogate the links between theorizations of European governance, specifically the concept of multi-level governance developed by Hooghe and Marks, and the representation of place in contemporary European crime television series, notably analysing how this representation gives narrative substance to the interplay between different tiers of bureaucracy and different jurisdictions and the particular challenges of solving crimes. Their chapter skilfully argues that television series and the storyworlds they create enact a version of multi-level governance (defined in terms of the related principles of devolution and localization) both through the way they represent crime-solving practices and at the level of production, via complex hook-ups between state television broadcasters and private corporations. Dobrescu and Waade's chapter covers a lot of ground in terms of the range of television crime series considered, arranged by or according to different taxonomies of place and space, but a handful of exemplary texts become central to their unfolding argument. With its overlapping jurisdictions, *The Bridge/Broen* is a powerful example of the way that crime narratives experiment with fictional representations of non-tiered levels of governance and in doing so demonstrate the benefits of a more general commitment to public order at a local, regional and national level. The chapter tests the concept of multi-level governance—quintessential to the administrative philosophy of the EU—through the working out of criminal justice in series such as *The Bridge*, emphasizing not simply where multi-level governance works but also those areas where it frays and begins to break down. Importantly, Dobrescu and Waade are proposing a genuinely European framework for assessing the insights and achievements of a wide range of television series set in different national

jurisdictions but similarly thinking about what can be achieved through the conjoined practices of devolution, localization and cooperation across state borders.

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Notes

1. Christine Matzke and Susanne Mühleisen, eds., *Postcolonial Postmortems: Crime Fiction from a Transcultural Perspective* (2006); Marieke Krajenbrink and Kate Quinn, eds., *Investigating Identities: Questions of Identity in Contemporary International Crime Fiction* (2009); Jean Anderson, Carolina Miranda and Barbara Pezzotti, eds., *The Foreign in International Crime Fiction: Transcultural Representations* (2012); Andrew Pepper and David Schmid, eds., *Globalization and the State in Contemporary Crime Fiction: A World of Crime* (2016); and Jesper Gulddal, Stewart King and Alistair Rolls, eds., *Criminal Moves: Modes of Mobility in Crime Fiction* (2019).
2. The four editors of this volume, Monica Dall'Asta, Jacques Migozzi, Federico Pagello and Andrew Pepper are all part of the DETECt consortium, as are the following contributors: Lucie Amir, Silvia Baroni, Massimiliano Coviello, Maria D'Amelio, Christos Dermentzopoulos, Caius Dobrescu, Nikos Filippaios, Lampros Flitouris, Alice Jacquelin, Thomas Morsch, Valentina Re and Anne Marit Waade.
3. Manchette's debt to Hammett, outlined in "A Toast to Dash", is alluded to in David Peace's Foreword to *Fatale*. See David Peace, "Foreword" in Jean-Patrick Manchette, *Fatale* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2015), v–vii.
4. Claims about the intolerance and conservatism of the Law and Justice party's administration in Poland, notably regarding its hostility to LGBTQ issues and rights, need to be weighed up in relation to the extraordinary mobilizations at local, regional and state level to greet and house Ukrainian refugees fleeing the conflict in 2020.
5. The reference is to one of the slogans used in France's 1968: 'Sous le pavé, la plage'.
6. "For generations, Europe was always the future". Thus opens the European Commission's "White Paper on the Future of Europe: Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025" (2017). See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2017:2025:FIN.

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