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French Crime Fiction and the Second World War: Past Crimes, Present Memories. By Claire Gorrara. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press (Cultural History of Modern War), 2012. Pp. viii + 151 pp.

All too often crime fiction, and particularly as it pertains to matters of national allegory, is considered the new Realism: the exigencies of plot and attention to detail on which it is necessarily predicated see it perceived as a mirror to contemporary society. French Studies has led the way in debunking this myth, and Gorrara's study is an excellent example of this: it traces the development of French crime fiction's reflections on the Second World War—with particular emphasis on (the myths of) resistance, collaboration and the repression and extermination of the Jewish population in France—over the decades since the Liberation. Gorrara reveals how this genre, more than any other, has reflected a broader gamut of memories and representations of the war and its legacy than those articulated by the dominant, State-sanctioned national narrative; furthermore, it has served to subvert received ideas, exposing the complexity of remembering and the relative nature of truth, and, ultimately, promoting the articulation of new national allegories. To this end, Gorrara's principal innovation is to avoid getting bogged down in Crime Fiction Studies: while the study covers the key critical material in this area, it focuses on the way in which the Second World War has been remembered in France, which allows the analysis of crime texts to be redeployed as a vehicle for Historical Studies. Gorrara structures her study around Henry Rousso's four-phase model of the evolution of French wartime memories: 'unfinished mourning', in the decade following Liberation; 'repression' and an obsessive focus on resistance heroism, from 1954 to 1971; the 'broken mirror' and the engagement with collaboration, from 1971 to 1974; and the 'obsession' with Jewish memory, 1974 to 1987 (when Rousso's study was first published). Gorrara's own chapter structure (1: Resisters and

resistance—the 1940s and 1950s; 2: Forgotten crimes—the 1950s and 1960s; 3: Resurgent collaboration—the 1980s; 4: Survivor stories—the 1980s and 1990s; 5: Mobilising memory—the 1990s and 2000s) is designed to reassess Roussio's chronology, debunking it where necessary but primarily revealing how highly popular French crime novels have in fact consistently reflected the cutting-edge historical thinking of their day rather than drawing on the popular national narrative. Collaboration and the Jewish question, for example, have been present in crime fiction since the years immediately following the Second World War while they were long repressed in the media and the national psyche. The search for historical truth, or at least a more nuanced reflection on the Occupation and Liberation, have tended to run parallel to the quests for resolution of the individual crime texts studies here, which include novels by authors now considered classics of the genre, such as Jean Meckert, André Hélène, Léo Malet, Didier Daeninckx and Thierry Jonquet. Perhaps most interestingly, however, Gorrara's final chapter focuses on children's crime fiction, showcasing the way that crime fiction's seemingly inherent capacity for challenging dominant discourses has been harnessed, in and out of the national educational system, to embed critical, and crucially trans-national, thinking in the new generation of memories of the Second World War and the French national allegory.