

# *Crime* Fiction and the Environmental Imagination of Place

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THE THEME OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION AND HUMAN-INDUCED climate change has become a staple of fiction and visual culture in the first decades of the twenty-first century. Indeed, the seeming ubiquity of environmental and climate fiction—or cli-fi for short—has led Mads Rosendahl Thomsen to identify it as one of four prominent themes in contemporary world literature (98, 102–03).<sup>1</sup> To date, critical attention to this phenomenon has centered primarily on “literary” and middle-brow” fiction (Trexler 7) as well as science fiction (Milner and Burgmann). Nevertheless, there is also a substantial corpus of crime novels from around the world that investigate and interrogate issues of environmental damage and ecological (in)justice. These novels have been identified variously as environmental crime fiction, “nature-oriented mystery novels” (Murphy 143), “eco-thrillers” (McKie), “*econoir*” (K. Bishop 9), “ecologically conscious detective fiction” (Bandyopadhyay 70), and “ecological crime fiction” (Walton 115).

These works of environmental, etc., crime fiction have not gone unnoticed by ecocritical scholars or by crime fiction scholars who employ ecocritical approaches to these novels. At its most basic, ecocriticism combines literary, film, and art analysis with environmental studies in order to better comprehend the ways in which the imaginative arts facilitate or, indeed, hinder interspecies connections (Buell et al. 418). Ecocritical approaches range from the study of representations of nature, understood as both wilderness and built environments (Buell, *Future* 22), to exploring expressions of environmental concerns (land degradation, pollution, species extinction, etc.) and,

importantly for ecological crime fiction, environmental justice. At the center of these studies is the issue of place, as ecocritical approaches seek to foster connectedness and attachment between the human and the nonhuman world (Heise).

In the specific case of crime fiction, early ecocritical literary scholars like Patrick D. Murphy advocated for the study of “nature-oriented mystery novels—with or without detectives, and perhaps even without murders—in order to understand the degree to which environmental consciousness and nature awareness has permeated popular and commercial fiction” (143). Murphy has a somewhat limited view of crime fiction, seeing the genre as a mere vehicle for articulating environmental concerns to a popular audience. More recent scholarship, however, has sought to understand not only the emergence of these concerns in crime fiction but also the ways in which generic conventions can shape our perceptions of the environment (Trexler 13; Walton and Walton 1). Critics like Lucas Hollister and Marta Puxan-Oliva, for example, note that while the genre’s conventions—“frames of intelligibility, . . . temporal and spatial delimitations, . . . actantial and narrative causalities, and . . . definitions of violence”—are seemingly “incompatible with or useful to contemporary ecological thought” (Hollister 1012), these conventions can also provide a “a unique tool not only for depicting and discussing ecological crises and abuses, but also for directly exposing the criminal acts they involve and their violent effects on people and the environment” (Puxan-Oliva 362).

Given that environmental (crime) fictions are fundamentally concerned with entangled relationships between the human and nonhuman in specific places, the present article contributes to these discussions on the relationship between environmental concerns and place in crime fiction by analyzing two examples of what in this article is called “crimate fiction”: *L'olor de la pluja* (The Smell of Rain, 2006) by the Catalan novelist and biologist Jordi de Manuel, and *Parantaja* (*The Healer*, 2010) by Finnish author Antti Tuomainen. The neologism “crimate fiction” obviously riffs on “climate fiction,” which has been defined by Dan Bloom, the novelist who coined the term “cli-fi,” as “works of art and storytelling that deal with climate change and global warming concerns” (Thorpe). Following Bloom, “crimate fictions” are narratives that both narrate the climate catastrophe through the popular conventions of the crime genre and apply

the genre's central ideological concerns with culpability and criminality to the climate crisis. In doing so, crimate fictions frame the causes of human-induced climate change as a criminal act of which there is a victim and for which those responsible should be held accountable. Although clearly a subset of environmental crime fiction, crimate fiction fosters a different relationship to place than that which is evident in many other environmental crime stories. This shift in the representation of place has a significant impact on readers of this popular literary genre. The ways that crimate novels move between the specific space of the crime and its investigation and the larger world can foster a form of "eco-cosmopolitan" awareness among readers (Heise 10).

## Place and Environmental Crime Fiction

Places are defined by the meanings and values attributed to them (Tuan 6). Although often associated with concrete forms—rooms, buildings, streets, public squares and parks, towns and cities, regions, and nations—places are also ephemeral and less tangible (Tuan 149). Tim Cresswell, for example, argues that place is a thing in the world and "a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world" (11). Place as "seeing, knowing and understanding the world" is central both to the emergence of the crime fictional form that Poe initiated in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) and to the interpretation of individual crime fiction texts. These two contributions of place to how we understand crime fiction are closely connected. First, critics have noted that the genre developed in response to a specific transformation in place: the extraordinary growth in cities during the nineteenth century that resulted from the shift from agricultural to urban societies (Sandberg 336–37). For Walter Benjamin, the "original social content of the detective story was the obliteration of the individual's traces in the big-city crowd" (43). Second, this in turn has shaped the interpretation of individual texts. For readers of crime fiction confronted with "uncharted areas of modern society," the crime genre provides a narrative form that promises to overcome the unreadability of modern urban centers (McCracken 63). This promise is delivered through the investigation in which the detective makes connections between individuals—the victims, suspects, witnesses, criminal(s), etc.—thus revealing (and making meaningful for readers)

the social, political, economic, cultural, and physical places they inhabit.

Making sense of place is central to the close analysis of the alleged locked room, the maps that accompany many Golden Age crime novels that help to identify exactly where the suspects were and at what time, and to the thick description of cities in the hardboiled genre. Indeed, to the point of cliché, places become closely associated with the detectives who operate within them: from Sherlock Holmes in London, Philip Marlowe in Los Angeles, and V.I. Warshawski in Chicago to Pepe Carvalho in Barcelona, Phryne Fischer in Melbourne, and Héctor Belascoarán Shayne in Mexico City. Given the focus on place as the locus of meaning in crime fiction, it is understandable that scholarship on the genre has historically been dominated and delimited by specific and distinct national traditions as seen through the numerous studies on crime fictions from Australia, China, France, Kenya, Mexico, etc., that are published in academic books and journals. This approach holds even stronger during the current globalized age. The geographer Gary Hausladen, for example, maintains in *Places for Dead Bodies* that the proliferation of different crime scenes around the world is an act of resistance to the homogenizing tendencies of globalization, arguing that “in an increasingly integrated world, places are different and unique and that ‘sense of place’ is about these differences” (23). The focus on the specificity of place—what differentiates authors and texts from distinct national or cultural groups—is of course also a consequence of the disciplinary divisions that frame the professional lives and careers of the scholars producing research within linguistically or area-defined departments of, among others, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Japanese, Latin American, Russian, and Scandinavian languages and literatures (King 9–10).

Recent crime fiction scholarship, nevertheless, has begun to challenge the dominant focus on the local (i.e., the national) in crime fiction and has instead sought to explore the transnational connections that have always existed in the crime genre (Schmid; King; Pepper; Pepper and Schmid; Gulddal et al; Pezzotti). In a brilliantly argued study, David Schmid charts how crime narratives make any number of places meaningful, from locked rooms, manor houses, cities, and regions to the entire planet. Focusing on how and to what purpose social power is deployed to understand the places represented within certain crime narratives, Schmid argues that each of these different

scales “posses[es] certain features and challenges unique to that type, as well as similarities with other types” (9). Drawing on the work of geographer David Harvey, Schmid maintains that understanding how the role of place in crime fiction functions is not about favoring smaller or larger spaces; rather we need to “keep in mind how different spatial scales interact with each other in crime fiction” (10).

The shift in crime fiction scholarship from a nationalizing practice to one that engages with different spatial scales is largely replicated in studies on environmental crime fictions. With the exception of those studies that explore the theoretical dimensions of environmental crime fictions (Hollister; Murphy; Parham; Puxan-Oliva), scholarship on ecological concerns in the genre is still largely circumscribed by the local, regional, or national framework identified previously. In one of the first analyses of crime fiction and environmentalism, for example, Peter Jordan situates Carl Hiassen’s novels, such as *Double Whammy* (1988), entirely within the Florida context in which they are set (61–70). Likewise, in her study of *Onsigbaar* (*Blood Safari*, 2009) by South African, Afrikaans-language writer, Deon Meyer, Sam Naidu draws on the work of South African ecocritical scholars to argue for a critical practice that “is sensitive to the history of both human and environmental exploitation in this region,” meaning South Africa (60). More recent ecocritical approaches to crime fiction replicate the local paradigm by studying environmental issues in specific national and sub-national regional contexts: Britain (K. Bishop; N. Bishop; Carroll; McLauchlan), Chile (Canepa), India (Paul), Mexico (Goldberg), Scandinavia (Mai), Sweden (Mäntymäki), and the diverse landscapes of the United States of America: California (Ashman), Florida (Horsley), Wyoming, and the Navajo Nation (Dechêne and Di Gregorio).

In comparison to the studies on local contexts, only a handful of scholars have analyzed environmental crime fiction beyond a single locale. In doing so, each of the authors of these studies employs a specific theoretical framework—comparative literature, postcolonialism, and world literature—to justify the appropriate scale for their analyses. For example, drawing on American and French examples, Lucas Hollister adopts a comparative literature approach in his brilliant study on the ways in which ecological concerns and crime fiction conventions mutually inform each other. Working within the field of postcolonial studies, Nibedita Bandyopadhyay explores ecocrimes and

environmental (in)justice in the Global South through the Young Adult detective fiction of Sunil Gangopadhyay set in India and Kenya; while Marta Puxan-Oliva adopts a wide-ranging world literature approach to draw attention to the different ways in which crime fiction writers from around the globe have used the genre to articulate environmental concerns and to criminalize the—often unacknowledged—violence committed against the nonhuman world.

In its representation of place, crimate fiction aligns more closely with the more expansive studies of Hollister, Bandyopadhyay, and Puxan-Oliva. Crimate fictions are not constrained by the specific national and cultural context in which the individual novels are set. While the local context does play a significant role in helping readers to see, know, and understand the world, *The Smell of Rain* and *The Healer*, for example, resist restricting meaning to the Catalan or Finnish context represented within the respective narratives. Instead, the narrative field of vision zooms out beyond the nation to offer readers a broader perspective on the world. Yet, at the same time, crimate fictions need the local to assist readers to comprehend the magnitude, complexity, and interconnectedness of the climate crisis. The world, then, is present in the local and vice versa. As such, crimate fiction demands to be read on different, but interconnected scales which, when read together, foster the eco-cosmopolitanism needed if humans are to address the slow destruction of the planet.

## Scale 1: The Local in Crimate Fiction

This interplay of different scales is evident in De Manuel's *The Smell of Rain* and Tuomainen's *The Healer*. As works from crime fiction traditions peripheral to the British-American center, these novels already come framed by the Catalan and Finnish contexts of their settings. Each novel takes place in its respective capital city—Barcelona and Helsinki—and each is set in the not-too-distant future. *The Smell of Rain* is both the beginning and the end of a loose series of novels featuring Inspector Marc Sergiot, a Columbo-like figure due to his calm demeanor and the worn and weathered bone-colored raincoat he often wears. The future that De Manuel's *The Smell of Rain* asks us to imagine, however, is now past. The novel was written in 1996, only published in 2006, and is set in Barcelona in 2017, twenty-five years

after the euphoria of the 1992 Olympic Games transformed the city into a model of urban regeneration.<sup>2</sup> The futuristic, technologically advanced Barcelona is far from the poster child of social and political inclusion that urban planners celebrated at the turn of the millennium. While those with the financial means can travel around in the city in “aerotaxis,” those who live in the city below them are on the frontline of a world that is suffering from a prolonged drought that has caused food and water shortages, various epidemics, and mass migration (116). Sergiot muses that “It won’t take long before Barcelona becomes a city without kids and without trees, and a city . . . where you can’t contemplate the innocence of children nor stop to chat under the shade of a tree will soon become a city without life” (“Barcelona no tardaria en transformar-se en una ciutat sense nens i sense arbres, i una ciutat . . . on no es pogués contemplar la innocència dels infants, ni parar-se a xerrar sota l’ombra d’un arbre, esdevindria una ciutat sense vida”) (211, my translation). The spaces that were once celebrated as evidence of the city’s regeneration have now become dystopian: Shanty towns housing climate refugees occupy the very beaches that in 1992 symbolized Barcelona as a city of leisure. Due to the prolonged drought, the once inclusive city has given way to the expulsion of recent migrants and the citizens that remain are divided between those who can purchase water and those who cannot access it easily (87). Desalination plants are guarded by riot police and some women are forced into sex work in exchange for water (47, 87).

To narrate the story of this environmental catastrophe, De Manuel uses a polyphonic structure that moves between the experiences (and points of view) of four people through three interrelated narrative threads. One narrative thread tells the story of a biology professor, Arnau Salord, who is investigating the causes of the drought with an Israeli colleague, who is found murdered inside a locked sauna—De Manuel’s perverse way of showing the effects of global warming in its most localized form! Another thread recounts Inspector Sergiot’s investigation into the professor’s murder, while the final thread narrates the impact of the catastrophe on society’s most vulnerable: Damià Darder and his daughter Sara, both of whom are climate refugees who wander the city streets in a desperate search for water.

Tuomainen’s *The Healer*, likewise, depicts a specific place: the Finnish capital Helsinki in an undefined, but near future which has

many similarities to the current world. Unlike *The Smell of Rain*, there are no technological advances unfamiliar to readers in the first decades of the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, as De Manuel does for Barcelona, Tuomainen presents readers with a dystopian vision of the Helsinki of the future. As a consequence of unrestricted economic development (138–39), global warming has accelerated, bringing floods, rising sea levels, plagues, and pandemics that have, in turn, resulted in the displacement of over 650 million climate refugees and armed conflicts over scarce resources (4). In Helsinki itself it has been constantly raining and at least five named waterfront suburbs “ha[ve] been continuously flooded, and many residents ha[ve] . . . abandoned their homes” (5). The mystery at the heart of *The Healer* is the disappearance of the protagonist Tapani Lehtinen’s wife, Johanna, an investigative journalist who was researching a series of brutal murders enacted by the titular self-styled “Healer” on those he believes have contributed to the ensuing disaster through unsustainable consumerism and wealth generation regardless of the cost, including “nine executives and politicians . . . along with their families” (12).

In contrast to De Manuel’s polyphonic text, Tuomainen uses the more common, single narrative point of view of crime fiction. Tapani, a poet who has not published anything for four years, crisscrosses the city—“West-East/North-South” (27)—in search of Johanna. In Tapani’s descriptions of the city he encounters on his search, Tuomainen represents Helsinki for his readers through the use of recognizable toponyms that he, in turn, defamiliarizes by describing the effects of climate change on the cityscape and its inhabitants:

I got off the bus at the Herttoniemi metro station . . . There was a break in the rain and the strong, gusting wind couldn’t decide which direction to blow . . . I walked briskly past the nursery school that had first been abandoned by children, then scrawled on by random passers-by, and finally set on fire. The church at the other side of the junction had an emergency shelter for the homeless and it looked like it was full—the previously bright vestibule was half dim with people . . . The roof of the building opposite had been torn off in an autumn storm and still hadn’t been repaired, and the flats on the top floor were dark. Soon we would be facing the same thing, like people in a thousand other buildings. (21)



At the beginning of the novel, the effects of the climate catastrophe seen here function primarily as a backdrop to the more important investigation—at least from the perspective of Tapani—into what has happened to Johanna. The dystopian world he and others live in provides the specific conditions that shape Tapani's actions. For example, given that there is no point in reporting Johanna's disappearance to the police—"All they can do is enter it in their records. Disappearance number five thousand and twenty-one" (14)—Lehtinen is forced to take on the investigation himself. Lehtinen's search for Johanna is, moreover, hindered by other climate-induced factors: transportation problems, a breakdown in communications, and a disappearing support network of friends and colleagues who have left or are leaving Helsinki.

To the extent that they recount investigations set in Catalonia and Finland, are written in Catalan and Finnish, and address, initially at least, Catalan and Finnish readerships, *The Smell of Rain* and *The Healer* underscore the logic of the location-based criticism that has framed the majority of studies on environmental crime fiction to date. As both crime fiction and ecocriticism share a great interest in setting, scholars are correct to acknowledge the importance of local circumstances to understanding the environmental crimes that occur in the particular regions or countries in the novels they analyze. Nevertheless, the localizing imperative that underlines such studies has been criticized by ecocritics like Lawrence Buell and Ursula Heise. Buell, for instance, argues that "most ecocritics tend in practice to adopt a single-country-focused approach" despite the fact that ecological borders rarely correspond to jurisdictional ones (Buell, "Ecoglobalist" 228, 227). For Buell, then, to "think 'environmentally' or 'ecologically' requires thinking 'against' or 'beyond' nationness" ("Ecoglobalist" 227). While acknowledging the importance of "situated knowledge" or "ecolocalism" in building environmental consciousness, of linking communities to the places they inhabit, Ursula Heise is likewise critical of what she describes as an "excessive investment in the local" at the expense of an "eco-cosmopolitan" perspective or "environmental world citizenship" that is necessary in order to develop an effective response that addresses the magnitude of the global environmental challenge facing not just individual countries, but the entire world (10). For Heise, what is needed is an "ecologically based advocacy on behalf of the nonhuman world as well as on

behalf of greater socioenvironmental justice” that is “premised no longer primarily on ties to local places but on ties to territories and systems that are understood to encompass the planet as a whole” (10). The next section explores how the two crimate fictions examined here shift the readers’ understanding of place from the specific setting to the world more broadly.

## Scale 2: The Global in Crimate Fiction

Critics have noted that the ecoglobalism of contemporary environmental approaches articulated by Buell, Heise, and others does not correspond neatly to the typical spatial delimitation of crime fiction. Lucas Hollister, however, has identified grounds for engagement between the green (ecological awareness) and the black (noir). Drawing on the works of Theodore Martin and Franco Moretti, Hollister argues that the “articulation of the green and the black implies not merely a logic of thematic incorporation, not just noir made bigger, but a different way of reading violence and of conceptualizing the container of genre” (1018). Hollister cites Martin’s claim that “because genre is ‘something that measures historical time on a different scale,’ we should pay attention to how the generic ‘containers’ like noir ‘require us to zoom out, to broaden our view, and to reconsider how we correlate form and history’ (88)” (1018). De Manuel’s *The Smell of Rain* and Tuomainen’s *The Healer* clearly do this through their speculative depiction of place. By asking readers to make temporal comparisons between present and future worlds, the novels focus the readers’ attention on the “slow violence” caused by human-made climate change; that is “a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (Nixon 2). As they grapple with representing different types of violence, both novels draw attention to the limitations of the conventions of the crime genre as well as an expansion of the genre’s central framing narrative—the investigation—beyond the initial mysteries that kickstart the respective investigations.

In *The Smell of Rain* and *The Healer* an initial crime or mystery serves as a device to reveal a much larger ecological crime. In this sense, the novels seek to raise readers’ consciousness by incriminating

those behaviors and attitudes that result in environmental destruction, thus expanding how we conceive what constitutes criminal behavior and who or what can be considered a subject for whom justice must be provided. De Manuel's and Tuomainen's narratives reveal their environmental crimes—in each case, the larger crime of human-induced climate change—through a more immediate crime or mystery set in a specific place.

In *The Smell of Rain*, for example, Inspector Sergiot's investigation into the murder of the Israeli scientist in Barcelona can only go so far in explaining the motive for the crime. An unassuming and somewhat marginalized figure within the police force, Sergiot is given the investigation because his superiors believe he will accept the official version that the scientist died from a heart attack and close the case quickly. Like many fictional detectives, Sergiot ignores these instructions and investigates the case thoroughly until he comes to suspect that the scientist was murdered by Mossad agents working in tandem with the Yakuza and with the approval of the Spanish government. If so far this seems clichéd, De Manuel introduces a surprise: Sergiot is killed by a Spanish government hitman to stop him from revealing what he has learned during his investigation.<sup>3</sup> With Sergiot's death, the police investigation ends, and with its end Barcelona to a certain extent ceases to be a place of significance for the larger story that De Manuel wants to convey to his readers. Instead, the narrative goes global and, in doing so, the representation of place also expands.

This more expansive sense of place emerges through Salord's scientific investigation that runs parallel to Sergiot's police one. Through his research, Salord uncovers a more significant crime: The devastating drought that is slowly spreading worldwide was caused by an experiment in genetic manipulation that escaped from one of the laboratories of a Japanese multinational firm. This revelation also explains the murder of Salord's Israeli collaborator, who was killed in an attempt by various national administrations, including the Spanish government, to cover up this more significant crime. In the face of this larger environmental crisis, Barcelona's diminishing significance as a place of meaning is represented symbolically through the city's abandonment by the remaining living main characters: Damià, his daughter Sara, and Salord. The novel ends with Damià and Sara abandoning the increasingly water-starved city for France, while Salord flees to India after he learns of the Spanish government's involvement

in the death of his Israeli colleague. Salord's flight to India, moreover, allows De Manuel to demonstrate the global dimensions of the catastrophe. Although Salord finds himself in a lush fertile India during the monsoon season, his modeling predicts that the drought plaguing the rest of the world will take only three or four months to reach the Asian subcontinent.

In a similar way, Tuomainen's *The Healer* emphasizes the increasing irrelevancy of nation-states in the face of global catastrophe. Although the consequences of climate change are played out in the Finnish capital, Tuomainen's Helsinki is not so much separate from, as intimately connected to, or permeated by the rest of the world and what is happening in it. Helsinki, for example, is made up of "whole countries and continents, . . . languages and dialects. [It] had finally become an international city" (229). The central figure of this recent multicultural transformation is a young North African man called Hamid, a climate refugee, who drives the protagonist around in his taxi and who will move further north in what seems to be a futile attempt to escape the oncoming environmental catastrophe. Tuomainen draws attention to—and is critical of—the focus on local concerns at the expense of global wellbeing. This is the criticism that the self-styled Healer of the title makes. Critical of those who ignored "the long-term common good" and who "masked their own interests under the mantle of economic growth for the common good" that led to overdevelopment and consumerism that "sped up the cycle of destruction" (138–39), the Healer announces that he will "continue to murder whoever he claimed had contributed to the acceleration of climate change" (12). We also see the prioritizing of the local over the global in the investigation by Tapani into his wife's disappearance. While Tapani's concern for Johanna's safety over and above the global catastrophe occurring around him is entirely understandable, Tuomainen proposes that it is this sort of attitude—looking after one's immediate concerns, whether economic or emotional, to the neglect of the environment—that will cause the nightmare scenario he depicts for his readers unless they modify their unsustainable lifestyle. While the "individual sexual love" between Tapani and Johanna may be "the only outstanding positive value" at the novel's conclusion, readers understand that love does nothing to save the environment or, indeed, the protagonists (Milner and Bergman 128). As the novel's ambiguous ending suggests, Johanna's rescue may have

been a fruitless exercise. Like Salord in *The Smell of Rain*, fleeing elsewhere does little more than delay the inevitable by a few extra months (Tuomainen 245–46).

The endings to *The Smell of Rain* and *The Healer* challenge two long-held practices in crime fiction and crime fiction scholarship respectively: the narrative closure that occurs in many, but not all, crime novels and the national framing of crime fiction that underlies much scholarship on the genre (Gulddal et al. 1–24). In the first case, the lack of a satisfying resolution that readers encounter in both novels leaves them “bereft of social hope,” as Milner and Burgmann argue in relation to *The Healer* (128). For Milner and Burgmann, the pessimism inherent in novels like these can have an impact on the agency of the readers in a way that perhaps the authors did not intend. Given that the primary function of the speculative element of crimate fiction serves to warn readers about the possible catastrophic consequences of present actions and behaviors, Milner and Burgmann claim that the representation of pessimistic or, indeed, unsalvageable futures that we see in novels like *The Healer* “kills the hope a warning might need to trigger” (129). However, while the endings may be pessimistic, by drawing attention to the specific behaviors that contribute to the catastrophe—the “self-absorbed, greedy and irresponsible” way people had “always been taught to live” (Tuomainen 139)—and by showing the catastrophic consequences, the novels seek to educate readers to act ethically and modify what De Manuel and Tuomainen represent as criminal behaviors in the present.

This call for a change in economic and environmental behaviors is directly related to the challenge the novels present to the national as an appropriate and effective category of analysis and understanding in crimate fiction. Whereas Lucas Hollister holds reservations about the incompatibility of the crime genre as a vehicle for ecological thought due to its physical delimitations to specific jurisdictions (1012), the fact that the larger, more significant crimes that are revealed in *The Smell of Rain* and *The Healer* lie outside the jurisdiction of any single country is not a failure of crimate fiction but a deliberate feature of it. Showing the limitations or failure of justice to account for slow violence on a global scale does not mean that the novels cannot seek to criminalize in the minds of readers the everyday behaviors and violent practices that act against the common good. Crimate novels like *The Smell of Rain* and *The Healer* present readers with the choice to

act before it is too late or do nothing and await the oncoming catastrophe. Individual jurisdictions may be powerless to act, but individuals are not. The novels, thus, bypass the nation as a referent and instead focus on smaller-scale acts with one eye to the global. It is in the interconnection between the global dimensions of the climate catastrophe and the actions of individuals within a specific place that climate fiction differs from the localizing focus of many environmental crime novels.

### Interconnected Scales

In many ways, the topic of human-induced climate change that we see in De Manuel's and Tuomainen's texts facilitates a reading that focuses on the global rather than the local dimensions of the crimes that the novels investigate. As such, these novels seek to foster an eco-cosmopolitan perspective favored by ecocritical scholars like Buell and Heise. However, this does not mean that the local ceases to be a meaningful scale of analysis and interpretation. While in the context of "global" and "cosmopolitanism," terms like "local" and "localizing" may sound negative or dismissive, this is not intended. The local remains important because it is through the local that readers become aware of the full implications of the crime of human-induced climate change.

Rob Nixon has noted that there is a representational problem with the sort of slow violence that is climate change. While violence "is customarily conceived as an event or action that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility," slow violence "is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales" (2). Indeed, it "is typically not viewed as violence at all" (2). In *The Smell of Rain* and *The Healer*, De Manuel and Tuomainen address this visibility problem, by revealing this slow violence to their readers through a focus on the local. Both novels, for example, ask readers to imagine the same place at different times, thus making a connection between Barcelona and Helsinki in the present and their future manifestations. In doing so, the novels require readers to develop a temporal comparison between a now that is never mentioned in the novels

and the future, the objective of which is to encourage readers to reflect on current behaviors (consumerism, extractivism, toxic dumping, etc.) as criminal acts of violence that lead to the death of communities and the destruction of property, and to change such practices if they want to avoid the dystopian scenarios that De Manuel and Tuomainen depict in their respective novels.

In the crimate fictions analyzed here, place is both local and global. In moving between the different scales, crimate fictions align with calls by ecocritical scholars “to reconceptualize place as a node in a global network” (Buell et al. 421). Given that place is “a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world” (Cresswell 11), as they move back and forth between different scales, crimate fictions open up texts and the settings represented in them to potential new meanings, thus highlighting the ways in which places—now fluid rather than fixed—become meaningful as they merge into a larger context. If crime “acts as a connective tissue” within a seemingly disconnected world and if the investigation serves to “trace the hidden relationships crime both indicates and conceals, to bring them to the surface,” then crimate fictions reveal these previously hidden connections on a much larger scale (Messent 1). They allow us to identify and appreciate local concerns as well as developing extra- and transnational forces of affiliation on which the eco-cosmopolitanism that is needed to address the contemporary environmental challenge is based.

By moving between the different spatial and temporal locales represented in crimate fiction, readers can develop a sense of the complexity and interconnectedness that is required to make comprehensible the enormous consequences of unsustainable consumerism, depleted resources, the extinction of species, and human-induced climate change. Seemingly fixed within novels as readers zoom in to comprehend the crimes committed in specific settings, place in crimate fiction becomes more fluid as the narrative expands the readers’ field of vision to encompass the world and, in so doing, make the world more meaningful.

## Notes

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1. The other three are “migration and networked identities,” “digital interfaces,” and the “post-human horizon.”
2. The other novels in the series, three of which were published before *The Smell of Rain*, are set unchronologically at different moments between 2002 and 2017.
3. To be more accurate, the novel only strongly suggests that the detective has been murdered. Nevertheless, Sergiot only appears in novels set prior to this one, including in the two novels published after *The Smell of Rain*. For all intents and purposes, then, and unless De Manuel resurrects his main character like Arthur Conan Doyle did, *The Smell of Rain* marks the outer chronological limit of the series.

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