MARÍA ABIZANDA-CARDONA
University of Zaragoza

Beyond SF: Reading the posthuman in crime fiction

ABSTRACT

Science fiction (SF)'s capacity to imagine alternative futures, embodiments and forms of agency is a crucial resource for the ethical project of critical posthumanism. In the twenty-first century, however, science-fictionality has surpassed its traditional generic boundaries to become a tool for comprehending and intervening in our changing reality, made concrete in different media and styles. This has translated into a rise of recombinant genre fiction, whereby themes and scenarios related to technoscience are addressed by genres other than SF. One illustrative instance of this tendency is the burgeoning body of works that integrate the conventions of SF and crime fiction, which have been steadily on the rise for the past five years in anglophone literary markets. Aiming to open up new avenues for the study of this critically unexplored corpus, this article sets out to assemble a critical apparatus for examining the representation of posthumanity in these hybrid texts. Drawing from an approach to crime fiction as a vector for dialectically exploring social and ethical questions, this article will argue that the constituent elements of the genre, namely its close interrelation with technological breakthroughs, its ambivalent engagement with the legacy of Enlightenment humanism and its affinity with interrogations of the exploitative workings of neo-liberalism, make crime fiction a productive locus for challenging dominant conceptions of the posthuman, as well as for articulating alternative visions indexed to critical posthumanist thought.

INTRODUCTION

As we near the quarter-century landmark, it is almost a truism to claim that life in the twenty-first century has become science-fictional. Quantum leaps in the technologies of what the World Economic Forum (WEF) has termed the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) (Schwab 2016), such as artificial intelligence (AI), nanotechnology, genetic engineering or the Internet of Things, are blurring the boundaries between human and machine in ways that until recently were the preserve of fiction. At the same time, the climate crisis and the impending threat of a Sixth Extinction evidence our co-dependence on our animal and natural environment. In this context of unprecedented technoscientific, socio-economic and ontological change, the definition of Man as the measure of all things established by the humanist tradition is shaken at its foundation, and we are forced to grapple with a potential posthuman stage.

Competing perspectives on the posthuman, oscillating between feelings of nostalgia and euphoria, pervade discussions on this paradigm shift. On the one hand, bioconservatists like Michael J. Sandel, Jürgen Habermas and Leon Kass call for restraint in the application of technoscientific advancements, arguing that unchecked enhancement runs the risk of undermining the essence of human nature. At the opposite end of the spectrum, transhumanist thinkers like Max More, Nick Bostrom and Natasha Vita-More adopt a techno-optimist stance, calling for the implementation of a programme of enhancement technologies to evolve past 'the less desirable aspects of the human condition' (More 2013: 4). Targets for enhancement include disease, ageing and death, particularly through the uploading or transubstantiation of the mind to digital supports, but also our cognitive and emotional capabilities, and even the design of social organizations and economies. This vision of the posthuman has been popularized through its adoption by corporations, like Google, tech gurus, like Elon Musk, and institutions, like the Singularity University, which strongly influence the depiction of the posthuman in mass media. Resisting both the appeal of humanist nostalgia and the transhumanist fantasies of disembodied transcendence, critics like Donna Haraway, Katherine Hayles, Sherryl Vint and Stefan Herbrechter have worked within the field of critical posthumanism, an alternative philosophy indebted to new materialism and the anti-humanist tradition. These thinkers oppose the grafting of the posthuman onto a liberal humanist view of the subject and advocate for a conception of the self as an expanded, relational, embodied subject, shot through with connections to human, natural and technological others. This reconceptualization triggers an affirmative politics of what Braidotti calls 'zoe-centered egalitarianism', underscoring an ethical-ecological use of technoscience that opposes the commodification and exploitation of Life (Braidotti 2013: 60).

All these ethical, social and political challenges are approached by different actors of public discourse. In particular, fictional works are one of the most remarkable agents in dictating desirable visions of the posthuman. Historically, science fiction (SF) has been the sovereign literary medium for dealing with technoscientific change. In the twenty-first century, as science-fictionality grows into the dominant mode of social imagination, the icons and themes historically circumscribed to SF are 'colonizing' other genres. One illustrative instance of this generic cross-breeding is the burgeoning body of literary works that integrate the *topoi* of the posthuman age within the stock plots and conventions of crime fiction, a booming trend in anglophone markets in

recent years. In this article, I intend to explore this emerging cluster of works and make a case for the productive possibilities for engaging with posthumanity offered by the formal and ideological conventions of crime fiction.

To set the foundations of my argument, I will briefly comment on the role of literature, particularly SF, in constructing our popular imaginary of technoscientific progress. Then, I will overview the recent turn in SF scholarship towards dynamic definitions of genre. This will be the stepping stone for my consideration of the fruitful possibilities of the study of the representation of the posthuman in crime fiction, which I will articulate along three axes: the genre's symbiotic relationship with technology, its ambivalent engagement with the legacy of humanism and its nature as a narrative vector to explore changing sociopolitical conditions.

LITERATURE AND THE POSTHUMAN IMAGINARY

Standing at the crossroads of posthumanity, Klaus Schwab reminds us, social, political and industry stakeholders must come together to ensure that 'new technologies promote the common good, enhance human dignity, and protect the environment' (2018: 14), rather than entrench biased systems and inequalities. This call for action sides with the co-productionist insights of science and technology studies, which draw attention to how the production of scientific knowledge and technology is 'embedded in social practices, identities, norms, conventions, discourses, instruments and institutions – in short, in all the building blocks of what we term the social' (Jasanoff 2004: 3). In the co-productionist paradigm, technoscientific development is negotiated and shaped by the emergence of what Sheila Jasanoff terms sociotechnical imaginaries – 'collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desirable futures, animated by shared understandings of forms of social life and social order attainable through, and supportive of, advances in science and technology' (2015: 4).

Among the different agents that shape our sociotechnical imaginary – advertisement, futurology, journalism, industry – fiction plays a particularly salient role. This is especially the case, Jasanoff argues, of the SF genre, which acts as a 'repository of sociotechnical imaginaries', expressing 'fears and yearnings rooted in current discontents' (2015: 337). In line with the notion of co-production, this relationship between SF and material technoscientific development is dialectical: not only has literature often pre-dated and inspired later technological breakthroughs, but the latter are also often mediated and popularized for the public through analogies to science-fictional scenarios or motifs (Herbrechter 2013; Vint 2008, 2021a, 2021b). Journalists, scientists and start-ups frequently appropriate the 'cultural capital' (Herbrechter 2013: 121) or 'science fiction capital' (Vint 2008) of the genre as shorthand to draw compelling visions of the future for the public and thus attract emotional and economic support for their research ventures.

The majority of discourses configuring our sociotechnical imaginary of the posthuman are optimistic, aligned with the technophile outlook of 'hard' SF. This positive rhetoric intersects with many of the tenets of transhumanist thought. The 'promissory futuristic discourse' (Rajan 2006: 116) put forward by Schwab when he proclaims that the 4IR is 'a source of hope for continuing the climb in human development' (2018: 18) is attuned with the transhumanist ambition of evolving intelligent life 'past its currently human form and limitations' (More 2013: 3) via technoscientific enhancement.

1. The WEF constitutes the world's biggest multi-stakeholder organization, comprising CEOs from the global private sector's largest companies, heads of state, royals, academics and celebrities, chiefly male and European/American. Access to meetings costs over $100,000 and is invitation-based. Transhumanist institutions like the Oxford Institute for the Future of Humanity likewise have links with the corporate world.

2. It should be noted that, as Sherryl Vint has examined at length (2008, 2020), transhumanist thought is deeply influenced by SF as well, even if these origins have been downplayed as the discourse has grown mainstream and institutionalized.

By the same token, Schwab's emphasis on the disruptive, unavoidable nature of this paradigm shift creates a 'dialectics of inevitability and epochalism' (Schiølin 2020: 8), also aligned with the teleological, deterministic view of technological development embraced by transhumanist philosophers. Despite their insistence on 'distributing the benefits of technological disruptions fairly […] and empowering all human beings' (Schwab 2018: 18), the rosy visions put forward by proponents of the 4IR, such as Schwab or Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014), and by transhumanist ideologists are likewise prone to downplay the issues of uneven access, mass unemployment and social inequality entrenched with technoscientific advancement. Both groups also overlap in their support of neo-liberal policies of governmental deregulation and private–public collaboration, in tune with their alliances with private enterprises.[1]

Permeating the discourse of mass media, industry hubs, advertisement and tech gurus, this promissory vision of the 4IR, mediated to the public through science-fictional scenarios and attuned to a transhumanist vision of the posthuman as a 'super-human meta-rationalist entity' (Braidotti 2019: 63), has an incontestable purchase over contemporary imaginaries of the posthuman. In the twenty-first century, however, dystopian visions of technoscientific development have taken over the science-fictional genre. These critical engagements with posthumanity highlight the possible aftermath of unchecked technoscientific development, as well as question the default humanist assumptions at the core of popular posthumanism. In this sense, its capacity for 'thinking about different embodiments, nonhuman agency and diverse futures, often at scales far beyond a human lifetime' can make SF 'a posthumanist practice' (Vint 2020: 232). Indeed, the genre has been the main source of inspiration for the work of critical posthumanist thinkers, starting with Donna Haraway's iconic re-appropriation of the military-begot cyborg and continuing with the writings of Katherine Hayles, Rosi Braidotti, Sherryl Vint, Stefan Herbrechter, Stacy Alaimo, etc., who have leveraged not only SF's archive of images but also its techniques of defamiliarization and literalizing metaphor for their alternative imagining of the posthuman (Vint 2020: 221).[2] If, as discussed above, the technophile visions of transhumanism 'migrate from SF to material practice' (Vint 2020: 227), the genre's critical encounters with the posthuman can likewise impact technoscientific development, contesting humanist biases and imagining new kinds of subjects and ethics. Thus, as Vint argues, SF

> remains a Janus-faced discourse, equally available as a tool to critique injustices of the present and inspire better futures or deployed to reconcile us to the inevitability of the future as a continuation of our present consisting of technologized capitalism and social injustice.
>
> (2021b: 168)

FROM SF TO SCIENCE-FICTIONALITY

As argued in the previous section, SF has been 'the posthumanist genre par excellence' (Herbrechter 2013: 120). Scholarship on SF has traditionally focused on pigeonholing the panoply of works comprised under its generic umbrella into watertight categories: *voyages extraordinaires* v. scientific romances, hard v. soft SF, speculative fiction v. SF, SF v. fantasy, etc. Much ink has been spilled attempting to establish a conclusive definition of what

constitutes SF, often passing judgement on the artistic merit of different works or subgenres. Already in the 1920s, Hugo Gernsback's agenda-laden editorials for *Amazing Stories* emphasized plausibility and adherence to a positivist view of science as the tenets defining good 'scientifiction' (Attebery 2003). Darko Suvin's momentous definition of SF as 'a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition' likewise sought to set the genre apart from the contamination of 'sub-literary species' (1979: 7, 23) such as folk tales or fantasy. This strait-jacketing of the genre was combined with exhaustive inventories of generic tropes and archetypes conforming SF's 'megatext' or 'parabolas' (Hollinger and Attebery 2013).

As Roger Luckhurst noted in his tongue-in-cheek polemic 'The many deaths of science fiction', behind this border-policing obsession lies a desire to 'smuggle [SF] across the border into high [literature]' (1994: 38). These attempts at legitimation are constructed, according to Luckhurst, upon a tripartite effort based on the implementation of internal borders that scorns any element bearing the stigma of 'popular' or 'pulp', the reclaiming of a 'glorious history' for the genre and the pledging of allegiance to scientific rigour (1994: 38).

In recent years, however, there has been a turn in critical inquiry toward more fluid conceptualizations of SF, embracing its multifaceted nature rather than focusing on 'squabbles about the minutiae of genre borders' (Vint 2021b: 6). This redefinition is motivated by the newfound currency of the genre under the rapid technoscientific progress of our times. Faced with the disruptive innovations of the 4IR, the feelings of estrangement and dislocation that once were the hallmark of SF have become ubiquitous, 'ingrained within the quotidian consciousness of people in the postindustrial world' (Csicsery-Ronay 2008: 5) as they witness the continuous breaching of material, conceptual and ethical thresholds. In this context, science-fictional thinking has grown into 'the dominant mode of social imagination' (Csicsery-Ronay 2008: 84). SF scholar Istvan Csicsery-Ronay coins the phrase 'science-fictionality' to refer to this new awareness or way of thinking about the world, which is 'made concrete in many different media and styles, rather than a particular market niche or genre category' (2008: ix). Building upon this conception, Vint proposes a definition of SF as '[l]ess a literary genre with clearly demarcated boundaries and more a way of thinking and perceiving, a toolbox of methods for conceptualizing, intervening in, and living through rapid and widespread sociotechnical change' (2021b: 158).

This approach to SF as a 'cultural mode' allows us to study the circulation of science-fictional images and motifs as they are 'mobilized and renewed by multiple communities of practice' (Vint 2021b: 164), in ways hindered by traditional approaches to the genre.

This paradigm shift towards a view of science-fictionality as a mode occurring 'across a range of texts and contexts' (Vint 2021b: 164) is taken up by Gary K. Wolfe, who in *Evaporating Genres* pins down the emergence of a generation of writers producing recombinant genre fiction, in which genre materials act as 'resources rather than constraints, in which the edges of genres bleed into one another, in which authors gleefully and knowingly cut the wrong wire' (2011: 16). In particular, Wolfe describes how the icons of SF are 'colonizing' other literary genres (2011: 34). One of the most notable instances of this 'genre implosion' is the growing body of works that combine the extrapolative icons and scenarios of SF with the stock plots and conventions of crime fiction.

This corpus of novels has burgeoned in recent years in anglophone literary markets, at the hands of writers such as Mur Lafferty (*Six Wakes* [2017]; *The Midsolar Murders* series [2022–present]), Rob Hart (*The Paradox Hotel* [2022]; *The Warehouse* [2019]), Blake Crouch (*Dark Matter* [2016]; *Recursion: A Novel* [2019]; *Upgrade* [2022]), Malka Ann Older (*The Mimicking of Known Successes* [2023]; *The Imposition of Unnecessary Obstacles* [2024]), Alastair Reynolds (*Prefect Dreyfus* series [2007]), Adam Sternbergh (*Spademan* series [2014–present]), Lincoln Michel (*The Body Scout* [2021]), Ben H. Winters (*The Last Policeman* series [2012–present]) and many others. While the generic cross-breeding between crime and SF is far from unprecedented – note, for instance, the borrowing of crime plots in cult SF works such as Isaac Asimov's *Wendell Urth* mysteries and Philip K. Dick's *The Minority Report* or the crucial influence of noir over cyberpunk – this trend is noteworthy in terms of its sheer volume of publications and its commercial and critical success. This group of works is also remarkable because of their self-referential awareness of their hybrid nature, illustrated in paratextual elements such as blurbs and praise, which explicitly make a selling point of their hybridity through the use of labels such as 'scifi murder mystery', 'science fiction thriller', 'techno-thriller' or 'sci-fi noir'.

The growing notoriety of this body of SF-inflected crime fiction coincides with a wider shift within genre studies, which grow less concerned 'with issues of belonging and generic purity and more with the actual workings of generic elements' in texts (Deleyto 2012: 228), hand in hand with a view of genre as a 'tool for cultural diagnosis' of its contemporary society (Lanzendörfer 2016: 4). Under this light, the reworking of generic conventions in contemporary texts is seen not as a deviance from proper formulae but as a response to changing social conditions. This seems indeed to be the case for SF-inflected crime texts as the ones listed above, which take up the icons of the 4IR – human enhancement, cloning, nanotechnology, AI, surveillance – and address the social and ethical challenges raised by this technological revolution: social inequality, environmental degradation, mass unemployment, state and corporate surveillance, etc. To respond to these hybrid texts, Wolfe argues, we need to leverage 'a critical discourse as polysemic as fiction itself' (2011: 187). Yet the application of a critical posthumanist lens to the reading of fiction has been circumscribed, for the most part, to the SF genre, and this body of works has remained virtually unexplored by SF and crime fiction critics alike.[3] Seeking to address this gap in scholarship, this article argues that this corpus of SF-inflected crime fiction is a productive locus for engaging with contemporary debates on the irruption of the 4IR and the paradigm shift towards posthumanity.

READING THE POSTHUMAN IN CRIME FICTION

As was the case for SF, scholars' dealings with crime fiction have been permeated by disputed definitions of the genre. Having fallen on the wrong side of the 'great divide' between elite and popular forms of literature, detective stories were long disparaged by critics, receiving a plethora of epithets ranging from a 'squandering of paper' to 'a vice' disclosing 'lax mental habits' in the 'addicts' (Wilson 1950: 264, 265) who enjoyed them. Less dismissive approaches sought to explain its popularity, proposing psychoanalytic (Pederson-Krag 1949; Rycroft 1957), mythical (Auden 1948; Van Metre 1976) and ludic rationales for crime fiction's pervading appeal. The latter, which viewed detective stories as an intellectual competition between writer and reader, peaked in the production of bylaws such as Roland Knox's 'A detective story decalogue' (1939)

or S. S. Van Dine's 'Twenty rules for writing detective stories' (1918), which prescribed to aspiring mystery writers such commandments as 'the reader must have equal opportunity with the detective for solving the mystery', 'the criminal must be someone mentioned in the early part of the story', 'not more than one secret room or passage is allowable', 'the detective must not himself commit the crime', etc. This approach inspired a formalist tendency in criticism that exhaustively defined and taxonomized the genre's formulae (Todorov [1966] 2010; Cawelti 1976). This rigid approach to formal conventions went hand in hand with a monologic ideological analysis of the genre, which conceived crime fiction as a purely cerebral pastime divorced from its social context.

This approach, which Eric Sandberg imputes to critics' 'persistent foundational anxiety over [the genre's] cultural status' (2020: 7), came under sustained assault from the 1990s onwards in works that moved beyond the taxonomy of features of the genre and toward an ideological critique of its conventions as vehicles of meaning (Bell and Daldry 1990; Knight 1980). Much like in SF scholarship, this emphasis on the fluidity of generic conventions has come to dominate current criticism, best encapsulated in Gulddal et al.'s call for a mobile approach to crime fiction that acknowledges its fluidity in terms of genre and meaning in the influential work *Criminal Moves* (2019). This mobile perspective views crime fiction as 'a field in flux where mutation, contamination, and innovation take precedence over the purity of canonical forms' (Gulddal and King 2020: 16), and aims to elucidate 'the mobile ways in which individual crime narratives use the conventions and formulae of the genre as a springboard for innovation' (Gulddal et al. 2019: 13).

This embrace of a fluid notion of genre on the part of the critics is contemporaneous to an 'outpouring' of hybrid crime fiction texts that borrow conventions from other genres, such as the ones encompassed in this article (Humann 2020: 57). This tendency towards cross-pollination, Humann argues, has made crime fiction 'a more suitable vehicle to call into question existing social norms, raise awareness about global issues, and critique prevailing sociopolitical structures (2020: 59). Indeed, the acknowledgement of the fluidity of crime fiction's generic borders goes hand in hand with an emphasis on its mobility of meaning, overcoming the attribution of an apolitical value to crime stories. This idea will be further delved into in following sections, so for now, it suffices to say that current scholarship explores the productive ways in which crime fiction writers actualize conventions to engage with their historical environment. Thus, the genre's formulae are conceptualized as an interface, a 'narrative vector for exploring a range of wider social, political, cultural or philosophical issues, implicated and framed by the criminal/investigative plot' (Gulddal and King 2020: 15).

In the wake of this mobile approach to generic hybridity as a tool for engaging with shifting social and political contexts, I suggest that the reworking of crime fiction conventions through the introduction of science-fictional tropes and scenarios – a priori at odds with the emphasis on plausibility and rationality prescribed by the likes of van Dine and Knox – can be read as a dialectical response to the social, epistemological and ontological challenges arising from the advent of the 4IR. Moreover, I contend that there is an innate affinity between the conventional themes of crime fiction and the project of critical posthumanism, to the extent that, much like SF, the genre can become a 'posthumanist practice' (Vint 2020: 232), indexed to critique the injustices of current technoscientific development and spell alternative futures.[4] In the

4. This article does not assert that the authors discussed explicitly align their texts with critical posthumanist agendas or use them as platforms for theorization. It is important to acknowledge that crime fiction, like all literary works, is influenced by market forces and audience demands, operating within a profit-driven framework that contrasts with the theorizing, deconstructive ambition of critical posthumanism. Despite this tension, it is my contention that, as cultural products, these texts mirror contemporary anxieties about technoscientific development, and as such can still work as archives of images, scenarios and ideas that may stimulate critical posthumanist inquiry.

subsequent sections, I will make my case through the analysis of three of the genre's constituent elements: its symbiotic interrelation with technology, its link with the legacy of humanism and its exploration of changing sociopolitical and economic dynamics. These ambiguous engagements pose crime fiction, circling back to Vint's words, as 'a Janus-faced discourse' (2021b: 168), liable to both celebratory and critical engagements with the consequences of technoscience.

CRIME FICTION AND TECHNOLOGY

Even though SF has been the privileged vehicle for grappling with technoscience in the literary realm, crime fiction enjoys a similarly dialectical relationship with technological and scientific breakthroughs. Across the genre's history, leaps in technology have acted as 'harbingers of new types of crime, new criminal methodologies, and new crime-solving techniques' (Kenley 2020: 261), rapidly reflected onto contemporary manifestations of crime fiction. Indeed, the symbiosis between the two is so remarkable that crime fiction can be deemed a form of 'popular science' (Bergman 2012: 88), shaping our sociotechnical imaginary in ways reminiscent of SF.

Crime fiction hence taps into the anxieties and apprehensions of its contemporary context, acting as an index of changing social approaches to science and technology. In the monograph *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science* (1999), the most sustained critical inquiry into the relationship between technology and ideology in the genre, Ronald Thomas argues that the emergence of forensic science caused a change of paradigm toward criminal proceedings based on scientific evidence, along with the popularization of technologies such as the polygraph, photography, mugshots or fingerprints.[5] Crime became 'a subject of scientific knowledge and mastery' (Thomas 1999: 25), and the criminal was rendered medicalized, objectified and datafied. This new paradigm was translated onto contemporary manifestations of crime fiction. Armed with what Thomas terms 'devices of truth' (1999: 10), the detective figure in the stories of Poe and Conan Doyle emerged as 'a thinking machine' capable of rendering the criminal's elusive body intelligible. These texts' message is thus reassuring: technological and scientific breakthroughs allow the sleuth, a stand-in for the 'machinery of law' (1999: 38), to apprehend deviant elements and restore social order. Thomas conceives this positivist view of science as a response to cultural anxieties about the blurring of personal and national identities in the nineteenth century and indexes this newfound currency of forensic technologies to the wider turn in modern societies towards disciplinary biopolitical regimes, seminally traced by Michel Foucault.

Yet crime fiction's engagement with these 'devices of truth' was not univocal. Thomas pins down an undercurrent of ambivalence in classical crime fiction's representation of forensic technologies, which are ambiguously constructed, in Holmes's words, as 'a double-edged weapon', an advancement that can potentially be deployed as a tool of surveillance, manipulation and containment on the part of institutions (1999: 172). This suspicion toward technology gains momentum with the emergence of hard-boiled fiction, which voiced an 'explicit critique of the assumptions that gave rise to the literature of detection in the nineteenth century – confidence in bourgeois institutions of law and order, in the stability of individual identity and in the scientific ideal of objective truth' (Thomas 1999: 91). Hard-boiled private eyes were suspicious

of nineteenth-century detection and the thinking machines it empowered. They dismissed forensic technologies as 'forms of quackery' (Hammett [1925] 1984: 28) and disclosed 'how deeply political the forensic "science" of criminology and the criminal body it identifies has always been', hence challenging the pretence of objectivity of the detective's 'devices of truth' (Thomas 1999: 275).

Despite this growing prevalence of scepticism across the twentieth century, recent manifestations of crime fiction suggest that positivist views of technoscience have not lost their purchase over the genre. Rather, Andrea Goulet argues, we are witnessing 'a revival of scientific influence on fictional crime' (2020: 296), ushered in by the popularity of forensic crime fiction products such as Patricia Cornwell's *Scarpetta* series (1989–present) or the television shows *Bones* (2005–present) and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000–present). These narratives are populated by recent breakthroughs in surveillance and digital and biomedical technologies, such as 3D simulators, face-recognition software or virtual reality. They return to an idealistic view of the detective/scientist as a guarantor of justice and truth, as forensic technologies are presented as incontestable, inevitably leading towards the resolution of the crime (Bergman 2012). This positivist approach to technology in forensic crime fiction intersects with the techno-optimist 'promissory discourse' that, as discussed in previous sections, predominates in popular accounts of the 4IR, as well as with the 'emphasis on reason, technology and scientific method' espoused by transhumanist ideology (More 2013: 4). Circling back to co-productionist accounts of the relation between fiction and science, this depiction of technology helps to create the illusion that this is how science works in real life, ignoring the gap in resources, speed and accuracy between these fictional representations and actual criminal investigations. In this sense, Bergman contends, forensic crime fiction posits science as a source of 'stability, certainty and truth', a form of communal salve in times of general indeterminacy (2012: 96).

This 'nostalgic' return to a blind faith in technology in an era of 'postmodern uncertainty' (Bergman 2012: 96) does not, however, exhaust the options for contemporary crime fiction's engagement with technoscience. As Nicole Kenley notes, the tension between 'benefits and risks, expediency and vulnerability' (2020: 262) governs most crime fiction concerned with technology. This ambivalence is particularly pronounced in the corpus of SF-inflected texts under consideration in this article. This body of work addresses numerous recent technological breakthroughs (cloning, enhancement technologies, AI, surveillance, social media) but adopts a critical stance towards the 'risks and rewards of (over)utilizing' (Kenley 2020: 262) them. If forensic crime products emphasize how science is put to work at the service of law enforcement, these texts underscore the extent to which criminals often leverage technological opportunities with greater facility than the former, and how technological 'devices of truth' can be easily co-opted by vested private interests and underlying social prejudice. In this, crime fiction intersects with critical posthumanist thought that draws attention to the social, ethical and ecological risks that may stem from unchecked technoscientific development.

CRIME FICTION AND (ANTI)HUMANISM

To be admitted into the Detection Club, an association of mystery writers with such prominent names as Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers and C. K. Chesterton among its ranks, aspiring members had to pronounce an oath vouching, among other things, to make 'the method of murder, and the

6. The influence of sensational elements such as the gothic, pseudo-sciences, romance or the supernatural in the detective form is excavated in the counter-genealogical work conducted by Maurizio Ascari (2007, 2013) and Michael Cook (2014). Ascari argues that these influences have been deliberately erased from histories of the genre by monogenetic critical narratives that locate its origins in Poe's tales of ratiocination in an attempt to endow legitimacy to a para-literary genre by attaching it to scientific authority.

7. For an extended analysis of the undermining of humanist rationality in postmodernist anti-detective novels, see Holquist (1971), Merivale and Sweeney (1999) or Stefano (1984).

means of detecting it, rational and scientific' and to avoid resorting to 'Divine Revelation, Feminine Intuition, Mumbo-Jumbo, Jiggery-Pokery, Coincidence or the Act of God' (Ascari 2013: 10). While anecdotal, this episode illuminates the extent to which a rational scientific spirit has been heralded as a defining feature of the genre. Indeed, scholarship has long recognized in crime fiction a celebration of the central tenets of the Enlightenment, insofar as it 'valorises reason and science; portrays a radically explicable, even mechanistic universe; and dramatizes the restoration of justice, order and decency in a momentarily upended social milieu' (Sevik 2013: 20). The sleuth, secluded in the Holmesian 'brain attic' or armed with Poirot's 'little grey cells', is posited as a spokesman for human reason, a genius from whom nothing can be hidden, as he collects data, formulates hypotheses and draws conclusions through observation and deduction. The detective's hermeneutic quest, inevitably headed towards resolution, betrays an epistemological and ontological stance attuned with the principles of humanism: a positivist belief in the straightforward meaning of signs, the fixed boundary between object and subject and the power of intellect to bring order out of chaos.

In recent years, this straightforward relationship between crime fiction and humanism has been interrogated. Despite its lip service to rationalism, crime fiction is now understood to navigate a liminal space between science and pseudo-science, positivism and the occult, surfacing in Poe's fascination with mesmerism, galvanism and mysticism or in Doyle's interest for the supernatural.[6] While modelled after the figure of the scientist, the bohemian dandies that populate classical detective stories are often more akin to the eccentric Romantic genius, and their answers to the 'whodunit' question indebted to intuition, coincidence and chance as much as to scientific deduction (Peach 2006). Moreover, as Goulet notes, these explanations are sometimes based upon fragmentary, unreliable evidence, exposing the detective's confidence as illusory (2020: 295). Many crime texts present, thus, 'not an affirmation but rather an interrogation, even an indictment, of Enlightenment reason and its social consequences' (Sevik 2013: 20).

This ambivalence intensified with the transition from 'the age of truth' to 'the age of doubt' in the aftermath of the World Wars. If, as William Stowe contends in his article 'From semiotics to hermeneutics' (1983: 373), the model of detection in Golden Age stories had espoused the positivist principles of the Enlightenment, in the hard-boiled mode this gives way to a hermeneutic mode of interpretation, where the boundary between object and subject is no longer fixed, and the powers of the detective's coherent, rationalist subjectivity to interpret signs and restore social order are increasingly defied. This discrediting of idealistic views of science and reason came to a head in the postmodern or metaphysical detective stories produced by Paul Auster, Umberto Eco, Alain Robbe-Grillet and Jorge Luis Borges, who moved beyond the genre's classical epistemological concerns to encompass ontological questions (McHale 1987: 10). In these fictions, the detective's hermeneutic quest leads 'not to the reaffirmation of a hidden order satisfying both to reason and morality, but to a core of doubt' and 'perceptual defamiliarization' (Porter 1981: 145), harnessing the playful parody and pastiche of the genre's classical conventions.[7]

This ambiguous engagement with humanism offers a rich context for exploring the conflicting epistemological and ontological world-views that infuse contested concepts of posthumanity. The faith in the unique, regulating and moral powers of rationality pinpointed by conservative readings of the genre would be in line with the transhumanist adherence to the Enlightened

principles of 'human reason, technology, scientific method, and human crea-tivity' (More 2013: 4), which inform a vision of the posthuman as a 'super-human meta-rationalist entity' (Braidotti 2019: 63). In particular, the image of the purely rational, disembodied cogito suggested by the common trope of the 'armchair detective' is conspicuously evocative of the transcendent, uploaded mind that has become the emblem of the transhumanist agenda. Nonetheless, if we side with more nuanced scholarly approaches, crime fiction's ambivalent highlighting and undermining of the powers of human(ist) reason is certainly attuned to the postulates of critical posthumanist thinkers. The latter have impeached the integration of Cartesian, anthropocentric assumptions into the posthuman, arguing that they perpetuate an exclusionary understanding of identity, agency and justice that overlooks the complex interplays between human and non-human entities and justifies the exploitation of those deviant from the ideal of Man. In turn, and in tune with the insights from new mate-rialism, situated knowledges and object-agent theory, critical posthumanism advocates for relinquishing exceptionalist accounts of human subjectivity and reason, moving towards an ontological relationality that acknowledges the intra-active becomings and assemblages of human and non-human actors. Crime fiction narratives, with their inherent hermeneutic orientation and their centring of ex-centric subject positions, offer prolific possibilities to illustrate the alternative epistemological and ontological outlooks proposed by critical posthumanism.

CRIME FICTION AND POLITICS

Debates between opposed visions of the posthuman are concerned not only with the nature of human subjectivity but also encompass social, political and economic considerations. Taking issue with transhumanism's links with the private sector, critical posthumanist thinkers have warned against the 'issues of egalitarian access to advanced technologies, social inequalities, massive job suppressions and on-going depletion of Earth resources' (Braidotti 2019: 36) that may stem from unchecked technoscientific development. In particular, they denounce how the reproduction of Cartesian dualism in transhumanist discourse risks reproducing the fault lines of class, race, gender and species inequality, condemning those allotted with stigmatized embodiments to the 'less than human status of disposable bodies' (Braidotti 2013: 25) at the mercy of the exploitative practices of biocapitalism.

Crime fiction is, in the words of Andrew Pepper, 'the most politically minded of all literary genres', because of its focus on how 'individual lives are shaped by the push and pull of larger social, political and economic forces, on the nature and adequacy of the justice system and on the reasons why crimes are committed' (2016: 17). Indeed, critics have long characterized crime fiction as a product of modern democracy and capitalism and therefore as a fertile medium for examining conflicts related to private property, social hierarchies and the state.

Early social readings of the genre, indebted to the Marxist tradition, diag-nosed it as an inherently conservative product. Due to its formulaic trajectory towards resolution, the genre was seen as providing 'a comforting worldview', whereby 'the criminal is always caught. Justice is always done. Crime never pays. Bourgeois legality, bourgeois values, bourgeois society, always triumph in the end' (Mandel 1984: 47). This is especially true of Golden Age texts penned by the likes of Christie or Sayers, understood as 'a projection of the dreams

of anxious middle-class people where change, disorder and work are absent' (Knight 1980: 118) in the face of post-war social instability. These anxieties were translated onto the 'criminal classes' inevitably contained by the detective, whose powers of deduction thus acquired a disciplinary dimension. In this view, crime fiction narratives worked for the legitimation of private property, the state's repressive machinery and even a transparent society and thus became part and parcel of the cultural apparatus of capitalism and the turn towards disciplinary societies in the modern age.

Yet even conservative readings, such as the ones produced by Stephen Knight or Ernst Mandel, locate 'fissures' in the ideological profile of the genre (Knight 1980) and admit that the form is fraught with contradictions. For crime fiction's containment of disorder to be effective in disciplinary terms, the story must raise a genuine challenge to the status quo, which, if too pronounced, risks rendering its suppression artificial and implausible. This precarious balance is epitomized in the motif of the double that permeates the representation of detectives since the genre's classical iterations. In iconic duos of antagonists such as Holmes and Moriarty, the sleuth becomes a liminal figure, the mirror image of the criminal. To attain the truth and restore order, he must enter the disturbed mind of his doppelganger and be implicated in the dark world of criminality that lurks behind the façade of polite civilization. In this tightrope between contamination and containment, the detective's identity as a deputy for rationality and social order is destabilized and his disciplinary powers undermined.

In this vein, crime fiction is no longer seen as essentially conservative, but rather as a form that can be 'co-opted for a variety of purposes' (Horsley 2005: 158). This reconceptualization has been the springboard for the construction of a tradition of dissent in crime fiction, both through against-the-grain readings of the undercurrents of disorder lurking behind the pastoral scenarios of Golden Age texts and through the explicit adaptation of the form in the wake of feminist, socialist or anti-racist agendas, which has been the keynote of the genre since the 1970s.

Siding with these radical approaches, I contend that crime fiction's concern with social, political and economic forces makes it a privileged vehicle for grappling with the changes ushered in by the 4IR. Crime fiction's subject matter is well suited to address the social ills stemming from our current paradigm shift: the corruption of state and legal power for the benefit of corporations, the erosion of social security nets, the failure of legal mechanisms to adapt to new forms of crime such as bio-piracy or data mining; the increasingly troubled distinction between the private and the public under the neoliberal regime of 'Life as capital', the growth of surveillance and the 'informatics of domination' (Haraway 1991: 161), etc. Besides, the protagonists of crime stories are often 'outsiders forced into awareness of the failings of established power structures' (Horsley 2005: 6), drawing attention to how definitions of criminality and justice are often underpinned by social prejudice and inequalities. In this sense, crime fiction is naturally adept at asking questions relevant to the agenda of critical posthumanism, such as: 'How is society ruled and for whose benefit? Is the justice system fair? What can the individual do in the face of injustice and exploitation?' (Pepper 2016: 12).

The genre is also a privileged platform for raising moral issues, especially through the showcasing of conflicts that strain the uneasy relationship between law, justice and ethics. Our contemporary age is witness to a host of such challenges: the attribution of rights to more-than-human entities

such as soil, water or animals; the blurred definition of personhood in the face of AI and technologically mediated beings; the contested proprietary status of biological and genetic tissues or the morality of altering human nature through genetic engineering and other forms of enhancement (Käll 2022). In this sense, crime fiction's engagement with the scenarios and icons of posthumanity can serve as a critical lens, interrogating the anthropocentric assumptions at the basis of western legal apparatus and articulating alternative frameworks based upon an ethical, response-able opening toward human and non-human others.

Crime fiction, therefore, is akin to critical posthumanism in its highlighting of coetaneous social, political and ethical issues. SF-inflected crime narratives, particularly as they incorporate ecological and technological crimes or non-normative subject positions into their plots, can become, to return to Vint's words, a 'posthumanist practice' (2020: 232), encouraging reflection on the consequences of the indexation of technoscience to transhumanist, neo-liberal and bio-capitalist interests. Likewise, this body of works can illustrate alternative ethical and political practices, based upon the principles of non-profit, collectivity, affectivity and responsibility, making strides toward 'socially sustainable horizons of hope' (Braidotti 2019: 25).

CONCLUSION

This article has endeavoured to open up new avenues for the study of representations of the posthuman in literature by focusing on the burgeoning cluster of narratives that tackle the icons of the 4IR through the lens and conventions of crime fiction. This inquiry into this hitherto under-explored body of texts is in tune with the recent turn in SF scholarship toward fluid understandings of science-fictionality as a cultural mode occurring across different genres and media, as well as with the mobile approach to generic boundaries and ideological meaning that has come to dominate crime fiction criticism in recent years. Crime fiction, this article has argued, is naturally aligned with the critical posthumanist project. A first point of intersection is the genre's synergistic relationship with technological breakthroughs, leveraged to explore the risks and rewards they pose for societal order. Crime fiction holds a similarly ambivalent stance towards the humanist epistemological and ontological world-view and its exceptionalist account of human subjectivity and reason, exposed as a source of entrenched inequalities and exploitative relations in critical posthumanism. Besides, the genre's subject matter has an inherently political inclination and as such is well suited to wrestle with the social, political and ethical challenges raised by our current contingency, particularly through the centring of marginalized, ex-centric subject positions. In the growing corpus of works examined in this article, these constituent generic concerns are harnessed to construct a critical view of the coalition of technoscience, bio-capitalism and transhumanist ideology, which is currently the hallmark of the 4IR. In this sense, this body of SF-inflected crime texts can be read as a barometer of contemporary anxieties about the social, ecological and ethical aftermath of the transition towards posthumanity. If, as posited in the first section of this article, literature plays a central role in constructing our sociotechnical imaginaries of the posthuman and is able to co-produce the material progress of technology and science, the critical portrayal of technoscientific progress in this group of works may certainly prove a productive platform for exposing

the injustices of the present and envisioning fairer alternatives for our posthuman future.

REFERENCES

Ascari, Maurizio (2007), *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ascari, Maurizio (2013), 'From enigmas to emotions: The twentieth-century canonization of crime fiction', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 31:2, pp. 9–19.

Ashman, Nathan (ed.) (2023), *The Routledge Handbook of Crime Fiction and Ecology*, New York: Routledge.

Asimov, Isaac (1968), *Asimov's Mysteries*, New York: Doubleday Books.

Attebery, Brian (2003), 'The magazine era: 1926–1960', in E. James and F. Mendlesohn (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 32–47.

Auden, Wystan H. (1948), 'The guilty vicarage', in W. H. Auden (ed.), *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays*, London: Faber, pp. 146–58.

Bell, Ian B. and Daldry, Graham (eds) (1990), *Watching the Detectives*, London: Macmillan.

Bergman, Kerstin (2012), 'Fictional death and scientific truth: The truth-value of science in contemporary forensic crime fiction', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 30:1, pp. 88–98.

Bones (2005–17, USA: 20th Century Fox Television).

Braidotti, Rosi (2013), *The Posthuman*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Braidotti, Rosi (2019), *Posthuman Knowledge*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brynjolfsson, Erik and McAfee, Andrew (2014), *The Second Machine Age*, New York: W.W. Norton.

Cawelti, John G. (1976), *Adventure, Mystery and Romance*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Cook, Michael (2014), *Detective Fiction and the Ghost Story*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cornwell, Patricia (1989), *Postmortem*, Scarpetta Series, London: Hachette UK.

Crouch, Blake (2016), *Dark Matter: A Novel*, New York: Ballantine Books.

Crouch, Blake (2019), *Recursion: A Novel*, New York: Ballantine Books.

Crouch, Blake (2022), *Upgrade*, New York: Macmillan.

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (2000–15, USA: Jerry Bruckheimer Television).

Csicsery-Ronay, Istvan (2008), *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Deleyto, Celestino (2012), 'Film genres at the crossroads: What genres and films do to each other', in B. K. Grant (ed.), *Film Genre Reader IV*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, pp. 218–36.

Dick, Philip K. (1956), *The Minority Report*, Fantastic Universe, 4–6 January.

Goulet, Andrea (2020), 'Crime fiction and modern science', in J. Allan, J. Gulddal, S. King and A. Pepper (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, New York: Routledge, pp. 291–300.

Gulddal, Jesper and King, Stewart (2020), 'Genre', in J. Allan, J. Gulddal, S. King and A. Pepper (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, New York: Routledge, pp. 13–21.

Gulddal, Jesper, King, Stewart and Rolls, Alistair (2019), 'Criminal moves: Towards a theory of crime fiction mobility', in J. Gulddal, S. King and A. Rolls (eds), *Criminal Moves: Modes of Mobility in Crime Fiction*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp. 1–26.

Hammett, Dashiell ([1925] 1984), 'Our readers' private corner', in D. Johnson (ed.), *The Life of Dashiell Hammett*, London: Chatto and Windus, p. 18.

Haraway, Donna J. (1991), *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, New York: Routledge.

Hart, Rob (2019), *The Warehouse: A Novel*, New York: Ballantine Books.

Hart, Rob (2022), *The Paradox Hotel: A Novel*, New York: Ballantine Books.

Hawthorn, Ruth and Miller, John (2022), *Animals in Detective Fiction*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Herbrechter, Stefan (2013), *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis*, London: Bloomsbury.

Hollinger, Veronica and Attebery, Brian (2013), *Parabolas of Science Fiction*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Holquist, Michael (1971), 'Whodunit and other questions: Metaphysical detective stories in post-war fiction', *New Literary History*, 3:1, pp. 135–56.

Horsley, Lee (2005), *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Humann, Heather D. (2020), 'Hybridisation', in J. Allan, J. Gulddal, S. King and A. Pepper (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, New York: Routledge, pp. 57–64.

Jasanoff, Sheila (2004), *States of Knowledge*, New York: Routledge.

Jasanoff, Sheila (2015), 'Future imperfect: Science, technology, and the imaginations of modernity', in S. Jasanoff and S. Kim (eds), *Dreamscapes of Modernity*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1–33.

Käll, Jannice (2022), 'Critical posthumanism, justice and law', in S. Herbrechter, I. Callus, M. Rossini, M. Grech, M. de Bruin-Molé and C. J. Müller (eds), *Palgrave Handbook of Critical Posthumanism*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 629–50.

Kenley, Nicole (2020), 'Digital technology', in J. Allan, J. Gulddal, S. King and A. Pepper (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, New York: Routledge, pp. 261–69.

Knight, Stephen (1980), *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, London: Macmillan.

Knox, Ronald A. (1939), 'Detective story decalogue', in R. A. Knox and H. Harrington (eds), *Best Detective Stories First Edition*, New York: Street & Smith, https://www.umsl.edu/~gradyf/film/knoxdecalogue.htm. Accessed 25 May 2024.

Lafferty, Mur (2017), *Six Wakes*, New York: Orbit.

Lafferty, Mur (2022), *Station Eternity*, The Midsolar Murders Series, New York: Penguin.

Lanzendörfer, Tim (2016), 'Introduction: The generic turn? Toward a poetics of genre in the contemporary novel', in T. Lanzendörfer (ed.), *The Poetics of Genre in the Contemporary Novel*, New York: Lexington Books, pp. 1–16.

Luckhurst, Roger (1994), 'The many deaths of science fiction: A polemic', *Science Fiction Studies*, 21:1, pp. 35–50.

Mandel, Ernest (1984), *Delightful Murder*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

McHale, Brian (1987), *Postmodernist Fiction*, New York: Methuen.

Merivale, Patricia and Sweeney, Susan E. (1999), *Detecting Texts: The Metaphysical Detective Story from Poe to Postmodernism*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Michel, Lincoln (2021), *The Body Scout: A Novel*, London: Hachette UK.

Mintz, Susannah B. (2020), *The Disabled Detective*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

More, Max (2013), 'The philosophy of transhumanism', in M. More and N. Vita-More (eds), *The Transhumanist Reader*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 3–17.

Older, Malka (2023), *The Mimicking of Known Successes*, New York: Tordotcom.

Older, Malka (2024), *The Imposition of Unnecessary Obstacles*, New York: Tordotcom.

Peach, Linden (2006), *Masquerade, Crime and Fiction*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pederson-Krag, Geraldine (1949), 'Detective stories and the primal scene', *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 18:2, pp. 207–14.

Pepper, Andrew (2016), *Unwilling Executioner: Crime Fiction and the State*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Porter, Dennis (1981), *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Puxan-Oliva, Marta (2020), 'Crime fiction and the environment', in J. Allan, J. Gulddal, S. King and A. Pepper (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, New York: Routledge, pp. 362–70.

Rajan, Kaushik S. (2006), *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Reynolds, Alastair (2007), *The Prefect*, Prefect Dreyfus series, London: Orion.

Rycroft, Charles (1957), 'A detective story: Psychoanalytic observations', *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 26:2, pp. 229–45.

Sandberg, Eric (2020), 'Contemporary crime fiction, cultural prestige, and the literary field', *Crime Fiction Studies*, 1:1, pp. 5–22.

Schiølin, Kasper (2020), 'Revolutionary dreams: Future essentialism and the sociotechnical imaginary of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Denmark', *Social Studies of Science*, 50:4, pp. 542–66.

Schwab, Klaus (2016), *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, New York: Crown Business.

Schwab, Klaus (2018), *Shaping the Future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, New York: Crown Currency.

Sevik, Greg (2013), 'Enlightenment, counter-enlightenment: Detection, reason, and genius in tales of Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 31:2, pp. 20–31.

Sternbergh, Adam (2014), *Spademan: Thriller*, Munich: Heyne Verlag.

Stowe, William W. (1983), 'From semiotics to hermeneutics: Modes of detection in Doyle and Chandler', in G. W. Most and W. W. Stowe (eds), *The Poetics of Murder*, San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, pp. 366–84.

Suvin, Darko (1979), *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Tani, Stefano (1984), *The Doomed Detective*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Thomas, Ronald R. (1999), *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Todorov, Tzvetan ([1966] 2010), 'The typology of detective fiction', in C. Greer (ed.), *Crime and Media: A Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 293–301.

van Dine, S. S. (1918), 'Twenty rules for writing detective stories', *American Magazine*, September, https://www.bu.edu/clarion/guides/dine.htm. Accessed 25 May 2024.

van Meter, Jan R. (1976), 'Sophocles and the rest of the boys in the pulps: Myth and the detective novel', in L. N. Landrum, P. Browne and R. B. Browne (eds), *Dimensions of Detective Fiction,* Bowling Green, OH: Popular Press, pp. 12–21.

Vint, Sherryl (2008), *Bodies of Tomorrow: Technology, Subjectivity, Science Fiction*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Vint, Sherryl (2020), 'Speculative fiction', in S. Vint (ed.), *After the Human*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 220–35.

Vint, Sherryl (2021a), *Biopolitical Futures in Twenty-First-Century Speculative Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vint, Sherryl (2021b), *Science Fiction*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Wilson, Edmund (1950), 'Who cares who killed Roger Ackroyd?', in E. Wilson (ed.), *Classics and Commercials*, New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, pp. 257–65.

Winters, Ben H. (2012), *The Last Policeman: A Novel*, Philadelphia, PA: Quirk Books.

Wolfe, Gary K. (2011), *Evaporating Genres*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

FURTHER READING

Kurzweil, Ray (2005), *The Singularity is Near*, New York: Viking.

SUGGESTED CITATION

CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

María Abizanda-Cardona is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Zaragoza (Spain). She holds a four-year research fellowship (FPU) by the Spanish Ministry of Education to carry out her doctoral dissertation. Her work explores the representation of posthumanity in twenty-first-century crime fiction by American authors, focusing on the effects of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies over definitions of personhood, ethics and social relations. Her research interests include critical posthumanism, transhumanism and biopolitics.

Contact: Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana, Universidad de Zaragoza, Pedro Cerbuna, 12, 50009 Zaragoza, Spain.
E-mail: mabizanda@unizar.es

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7144-9583