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This is a highly nuanced study. While Platten dispels a number of myths that have become attached to crime fiction (that it is a commercial entity, that it is a minor literary genre somehow yet to come of age, and that readers engage with it in order to pit their wits against a clue puzzle), he is also careful to assess these myths and to weigh and present the scholarship behind them. Clearly, Platten is neither tipping his hat to the doyens of French crime fiction nor embarking on a project of one-upmanship; instead, his work is balanced both in scope and scholarship. While the ‘pleasures’ of the title are not entirely of the poststructuralist kind (although Barthes does get a mention, notably in the conclusion), which may prove a disappointment for some readers, there are gains in terms of the reading pleasure to be had by a broad audience, with Platten’s material pitched (alternately, but to the same degree across all chapters) at undergraduates, postgraduates and researchers, and a more generalist reading public. The pleasure is clearly Platten’s, too, which is seductive. The reader is led from the emergence of crime fiction in France (Poe, Gaboriau, Leroux, Leblanc) through Simenon towards the noir (Malet, Héléna), the néo-polar (Manchette, Amila, Daeninckx), into the contemporary (Pennac, Izzo, Benacquista, and Vargas, the last of whom justifiably merits a chapter to herself). In each case, Platten introduces the dominant critical paradigm(s), makes an assessment and, carefully and deliberately, proposes his own lens; he then engages in detail with a selection of what he deems the most representative works of the authors under study. The generalist reader is afforded a strong sense of the development of the genre in France and the pleasures to be had from its various exponents, while the researcher is given an invaluable presentation of key secondary sources. It is undoubtedly in this mix of thoroughness of scholarship and targeted delivery that the success of The
*Pleasures of Crime* lies. For this particular reader, however, Platten is at his best in his asides. Each chapter makes room for digression but is generally content to point the reader towards it; but in chapter 5 Platten joins the reader in what is a miniature manifesto of digression. This neat *mise-en-abyme* study of crime scenes argues against the very diachronic approach taken by the book, suggesting points of intersection with other genres to take crime fiction studies into new dimensions (urban architecture is Platten’s especial focus here). This is the ironic side of Platten’s work, which is all the more powerful for being kept in reserve: there is a pattern to crime fiction studies as there is to crime fiction, and this must be studied before being transcended. With *The Pleasures of Crime* Platten places himself at the forefront of scholarship and prepares himself for digressions to come.

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