

# CSN Cafe: Crime Narratives with Andrea Goulet, Michelle Robi...

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## SPEAKERS

Andrea Goulet, Casey Wayne Patterson, Michele Robinson, Margaret Cohen, Hector Hoyos



Casey Wayne Patterson 00:11

Welcome, and thanks for joining us in another installment of "Cafe," the Stanford Center for the Study of the Novel podcast. In this episode, our host Margaret Cohen is joined by guests, Andrea Goulet, Hector Hoyos, and Michelle Robinson for a discussion of crime narrative. Andrea Goulet is professor of French and Francophone Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and co-chair of the 19th century French Studies Association. Her books include *Optiques: The Science of the Eye and the Birth of Modern French Fiction*; *Legacies of the Rue Morgue: Space and Science in French Crime Fiction*, and a co-edited volume on the scifi television show *Orphan Black*. Her current project, titled *Shady Quakers and Humbug Inventors*, is on anti-American types in 19th century France. Hector Hoyos is an associate professor of Iberian and Latin American cultures, and by courtesy of Comparative Literature at Stanford University. He is the author of *Beyond Boloño: The Global Latin American Novel*, a study of globalization critique in the post 1989 novel, as well as *Things With a History: Transcultural Materialism and the Literatures of Extraction in Contemporary Latin America*, a genealogy of materialist thinking in the region's fiction. Michelle Robinson is an associate professor of American Studies at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Her book *Dreams for Dead Bodies* examines how stories and novels by Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, Pauline Hopkins and Rudolph Fisher drew on the puzzle elements of detective fiction, to explore shifting configurations of race and labor relations in the 19th and early 20th centuries. We're thrilled to be sharing this conversation with

you, so thank you again for listening in as we scholars have a friendly chat among ourselves.

**M** Margaret Cohen 02:29

Thank you all so much for joining us at the center. I guess I'll start with one of the most sensationalist aspects of crime fiction, which is blood. Do you think crime fiction needs blood?

**A** Andrea Goulet 02:46

Margaret, the idea of bloodless crime fiction seems to be one that's put forward by the most purified models of like the Agatha Christie puzzle, the deduction format, and the S.S. Van Dine, *Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Fiction*, that leaves out anything gory or Gothic, and both supernatural or too bodily. And so it becomes this puzzle of intellection, right? But I think that my co-panelists would agree with me that that model never really holds, in practice. There's always murder and murder is by--well, not always, but in most crimes, there is bodily harm and violence and in the most extreme forms, murder, which whether by poison or by knife, involves gore.

**H** Hector Hoyos 03:51

Your question makes me wonder about why is blood so satisfying to read about? Or to see? It is such a delight, even when it's scary. I'm thinking of that scene in *100 Years of Solitude*, I think it's the last of the 17 Aurelianos who gets killed or one of the children I don't remember the moment but there's a long trickle of blood that is described for many a page and you never know who shot the individual in question, but the trickle of blood is very satisfying, even when it is scary.

**M** Michele Robinson 04:28

I obviously agree with I'm very I'm thinking back from *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, and the decapitation there all the way to say the unbelievable crimes that Dexter commits in that show were one of the first crimes I think is a killer, an ice truck killer who actually drains all the blood out of his victims bodies so you get big barrels of the stuff there. I think there's plenty of attention to blood and most detective fictions.

**A** Andrea Goulet 05:00

What What kinds of? I mean, I take your point that that the puzzle, I guess, well, actually

I'm a little bit confused now. detective fiction, crime fiction? Is there a difference? I think detective fiction is a narrower form is narrower, more narrowly defined. And one way in which it can be distinguished is through that intellection model, the emphasis on the deductive resolution of a mystery and the mystery can for hundreds of pages, be fully rationally described. But crime fiction, I think would incorporate the bloody corporeal aspects more. On the other hand on the kind of edge of that generic definition. I think people have a sense of crime fiction, even in the most capacious definition as different from horror. And so the frisson, the disgust, and fear evoked by horror films, or novels or stories seems to be different from the— even the most bloody of crime narratives.

H

Hector Hoyos 06:20

You also have a triangle between detective crime and victim and some stories would place more of an emphasis on one of the points in the triangle than others.

M

Michele Robinson 06:31

And there's another definition that Charles Rzepka uses where he differentiates even between detective fiction, which simply has the character of the detective, using the detective as its dominant, to fiction of detection, where the puzzle element is paramount. And maybe those are often the least bloody, because we're so wrapped up in a lot of minute clues. But there's that as well as a way of demarcating the various types of detective fiction that we deal with a crime fiction that we encounter.

M

Margaret Cohen 07:03

Hector, can I come back to what you said about the satisfaction of the blood and you know, just be able to get into the gore—I was struck in your, in your thinking about it that you evoked a very specific visual, like figure of the blood and the way there was this trickle of it. And so I wondered if I could ask all three of you to talk a little bit more about the types of ways in which blood is offered to the reader and maybe the voyeurism of that in detective fiction?

H

Hector Hoyos 07:40

Well, certainly there's an element of aestheticization, right, in the representation of blood, and, and there's always the conceit, because when you actually see blood, it's not pleasant. When you read about it, when it is enveloped in art, then it can be. But without the kind of filtering or elaboration, you wouldn't be in the terrain of, you know, crime fiction or real crime fiction, but in real, \*real\* crime fiction, and you don't want to go there.

A

Andrea Goulet 08:12

You talked about satisfaction. I think there's a kind of double movement in the most typical of crime or detective stories, which is the initial seduction and the titillation of entering into this punctured state of things, punctured by violence, often by grotesque bodily violence. And then there's a movement toward a different kind of satisfaction, which is that of the resolution of the unknown. And that, I think, has led a lot of people to think of the genre as fundamentally conservative, in that a satisfactory resolution gives us an answer to the mystery and a kind of closure that is then going to be reopened in the next installment because it is a very serial genre.

H

Hector Hoyos 09:03

Let me footnote that by reminding us of Thomas De Quincey's *Murder is One of the Fine Arts*, which is such a great read. And I guess it evidences how in every reader there is the sadistic and masochistic and that's part of the titillation also that Andrea was talking about, right? We we indulge in one of these, you know, sides of, of our personalities, the sway of the pendulum in everyone.

M

Michele Robinson 09:30

Just to add on to what Hector said, I'm interested in the way that blood can sometimes be a mark of elegance, as in that really beautiful image you described. So if we think of the murderer, in some cases as a kind of artist, the way that the blood is, is on display becomes really imaginatively, really exciting. But there is the other hand, that kind of brutality or the index of cruelty, that the proliferation of blood and human remains can signal.

A

Andrea Goulet 10:01

So I really interested by the aesthetic appreciation, you're giving a blood and it speaks to something you brought up in the conversation, Hector, about your struggle to have people read Marquez, not as a social, just as a social writer, but as a brilliant, poetic and literary writer. And so I'm wondering if I could kind of pivot from that to a question which I think you all addressed in your panels in different ways the *jeux les jeux* and the issue of class, America's foundation upon enslavement and how American fiction works through that, relations that you described Hector, about honor killing and patriarchy and ask about how the political and the aesthetic work together in, in this specific literature discussed or maybe more generally, you know, in crime fiction.

H

Hector Hoyos 11:03

I'm happy to say one thing about this, and I really appreciate by read how you say the political rather than politics. I think that is pretty spot on. And one of the characteristics of crime fiction, as far as I can tell, is to reveal certain social ontologies they make visible certain social types. So, you know, the detective is cool, cerebral, traditionally upper class or has a certain, you know, certain manners and so on. When that model starts to break down, and other social ontologies become visible in crime fiction, we intervene in the realm of the political of what is possible to imagine as a subject, I think that's one great feature of crime fiction.

A

Andrea Goulet 11:55

And, and when Hector says that it provides a way to imagine political, I think you're also talking about the emancipatory potential for crime fictions, right, as a way to imagine alternate models, but also as a way to critique current ways that the state or that institutions or that ideologies, create inequalities or the circumstances that lead to violent rupture,

M

Michele Robinson 12:31

in the work that I was discussing, by Mark Twain, one of the things that we see when detectives emerge, and I only was able to mention this briefly, because there are many detectives, is they are following more of the model of the Pinkerton and there really are interested in the work and then the money and don't have this kind of connection or loyalty towards any kind of conservative project except for capitalism, which is plenty conservative. So I think that Twain is very excited about imagining politics, but the detective is not necessarily a figure that will take him down down these avenues.

A

Andrea Goulet 13:10

I was going to ask you, Michelle, in your paper, whether opium came in, in because when I you know, in my work on the sea in the 19th century in the US, the opium trade with China is such a prominent feature of kind of the dream states and the, the ways in which the Orient is envisaged.

M

Michele Robinson 13:32

It's not in that particular fiction. I do think it comes up in other places maybe in his double barrel detective story like kind of parody where there is a Sherlock Holmes figure, who is

really inept, and actually has a body explode in front of them, and doesn't understand why that happens. So yeah, so he does see that kind of Sherlock Holmes ritual of opium in one of his works.

A

Andrea Goulet 14:00

Yeah the Sherlock Holmes addictions I think, are connected to that tension between the the bodily and the incorporeal, rationalized side of things. And if I can address the aesthetics of crime fiction too in relation to one of the authors in the French tradition, Leo Malet, who wrote in the mid 20th century, had been a surrealist poet, before using the American noir as a model to shift into crime fiction and some of his contemporaries, especially the surrealists found this to be a complete sellout. But people like Jonathan Eburne and others like me, have read a continuity between the aesthetic surrealism of Malet's poetry and the scenes and language of his crime novels. So I don't think they're oppositional.

H

Hector Hoyos 15:07

And following up on the opium question, one thing that came up in Andrea's presentation was the role of the nonhuman, the role of cars. And I would love to see more scholarship about the nonhuman in crime fiction. You have these chain smoking detectives, it seems like like thinking and smoking are of a piece. So there seems to be a lot to explore there. And then something harkening back to an earlier moment in the conversation, though, it's interesting to think about the political context of crime fiction and how that impacts, you know, fiction itself. A great Cuban author that I was going to present on and then I shifted and ended up working on Garcia Marquez was Leonardo Padura. And, you know, to write detective fiction under communism, like in the island of Cuba, means you have to change every rule, right? Because obviously, a detective wouldn't make sense. Privacy doesn't work in the same way. And so you learn so much about the, you know, the Cuban regime, its ideology, and also about daily life by reading someone like, like Padura, that I would, you know, encourage people to follow up on and then when he writes about the assassination of Trotsky in Mexico City, he is able to do all sorts of like, you know, lateral moves on the Cuban government. Well, we're living to this day in Havana where I hope this podcast is never listened to.

M

Margaret Cohen 16:33

Do you think that, uh, I was gonna ask, and I, because I'm thinking of serial TV shows today, I guess, that are so powerful that we've all been watching during the pandemic, so many of them are crime based. I guess I'm interested in the continuity of these TV shows

with the earlier crime fiction that you work on, and how crime portrayal shifts across media. I think there's been a lot of interesting work done on serial TV, as inheritor of the 19th century feuilleton serial novel form in newspapers. Do you agree?

A

Andrea Goulet 17:20

Yes, I, I wrote an article once about *The Wire* as a 20th century version of Eugene Sue's urban mystery, *Mysteries of Paris*, which is a transnational genre. It includes the *Mysteries of Philadelphia* by George Leopard, which resonated--resonates for me with the Mark Twain story that Michelle was talking about.

M

Margaret Cohen 17:47

You wanna say more, does anybody want to say more about this features? I mean, I don't know who's read all twelve or nine, ten volumes of *The Mysteries of Paris*, I guess I myself have. So we could we could get into the all the intricacies of what's going on there. But, um, but it might be it might be helpful just just to say a little bit more about serials and their relationship to crime.

H

Hector Hoyos 18:15

So So I wonder, you know, what order is being restored in the different serials? that that would be an interesting question to ask. And also on the on the French vein, I recently watched *Lupin*, which is a remake on you know, the great *Fantomas*. And that's interesting, right? Because every episode is like a restoration of a sense of of racial equity in a multicultural multi ethnic French society. So the bad thing though is that if you are aware of this, then it becomes a little repetitive and dull after a little while. But at least the opening, you know, remake of the whole painting stolen at the Louvre scene is amazing. It's just really quite something, it's an event.

A

Andrea Goulet 19:02

It absolutely does and the Maurice LeBlanc Arsene Lupin stories were very much about the restoration of money and artifacts and national treasures. So when the new TV series *Lupin* plays on the theft of the the you know, Louvre piece, it's nodding, of course directly back to the Maurice LeBlanc Arsene Lupin. And that Maurice LeBlanc, nods back to an ever receding earlier model. For example, one of the adventures of Arsene Lupin is called *Arsene Lupin Contra Herlock Sholme*, so playing with the you know, British predecessor.

- M** Margaret Cohen 19:57  
I love that I mean it's so resonant about heist, heist drama as restorative, I think that, you know, I'm sort of scrolling through all the heist, movies and stories I can think of. And at the end, always the like, the order seems to have to step in there. They're very few where you don't get, you know, like Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid kind of jumping off and then freezing, there's always some--but up until that last minute, there's a sense of restoration that that occurs. *Thelma and Louise*, I mean, they're just there's so many that come to mind. It's really interesting.
- A** Andrea Goulet 20:41  
And there's a Robin Hood fantasy too, I think, in a lot of them that comes back to the was it Brecht quote that Hector was citing, about founding a bank being as much as a crime as robbing one?
- M** Margaret Cohen 20:58  
What do you think the first heist drama is?
- M** Michele Robinson 21:02  
I think that maybe the most monumental one, and there's got to be plenty before that, would be *The Moonstone*. And that is certainly about the restoration of a treasure.
- M** Margaret Cohen 21:12  
Yeah, right. I mean, I guess this also then gets into, in a way--which I mean, the subject of your paper, Michelle, which was like the meeting of crime fiction and inheritance literature, which is, I mean, I think of inherited the inheritance plot, or Dickens, is so much like, so central to 19th century literature, and to what we would think of as realist literature. But in the Twain piece, is it a novel, it's unfinished?
- M** Michele Robinson 21:44  
It's about 200 pages--
- M** Margaret Cohen 21:45  
Ok, so we're gonna call it a novel





Michele Robinson 21:49

I'm interested in and maybe why, you know, of course, Twain wrote himself, painted himself into a corner, I think. But why that would not be something he would have revised for publication. Since there's so many different kind of scattered, unfinished pieces that went on to be finished.



Margaret Cohen 22:06

Can you say a little bit more about that, you know, for people who were at the event.



Michele Robinson 22:10

So I was speaking about an unfinished novel called, Which Was That, which is a dream experiment. So Twain had a couple of these, where he imagined the experience of someone who was highly successful, and which was the dream, it's someone who is on his way to becoming president after having succeeded in in you know, beyond all imagination in the Mexican American War, and then, in a dream sequence, that individual went on to lose all of his money, to become an outcast in society for some mix up that he's been drawn into. And for Twain, sometimes these leave off in the dream. There's, you know, the horrifying situation that he's interested in exploring, can't be closed off, and kind of settle there. And that's something that's very important, which was that the piece I was discussing, because it does go on for so long, this dream is, you know, how he can get out of a dream once he's gone really down this rabbit hole, and discovered, you know, that this endpoint, where I guess it's too difficult to wake up, once the protagonist finds himself in a locked room with a man who is a former slave and being subordinated to that black man, it's just such a horrifying endpoint that how you emerge from that how you can reconcile that and return to waking life as if it never happened is just hard to understand.



Andrea Goulet 23:44

I think that that dream motif is really interesting as a counterpoint to the hyper rationality right? Mauricio Ascari I think has has written about the irrational roots of the form and the dream comes in the Wilkie Collins, right, The Moonstone the question of somnambulism and also in Gaston Leroux's Le Mystere de la Chambre Jaune, these alternate states are in a way apparently the exact opposite of the lucid Cartesian detective's mind. Right. So the fact that these dreams are there from the beginning of the genre, kind of clouding that transparent rationality, I think is interesting.

M

**Margaret Cohen** 24:39

I mean, I guess I just feel it you know, if if crime fiction in some ways is the dream of realism, or you know, it's sort of able to bring to the fore the very disturbing elements of the society portrayed say in 19th century realism that have to be put to the margins in order to focus on, like, I guess the social hierarchies that are, I don't know, I'm now I'm talking to myself into a corner, that are considered dominant. You know, it seems to me that the surrealists are really in there throughout the whole...You can see why the surrealists love crime fiction, even if they really didn't like the fact that they might be betrayed by Leo Malet, but it seems like there there is a fantasmic quality to crime fiction and I guess you've been talking about how it sits with the hyper rationality.

A

**Andrea Goulet** 25:33

Well, there are two--I'll mention Jonathan Eburne's book *The Art of Crime*, which is about surrealism and crime narrative.

M

**Michele Robinson** 25:42

and Eburne brings up Chester Himes, doesn't he? I think there's quite a bit on him there. So there's that kind of nice crossing. We're Himes's Harlem is so dreamlike in many ways, and it's so--the the [...] are so fixated on like economies within Harlem, and that the kind of subterranean transactions that are taking place, and at the same time, it's absurd, and it's completely dreamlike.

H

**Hector Hoyos** 26:11

And also, you know, look no further than Edgar Allan Poe, with the supernatural and the detective, I'm thinking of the Cask of Amontillado, and *The Iron Mask* and you know, all of these other tropes. And that's the point of contact between the supernatural and the super rational was very successful in Latin America, for instance, where you have Julio Cortazar doing the translations of Poe into Spanish. And so add in someone like a Borges, as well, right? He's his own, you know, for Borges fantastic literature and philosophical literature and literature of ideas, were one and the same thing. And so someone like Poe provided like the example I think, more so than, than others in the Pantheon. Poe, I think was was the more eloquent to folks in in different places in Latin America.

M

**Margaret Cohen** 27:08

Maybe I'll just shift a little bit and ask you, um, crime fiction: tragedy or comedy? And I guess, I guess, I guess starting thinking about tragedy in your paper Hector, I was thinking

of Antigone, actually, and I know we had a question in the chat, which you didn't get to respond to about Hegel and the sublime, but I was thinking about, you know, Antigone and the law of blood versus the law of the state, and the way in which that's resolved as tragedy, for Hegel is the genre of tragedy. And that you were describing, in some ways, a very different generic take on it, but nonetheless, involving some of the same issues. So I am wondering if there's any kind of lightning, about that.

H

Hector Hoyos 27:51

You know, Antigone looms really large here. I would direct folks to Moira Fradinger's book on the Antigones in Latin America, there's something like 1000 versions of Antigone that she considers, but you know, some of the more prominent ones and related to the book I was giving a talk on include *In Evil Our*, one of Garcia Marquez's early novels, and, and he also has an epigraph from Antigone elsewhere. So I think that crisis at a very, like, literal level, like "does the State allow to bury remains here or not," has been experienced, you know, unfortunately, by so many 1000s of people in connection to different oppressive regimes, some military some, some, some no, that, Antigone just really resonates. Now at the same time, but the Hegelian reading of Antigone, and the idea of restoring an order and of putting, you know, reason and society together, that part doesn't resonate. So so you have the premise of Antigone, but not the resolution, springing in all kinds of ways. Another book that's interesting in that regard by Sara Uribe is *Antigona Gonzalez*, it's one of the many rewritings, it has to do with femicide along the US Mexico border. And so *Antigona Gonzalez* is a really interesting working in that way too. And I'm sorry to retreat to like sub disciplinary expertise, because your question was a little broader than that.

M

Margaret Cohen 29:23

I guess I was also thinking about comedy in crime. I mean, this, it has an aesthetic quality to it and does go back to the sensationalism that you that you talked about, but I was just interested in me hearing everyone talk a little about that.

H

Hector Hoyos 29:39

Maybe just a tiny thing about comedy, there's comedy that one laughs about and there's comedy that one kind of like laughs and cries at the same time about. So sure, I mean, comedy by all means, and and sometimes the you know, what people are experiencing like duress and are close to crime, you know, they are in the vicinity of crime. It's not something about abstract that you have to read in a book, but you know crime is right there, that's sometimes when the when the, you know, most like perverse humor emerges.

And people really relish you know, and laugh but they laugh with with a little sadness and sometimes with anger and it's all bundled together it's it's like a powerful, like somatic experience. It's it's in the body that kind of laughter, I guess.

A

Andrea Goulet 30:21

And there again, Edgar Allan Poe really encapsulates that kind of dark humor and the the tricky edge between horror and humor. But can I say, Hector, when you apologize for being being field specific, you shouldn't. In my paper, I was calling for keeping a national distinctions in play when we think about the entanglements of local and global right, I wanted to keep that kind of national tradition as one of the points of reference. And, in part, it was out of a recognition of distinct scholarly fields of expertise, like the ones represented by the three of us. So um, just as an anecdote, a University Press editor once asked me, Why are you writing just about French crime fiction? Isn't this a global genre? Why aren't you writing about Scandinavian and Latin American? And I thought it was a strange question, because it presumes that I would be capable of writing about American crime fiction as well as Michelle can, or Latin American as well as Hector can, and I can't. And I think what really came out in their talks is that knowing not only the political context and the historical context of a specific national tradition, but also the literary history really adds something important to readings. Otherwise, you just get a mega-formalist presentation of the Todorov, you know, shape of detective fiction or something.

H

Hector Hoyos 32:06

There's something that I really liked in the three papers together, which was Andrea you were saying it right, though, the national slash international dimension of all the papers, they were very grounded, you know, French literary studies and American and Latin American. But in Michelle's paper, you have this imaginary Orient, and, and, you know, the types of stereotypes that are indeed more than just, you know, American, if you want to understand that very narrowly. So when I think of someone like, like, wait, Wai Chee Dimock, who I know has been an interlocutor at the center, and that idea that, you know, US literature is criss crossed by the literature of the world. It's interesting, but I feel that the three presentations were already there, you know, they they are at a resolution of a dialectic between being like, narrowly nationalistic, and, and being vaguely cosmopolitan and open to the world, but without granularity and, and we're trying to do that, I know that I enjoyed a lot really, I would have enjoyed a lot more in person, to see people's eyes when I included the Mishima image, after the falconry image, you know, I was I was going for the defamiliarization, I was going for "this is the Spanish Middle Ages are alive here. But you know, what, also the Japanese Middle Ages." And I wasn't doing that out of Impressionism or equating everything kind of like a postmodern melee. But because I do

think there are like threads that you can follow across these different domains.

M

Margaret Cohen 33:38

I mean, just to speak to one of the French elements under what you were talking about, when you were showing the rond-points, I have here in France, over the past 15 years, I've noticed this, like increasing movement to put those giratoires everywhere, you know, so they've gotten rid of the stop signs, and you can't go anywhere without giratoires, and they're always on the the edges of town and like the exurbs and so that sense of the street as you would have it in 1848, or the Paris Commune, that's really so different from the emotional valence of these, you know, blank spaces that are built upon probably, you know, landfill with this kind of artificial grass, it looks like, around them. And in that image you showed from Saint-Malo, it's just a really different space from from the kind of, I would say almost the warmth and the hot space of the street and, and so I wonder like, if this is specifically for your paper, but I'm I'm and just keeping with Hector's, you know, which I, it all of you are showing like both the very local inserted aspect of the crime narrative, and yet their entanglement with problems that stretch beyond the local, so I'm interested in how like the, those excerpts in France give a really different feeling to like a crime scenes in 2019, than you would see in something in the streets of Paris or Marseilles.

A

Andrea Goulet 35:14

Right, I think you're right. It is a different kind of typography. And so I think that if you try to trace as I did a sort of street crime genre, back to the 19th century, there's continuity and there's change, the continuity that I was trying to bring out is that the street, whether it's a 19th century cobblestone or a Haussmannian Boulevard, or a 20th, or 21st century rond-point, continually exists as a site of conflict between domestic and national, private and political, etc. But there's discontinuity as well, which I think you're hinting at, because the terrain changes. And so when, as I mentioned, Kristen Ross sees continuity between the Paris Commune uprisings and the gilets jaunes, rond-points, insurrections and blockages, that's a political continuity. But there's also a different shape to it. And so the shape of the rond-point that as you said as often peripheral, not central, connects more to what I was saying about revolution and circulation at the question of revolution as a cycle with no exit or revolution as rupture and change.

H

Hector Hoyos 36:50

would be super intrigued, Andrea, to to hear you say something about Serotonin, Michel Houellebecq novel--

A Andrea Goulet 36:56  
[laughter] I can't!

H Hector Hoyos 36:58  
All right. All right. Well, that's it's not his best it's not his best I am a fan of the of the early work and I know he's problematic in many many ways, but I am--but the thing in Serotonin is there as a standoff at a highway blockage between--he doesn't call them gilets jaunes because they hadn't been constituted at the time, but he's writing but he imagines these like rabble based on Jose Bove types against the state and you have like like this, you know, line of fight on the highway. So it's a highway blockage. So, but yeah, maybe for some future conversation, it's also a really appreciated connection with situationists because what would a site psychic map of Paris look like these days with, you know, everyone sheltering in place, or in quarantine and after Bataclan and whatnot, I mean, geez, you're really, you know, redoing the whole thing

M Michele Robinson 38:02  
That kind of takes us back to, I'm not sure it was Hannah, or another person in the larger talk who, who spoke about the protesters in the street being vulnerable to murder, and that that kind of shape of the street now. I'm so fascinated Andrea by this idea that the shape of the street in Paris also informs the structure of crime fiction there and vice versa. And going back to to I guess its murders right where the cobblestones that have been thrown, are there for the throwing and the idea of revolution behind that too, how susceptible the streets are to revolution seems so important.

A Andrea Goulet 38:43  
Right and, and part of it is the street toponymics, the namings of the street. Because in the French history, as you probably know, each successive political regime changed street names, right. So after the revolution, they got rid of names that evoked saints or kings, and put in sort of like "La Rue du Citoyen," "the citizen" or something right, and then each subsequent regime changed street names again. And what I found in some of the crime stories was that those street names became red herrings as plot points, so that the detective was trying to solve a recent murder or mystery, but had to understand the history and the National History in order to realize that, "Oh, wait, this didn't happen on this street. It had a different name at the time." Right. So there's the there's the kind of archaeological layers that are at work that that anchor, even the most contemporary crime fictions in sedimented history that you can get at through those streets and the

street names

**H** Hector Hoyos 40:00

There's also that meeting point between urban fiction and crime fiction to think about and crime fiction in rural context. I mean, that was the big success of Fargo back in the late 90s, I believe and it has been remade a number of times that, "could there even be crime," right. Could it be imaginable in those vast wide expanses. There is one very rare—I don't know if maybe someone who's listening to podcasts and wants, like, a rare reading tip—there's a novella called To Lose is a Matter of Methods—Perder es Cuestion de Metodo by Santiago Gamboa. I don't know if it has been translated, that has to be both one of the best urban novels of the city of Bogota, and also a really fun, like, like page turner crime story about this character who appears to be impaled next to a lake in the outskirts of the city and so how did this come to happen? And in that book, at the end, so huge spoiler, it turns out that some construction mogul, you know, someone who wanted to develop like real estate around the lake area, had staged the whole impaling. And this person had gone to school at Stanford. [laughter] It's a novel from 1996, what can I say?

**M** Margaret Cohen 41:21

Well, always the bad guys. [laughter] It's pretty hard to follow up on that one. Hector, I think you've given us our note to wrap up. So thank you all for joining us for this, this really fascinating conversation, I feel like just as the pandemic is ending, and I'm now going to be able to get out and travel a lot and don't have to sit in front of the TV every night and watch, you know, crime crime series, maybe I have a huge number of books I could pick up and start reading as I as I move about. So it's also been personally very enriching.

**A** Andrea Goulet 42:00

And thanks to you all.

**H** Hector Hoyos 42:01

Thank you.

**M** Michele Robinson 42:02

Thank you.



## Casey Wayne Patterson 42:10

Thank you again for joining us in this episode of the Center for the Study of the Novel's podcast, Cafe. We would also like to thank Andrea Goulet, Hector Hoyos, and Michelle Robinson, for their generosity in agreeing to this conversation. Thanks to our team at the Center for the Study of the Novel to An Truong Nguyen and Maritza Colon for their operational support. To our graduate coordinators, Victoria Zurita, Cynthia Giacotti, and Casey Patterson, to Erik Fredner for editing, consultation and sound engineering and to our host and director Margaret Cohen. The Center for the Study of the Novel is a subsidiary of the English Department at Stanford University.