

СОВЕТСКО-КАРАИМСКАЯ



ПРЕДГОВОР

**PERRYSCOPE 4**, November 2020, is an issue of the personalzine published, whenever the mood takes him, by **Perry Middlemiss**, 32 Elphin Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, AUSTRALIA 3122. E: perry@middlemiss.org  
Produced initially for ANZAPA (the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association) and then whoever else unlucky enough to receive it.  
Cover by WH Chong.

### INTRODUCTION

I've been creating these zines using the OpenOffice Writer software and have been getting a bit frustrated at the options available. So I've shifted over to LibreOffice Writer for this issue. Hopefully I'll be able to mess about a bit with some of the layout and formatting options to produce something a little better.

This issue is, of course, greatly enhanced by the addition of a cover from my friend Chong. The small drawing of me is also by him. He tends to do these things when you're out for dinner. Just can't stop himself apparently. Many thanks to him for the work.

This month's entry in my "Personal Life" section was started a few years back, but I just couldn't finish it. I had suggested to Bruce Gillespie that I might give it to him to publish in Science Fiction Commentary originally, and then it just kept on not being finished, and put off, and re-written so much that I decided to write something else for him, namely a write-up of the works nominated for the 1961 Hugo Awards. Not the most interesting of topics, though better for Bruce's fanzine than this one I suspect. I'll let you know when he aims to publish that, and provide a link to an online version. If you are interested. I can hardly blame you if you're not.

This piece is the first in what will be a series, looking at my return to reading after a fallow period through the 1990s and 2000s. Given my attention span is rather short these days I'm liable to move onto something else, or write a sequel to a previous piece next month, before returning to this topic. Further instalments will appear when ready.



### WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MY PERSONAL LIFE

#### A READER'S JOURNEY: 1. SPREADSHEETS EVERYWHERE

A few years back, just after I turned 60, I was staring at the full bookcase housing my paperbacks and dreading the prospect of having to move them at some time in the future. I know that is going to happen at some point though I have no definitive notion of when.

And while I was dreading that move I also came to the realisation that if I was ever intending to read through some of the old books in front of me: a) I'd better get on with it; b) I'd better have a plan; and c) I was only going to be able to read some of these just once. Could I afford the time to go back and re-read *OUR LADY OF DARKNESS* by Fritz Leiber, especially after I'd probably

## Perryscope 4

---

read it three or four times already? No. Sorry Fritz, as much as I like the novel I had others demanding my attention. Like DYING INSIDE by Robert Silverberg, a novel I'd never read, which I'd probably owned for over 40 years, and which I promptly sat down and consumed with great pleasure. It became the first in the discard box.

The old paperback novels would have to go, mostly, and the old anthologies, annual "best of"s and single author collections would have to join them on the discard pile. A pity but I had to think of lifting all those boxes of books in my dotage. Moving all the other crap I had managed to accumulate after living in the same house for close on 30 years was going to be bad enough, the books looked like a back-strain too far.

At about the same time I decided to return to voting in the Hugo Awards, a job made much easier these days by the Hugo packet provided to all Worldcon members which contains a copy of nearly all the fiction nominees. I figured if I could get through the Hugo nominees I could feel comfortable about voting in each category and would, quite possibly, gain some level of understanding of what the current sf field was covering; something I hadn't felt since the 70s or 80s.

It seemed like a plan.

Until I came to realise the challenge I'd set for myself.

I have thousands of paperbacks on the shelf: sf, fantasy, crime, literary, horror, you name it. I had all those Booker prize-winners I'd been buying each year, unread; Miles Franklin Award winners, unread; Ned Kelly Awards, Australian literary fiction, crime series, and a shelf of old Gardner Dozois volumes of "Best SF of the Year: Annual Collection", all unread.

I needed a list.

Or actually, lots of lists.

The first list started with awards in the sf and fantasy fields. How many of the past Hugo Award winners had I read and how many of them did I own? A spreadsheet was started, Wikipedia was consulted, data entered and before long I came to the conclusion that I could not, in any form of truthfulness, call myself knowledgeable about the sf&f field post say 1980. I had the books, they were sitting there on the ceiling-high shelves staring at me. They just hadn't been read.

The Nebula Award list followed and that was just as bad, if not worse. And then the rest: the various Locus Awards, World Fantasy, British SFA and Fantasy, Phil Dick, John Campbell, Shirley Jackson, and on and on. It was very easy to get a little obsessive about all of this. Names I'd never heard of were all over the place. Who was Jane Rogers (Clarke Award 2012), and who were Jo Walton (Hugo 2012), Cherie Priest (Locus SF 2010), and Jack McDevitt (Nebula 2007)? I was obviously a long way behind.

And that was just the novels.

I'd always liked the novella length in sf&f, it seems to just fit the field well, with a beginning, a middle and an end. Plus they were short. Shorter than the usual door-stops of novels being

published. So a similar award-based list of novellas was started, some had been read, most not.

And the lists kept on rolling out: Australian literary awards (Miles Franklin, Stella, Prime Minister's, and all the state literary awards); other Literary novels (Booker, Whitbread/Costa, Pulitzer, Orange etc) and Crime novels (Ned Kelly, Davitt, the Daggers, Edgars, Shamus and Barrys). It became a bit of a joke when I realised I was never going to be able to read them all in half a dozen lifetimes. Regardless, I kept adding award lists when I found them, list after list, novel after novel. Did I mention obsessive?

I'm still at it, still adding books to existing lists, and still creating new ones. I am starting to wonder if it's going to be as much trouble keeping the spreadsheets up-to-date as it will be getting rid of the actual physical volumes.



### WHAT I'M DOING TO KEEP MYSELF BUSY

**Podcasting – TWO CHAIRS TALKING, co-hosted with David Grigg**

**Episode summary catch-up (21 - 30):**

Episode 21: A beautifully illuminated manuscript (18 February 2020)

We put the 1961 Hugo Award nominees under the microscope.

Episode 22: The best publishing house in Old North Australia (2 March 2020)

David and I speak to Rob Gerrand, Bruce Gillespie and Carey Handfield, the principals of Norstrilia Press, an innovative small publishing house based in Melbourne in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Episode 23: Stocking up for the Apocalypse (17 March 2020)

We discuss what we've been reading lately and we chat with Lucy Sussex and W. H. Chong about their favourite books of 2019.

Episode 24: Noir is the new Black (31 March 2020)

Mostly about what we've been reading in the crime fiction field, including a chat with Lucy Sussex about the Garry Disher novel PEACE.

Episode 25: Kings of infinite space (14 April 2020)

David and I chat about how we first got involved in the sf field and then I interview W.H. Chong and David interviews Paul Carr about how they came to be interested in sf.

Episode 26: Now we are one (28 April 2020)

Our first anniversary episode. David and I pay tribute to the late Mervyn Binns, and then go on to discuss our 5 favourite books, of any genre.



### Episode 27: TV or not TV? (12 May 2020)

David and I discuss THE EXPANSE tv series, I talk about THE OUTSIDER 10 episode series, I chat to Rose Mitchell and Andrew O'Rorke about the PICARD tv series, and David reviews TALES FROM THE LOOP.

### Episode 28: Mastering the dragons (26 May 2020)

We discuss the novels and novellas on the 2020 Hugo ballot. David discusses some of his recent reading and then interviews Rob Gerrand about Jack Vance's novels, both sf and crime.

### Episode 29: Omphalistic Hugosity (9 June 2020)

I lead a discussion of the novelettes and short stories on the 2020 Hugo ballot. David and I then discuss the works nominated for the 1962 Hugo Awards.

### Episode 30: The many trouser-legs of time (23 June 2020)

Lucy Sussex joins us for a discussion of alternate history novels, mainly centred around the Axis powers winning the Second World War, but not solely centred on that event.

## Notes from this month's podcasts

### Episode 38: Big, bigger, biggest, bigly! (14 October 2020)

The role of megastructures in science fiction is the topic for this episode. With any of these sort of theme episodes it is impossible to be comprehensive. All we can do is aim to cover a few sub-topics and give some examples of what they are and how they are used. We look at city-sized spaceships, space elevators, Jupiter-sized space ships, hollow planets and Dyson spheres., covering everyone from Edgar Rice Burroughs to Iain M. Banks.

### Episode 39: Completely zoned out. (27 October 2020)

David and I discuss the books SOLARIS, and its two film adaptations, and ROADSIDE PICNIC which was adapted into the film STALKER by Andrei Tarkovsky. We generally agree on the SOLARIS material but have differing opinions on STALKER – which is probably due to the fact that I was reading the Dyer book (see below) at the same time as watching the film – and I do mean exactly the same time, interweaving scenes from film and book.

You can access the current, and all past podcast episodes at [www.rightword.com.au](http://www.rightword.com.au) or you can subscribe through any podcast subscription service.



## WHAT I'VE BEEN READING LATELY

2020 targets met this month: Total books for the year (102)

Codes – F: format (e for electronic, blank for paper); R: rating, out of 5.0.

Abbr – Aust: Australian; nvla – novella; coll – single-author collection

## Perryscope 4

---

### October 2020 books

Title	Author	Genre	Date	F	R	Notes
Shades of Darkness	Richard Cowper	Horror	Oct 2		3.3	
Marrow	Robert Reed	Sf	Oct 5	e	3.4	
Orbitsville	Bob Shaw	Sf	Oct 9	e	3.2	
Feersum Endjinn	Iain M. Banks	Sf	Oct 13		3.4	
Unreliable Memoirs	Clive James	Non-fic	Oct 14		4.1	Aust, Biography
Desdemona and the Deep	C. S. E. Cooney	Fantasy	Oct 19	e	3.4	nvla
Roadside Picnic	A & B Strugatsky	Sf	Oct 23		4.0	
The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes	Arthur Conan Doyle	Crime	Oct 25		3.6	coll
Zona: A Book About a Film About a Journey to a Room	Geoff Dyer	Non-Fic	Oct 25	e	4.4	
Piranesi	Susanna Clarke	Fantasy	Oct 28		4.4	
The Good Turn	Dervla McTiernan	Crime	Oct 30		4.3	Aust

Books read in the month: 11

Yearly total to end of month: 103

#### Notes:

SHADES OF DARKNESS (1986) – Jim Fuller, a journalist, is kicked out of Uganda by the government and returns to London where he is then let go by his newspaper. At a loose end he decides to turn his African experiences into a novel and rents a house on the south coast of England to get the privacy he needs. All seems to be going well until he starts getting a sense that there is something in the house with him. Something that is attempting to communicate with him. A novella length ghost story, competent enough though rather standard fare. Rather more “suspenseful” than the “horror” as listed. R: 3.3/5.0

MARROW (2001) – In the early far-distant universe The Great Ship was built by a race of unknown aliens. In the distant future humanity has become a space-faring, technologically advanced race of immortals who discover the Ship as it enters the neighbourhood of the Milky Way. They board and explore the Ship, at first repelling all other races, and then deciding to turn the Ship into a great cruise ship circumnavigating the galaxy in a million-year-long voyage. A hundred thousand years later a chance discovery at the heart of the Ship, a subsequent mutiny and then war threatens to destroy the entire vessel. A slow-moving novel that attempts to cover too much time and territory in its 500-odd pages. Discussed on the podcast in episode 38. R: 3.4/5.0

ORBITSVILLE (1974) – Exploring the nearby universe, after a chance discovery that allows for faster-than-light speeds (seems time is constant not the speed of light above 0.2c), has identified only one Earth-like planet anywhere nearby. One starship captain flees Earth pursued by the Empress, and takes a chance that one unexplored region will contain a mythical star that seems to have vanished. It does, and the reason why it vanished is that it is surrounded by a Dyson sphere. The rest of the novel is one crisis after another resulting in a very long voyage

## Perryscope 4

---

across the interior of the sphere. A reasonable adventure story but nothing very startling. Very reminiscent of RINGWORLD by Larry Niven. Discussed on the podcast in episode 38. R: 3.2/5.0

FEERSUM ENDJINN (1994) – A non-Culture sf novel by Iain M. Banks. Set in a far-future Earth in and around the ruins of a huge crumbling megastructure called the “Fastness”. This is the remains of a space elevator though that is really only revealed near the end of the book. Told in four major points-of-view the novel takes a long time to get to the point. The journey is interesting but I don't think it is to the standard of Banks's Culture novels. Discussed on the podcast in episode 38. R: 3.4/5.0

UNRELIABLE MEMOIRS (1980) – One of the great Australian autobiographies. It aims to be a memoir, but it is a rather fictionalised account of James's life from pre-school, through high school and university until he arrives in England in 1962. At times laugh-out-loud funny it tells of world long gone, a part of suburban Sydney that was part town and part bush. James doesn't shy away from the fact that he was a rather self-centred little shit as a kid, and is quite happy to criticise himself all the way through. While humour from this time can seem dated and slightly “off”, James realises that the best subject for his humour is himself. R: 4.5/5.0

DESDEMONA AND THE DEEP (2019) – In a fantastic alternate world to our own Desdemona is the very spoiled child of a rich mining family. She overhears her father making a pact with a goblin from one of the worlds below in order to find oil on one of his lands. In payment he offers a “tithe” in the form of the lives of a number of miners who the goblins will take into their kingdom for use as slaves. She resolves to right this wrong, travels to the goblin kingdom with her best friend Chaz and rather falls into a solution rather than manufacturing one. This novella is #3 in the author's Dark Breakers series. R: 3.4/5.0

ROADSIDE PICNIC (1972) – This was originally published in Russia in 1972 but not translated into English until later in the 1970s. Sometime before the novel starts aliens have visited six different places on Earth leaving behind debris, junk, and various objects in mysterious areas called Zones. This novel follows Redrick Schuhart (at the ages of 23, 28 and 31) as he enters the Zone outside the town of Harmont in Canada. First legally, and then later illegally, Schuhart gathers up whatever alien objects he can find to sell on a thriving black market for the material. The Zones are always changing and cause long-term medical and genetic changes in the people who enter them. A mysterious novel of First Contact, without the aliens being present at any time. Discussed on the podcast in episode 39. R: 4.0/5.0

THE MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1894) – This second collection of Sherlock Holmes stories takes Holmes up to his “death” at the Reichenbach Falls. Oddly enough, given the way Moriarty has come to dominate most SH film and television adaptations, he only appears for the first time in “The Final Problem”, the last story in this book. These stories were a favourite of mine when I read them during my teenage period, but it appears that the intervening years have made me more than a little jaded, and they no longer have the same appeal. Competent and enjoyable though rather flat to me now. R: 3.6/5.0

ZONA: A BOOK ABOUT A FILM ABOUT A JOURNEY TO A ROOM (2012) – Geoff Dyer takes us through a viewing of Andrei Tarkovsky's film STALKER, his adaptation of ROADSIDE PICNIC. And when I say “viewing” I mean just that. The author looks at each of the film's 142 cuts (he or

## Perryscope 4

---

someone must have counted them!) and gives varying forms of detail about each of them: his experience of seeing it for the first time; how it relates to other Tarkovsky films; how it relates to the book; how it was made; echoes in other forms of art; etc etc. A remarkable book about a very strange film. I actually read this while I was watching the film; I'd watch 5 minutes of the film, then read the accompanying book passage, and repeat. A very weird experience indeed. Discussed on the podcast in episode 39. R: 4.4/5.0

PIRANESI (2020) – This is only Clarke's second novel, coming 16 years after JONATHAN STRANGE & MR NORRELL. It follows the main character, who is called Piranesi as he lives a solitary existence in The House, a vast labyrinth of Halls and Passages, with its own internal weather and Floods (capitals deliberate). The only other person he sees is called The Other and while the two appear to be working together we have our doubts about both of them. A very interesting novel about existence, control and power. To be discussed on the podcast in episode 40. R: 4.4/5.0

THE GOOD TURN (2020) - #3 in the Cormac Reilly series of crime novels. Reilly is on the outer in Galway – hated by his superiors, disliked by his co-workers, he falls foul of the police hierarchy by allowing a younger detective (Fisher) to take the lead in a pursuit which results in a death by shooting. Fisher is shuffled off to work with his father at a country police station while Reilly is put on suspension. As his life starts to unravel Reilly keeps investigating his suspicions of police corruption while Fisher stumbles onto a devastating crime. Very well plotted, this is an excellent entry in the series. It also shows a lot more authorial confidence with more local colour and a willingness to put the heat on her central characters. R: 4.3/5.0



### REVIEWS OF AUSTRALIAN BOOKS 1

**THE RAIN HERON** (2020) by Robbie Arnott  
Genre: Literary

Robbie Arnott's first novel, FLAMES, attracted a lot of attention for this Tasmanian author: longlisted for the 2019 ALS Gold Medal and Miles Franklin Award, and shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Fiction and the Guardian's Not the Booker Prize. I either missed it or wasn't paying attention. If this novel is anything to go by then I won't be missing his work again.

At the heart of this novel is the Rain Heron of the title, a mystical bird that drives the love, hatred, awe, acquisitiveness, and death in the book. Described variously as “a ghost” or “a mirage” it seems, at once translucent with blue-grey feathers spreading thick sprays of waters from its wings whenever it takes flight. In addition it has the ability to change localised weather conditions – making it rain or snow – and a predilection for pecking the eyes out of people who menace it. A mythical creature indeed.



In an unnamed country in an undocumented age – though we can assume it is probably a



## Perryscope 4

---

Western country sometime in the near future – a violent coup has overthrown the government and thrown the country under authoritarian military rule. A middle-aged woman named Ren has retreated to live a feral existence on a mountain wanting to remove herself from human contact. There she comes into contact with the heron which she treats with utmost respect and whose existence she guards as jealously as her own. But the coup's army comes to the nearby town looking for the bird; the generals have an acquisitiveness in line with their lust for power. The troops are led by a young woman named Harker who, in her own way, is as physically and emotionally scarred as Ren. What follows is a story of ecological tension, survival and redemption which will resonate deeply with the reader. It may seem at times that the author has lost his way but the reader should persevere as all becomes clear and the various threads come together rather unexpectedly to drive the narrative forward.

Arnott's ability to marry his characters with their environments is a powerful force in this book. His love of and attraction to nature flows throughout, and he excels at depictions of both forested mountains or creatures of the sea. He is a writer to watch.

My rating: 4.6/5.0

[Cross-posted to Goodreads.com and to the Facebook Australian Literature page.]



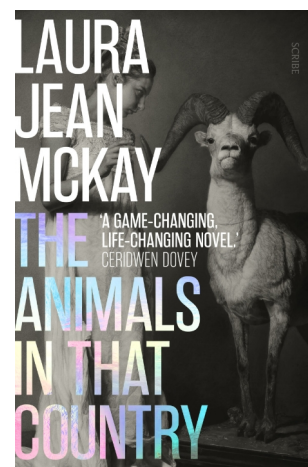
### REVIEWS OF AUSTRALIAN BOOKS 2

**THE ANIMALS IN THAT COUNTRY** (2020) by Laura Jean McKay  
Genre: Literary

Laura Jean McKay is a writer, performer and playwright with one collection of short stories to her name (HOLIDAY IN CAMBODIA) prior to the publication of this, her debut novel. This book has recently been shortlisted for the 2020 Readings Prize for New Australian Fiction.

The novel's protagonist Jean works as a guide in a wildlife park in the Northern Territory. She's a hard-drinking, foul-mouthed grandmother of Kimberley who lives with her mother Angela; the father Lee, Jean's son, is off somewhere else. Jean has ambitions to become a ranger in the park, like Angela, but is restricted to guiding tourists and not interacting with the native animals. Then, one day, on a tour, she comes across the dingo Sue who has her paw stuck in a fence. Jean rescues the dingo from the wire and receives a bad bite on her hand for her trouble.

Soon thereafter news starts to spread of a new virus epidemic affecting the rest of Australia. At first this seems like a mild form of the flu though it rapidly becomes apparent that sufferers start to experience some remarkable side-effects, namely the ability to speak to and understand the animals around them. The park and its residents close themselves off from the rest of the world and remain flu-free until Lee arrives, breaks in and proceeds to infect everyone in the park with the virus. The virus, commonly known as "zooflu" is described as "an H7N7 subtype of influenza A virus, a genus of orthomyxovirus."



## Perryscope 4

---

The constant sound of the animals talking starts to turn some people mad, Lee being one of them. He decides that he is desperate to talk to the whales on the south-eastern coast of Australia, so he takes Jean's car and heads south with Kimberley. A day or so later Jean sets off in pursuit with the dingo Sue riding shotgun. The novel then follows Jean in her long journey south, as her hand becomes more and more infected, and her conversations with Sue veer from inane to serious to menacing. The country is badly affected by this flu with most people suffering badly – as the symptoms progress even the insects become understandable – and society basically shuts down.

The novel becomes a road journey with Jean and Sue attempting to communicate, and to negotiate the hierarchy in their little pack. The final part of the journey is a harrowing experience as Jean finally catches up with Lee and Kimberley while the whales off the coast call to people on the beach.

For much of the novel it doesn't appear that the author will be able to bring the story to a satisfactory conclusion: the human-animal conversations don't seem to be going anywhere for much of the book, and the continual societal desolation the two encounter threatens to turn the book into something approaching *THE ROAD* by Cormac McCarthy. The novel steers away from that possible ending, though the conclusion presented here appears a little rushed which left this reader with a slightly flattened feeling at the end. Inventive, although probably a little too ambitious.

My rating: 4.0/5.0

[Cross-posted to Goodreads.com and to the Facebook Australian Literature page.]



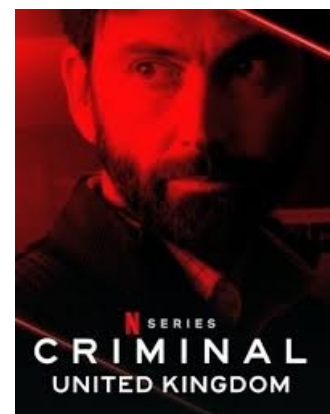
### WHAT I'VE BEEN WATCHING LATELY

**CRIMINAL : UK** Seasons 1 (3 episodes) and 2 (4 episodes)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Crime

This is an anthology series of one-act plays each set in the same police interrogation room. A crime unit investigating serious crimes interviews one suspect each episode with varying members of the team undertaking the interrogation. This is all above board, there are no physical beatings, and each of the suspects has a solicitor present. All are extremely well written and acted. It is very interesting to watch the interview techniques used by the police as they attempt to slip past the defences of the accused to get to the truth.



In season 1 (3 episodes), David Tennant plays a doctor accused of the rape and murder of his step-daughter; Hayley Atwell (Captain America's love interest in the Marvel movies) is a woman accused of poisoning her sister's boyfriend; and Youssef Kerkour plays a truck driver suspected

## Perryscope 4

---

of abandoning his truck which the police suspect contains a crowd of illegal immigrants. R: 4.6/5.0

Season 2 has 4 episodes: Sophie Okonedo, the ex-wife of a man accused of murdering a young man, is interviewed to provide background information on her husband; Kit Harrington (Jon Snow from GAME OF THRONES) is a real estate agent accused of raping a work colleague after a night of drinking; Sharon Horgan is the head of an online vigilante group that seeks to expose sexual predators, and who is accused of slander; and Kunal Nayyar (who you may know from THE BIG BANG THEORY) plays Sandeep, currently in jail for murder, who attempts to have his prison sentence reduced by supplying information about some outstanding high-profile cases.



This is a concept that Netflix has used for other country-based versions: France, Germany and Spain. All use the same set (located in Madrid) and each country's stories are written, directed and acted by locals, featuring local stories. I'll be following each of them up in turn. R: 4.6/5.0

### **CHEF'S TABLE : BBQ** (4 episodes)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Food, documentary

Four one-hour episodes concentrating on chefs around the world who use wood fires to achieve their cooking goals. This is a special season of Netflix's Chef's Table which is now up to season 6, with 6 or 4 episodes in each. BBQ features Tootsie Tomanetz from Lexington, Texas; Lucas Hastie from Sydney, New South Wales; Rodney Scott from Charleston, South Carolina; and Rosalia Chay Chuc from Yaxuná, Mexico. Each has a fascinating story to tell about their cooking history and approach. Probably helps if you like BBQ, like myself, though not completely necessary. R: 4.2/5.0

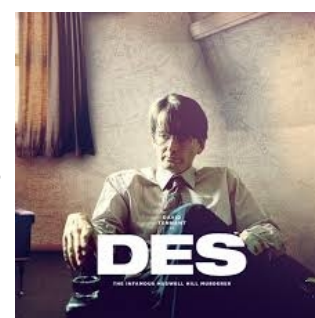


### **DES** Miniseries (3 episodes)

Platform: Stan

Genre: Crime, based on a true story

David Tennant takes the lead role of Dennis Andrew Nilsen, known as Des, a serial killer arrested in Scotland in 1983. Nilsen was convicted of killing 6 young men though he may well have killed a number more. The 3-part TV series is a harrowing depiction of his arrest, investigation and trial. Tennant is wonderful in the role of a cold, intelligent killer showing no remorse or guilt, while at the same time being the sole reason he was arrested – he refused to pay the rent on his flat until the drains were cleared, the same drains clogged with the body parts of his victims he'd been flushing down the toilet. He couldn't stop killing yet he wanted to be caught. He says to the lead detective at one point: "If you hadn't caught me, it wouldn't have been 15, it would have been 115." The script is a straight-forward depiction of events told with a level of detachment which tends to



## Perryscope 4

---

increase the sense of tension and unease. Not horror, though the crimes described are horrific. The episodes don't dwell on the violence, nor do they steer away from it. It's just a part of the story. R: 4.5/5.0

### **CRIMINAL : FRANCE** Season 1 (3 episodes)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Crime

The French have taken a different approach to the same concept. The overall structure is the same, as is the setting, with the scripts having more focus on the interactions between the team members than the UK version. I don't know the actors here so I'll just note the stories: a woman is accused of fraud after she has claimed compensation for being a survivor of the massacre at the Bataclan club in Paris where her boyfriend was killed; a construction executive is accused of the murder of a worker who has died at her high-rise building site; and a man is interrogated over the death of a homosexual man in a brutal bashing. It's possible to read a lot into the choice of crimes investigated in the French version as compared to the UK, though that might be stretching things a little. I didn't think this was quite to the standard of the UK version, maybe because of the crime choices and because some of the actions of the interrogation team were more than a little unbelievable. The episodes seemed a bit shorter as well. Still worth watching. R: 4.0/5.0

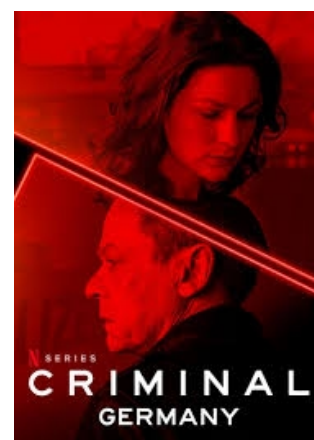


### **CRIMINAL : GERMANY** Season 1 (3 episodes)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Crime

Similar to the UK and French versions of this series, in that the same set is used, and the same structure employed for the interrogations. Stories again, as I don't know the actors, again: a businessman is interviewed for background information regarding the disappearance of a handyman in East Berlin in 1991, though this rapidly takes a couple of interesting turns; a man suspected of domestic violence against his severely injured wife is represented by an aggressive lawyer appointed by his father-in-law, and all is not as it seems; and the investigators play a cat-and-mouse game with the lover of a serial killer in an attempt to find the body of their last victim. There are a number of differences between this and the French version and I must admit to preferring this one. Like the UK version there is more emphasis on the suspects' stories, and it's the better for it. R: 4.5/5.0



## **PERRYSCOPE Responses**

The observant among you will have noticed in the page 2 details box that this little fanzine is initially intended for ANZAPA. What you may not know is that one of the traditions of an apa is for contributors to comment on other members' contributions in what are called "mailing

## Perryscope 4

---

comments". This is the way the conversation is maintained between members, and is one of the great things about the sense of community that is an apa. Generally I reply to comments about the members' apa contributions in the apa. I have a small fanzine dedicated solely to my mailing comments which is only included in ANZAPA and not distributed anywhere else. That's okay for the bulk of mailing comments, but occasionally someone in the apa asks a question that I think might be of interest to other readers of this fanzine. The first of these is from Leigh Edmonds, an old friend of mine, who listens to the podcast while pottering with one of his hobbies, assembling model aircraft.

### Perryscope 1:

**Leigh Edmonds:** "How much of your computation about the value of a book takes into account your own skill in reading and your frame of mind at the time you are reading. I ask this because I gave some thought to trying to make up the same kind of grading scale for scale model kits but realized that really the end of the process depended as much on my skill and mentality during the building process as it did on the quality of the kit. And it must be the same for reading too because you are making a mental construction of a story or book in your mind based on the words you've read."

[**PM:** My determination of a rating to give a book is completely subjective. It started when I joined Goodreads a few years back. They have a rating system of 1-5 – whole numbers only. That was okay until I came across some books which ended up with the same rating of, say, three, but which were very different in quality, or which ended up with different ratings and yet were very close in quality. So I decided to start splitting the ratings into decimals to provide more granularity.]

The value I now give is based on an initial reaction and then a comparison with other recent ratings. I have gone back and changed some earlier ratings when I realise I may have over- or under-rated something, though this doesn't happen that often. The highest value I've given this year is 4.9, to both *THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS* and *THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN*, and the lowest 2.4 to *GLORY ROAD*. I usually arrive at a value just as I finish reading the work. I suppose I've done enough of these now that the figure just automatically presents itself. It's all a matter of experience and mumbo-jumbo really.]

### Perryscope 3:

**Tineke Hazel** who noted "I think retirement has done you a world of good..." [**PM:** Sure beats working for a living]; and asked "what happened to the C. J. Dennis window?" [**PM:** It was preserved and ended up in either the South Australian State Library or State Museum. Not sure which. I've seen photos of it but not the actual item.] **Chong:** "I couldn't watch Season 2 of *Umbrella Academy*. I enjoyed the narrative revelations of S1 but 2 just seemed so chaotic and breathless I couldn't cope." [**PM:** It is a bit hectic, but I rather liked it for that.]

**I also heard from: Martin Field:** "Another good read". [**PM:** He's going to chase up *WAY STATION*, and a good thing that is]; and **John Harvey**.

