TWENTIETH-CENTURY SUSPENSE

Twentieth-Century Suspense

The Thriller Comes of Age

Edited by

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For Susan who likes to know whodunit

Contents

	<i>Preface and Acknowledgements</i>	ix
	<i>Notes on the Contributors</i>	x
1	The Immorally Rich and the Richly Immoral: Raffles and the Plutocracy Nick Rance	1
2	West is East: Nayland Smith's Sinophobia and Sax Rohmer's Bank Balance Clive Bloom	22
3	Fear's Keen Knife: Suspense and the Female Detective, 1890–1920 Gwen Williams	37
4	A Society of Murderers Run on Sound Conservative Lines: The Life and Times of Sapper's Bulldog Drummond Hans Bertens	51
5	The Novels of Leslie Charteris Helena Blakemore	69
6	Ordeal by Analysis: Agatha Christie's <i>The Thirteen Problems</i> Gary Day	80
7	Dorothy Sayers: The Masks of Lord Peter Valerie Pitt	97
8	Elizabeth Bowen's Stories of Suspense J. A. Morris	114
9	But One Isn't Murdered: Elizabeth Bowen's <i>The Little Girls</i> Sandra Kemp	130

10	Fifty Million Copies: The Fiction of Dennis Wheatley Christopher Bentley	143
11	Margery Allingham and Reader Response Sue Asbee	161
12	The View from the Rear Window: The Fiction of Cornell Woolrich A. Robert Lee	174
13	Hitchcock and the Mechanics of Cinematic Suspense Lez Cooke	189
14	Grace under Pressure: Reading Alistair MacLean Brian Docherty	203
15	Elizabeth Jenkins: Perhaps the History Woman Ian MacKillop	225
16	Feminist Detective Fiction Maggie Humm	237
17	The Gentleman's Excuse-me: The Male Apologist and the Experience of Realism in James Herbert's <i>The Magic Cottage</i> Andrew Smith	255
	<i>Index</i>	271

Preface and Acknowledgements

This volume contains seventeen critical essays on a selection of the most influential and most interesting suspense writers of the twentieth century. From the glittering world of Raffles to the domestic terror of *The Magic Cottage*, and from the heroics of Bulldog Drummond to the dogged pursuits of Miss Marple, this volume traces a variety of suspense writers: those well known, such as Agatha Christie, Dennis Wheatley and Dorothy L. Sayers, and those less well known, Elizabeth Bowen, Elizabeth Jenkins and the 'new wave' feminist thriller writers of today and the half-forgotten women detective writers of the early part of this century. Also included is Alfred Hitchcock (British suspense in a Hollywood setting) and the work of Cornell Woolrich (Gothic writing in an American world).

This volume is the companion of *Nineteenth-Century Suspense: From Poe to Conan Doyle*, *American Crime Fiction: Studies in the Genre*, *American Horror Fiction: From Brockden Brown to Stephen King*, and the forthcoming *Literature and Imperialism* and *Spy Thrillers*. As such it forms part of a unique critical collection dedicated to the study of popular and non-canonical literature. Elsewhere amongst these books the reader can find studies of such names as Stephen King, Raymond Chandler, James M. Cain, Robert Bloch, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, Ian Fleming, John Buchan and dozens more. The Insights series is dedicated to the study of neglected aspects of modern culture and the critically neglected literature of the popular imagination.

I should like to acknowledge the help of James Herbert, Leslie Charteris, Valery Rose, Andrew Coleman, Clare Hudson and Sarah Roberts-West in the preparations of this volume and, as always, Lesley Bloom for her patience and suggestions.

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