



# Introduction: BIPOC Female Detectives in a Global Context

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**Abstract.** The guest editor discusses the rationale for and content of this *Clues* theme issue, including articles on the TV series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* and the work of Eleanor Taylor Bland, Oyinkan Braithwaite, K'im Ch'ae-hüi, Maria L.M. Fres-Felix, Pauline Hopkins, Tiffany D. Jackson, Vaseem Khan, Angela Makholwa, Marcia Muller, Barbara Neely, Nnedi Okorafor, and Kwei Quartey.

This theme issue began life with the intention of foregrounding female detectives who are categorized as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC), to use a term popular in North America. In planning discussions held at CUNY Graduate Center in November 2022, this focus was debated with full cognizance of the problematic and possibly retrograde nature of such racial and ethnic categorization. While BIPOC is a capacious and inclusive term, it runs the risk of glossing over the specificities of each group oppressed by “whiteness.” Indeed, the term *female* was also discussed as possibly contentious and necessarily complex and fluid in contemporary parlance. One point of convergence was that this issue needed to foreground authors, detective figures, and scholars who are generally still marginalized in crime fiction studies and who seem, in some ways, to constitute a subversion of mainstream crime fiction, or to adapt and extend traditional genres in new and exciting ways.

For this reason, this theme issue is predicated on a pivotal question: Are BIPOC female detectives still considered part of a countertradition in crime fiction? “When I wrote *Sisters in Crime: Feminism and the Crime Novel* in 1988,” Maureen Reddy explained, “there was not a single crime novel by a woman of color—feminist or not—in print” (49). Fifteen years later, Reddy concluded that crime fiction by or about women of color “carries weight and suggests

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