



Intersecting Crime: South African State Capture and the Hero-Criminal Binary in Deon Meyer's *The Last Hunt* (2019)

Sam Naidu

Abstract. Deon Meyer's *The Last Hunt* can be categorized as African noir in its themes of political disillusionment, corruption, and crimes of the state against its citizens, shedding light on contemporary African-European relations. This article examines the novel's intersections of time, space, national, and transnational with criminal and detective characters, and the blurriness of the hero-criminal binary.

Deon Meyer, arguably South Africa's most translated and most widely read author due to the international popularity and high sales figures of the crime fiction genre (see Meyer, "Biography"; Le Roux and Buitendach), has increasingly appealed to a global readership by interweaving national and transnational crimes in the plots of his crime thrillers, as evidenced in his most recent novel, *The Last Hunt*. Published in 2019, originally in Afrikaans as are all Meyer's novels, this novel presents a critique of both post-apartheid national politics and transnational criminal networks. Because of its fusion of local and global concerns, *The Last Hunt* highlights South Africa's political crisis and exemplifies the "global spread of crime fiction and how these stories become ambassadors for a specific nation and culture, with special emphasis on political issues" (Nilsson, Damrosch, and D'haen, "Introduction" 5). Focusing on the novel's intersections of time, space, the national, and the transnational, of criminal and detective characters, and the blurriness of the hero-criminal binary, this article argues that the novel turns political disillusionment, corruption, and crimes of the state against its citizens into themes, to the extent that it can be categorized as African noir.

Since 1994, the date of formal dismantlement of the apartheid regime, crime fiction has

Sam Naidu is a professor of literary studies in English at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa.