



Japanese Crime Fiction as World Literature

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Abstract. This article explores the development of Japanese crime fiction through the translation and circulation of international crime fiction as world literature. It also explores the circulation of modern Japanese crime fiction, demonstrating that the genre has achieved more widespread readership (and hence status as “world literature”) through translations into less-translated languages.

Since 2014, there has been a growing body of work that seeks to understand crime fiction as a form of world literature, which Damrosch (*What 4*) defines in the age of globalization as “all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language.” Under this definition, it seems apparent that the crime fiction genre belongs to the sphere of world literature considering the large number of works that have reached numerous countries and gained global readership through translation, and produced various works and collections that study their reception by new audiences (for example, Anderson, Miranda, and Pezzotti; King and Knight; Nilsson, Damrosch, and D’haen; Allan, Gulddal, King, and Pepper). However, discussions of Japanese crime fiction have been largely absent within this framework, despite the range of cultures that are represented in these works—for example, *Crime Fiction as World Literature* edited by Nilsson, Damrosch, and D’haen contains discussions of Chinese, Thai, and Tibetan crime fiction, but Japanese is a glaring omission. This article therefore aims to address this omission by exploring (1) the role of translation and circulation in the development of Japanese crime fiction, (2) the engagement of Japanese crime fiction in a transnational dialogue, and (3) the reach of Japanese crime fiction beyond Japan.

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