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Elements in Crime Narratives

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FEMALE ANGER IN CRIME FICTION

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Female Anger in Crime Fiction

Elements in Crime Narratives

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Abstract: Feminist anger is having a moment, but the double meaning of “mad” as angry and crazy has shaped the representation of women in popular crime fiction since Lady Audley burned down the house over 150 years ago. But when is anger just, when is it revenge, and when is it maddening? This Element will explore the ethics and efficacy of anger in female-centered crime fiction from its first stirrings in the nineteenth century through second-wave feminism’s angry, individualist heroes to today’s current explosion of women who reject respectability and justification. It will also examine recent challenges to our understanding of the genre posed both by feminist care ethics and by intersectional crime fiction. This Element considers anger as the appropriate affect for women fighting for justice and explores how it shapes the representation of female detectives, relates to the crimes they investigate, and complicates ideas around justice.

Keywords: crime fiction, anger, women, justice, violence

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