

Bergman, Kerstin, ed. 2014. *Deckarnas svenska landskap. Från Skåne till Lappland*. Halmstad: Tryck Bulls Graphics. 228 pages. ISBN: 978-91-7061-157-5.

In this collection, Kerstin Bergman has assembled contributions from crime literature critics and researchers who presented at a crime literature seminar at Lund University. Each contributor introduces one of Sweden's twenty-five provinces, so called *landskap* [landscapes] as depicted in crime literature. Bergman has written extensively about Swedish crime literature, most recently in the book *Swedish Crime Fiction: The Making of Nordic Noir* (2014), but compared to her other more academic writing, *Deckarnas svenska landskap* offers a lighter fare. If the book had been glossier and larger it would have worked perfectly as a coffee table book, especially considering the beautiful (summer) landscape photos, which introduce each region. In the introduction, Bergman talks about the Swedes' deep connection to nature and how it is carried over into literature. Indeed, it is this attention to nature depictions in the crime novels, she argues, which makes them so typically Swedish. She believes that the connection to the local environments gives a sense of realism and increases the readers' perception of the authenticity of the stories. Finding a dead body in the peacefulness of Swedish nature makes the crime even more frightening.

Each *landskap* is represented by at least one reasonably well-known Swedish crime writer, not necessarily because these authors come from there, but rather because they have chosen to set their stories in that particular region. Bergman defines four different categories of crime writers in the framework of how they relate their texts to nature: one, by letting nature represent evil itself; two, by showing how nature and weather reflect the criminal investigation and the protagonists' emotional states; three, by using local attractions and regional highlights to function as a sort of guidebook for possible tourists; and four, by re-enacting the mystical relationship to nature in one's childhood. It's clear, however, that the function of nature for the many writers introduced in this collection can seem somewhat repetitious within these definitions, which is understandable considering the sheer volume of crime writers (more than 30) introduced in this work.

The chapters, on average seven to eight pages long, are organized geographically from south to north (we are provided with a map of Sweden), and, at the end of each chapter a list of other authors of local interest is presented. It's probable, and recommended, that readers approach the texts by picking the *landskap* they are particularly interested in. To read it from cover to cover can be daunting with one forest depiction gliding into the next, making the regions blur together into one single long stretch as if one were driving along the E4 highway. This is especially true for the chapters that almost solely focus on plot summaries

interspersed with quoted nature depictions from its chosen crime writer. The most memorable chapters are those written with the intention to not just describe nature but rather to analyze the works in which they appear. Noteworthy are Sara Kärrholms' intriguing reading of major themes connecting the supernatural and mythological to the past in Johan Theorin's novels, Emma Tornborg's clever analysis of how the conflict between nature and culture is illustrated in Kerstin Ekman's landscape depiction, and Carina Sjöholm and Katarina Tornborg's presentation of the complex relationship between tradition and modernity in Tove Klackenborg's works.

The major attraction of this book is definitely its introduction of many exciting, and to some, new authors and landscapes other than the obvious cases of Henning Mankell and the Scania of his Kurt Wallander or Åsa Larsson and her Rebecka Martinson's Lappland (although they too are of course represented here). In this sense, *Deckarnas svenska landskap* will work as a gate to further exploration of Sweden and its regional crime writers; it's easy to see the appeal of bringing this book along for a road trip or to put it in the guest room in the summer cottage. While the book will be of primary interest to Swedish tourists and crime readers, it could also be beneficial to instructors of Swedish studies who want to introduce settings beyond the more traditional urban ones in their teaching. This much is clear: you are not safe anywhere in Sweden.

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