

CALL FOR PAPERS

Captivating Criminality 12

Crime Fiction and the Global Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

Monash University, Melbourne / Hybrid
25-27 June

Crime fiction has long since refuted the assumption that its socio-political engagement is somehow not genuine – that it tends to reduce “social problems to so much local colour or authenticating detail” (John Sutherland). Nordic Noir, in particular, is often lauded for its analysis of Scandinavian welfare and gender politics, yet the critical orientation is prominent in contemporary world crime fiction more broadly.

Using the nexus of crime and investigation as its lens, the genre is increasingly defined by abandoning the idea of local and containable criminality in favour of a conception of individual crime as a manifestation of larger global challenges such as gender-based violence, economic inequality, climate change, migration, Indigenous rights and the crisis of democracy. Given this orientation towards the key challenges of our time, it is no exaggeration to say that world crime fiction today, like the nineteenth-century realist novel according to Georg Brandes, is defined by its determination to “place problems under debate”.

The conference will focus on crime fiction and the global challenges of the twenty-first century. While this topic allows a new critical assessment of individual crime novels, it also has broader ramifications for our understanding of the crime genre and its global distribution and impact. On the one hand, it enables an examination of how crime fiction’s socio-political engagement requires a revision of classic tropes, for example due to the emerging non-individualistic conception of victimhood and culpability. On the other hand, it opens up opportunities for a new comparative approach to crime fiction focusing on the ways in which shared global issues are dealt with by authors in different countries and regions.

Papers at the conference will examine the global socio-political engagement of crime fiction from a broad range of perspectives, drawing on examples from across the world. We particularly welcome abstracts dealing with one of the previously identified challenges and offering comparative readings of literary texts from different countries and regions. We also welcome papers that reinterpret earlier crime narratives in light of the genre’s contemporary socio-political engagement.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Crime fiction and the climate emergency
- Crime fiction and the crisis of democracy
- Crime fiction and economic inequality
- Crime fiction and gender and sexual freedom
- Crime fiction and migration
- Crime fiction and war
- Crime fiction and gender-based violence

- Crime fiction and global capitalism
- Crime fiction and extractive economies
- Crime fiction and new forms of totalitarianism
- Post-truth crime fiction
- First Nations Crime fiction
- Non-political crime fiction
- Comparative perspectives on world crime fiction

Please submit your 250-word abstracts for 20-minute presentations and proposals for panels and a short bio-note (about 100 words) via [this form](#). Submissions are due on 15 December 2024.

For postgraduate students and ECRs, a workshop will be held on 24 June before the conference proper begins.

If you need an immediate response to apply for funding, please indicate this in your application form.

Please address any questions to: CaptivatingCriminality@monash.edu