

# CAPTIVATING CRIMINALITY 11

27-29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2024

ESZTERHÁZY KÁROLY CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, EGER, HUNGARY

[www.uni-eszterhazy.hu/captivating-criminality-11/m/home](http://www.uni-eszterhazy.hu/captivating-criminality-11/m/home)

## PROGRAMME

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# Practical Information

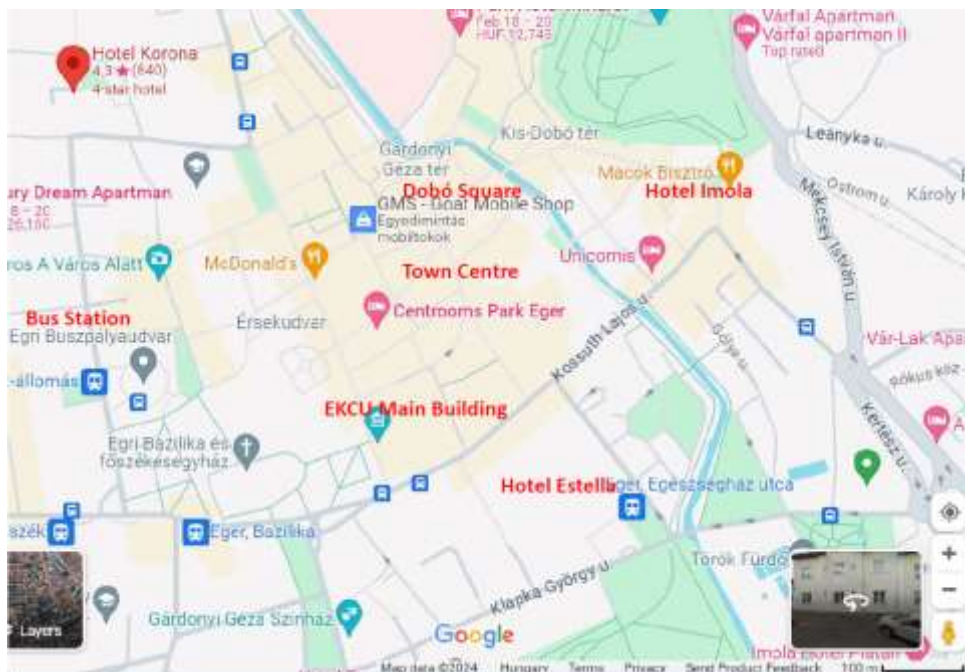
## CONFERENCE VENUE

Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, Main Building (*Eszterházy Károly Katolikus Egyetem, Főépület*)  
3300 Eger, Eszterházy tér 1.

For all kinds of practical information on Eger – including tips on transport between Budapest Airport and the town – please, check out the town's official website for tourists at <https://visiteger.com/en/useful>. Please, note that the town centre is largely a car-free zone.

If you arrive in Eger by bus, you can simply walk to the town centre (see map below, 5 to 10 minutes downhill, depending on your destination).

The railway station is in the south of Eger, a 15-minute walk along a straight and level route from the town centre. Should you find that inconvenient, you can take bus No. 12 or 14 at the railway station: the second stop north (final destination: TESCO's or Berva) is Színház (see map below), which is about 300 m from the EKC Main Building. You can buy your bus ticket from the driver for cash only, but please make sure you have small change on you (about HUF 350).



## **WELCOME RECEPTION**

The organisers warmly invite all participants of the conference to the opening reception (full buffet dinner) in the EKCUC Main Building on 27<sup>th</sup> June.

## **EATING OUT (LUNCH BREAKS)**

The 90-minute lunch breaks will provide you with an opportunity to discover the large variety of food (Hungarian and international, traditional and fast food, a la carte dishes or two-course business lunches) the centre of Eger offers to you with its numerous restaurants, bistros, cafés, bakeries and confectioneries. Most of them will be within a 5-minute walk from the conference venue, in Széchenyi Street and in the streets connecting it with Dobó Square.

## **COMMUNICATION**

**OPEN WI-FI AT ALL UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS:** uni-Eszterhazy

## **EXTRA SOCIAL PROGRAMMES**

Social programmes can be chosen in any combination. Kindly remember to indicate your choice(s) in the registration form and transfer the extra fee(s) listed at <https://uni-eszterhazy.hu/captivating-criminality-11/m/registration-and-conference-fees>.

## **CONFERENCE DINNER**

We request the pleasure of your company at the conference dinner at Hotel Korona <https://koronahotel.hu/en> on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

## **WINE TASTING AND PICNIC**

Tóth Ferenc Wine Shop and Cellar <https://tothferencpincszet.hu/en/>, Szépasszony Valley, Eger, 29<sup>th</sup> June.

The EKCUC Main Building and Hotel Korona, just like Hotel Imola and Hotel Estella, are within a walking distance (5-15 min) from one another, in or near the centre of Eger. A longer walk (c. 30 min) will take you to Szépasszony Valley, but you might find a taxi useful on your way home.

## **TAXI**

City Taxi +36 36 555-555



## **DAY TRIP**

Szilvásvár, Szalajka Valley (Bükk National Park)



Szilvásvár is less than an hour's journey by bus or train from Eger. A light walk of about 5 km will take you to the waterfall at Szalajka Valley, where you can also taste the fresh water trout (smoked or deep-fried) Szalajka Stream is famous for. Alternatively, you can take the retro train uphill to the waterfall and walk only downhill.

# Conference Organisers

## Main Organisers

Prof. Fiona Peters (Bath Spa University)

Professor of Crime Fiction

Director of the International Crime Fiction Association

Dr. Renáta Zsámber (Eszterházy Károly Catholic University)

Dr. Angelika Reichmann (Eszterházy Károly Catholic University)

Secretary of the Hungarian Society for the Study of English

## Organising Committee at EKCÚ

Dr. Fanni Antalóczy

Eszter Krakkó

Dr. Zoltán Peterecz

Ilona Hatvani Ponyi

## Student Helpers

Veronika Almási

Lili Csutor

Botond Dávid

Dávid Farkas

Nóra Jakab

Gergő Kulyó

Lilla Lámer

Emese Melkó

Panna Nagy

Zsóka Sándor

# Programme

|   |
|---|
| <b>Day 0: 26 June, Wednesday</b>  |
| 13.00 – 14.45: ECR Symposium led by Professor Mary Evans (A-112)                            |
| 15.00 – 16.30: Roundtable Discussion – <i>Hungarian Crime Fiction: Then and Now</i> (A-112) |
| 15.00 – 17.00 Coffee and refreshments available   |

|   |
|---|
| <b>Day 1: 27 June, Thursday</b>   |
| 8:30 – 15:00 - Check in (Lyceum hall)   |
| 9:30 – 10:00 – Opening and welcome speeches – Grand Hall  |
| 10:00 – 11:00 – <b>Keynote speech 1: Ruth Heholt: ‘You are supposed to be the detective here’ (<i>The Wicker Man</i>, 1973): The Folk Horror and Crime Fiction Hybrid</b><br>Grand Hall |
| 11:00 - 11:30 – Coffee break  |
| 11:30 – 13:00 – Session 1 (3 speakers per panel, A-112, A-213)  |
| 13:00 – 14:30 – Lunch break   |
| 14:30 – 16:00 - Session 2 (3 speakers per panel, A-112, A-213)  |
| 16:00 – 16:30 – Coffee break  |
| 16:30 – 18:00 – Session 3 (3 speakers per panel, A-112, A-213)  |
| 18:15 - 21:00 – <b>Reception (all conference participants)</b> – Lyceum – (1 <sup>st</sup> floor, the hall in front of the main auditorium)   |

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|---|
| <b>Day 2: 28 June, Friday</b>   |
| 8:30 – 10:00 – Check-in (Lyceum hall)   |
| 9:00 – 11:00 – Session 4 (4 speakers per panel, A-112, A-213, A-313)  |
| 11:00 – 11:30 – Coffee break  |
| 11:30 – 12:30 – <b>Keynote speech 2: Tamás Bényei: Post mortem: The Necropoetics of Golden Age Crime Fiction</b><br>Grand Hall                    |
| 12:30 – 13:00 – <b>Stewart King and Barbara Pezzotti: A Thematic History of World Crime Fiction: Making Sense of a Global Genre</b><br>Grand Hall |
| 13:00 – 14:30 – Lunch break   |
| 14:30 – 16:00 – Session 5 (3 speakers per panel, A-112, A-213, A-313)   |
| 16:00 – 16:30 – Coffee break  |
| 16:30 – 18:00 - Session 6 (3 speakers per panel, A-112, A-213, A-313)   |
| 19:00 – 22:00 – Conference dinner at <b>Hotel Korona (optional programme)</b>   |

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|---|
| <b>Day 3: 29 June, Saturday</b>   |
| 9:00 – 11:00 – Session 7 (4 speakers per panel, A-112, A-213, A-313)  |
| 11:00 – 11:30 – Coffee break  |
| 11:30 – 12:30 – <b>Keynote speech 3: Mariaconcetta Costantini: Polar Noir: A New Subgenre</b><br>Grand Hall |
| 12:30 – 13:00 – Closing remarks/ Award ceremony – Grand Hall  |
| 18:00 – 19:30 – <b>Wine tasting with snacks in the Valley of the Beautiful Woman (optional programme)</b>   |

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| <b>30 June, Sunday</b><br><b>Trip to Szilvásvár (optional programme)</b><br><b>10 am – 4 pm</b> |
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## Detailed Programme

| Thursday, 27 June 2024 |  |   |
|------------------------|--|---|
| 8:30-15:00             | Check-in (Lyceum hall)   |   |
| 9:30-10:00             | Opening and welcome Speeches (Grand Hall)  |   |
| 10:00-11:00            | <b>Keynote speech 1: Ruth Heholt (Grand Hall)</b><br>'You are supposed to be the detective here' (The Wicker Man, 1973): The Folk Horror and Crime Fiction Hybrid<br><b>Chair: Angelika Reichmann</b>  |   |
| 11:00-11:30            | Coffee break   |   |
| 11:30-13:00            | <b>SESSION 1</b>   |   |
|                        | <b>Panel 1.1: The Savage, the Other and Sensation in Crime Fiction (A-112)</b><br><b>Chair: Mariaconcetta Costantini</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gabriella Hartvig: Sensation Novels and Detective Fiction in Hungarian Newspapers 1880-1920</li> <li>• Boróka Andl-Beck: Itinerancy in British Crime Fiction Narratives: From Sherlock Holmes to <i>Midsomer Murders</i></li> </ul>  | <b>Panel 1.2: Indigenous Voices in Crime Fiction (A-213)</b><br><b>Chair: András Tarnóc</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Éva Urbán: Humor in Indigenous Postmodern Crime Fiction</li> <li>• Erin Hitchmough: The Liminal Indigenous Body in Jo Nesbø's <i>Midnight Sun</i></li> <li>• Malinda Hackett: "Gee, You Don't Look Like an Indian From the Reservation": Re-examining Marcia Muller's Sharon McCone as Native American Private Investigator</li> </ul> |
| 13:00-14:30            | Lunch break  |   |
| 14:30-16:00            | <b>SESSION 2</b>   |   |
|                        | <b>Panel 2.1: Women Writing and Acting in Crime Fiction (A-112)</b><br><b>Chair: Kinga Földváy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jennifer Schnabel: The Fairest of Them All: Jessica Fletcher's Reign of the Queen of Mystery in <i>Murder, She Wrote</i></li> <li>• Éva Cserhádi and John Clarke: Translating Hungarian Crime Fiction</li> <li>• Caroline Reitz: Laughing and Crying: Fugitive Tone in Contemporary Female Crime Narratives</li> </ul> | <b>Panel 2.2: Noir and Gothic Specters (A-213)</b><br><b>Chair: Sándor Kálai</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laura Major: Genre Crossing in Anne Holt's <i>1222</i></li> <li>• Jarosław Giza: The Spectres of Gothic Literature in Jo Nesbø's Oslo Trilogy</li> <li>• Agnieszka Sienkiewicz-Charlish: From William McIlvanney to Sarah Smith: Mapping Scottish Crime Fiction</li> </ul>  |
| 16:00-16:30            | Coffee break   |   |
| 16:30-18:00            | <b>SESSION 3</b>   |   |

|             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
|             | <b>Panel 3.1: Place, Law and the Other</b><br><b>Chair: Barbara Pezzotti (A-112)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maria-Novella Mercuri: Intertextuality and Historical Memory in the Crime Fiction of Leonardo Gori and Marco Vichi.</li> <li>• Garima Yadav: Criminally Grotesque: Police, Procedure and Fixation of Criminality in <i>Delhi Crime</i>: Season 2</li> <li>• Vaibhav Iype Parel: Giving Voice to the Subaltern? The Case of Sunanda in Massey's <i>The Mistress of Bhatia House</i></li> </ul> | <b>Panel 3.2: Revisiting Agatha Christie</b><br><b>Chair: Tamás Bényei (A-213)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerstin-Anja Münderlein: "There is no detective in England equal to a spinster lady of uncertain age": Anti-Ageism in Agatha Christie</li> <li>• Jiří Jelínek and Jana Jelínková: Turning Tides, Changing Times: Sea in Agatha Christie and Michal Ajvaz</li> <li>• Felicitas Luise Mayer: A "celebration-cum-critique-cum-parody": Gilbert Adair's <i>The Act of Roger Murgatroyd</i></li> </ul> |
| 18:15-21:00 | <i>Welcome Reception</i>  |   |

| Friday, 28 June 2024 |  |   |  |
|----------------------|--|---|--|
| 8:30-10:00           | <b>Check-in (Lyceum hall)</b>  |   |  |
| 9:00-11:00           | <b>SESSION 4</b>   |   |  |
|                      | <b>Panel 4.1: Hybridity in US Crime Fiction (A-112)</b><br><b>Chair: Linda Ledford-Miller</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gabriella Vöő: Apocalypse Around the Clock: The Interplay of Agencies in Chester Himes's Harlem Mysteries</li> <li>• Michael Pronko: "Just how dangerous is he?" Cormac McCarthy's Hybridized Crime Fiction</li> <li>• Ágnes Zsófia Kovács: Detecting African American History in Barbara Neely's <i>Blanche Among the Talented Tenth</i> (1994)</li> <li>• Oliver Eccles: Parboiled Detective Fiction</li> </ul> | <b>Panel 4.2: Generic Innovations and Strategies in Crime Fiction (A-213)</b><br><b>Chair: Andrew Pepper</b><br><br><b>PANEL STARTS AT 9.30</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isabell Große: Murdering Mindfully – A Generic Hybrid: When Crime Fiction Converges with Self-Help Literature</li> <li>• Krisztián Benyovszky: Crime Fiction and Gastronomy</li> <li>• Réka Szarvas: Detecting Fanfiction – The Intersections of Fandom and Crime Fiction</li> </ul> | <b>Panel 4.3: Fantasy, Haunted and Weird (A-313)</b><br><b>Chair: Kerstin-Anja Münderlein</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicole Kenley: Breach, Crosshatch, and Communities of Criminality in <i>The City &amp; the City</i> and <i>Europe at Midnight</i></li> <li>• Norbert Gyuris: Exploring the Unmappable: Investigation in Weird Spaces</li> <li>• Mona Raeisian: Ghosts of America: Murderous Spirits, Dualities and American Ideologies in the Crime Fantasy Hybrid</li> <li>• Moritz A. Maier: "Who needs a hero?": Genre Dynamics between (High) Fantasy and Crime Fiction, Magic and Being a Copper in Terry Pratchett's Discworld</li> </ul> |
| 11:00-11:30          | <i>Coffee break</i>  |   |  |
| 11:30-12:30          | <b>Keynote speech 2: Tamás Bényei (Grand Hall)</b><br>Post mortem: The Necropoetics of Golden Age Crime Fiction<br><b>Chair: Renáta Zsámbo</b>   |   |  |
| 12:30-13:00          | <b>Stewart King and Barbara Pezzotti (Grand Hall)</b><br>A Thematic History of World Crime Fiction: Making Sense of a Global Genre   |   |  |

|             |  |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| 13:00-14:30 | <i>Lunch break</i>   |  |  |
| 14:30-16:00 | <b>SESSION 5</b>   |  |  |
|             | <b>Panel 5.1: Children's Crime Fiction (A-112)</b><br><br><b>Chair: Ruth Heholt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dorothea Flothow: Friedrich, Emil and the Memory of 1930s Berlin – Philip Kerr's <i>Friedrich the Great Detective</i> between Playful Detecting and Bleak Warning</li> <li>• Brigitta Hudácskó: "Elementary, my dear Wong": Re-imagined Golden Age Crime Fiction in Robin Stevens's <i>Murder Most Unladylike</i> Mysteries</li> <li>• Jahnavi S. Das: Kid Crime Busters</li> </ul> | <b>Panel 5.2: Generic Innovation in Global Crime Fiction (A-213)</b><br><br><b>Chair: Fiona Peters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stewart King: Time after Time: Generic Innovation in Contemporary Catalan Hybrid Crime Fiction</li> <li>• María Abizanda-Cardona: Exploring American Techno-Thrillers: Science-Fictionality and Posthumanism in Rob Hart's <i>The Warehouse</i> (2019)</li> <li>• Andrew Pepper: Already Too Late: Generic Mutation and Environmental Breakdown</li> </ul>                 | <b>Panel 5.3: The Glorious Golden Age (A-313)</b><br><br><b>Chair: Ágnes Zsófia Kovács</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kinga Földváry: Heritage and Innovation: The Hybrid Intertextuality of Shakespeare and Hathaway: Private Investigators</li> <li>• Benjamin Parris: Detecting the Grand Guignol: The Terrifying Theatrics of John Dickson Carr</li> <li>• Chiho Nakagawa: Dark Secret in the Country: <i>Ladies' Bane</i> and "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches"</li> </ul>  |
| 16:00-16:30 | <i>Coffee break</i>  |  |  |
| 16:30-18:00 | <b>SESSION 6</b>   |  |  |
|             | <b>Panel 6.1: Traces of Sherlock Holmes (A-112)</b><br><br><b>Chair: Dorothea Flothow</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sabrina Yuan Hao: Decolonizing Sherlock: Zhou Shoujuan's Reworking of the Lincheng Train Hijacking</li> <li>• Edit Gál: Gothic Villains in Sherlock Holmes Stories</li> <li>• Emily August: Prehistoric Detection and the Science of Crime in <i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i></li> </ul>   | <b>Panel 6.2: Postmodern Experimentations in Crime Fiction (A-213)</b><br><br><b>Chair: Norbert Gyuris</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phillip Halton: A Postmodern Framework for Studying and Writing Crime Fiction</li> <li>• Šárka Dvořáková: American Detectives in "Golden Czech Hands": Parody, Pastiche, and Meta-Crime Fiction</li> <li>• Alan Mattli: The Last Detective: Disassembling a Genre Through Historiographic Metafiction in Joyce Carol Oates' <i>Mysteries of Winterthurn</i></li> </ul> | <b>Panel 6.3: Forms of Violence and Ethical Dilemmas in Crime Fiction (A-313)</b><br><br><b>Chair: Caroline Reitz</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linda Ledford-Miller: <i>All the Sinners Bleed</i>: A Town Haunted by History</li> <li>• Roberta Garrett: The Case of Sally Challen and The Bubble and Squeak Murder: Revenge, Justice and Representations of the Victim Turned Killer in True Crime Documentaries</li> <li>• Angelika Reichmann: Sins, Debts and Food: Renegotiating Feminisms in <i>Fargo</i> Season 5</li> </ul> |
| 19:00-22:00 | <i>Conference Dinner – optional programme</i>  |  |  |

| <b>Saturday, 29 June 2024</b> |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 8:30-10:00                    | <b>Check-in</b> |

|             |   |   |  |
|-------------|---|---|--|
| 9:00-11:00  | <b>SESSION 7</b>  |   |  |
|             | <p><b>Panel 7.1: Geographies of Crime (A-112)</b></p> <p><b>Chair: Stewart King</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barbara Pezzotti: Geographies of Crime: Ethnographic Investigations on Mediterranean Islands</li> <li>• Enakshi Samarawickrama: Cosy Mystery in Sri Lanka: Nadishka Aloysius' A Sri Lankan Mystery Series</li> <li>• Lívia Szélpál: An Eco-Detective Reading of Donna Leon's <i>Earthly Remains</i></li> <li>• Monika Jurkiewicz: Thriller Genre and Political Criticism in Claudia Piñeiro's <i>Las Maldiciones</i> (2017)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Panel 7.2: Fascinating Precursors and Intersections in Crime Fiction (A-213)</b></p> <p><b>Chair: Angelika Reichmann</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zsuzsanna Péri-Nagy: Crime and the Transcendental: Early Traditions</li> <li>• John Clarke: On Being Clever: The Collective Intelligence of The Thursday Murder Club</li> <li>• Charlotte Adenau: Gothic Modes in Serial Killer Narratives</li> <li>• Kristina Alexandra Steiner: Remoralising the Fairytale in Michael Buckley's The Sisters Grimm Series</li> </ul> | <p><b>Panel 7.3: The Many Faces of True Crime (A-313)</b></p> <p><b>Chair: Nicole Kenley</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Conlon: True Crime and Poetry: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Innovations</li> <li>• Loren Verreyen: Distant Listening: Fictionality in True Crime Podcasts</li> <li>• Anthony Howell: Murder as Fine Art: Cultivation of the "True Crime" Audience in the Work of Thomas De Quincey &amp; Edgar Allan Poe</li> <li>• Emily Farmer: In True Crime We Trust: The Artificuality of John Douglas and Mark Olshaker's <i>Mindhunter: Inside the FBI Elite Serial Crime Unit</i> (1995) and Netflix's <i>Mindhunter</i> (2017)</li> </ul> |
| 11:00-11:30 | <i>Coffee break</i>   |   |  |
| 11:30-12:30 | <p><b>Keynote speech 3: Mariaconcetta Costantini (Grand Hall)</b></p> <p>Polar Noir: A New Subgenre</p> <p><b>Chair: Fiona Peters</b></p>   |   |  |
| 12:30-13:00 | <b>Closing remarks/Award ceremony (Grand Hall)</b>  |   |  |
| 18:00-19:30 | <i>Wine tasting with snacks in the Valley of the Beautiful Woman – optional programme</i>   |   |  |

## Plenary Speakers

### Keynote speech 1: 27 June, Thursday, 10:00 – 11:00 (Grand Hall)

Chair: Angelika Reichmann

**Ruth Heholt: ‘You are supposed to be the detective here’ (*The Wicker Man*, 1973): The Folk Horror and Crime Fiction Hybrid**

Falmouth University

Professor of Literature and Culture

[ruth.heholt@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:ruth.heholt@falmouth.ac.uk)



The relatively newly identified genre of folk horror has often been associated with the Gothic but, to date, not so often with crime fiction. Yet folk horror is very often about crime and there is frequently a detective figure. Sergeant Howie in the iconic folk horror film *The Wicker Man* is on a mission to uncover the truth about the disappearance of a young girl; many of the classic folk horror literary texts, academics and amateur sleuths go ‘too far’ in their pursuit of the objects of their obsessions; and in a similar way the anthropology students in *Midsommer* are there to uncover the secrets of local rites and lore. Not only is detection a feature of folk horror, the concept of law and order is important in folk horror texts. In 2017 Adam Scovell identified ‘skewed morals and beliefs’ (18) as part of what he calls the ‘folk horror chain’. In folk horror, this often includes the entire conception of law and order being ‘skewed’ differently. Law and ‘lore’ mix and meld and the focus of many folk horror texts are the (from our point of view) unacceptable beliefs and practices such as ritual murder and blood sacrifice. Yet in these isolated communities, what we might see as crime is not viewed as criminal. Law and order of any conventional sort break down entirely into a Carnavalesque reversal. This talk looks at the cross-overs between folk horror and crime fiction, arguing that if we look at the two together, we can identify new and fruitful types of hybridity and different connections and associations. Examining folk horror texts through the lens of crime fiction can expand on both genres.

**Ruth Heholt** is Professor of Literature and Culture at Falmouth University in Cornwall. She is author of Catherine Crowe: *Gender, Genre, and Radical Politics* (Routledge, 2020) and co-author of *Gothic Kernow: Cornwall as Strange Fiction* (Anthem Press, 2022). She is co-editor of several collections including *Folk Horror: New Global Pathways*, *Gothic Britain: Dark Places in the Provinces and Margins of the British Isles* (2018), and *Haunted Landscapes* (2017). She has organised international conferences including *Haunted Landscapes* (2023), *Crones, Crime, and the Gothic* (2022) and *Folk Horror in the Twentieth Century* (Falmouth and Lehigh Universities 2019). She is the leader of the recently founded Dark Economies Scholarly Association (DESA) and editor of the peer reviewed journal *Revenant: Critical and Creative Studies of the Supernatural*. *Revenant* is dedicated to academic and creative explorations of the supernatural, the uncanny and the weird and can be found at [revenantjournal.com](http://revenantjournal.com).



## Keynote speech 2: 28 June, Friday, 11:30 – 12:30 (Grand Hall)

Chair: Renáta Zsámber

**Tamás Bényei: Post mortem: The Necropoetics of Golden Age Crime Fiction**

University of Debrecen

Professor

[tamasbenyei@yahoo.com](mailto:tamasbenyei@yahoo.com)



The proposed talk will explore the paradoxical role of the corpse in British Golden Age detective fiction: while the dead body is an indispensable prop of crime stories, it is usually dismissed straightaway by being transformed into text to be deciphered (*corpse* into *corpus*), the starting point of an intellectual puzzle. This treatment of the dead (body) is related to the cultural function of Golden Age crime fiction in the context of changing Western attitudes to death and the dead body, and, in particular, the aftermath of the Great War. The talk will begin with a brief discussion of the treatment of the incongruous body in Agatha Christie's *The Body in the Library* (1942), a novel that might be said to be fairly typical of the tendency to dismiss the corpse. Golden-age crime fiction, however, is not homogeneous in this respect. I shall argue that, at least some texts by Dorothy Sayers offer glimpses of a different necropoetics and necropolitics of crime fiction. While I shall refer to *Have His Carcase* (1932) as well as to a few Lord Peter Wimsey stories, the centrepiece of the talk will be the first Wimsey novel, *Whose Body?* (1923), a text that might be seen as embodying an alternative necropoetics and necropolitics, one not unrelated to contemporary Modernist strategies. Sayers's novel lends itself to such a reading on account of the key plot role it accords to what I call the "twofold corpse", its invocation of the cadaverous abject, the Great War, and its references to a gothicised anatomy. I shall also argue that the reconsideration of the Modernist necropolitics of Sayers's novel is in line with the ongoing critical rewriting of the history of crime fiction, most importantly, the retrieval of its 19<sup>th</sup>-century (pre)history.

**Tamás Bényei** is Professor of English Literature at the Department of British Studies, University of Debrecen. His main research fields are 20<sup>th</sup>-century British fiction, crime fiction, (post)colonial fiction and British women's writing, metamorphosis, and more recently, ecological criticism and animal studies. He is the author of seven books in Hungarian, and one in English: *Acts of Attention: Figure and Narrative in Postwar British Novels* (Peter Lang, 1999). He has published numerous journal articles and book chapters in the UK, other European countries and the United States on writers like Rudyard Kipling, George Orwell, Anthony Powell, Iris Murdoch, Angela Carter, J. G. Ballard, Jeanette Winterson, Peter Ackroyd, Graham Swift, Martin Amis and Kurt Vonnegut – as well as a number of Latin-American and Hungarian authors. Apart from his 2000 monograph in Hungarian, dedicated to metaphysical detective stories (*Rejtélyes rend: A krimi, a metafizika és a posztmodern* ["Mysterious order: Crime



fiction, metaphysics and the postmodern,” 2000]), he has written essays on Poe, Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie and the movie *Angel Heart*. He has translated seven novels, including Angela Carter’s *Nights at the Circus*, Anthony Burgess’s *Earthly Powers* and J. M. Coetzee’s *Dusklands*, and a number of short stories by Henry James, Rudyard Kipling, Jorge Luis Borges and Dashiell Hammett. Over the past ten years or so, he has been working on the seven-volume history of English literature in Hungarian, of which he is editor-in-chief, while also contributing most of the chapters covering the Victorian period and the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**28 June, Friday, 12:30 – 13:00 (Grand Hall)**

**Stewart King and Barbara Pezzotti: A Thematic History of World Crime Fiction: Making Sense of a Global Genre**

Stewart King  
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### **Keynote speech 3: 29 June, Saturday, 11:30 – 12:30 (Grand Hall)**

**Chair: Fiona Peters**

**Mariaconcetta Costantini: Polar Noir: A New Subgenre**

G. d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara

Full Professor of English Literature

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This lecture identifies “Polar Noir” as a new crime subgenre set in northern and southern polar regions, which partly intersects, partly distances itself from the globally known subcategory of Nordic Noir (also called Scandinavian Noir). My conceptualisation of Polar Noir has nothing to do with the multiform French genre called *Polar* and its later ramifications, including its recent application to African-American detective fiction (Mills and Julien 2017). I instead use the term to define a transmedial subgenre that has lately proved commercially successful but still demands academic recognition. What I am to prove is that a number of novels, films and TV series appeared in the last two decades reveal specificities that make them classifiable as distinct from the Nordic Noir subcategory within which they are generally included. Drawing upon recent criticism (Forshaw 2013; Toft Hansen and Waade 2017; Badley, Nestingen and Seppälä 2020), my lecture opens with an analysis of the geographical and thematic features of Nordic Noir which, together with novels by Scandinavian authors such as Mai Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö, Henning Mankell and Stieg Larsson, comprises numerous film and TV series adaptations as well as original productions. Mostly set in Scandinavian nations, Nordic Noir exposes the dark ambivalences of these nations’ welfare state by representing police investigations of violent crimes that upset the social order. Yet, this capacious subgenre is neither unitary nor monolithic. As scholars have recently suggested, its heterogeneity bears evidence of the malleability of contemporary crime fiction (Duerre Humann 2020), a quality further confirmed by its fertile crossings with the newly theorised subgenre of Nordic Gothic, from which Nordic Noir writers and directors draw uncanny and supernatural elements that complicate their detective plots (Holmgren Troy, Höglund, Leffler and Wijkmark 2020). The aforementioned generic elasticity is the premise on which I base my conceptualisation of Polar Noir as a subgenre distinct from the Nordic Noir tradition. From a geographical perspective, Polar Noir is set in Ant/Arctic icescapes connoted as outposts of civilisation which, in addition to northern parts of Scandinavia and Russia, include North American, Canadian and international areas like those of Antarctica. On these frozen settings, small groups of people of different nationalities commit, or are threatened by, crimes that upset their already precarious social balance, forcing those in charge to resort to arbitrary, if not illegal, means that grant their own and other people’s survival. The collapse of the lawand- order system is a distinctive element of Polar Noir which, unlike Nordic Noir, features fewer police detectives. Often conducted by scientists and other unofficial figures, investigations rarely lead to forms of institutionalised punishment, while crimes take various disturbing shapes, ranging from perverse killings to international conspiracies. In many cases, moreover, criminal actions are

triggered by ecological and medical dangers resulting from anthropogenic activities, such as the emergence of “zombie viruses”, which add Gothic paraphernalia to the whodunit plots. After retracing the nineteenth-century origins of Polar Noir and showing how it suggestively emerges in a novel like Peter Hřeg’s *Miss Smilla’s Feeling for Snow* (1992), my lecture offers examples of Polar Noir ingredients found in post-2000 literature, film and TV drama, including Allan Edel’s novel *Thaw’s Hammer* (2016), and the series *Helix* (2014-15), *Fortitude* (2015-18) and *The North Water* (2021).

### Works Cited

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**Mariaconcetta Costantini** is Professor of English Literature at Gabriele d’Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara (Italy). Her research primarily focuses on Victorian literature and culture, with a special interest in the Gothic, the sensation novel and crime fiction. She has also worked on neo-Victorian literature and postmodern Gothic culture. She is the author of six monographs, including *Mrs. Henry Wood* (Edward Everett Root, 2020) and *Sensation and Professionalism in the Victorian Novel* (Peter Lang, 2015), numerous journal articles and book chapters, and has edited collections of essays, such as – most recently – *Becoming Home: Diaspora and the Anglophone Transnational* (2021) and *Rethinking Identities Across Boundaries: Genders/Genres/Genera* (2024). She is co-editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed online journal *Victorian Popular Fictions*. She co-organized the international conference *Captivating Criminality 6: Metamorphoses of Crime: Facts and Fiction* (Pescara, 2019).

## Roundtable Discussion

**26 June, Wednesday, 15.00 – 16.30 (A-112)**

**Hungarian Crime Fiction: Then and Now**

**Moderator: Renáta Zsámba**

**Éva Cserhádi** is a Hungarian-British writer and literary translator. She writes upmarket crime fiction. In her writing, she aims to give voice to the silenced “herstory” of women during state socialism and to explore how they have been affected by the transition. Her books have been praised for their gripping storylines, engaging characters, high-quality writing, and in-depth research. She is a member of the British Crime Writers’ Association and, in 2019, won a prestigious grant from the Arts Council England.

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**Zsolt Győri** is Assistant Professor at the University of Debrecen. His research interests include British and Hungarian cinema, auteur theory, the intersections of cinema studies, spatial studies and cultural studies, and the synergies between cinema and popular music. In these areas he authored, edited and co-edited nine volumes. His more recent edited publications include *Postsocialist Mobilities* (CSP, 2021), and *Europe and European Cinema at Times of Change* (DUPress, 2021). He serves as an associate editor of the *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* and is a member of

the steering committee of the Hungarian Society for the Study of Cinema.

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**Sándor Kálai** is Associate Professor at the Department of French Studies and the Department of Communication and Media Sciences at the University of Debrecen. He became interested in the evolution of European media culture and the genres of mass culture, in particular crime fiction in 2009 after the publication of his monograph in Hungarian about religious and scientific discourse in the works of Émile Zola. In 2012 he published a book about the history of French crime fiction in Hungarian. In 2017 he co-organised the conference *Zola, Mirbeau et le naturalisme* with Anna Gural-Migdal and Gabriella Tegye, the proceedings of which were published in 2020 by Classiques Garnier under the title *Émile Zola et Octave Mirbeau. Regards croisés*. He co-edited two issues of

*Belphegor* with Jacques Migozzi, a journal devoted to popular literature and media culture, and launched *Regards croisés sur la culture médiatique européenne* in 2020 and, as part of the European H2020 DETECt project, *Euronoir*, in 2022.

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**Ágnes Zsófia Kovács** is Associate Professor at the Department of American Studies, University of Szeged, Hungary. Her research interests include late-nineteenth-century protomodern fiction, conversions of literary modernisms, popular fiction genres, and contemporary multicultural American fiction. Her current research into travel writing involves remapping travel texts by Edith Wharton. She has published two books, *The Function of the Imagination in the Writings of Henry James* (2006) and *Literature in Context* (2010), co-edited *Space, Gender and the Gaze* (2017), and edited Edith Wharton's

*Osprey Notes* (2021). She sits on the editorial board of *Americana E-Journal*, *TNTeF* (Szeged), and *Acta Philologica* (Cluj, Romania).

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## Conference Papers

### SESSION 1: Thursday, 27 June, 11:30-13:00

#### Panel 1.1: The Savage, the Other and Sensation in Crime Fiction (A-112)

Chair: Mariaconcetta Costantini

#### Gabriella Hartvig

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#### Sensation Novels and Detective Fiction in Hungarian Newspapers 1880-1920

The most popular novels by Victorian authors such as Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, or Mary Elizabeth Braddon were translated into Hungarian and serialized in the literary sections of newspapers such as *Pesti Hírlap*, *Budapesti Hírlap*, or *Fővárosi Lapok*. Newspaper editors made efforts to feature the most recent works, with a focus on horror novels, detective stories, and sensation fiction. Hungarian magazines expedited the translation process, promptly publishing these works. According to Simon Beattie, the Hungarian version of *Dracula* stands as the first foreign edition and the earliest translation of Bram Stoker's novel. Many times, newspaper publications were followed by book releases, but many of these books fell victim to censorship and were banned in the 1950s. Hungarian authorities prohibited *Dracula*, and all the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Rider Haggard, who were highly popular and extensively translated at the time. Additionally, several works of Mary E. Braddon, G. K. Chesterton, and one or two translated books of Florence Marryat were also forbidden. Despite this, they remained available in Victorian newspapers. This paper studies the serialized publication of sensation and detective fiction in late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century newspapers.

Keywords: newspaper fiction, sensation novel, serial publication, Hungarian translation, censorship

**Gabriella Hartvig** teaches at the University of Pécs. She is the author of two books, *Laurence Sterne Magyarországon 1790-1860* ("Laurence Sterne in Hungary 1790-1860"; Budapest, 2000) and *The Critical and Creative Reception of Eighteenth-Century British and Anglo-Irish Authors in Hungary* (Pécs, 2013). Her papers have appeared in journals including *The Shandean*, *The AnaChronist*, *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, and *Translation and Literature*. She has contributed chapters on the reception of Sterne, Ossian, and Jonathan Swift to the series *The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe*.



**Boróka Andl-Beck**

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### **Itinerancy in British Crime Fiction Narratives: From Sherlock Holmes to *Midsomer Murders***

From the late-Victorian works of Arthur Conan Doyle and the classic twentieth-century crime novels of Agatha Christie to early-2000s television series like *Midsomer Murders*, British audiences often face the issue of wandering in crime narratives, with itinerant peoples usually taking on the marginal role of the scapegoat. Every crime story needs elements that divert the attention of the prejudiced “masses,” and, for the most part, the stereotypically narrow-minded police. In an effort to map out the changes and similarities in representations of characters on the move, this research examines well-known crime narratives, be they distributed in a novel or a television format, over a 120-year period. In such narratives, the air of illegality is always attached to the wandering folk, but a more detailed typology that combines literary and contemporary legal texts may uncover features that otherwise go unnoticed due to the relative unimportance of these marginal characters. Existing in the natural rather than the social landscape, their job is to foreground the kind of external threat that comes from within. As domestic Others whose core understanding of space differs from that of the majority society, they are missing a basic tenet of social relatedness, thus they cannot easily be empathised with as individual characters: their role transforms according to social trends and the main characters’ perspectives, making them a versatile vessel whose roles range from ally to banal threat and even contagious alien. Such diversity in the representation of typically marginal figures highlights socio-cultural as well as political changes, factors that popular crime fiction must consider to stay relevant for their audience.

Keywords: itinerancy, vagrant, gypsy, crime fiction, space

**Boróka Andl-Beck** is an alumna of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and the University of Vienna currently working on her dissertation as a PhD student in the Modern English and American Literature and Culture doctoral programme at ELTE. Her scholarly work so far has considered the concept of the “imagined Gypsy” and the Western gaze in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary fiction, ethnographical works, and newspaper articles. In her PhD research, the issue of itinerancy in the same period of English literature is studied incorporating the trends of moral philosophy and the ever-changing conditions of sympathy, with a focus on the notion of social relatedness via the concepts of spatial and historical belonging.

## **Panel 1.2: Indigenous Voices in Crime Fiction (A-213)**

**Chair: András Tarnóc**

**Éva Urbán**

University of Debrecen

MA student

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### **Humor in Indigenous Postmodern Crime Fiction**

In postmodern crime fiction, literary devices such as fragmentation, unreliable narrators, and intertextuality are all in contrast with classic elements of detective stories. Humor is one of the most culture-specific characteristics widely used by Native American writers, for example by Sherman Alexie. In his crime fiction novel *Indian Killer* (1996), Alexie extensively employs dark humor, not only to comment on social injustices that occur in urban Indians' daily lives, but also to build the characters. Unlike classic fiction, the novel does not feature a detective figure, the role of piecing the information together is the reader's task achieved by humorous comments which can be regarded either as valuable clues or red herrings, or distractions due to the ambiguity rooted in humor. For example, the title of Alexie's work has several potential meanings. It refers both to the serial killer and white men who killed Native Americans, thus evoking the murderer's revenge to commit homicide. Also, it is part of the metanarrative, because one of the characters is working on a novel about the murders titled "Indian Killer."

Keywords: Native American fiction, postmodern fiction, humor

**Éva Urbán** is a final-year English-History major teacher trainee at the University of Debrecen. She started her research about contemporary indigenous fiction in 2020, and in 2023 she was awarded third place at the 36<sup>th</sup> National Scientific Students' Associations Conference. She intends to continue her studies in the American Studies PhD program at her university.

**Erin Hitchmough**  
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### **The Liminal Indigenous Body in Jo Nesbø's *Midnight Sun***

This paper argues that the character of Mattis in Jo Nesbø's 2015 novel, *Midnight Sun*, is representative of an archaic characterisation of the Indigenous Scandinavian Sámi and is a revealing lens to explore contemporary attitudes towards Sámi culture, and the relationship between the Scandinavian socio-cultural imagination and indigenous identity. Set in the Sápmi region of northern Norway, *Midnight Sun* follows the story of a hitman who flees from his home to a remote cabin in the remote north. One of the people he encounters here is Mattis, a Sámi man, and one of the few Sámi characters, who lives around the village and becomes a central figure in the novel's narrative. Despite this, Mattis was entirely erased in the 2020 film adaptation which infers that his character is fictionally emblematic. This paper argues that, through Nesbø's descriptions of Mattis from the outset, Mattis comes to represent the archaic, exoticized stereotype of the Sámi that is utilised as a vehicle to also reflect on white Scandinavian identity. The paper builds on Höglund's concept of Sápmi as a liminal, Gothic space to suggest that liminality is projected onto Mattis himself. He becomes a liminal body used to explore societal tensions around the meanings of Sámi culture, traditions and a history of internal colonialism. This paper builds upon work in the fields of the Gothic, crime fiction, indigenous studies, and the emergent Indigenous Nordic Gothic, to suggest that Nesbø's engagement with Sámi culture and colonisation needs to be scrutinised to understand colonial dynamics.

Keywords: indigenous, Indigenous Gothic, Jo Nesbø, Sámi, Scandinavian crime fiction, Nordic Noir, Nordic Gothic

**Niamh Hitchmough** is a doctoral researcher at the University of Oulu in Finland, working within the Languages and Literature Department, and the Giellagas Institute. She completed her Bachelor's degree in English at Falmouth University (2018-2021) and her Master's degree in Comparative Literatures and Cultures at the University of Bristol (2021-2022). Her work covers Nordic Noir, the writings of Henning Mankell, Native American folk horror, the Gothic, Indigenous Gothic, and the characterisation of landscape, nature and weather in literature.

**Malinda Hackett**

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**“Gee, You Don’t Look Like an Indian From the Reservation\*”: Re-examining Marcia Muller’s Sharon McCone as Native American Private Investigator**

In *Traces, Codes, and Clues*, Maureen T. Reddy asserts that crime fiction author Marcia Muller’s portrayal of Native American private investigator Sharon McCone relies on “incorporating a view of race as biological, [and] thus reproduces a fundamental concept in white discourse and in that way works against its own obvious intentions.” Credited as the first author to introduce the female private investigator and to effectively reconceptualize the hardboiled genre, it would seem that Muller’s intentions with her detective protagonist were to represent what Reddy refers to as a “doubly marginalized” person who works against stereotypes both about women and Native Americans as they attempt to solve crime. While acknowledging success with the former, Reddy argues that Muller falls short with the latter by reducing McCone’s Native Americanness to an identity that she can put on and take off at will which stems from her proximity to whiteness (as the adopted child of a white couple) as well as her lack of tribal affiliation (she only discovers that both of her parents are Native American when already well into adulthood). At the time Reddy first dismissed McCone as a productive example of “writing the other,” Muller had written twenty-one novels in the McCone series (*Traces* was published in 2003). Two decades have passed since then, and Muller has added to the McCone oeuvre with fourteen additional novels several of which witness McCone more fully engaged with her Native American heritage including *Burn Out* (2008), *City of Whispers* (2011), *The Color of Fear* (2017), and *Ice and Stone* (2021). With this gap in mind, this paper seeks to re-examine Muller’s McCone series in its entirety while highlighting several key texts against the perspectives of recent scholarship in indigenous, colonial, and ecocritical narrative theory. In doing so, I aim to illustrate McCone’s evolution in self-identification in order to question whether Muller’s detective character adds crucial insight to current scholarship in crime fiction studies by functioning as a representation of the liminal existence imposed by forced border crossings (to borrow Gloria Anzaldúa’s definitions of border space), or if McCone is merely a persistent product of the white literary imagination (as Redding asserts and as first articulated by Toni Morrison).

Keywords: Marcia Muller, Sharon McCone, crime fiction, feminist detective, Native American, indigenous, ecocriticism, colonial

**Malinda Hackett** is pursuing a PhD in English at Claremont Graduate University and is a 2022-2023 Chancellor’s Doctoral Initiative Program Fellow. Her research examines how American crime, detective, noir, and gothic fictions engage with the environment, indigeneity, race, and class. Her scholarship has been published in *The Routledge Handbook to Crime Fiction and Ecology* (Routledge 2023), *Watching the Cops: Police and Policing in 21st Century Film and Television* (MacFarland 2023), and *Clues: A Journal of Detection* (MacFarland 2020).

\*Title refers to an essay written by Indigenous author Barbara Cameron which appears in the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga, Anzaldúa 1981)

## **SESSION 2: Thursday, 27 June, 14:30-16:00**

### **Panel 2.1: Women Writing and Acting in Crime Fiction (A-112)**

**Chair: Kinga Földvály**

#### **Jennifer Schnabel**

The Ohio State University

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#### **The Fairest of Them All: Jessica Fletcher's Reign of the Queen of Mystery in *Murder, She Wrote***

Jessica Fletcher, the protagonist in the American television series *Murder, She Wrote* (1984-1996), is a retired English teacher from Cabot Cove, Maine who turned to mystery writing after her husband died. Her first novel, *The Corpse Danced at Midnight*, is an instant commercial success, and she continues to publish best sellers under the pen name J.B. Fletcher. Jessica also investigates crimes in Cabot Cove and in other cities when she travels for book tours or visits friends and family. The iconic character, played by Angela Lansbury, is particularly noteworthy in the study of television history because she is an older female protagonist and a skilled investigator, a change from the more traditional male detective archetype viewers were accustomed to seeing on their screens. However, Jessica's identity as a popular mystery writer is equally important to understanding the gender stereotypes the show both embodies and subverts throughout the 12-season series. I will first examine the show through the lens of Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's critical essay, "The Queen's Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity" (1979). Then, I will use examples relevant from several episodes, including the two-part "Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall" (1989), "The Grand Old Lady" (1989) and "According to Maggie" (1990), to discuss how *Murder, She Wrote* addresses paternalistic treatment of women mystery writers and consider ways popular views of women authors of crime have evolved (or not).

Keywords: gender, amateur detective, mystery writer, tv series, popular culture

**Jennifer Schnabel** is associate professor and English subject librarian at The Ohio State University. Her research agenda includes women in crime fiction and librarian support of undergraduate and graduate research. She has published on Ruth Rendell and presented conference papers on Tana French and Columbo. She contributes scholarly book reviews to *Clues: A Journal of Detection and Crime Fiction Studies* and is a peer reviewer for several publications. She recently co-chaired the Mystery & Detective Fiction Area of the Popular Culture Association and is co-editing a collection on *Murder, She Wrote* published by Routledge. She currently serves the International Crime Fiction Association as research support officer.

**Éva Cserhádi** (independent writer) and **John Clarke**  
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## **Translating Hungarian Crime Fiction**

While the largest part of all fiction sales in the UK are crime and thriller books, only 3 to 5% are from non-English speaking authors. Female authors make up 30% of all crime fiction in translation. In 2019, Éva Cserhádi, a Hungarian crime writer and literary translator, won an Arts Council England grant for her Translating Me / Translating Us project. Her experiences in the UK book market led her to try self-translation with her co-translator, John Clarke. He is an avid crime fiction reader and has written about the genre from a sociological point of view. Based on a long-established friendship, their collaboration started during the first lockdown. Their presentation will discuss their experience translating Hungarian crime fiction into English. Apart from the obvious challenges of any literary translation, they were aware of the difficulties in addressing the cultural context. While Hungary has a sporadic history of writing crime, crime fiction is one of the greatest selling points of British culture. Crime fiction set in a foreign country is a subgenre that tends to either predigest or exoticise the cultural differences for the reader. The result is an easy read that uses the British reader's cultural references. For Cserhádi and Clarke, the translation process was a constant negation of meaning to avoid any exotic veneer and keep the insider's view. Expressions, idioms, situations and dialogues were looked at with this double objective in mind how to make the text British reader-friendly without giving up the Hungarian-ness of it. In this presentation they examine the practices, possibilities, pleasures and problems of the collaborative process.

**Keywords:** Hungarian crime fiction, translation, cultural context, women in translation

**Éva Cserhádi** is a Hungarian-British writer and literary translator. She writes upmarket crime fiction. In her writing, she aims to give voice to the silenced 'herstory' of women during state socialism and to explore how they have been affected by the transition. Her books have been praised for their gripping storylines, engaging characters, high-quality writing, and in-depth research. She is a member of the British Crime Writers' Association and, in 2019, won a prestigious grant from the Arts Council England.

**John Clarke** is an Emeritus Professor of Social Policy at the Open University, UK. His work has explored a wide range of issues from the changing relations of welfare, state and nation to the crises of power and politics in the contemporary UK (most recently in *The Battle for Britain: Crises, Conflicts and the Conjuncture*, Bristol University Press, 2023). He has a long-standing interest in crime fiction and has previously written about it for the Open University.



**Caroline Reitz**

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**Laughing and Crying: Fugitive Tone in Contemporary Female Crime Narratives**

Contemporary female crime narratives are frequently, to quote many a book jacket blurb, “darkly witty.” Works such as Oyinkan Braithwaite’s *My Sister the Serial Killer*, Emerald Fennell’s *Promising Young Woman*, Gu Byeon-Mo’s *The Old Woman with the Knife*, the BBC series *Killing Eve*, and Ottessa Moshfegh’s *Eileen* (to name only a few) are excessively violent and hilarious, often pitching between sincerity and irony, the sentimental and the savage. Recent scholarship on crime fiction foregrounds “the mobility of genre”; this paper explores the consequences of such generic movement for tone.

Keywords: violence, humor, gender, tone, mobility

**Caroline Reitz** is the author of *Detecting the Nation: Fictions of Detection and the Imperial Venture* (Ohio State, 2004), and multiple articles on 19th - 21st century detective fiction. She edited Oxford World’s Classics *Arthur Conan Doyle, The Sign of the Four* (2023) and is currently the executive editor of *Clues: A Journal of Detection*. She has recently submitted *Female Anger in Crime Narrative* to Cambridge University’s *Elements of Crime Narrative* series.

## **Panel 2.2: Noir and Gothic Specters (A-213)**

**Chair: Sándor Kálai**

**Laura Major**

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### **Genre crossing in Anne Holt's *1222***

This talk will discuss the ways in which Anne Holt's *1222* uses the stasis of the "locked room mystery" in the novel to interrogate notions of disability and gender. In addition, the crimes committed in the novel, the locale and context of the crimes and the way in which they are solved reflect the sense of disillusionment with the Scandinavian social welfare state, in this case, Norway. Indeed, the extreme weather and isolated hotel form the very Norwegian setting of the locked room mystery. The novel's protagonist, Hanne Wilhelmsen – the kind of complex, troubled investigator typical of Scandinavian crime fiction or 'Nordic Noir' – is permanently confined to a wheelchair, and as such represents a conflicted stasis. In this way, she mirrors the broken-down social welfare state, the full-bodied version of Norway now in the past. Hanna is not however only a mirror of the state, but is also on her own paradoxical "journey" – both personal and professional – within the stasis of her disability and her confinement at Finse 1222, where she and her fellow train passengers are interred. Holt's *1222* challenges assumptions about the incompatibility of disability and achievement, not only through Hanne Wilhelmsen, but also through the character of Dr. Magnus Streng, who is a "dwarf" (Holt 13). Both Hanne and Magnus unfold, as the locked room mystery itself unfolds, as characters that affirm the subjectivity and agency of the disabled, not in a simplistic, binary manner, but in a way that indeed reflects disabled ways of being in a fallen world.

Keywords: locked room, Nordic noir, disability, gender

**Laura Major** (PhD) is Lecturer at the English Departments of Achva Academic College and Hemdat Academic College in Israel in the field of Literature. Her research interests include women's narratives, crime fiction, spiritual narratives, creative writing, innovative pedagogies, and Holocaust Literature.

**Jarosław Giza**

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### **The spectres of Gothic literature in Jo Nesbø's Oslo Trilogy**

Gothic literature is a literary subgenre of fiction that emerged in the second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and reached its peak in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is characterized by its focus on dark, mysterious, and often supernatural elements, as well as an exploration of psychological and emotional extremes. And although Gothic literature appears to be dissimilar from crime fiction, there are similarities between those two subgenres of fiction that are worthy of exploration. In this attempt of discovering and analysing elements of Gothic literature in the modern crime fiction, the Norwegian Jo Nesbø's literary oeuvre – whose novels about hard-boiled detective Harry Hole are among the most globally well-known and commercially successful examples of Nordic noir – emerges as an outstanding field of investigation of possible juxtapositions and interconnections.

The main objective of the article is the meticulous analysis of Jo Nesbø's three crime novels belonging to the Oslo Trilogy (*The Redbreast*, *Nemesis*, and *The Devil's Star*) focusing upon the detective Harry Hole's struggle with both criminals in Norway and his inner demons and the ensuing presentation of Gothic elements in those three crime novels. The analytical approach will focus upon such concepts as dark and mysterious settings, complex (often flawed) characters, evil criminals; themes of isolation, madness, crime, and malevolence; elements of horror and suspense; a psychological exploration of the wicked; the elements of the supernatural, the uncanny, the macabre.

Keywords: crime, Gothic, evil, isolation, madness

**Jarosław Giza** is Assistant Professor at the University of Applied Sciences in Nowy Sącz, Poland. He is a graduate of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. He has completed his doctoral dissertation, entitled "The Archetype of Evil Genius – A Comparative Study: John Milton, Joseph Conrad, Fyodor Dostoevsky," that focuses upon the embodiments of the archetype of evil genius: Satan, Kurtz, and the brothers Karamazov. So far he has published fifteen articles addressing different shades of iniquity in literature. In addition to being Assistant Professor at University of Applied Sciences in Nowy Sącz, he is also a teacher of English at the secondary school in Nowy Sącz.

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### **From William McIlvanney to Sarah Smith: Mapping Scottish Crime Fiction**

Scottish crime fiction has gained international acclaim for its distinct voice and unique exploration of societal issues. Prominent authors associated with Tartan Noir include, among others, Ian Rankin, Val McDermid, and Denise Mina. Their novels often feature detectives who, while navigating the complexities of Scottish urban and rural landscapes, interrogate cultural, historical, and political aspects of Scotland. This approach to genre as a vehicle for exploring issues connected with “the state of Scotland” has been started by William McIlvanney with his *Laidlaw* (1977) and continues until today. Over time as Scottish crime fiction evolved it incorporated elements from different genres; the generic hybridity becoming one of its characteristic features and, arguably, the key to its success and popularity among readers. In my presentation I am going to examine the hybrid nature of Tartan Noir novels by looking at the evolution of the genre from its creation till present day.

Keywords: Tartan Noir, genre, Scotland

**Agnieszka Sienkiewicz-Charlish** is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Linguistics and Literary Studies at the University of Siedlce and a member of research group “From Queen Anne to Queen Victoria” (University of Warsaw). She completed her PhD on genre polymorphism in the fiction of Ian Rankin at the University of Gdańsk. She was an organiser of bi-annual crime fiction conference “Crime Fiction Here and There” (University of Gdańsk, 2012, 2014, 2016) and “Place and Space in Scottish Literature and Culture” conference (University of Gdańsk 2015). She is the co-editor (with Urszula Elias) of *Crime Scenes: Modern Crime Fiction in an International Context* (2014) and (with Stephen Butler) *Crime Fiction: A Critical Casebook* (2018). Her research interests include Scottish fiction, crime fiction and the Gothic.

## **SESSION 3: Thursday, 27 June, 16:30-18:00**

### **Panel 3.1: Place, Law and the Other (A-112)**

**Chair: Barbara Pezzotti**

**Maria Novella Mercuri**

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### **Intertextuality and Historical Memory in the Crime Fiction of Leonardo Gori and Marco Vichi**

The Italian tradition of the detective novel has continued to develop in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the notable characteristic of differentiating itself into approaches determined by geographical settings. However, the scholarly debate has not so far considered the importance of Florence as an increasing popular setting for this genre. The first aim of my paper is therefore to comment on the work of a group of crime fiction writers who have set their stories in Florence: Magdalen Nabb, Michele Giuttari, and especially Marco Vichi and Leonardo Gori, whose work is still in progress and showing intriguing possibilities of intertextual development and reciprocal influence. My second objective is to show that the Florentine detective novel fits well in the panorama of Italian crime fiction because its vision of Florence as a seat of violence, crime and, most of all, of long-seated and historical corruption is the product of a politically engaged critique of Italian society. In this aspect Florentine crime fiction is also part of the tradition of the Italian "giallo," which, after developing between the two World Wars as a sub-genre largely influenced by Anglo-Saxon detective fiction, acquired credibility as a vehicle for social and political critique and philosophical reflection. My third objective is to argue that, just because Florence is so rich in history and culture, the interplay between the traces of its past, the personal memories of the detective-protagonists and the events unfolding in the present which are being investigated by them give a special resonance to any fiction set in this city. As both a modern town and the 'cradle of the Renaissance', the place of origin of the Italian foundation myth, Florence occupies a special place in the collective conscience of the Italians as a nation and lends itself particularly well to convey the reflection about modern Italian cultural identity.

Keywords: Florence, crime fiction, detective novel

**Maria-Novella Mercuri** teaches English, American and Comparative Literature in the School of European Languages, Culture and Society at University College London, UK. She read for a laurea degree in English and Anglo-American literature at the University of Florence, Italy, and subsequently from an MA in Philosophy and a PhD in German Studies at UCL, where she has been teaching, among other modules, one on post-1945 European crime fiction. She is currently working on a comparative study of Wharton's fiction and selected German authors. She has translated into Italian two volumes of Wharton's stories set in Italy and the novel *The Fruit of the Tree*.

**Garima Yadav**

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**Criminally Grotesque: Police, Procedure and Fixation of Criminality in *Delhi Crime: Season 2***

This paper locates the fixation of criminality on the intersections of colonial law, socio-economic prejudices, and socio-biological determinism as mediated by Tanuj Chopra's *Delhi Crime: Season 2* (2022). The 1870 Criminal Tribes Act, introduced by the British to monitor and control itinerant tribes of India pronounced millions of Indians as hereditarily inclined towards crime as a choice of profession. After India's independence, the vindictive law was replaced by similar laws with different mantles leading to an enduring social and legal prejudice against persons belonging to the denotified tribes. *Delhi Crime: Season 2* engages with the trenchant residual biases against the persons belonging to these tribes and the continued policial practice of using obsolete socio-determinism to impose criminality on them. As a police procedural, *Delhi Crime: Season 2* deserves close scholarly inquiry as it brings socio-cultural focus into the methodology of the Indian police. The representation of the denotified tribes as the unambiguous perpetrators of heinous crimes, without sufficient labour of proof, makes apparent the relationship between policing method and cultural bigotry. The subaltern subject in the shape of the denotified tribal conjures up the postcolonial anxieties of fixation of criminality as well as culpability. This paper also investigates the role of the mediated spaces which intersect with the politics of production, representation, and reception of criminality as represented in the OTT series.

Keywords: police procedurals, criminal law, criminal tribes, representation

**Garima Yadav** is a Jawaharlal Nehru University alumna. An Assistant Professor working at Shaheed Bhagat Singh College (University of Delhi), her area of interest lies in gender studies, cultural studies, postcolonialism, and crime fiction. She has published articles on indigenous detective fiction, Postcolonial literature, Indian cinema, and Romanticism.



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**Giving Voice to the Subaltern? The Case of Sunanda in Massey's *The Mistress of Bhatia House***

Perveen Mistry is Sujata Massey's fictional investigator in her recent series of novels set in 1920s Bombay, India. Perveen is a Parsi solicitor – modelled on Cornelia Sorabji – who is unable to practice law because she is a woman in British India. However, she puts her knowledge of the law to use to save various women from unjust accusations or fraud. In doing so, she raises questions about religious patriarchy and the condition of women in a society where a majority of women have neither education nor a voice for themselves.

Keywords: servants, women's voices, historical crime, India, Bombay

**Vaibhav Iype Parel** is a Doctoral Researcher in the School of English at Newcastle University, UK. He is interested in South Asian crime fiction and the histories of the subcontinent. His work has appeared in ARIEL, Journal of Postcolonial Writing, Libri et Liberi and other fora.

### **Panel 3.2: Revisiting Agatha Christie (A-213)**

**Chair: Tamás Bényei**

**Kerstin-Anja Münderlein**

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#### **“There is no detective in England equal to a spinster lady of uncertain age”: Anti-Ageism in Agatha Christie**

“After all, though he was old, Poirot had been a great man in his day” (Styles 55) – says Captain Hastings about his friend Hercule Poirot in Agatha Christie’s first detective novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920). Yet, what looks like a compliment when detached from the text is more of a lament for Poirot’s allegedly waning faculties as Hastings believes himself superior over the now old and, as Hastings implies, silly Poirot. Of course, Hastings turns out to be wrong and Poirot has not lost any of his little grey cells at all, but that doesn’t stop Hastings from being ageist again in the next novel. Miss Marple shares a similar fate of being often underestimated because of her age. In the first Marple novel, *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930), Christie plays with Marple’s alleged innocuousness and lets us know that “For all her fragile appearance, Miss Marple is capable of holding her own with any policeman or Chief Constable in existence” (Vicarage 99). Both Poirot and Miss Marple are highly capable detective with distinct methods of detection, but they are also habitually underestimated by some of the other characters and devalued because of their age. Yet, instead of following an ageist agenda in showing her elderly detectives to be tottering fools, Christie makes the characters doubting Poirot and Marple the fools for not recognising that their outstanding abilities are not diminished by their age (Poirot) or for not being able to detect these abilities behind the façade of old age (Marple). Thus, Christie not only dismantled ageism but enforced an anti-ageist agenda in the creation of her two most beloved sleuths.

Keywords: Agatha Christie, ageism, Golden Age, Poirot, Marple

**Kerstin-Anja Münderlein** is Research Assistant and post-doc at the Department of English Literature at the University of Bamberg and assistant editor of *Crime Fiction Studies*. Her research interest in Crime Fiction lies in English Golden Age detective fiction and late 19<sup>th</sup>-century crime writing with a focus on gender representation. Among other topics, she has worked on Gothic and (political) Gothic parody of the long 18<sup>th</sup> century, trauma in the poetry of the Great War, and socio-political criticism in Star Trek fanfiction, and is currently working on her post-doc project on masculinities and femininities in Golden Age Crime Fiction.

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### **Turning Tides, Changing Times: Sea in Agatha Christie and Michal Ajvaz**

The paper aims to compare two murder mysteries in which the sea plays a key role – the Golden Age mystery *Evil Under the Sun* (1941) by Agatha Christie and the postmodern novel *Journey to the South* (2004, in English 2023) by Michal Ajvaz. The paper analyses what function the presence of the sea has in building the sense of suspense, sublime, and boundary crossing. In both cases, the geographical sense of “crossing the border” between the “known” land and the “treacherous” sea is also linked to a shift in the perception of the sea over the centuries. In *Evil Under the Sun*, this cultural transformation is depicted in its early stages, with the penetration of the social type of tourist into a space archaically reserved to danger and, in early modern discourse, colonisation. Meanwhile, Ajvaz already regards this as the default attitude – the sea is a domesticated place of leisure, with evil, dangerous, or even supernatural elements suppressed and only manifested in tense moments of conflict. The paper argues that both novels present the sea and water as an element that tempts transgression, yet at the same time facilitates the solving of the crime. The issue is considered in the context of Bernhard Klein’s and other scholars’ reflections on the role of the sea and the ocean in fiction, and against the backdrop of the sea as a mystery story topos (e.g. Joseph Conrad’s *Twixt Land and Sea* or Daphne du Maurier’s *Rebecca*).

Keywords: Agatha Christie, *Evil Under the Sun*, *Journey to the South*, Michal Ajvaz, Postmodern literature, sea

**Jiří Jelínek** studied Comparative Literature at Charles University in Prague, finishing his PhD thesis “Constructed Languages in Literature” in 2018. He is employed as an assistant professor at the University of Hradec Králové. He has published articles on word formation, modern poetry, and speculative literature – among others “Of the Constructivist and the Essentialist” in *Česká literatura* journal, and “Anthropocene vs. Plague”, published as a chapter of *Images of the Anthropocene in Speculative Fiction*.

**Jana Jelínková** is an English Philology and French Philology student at Palacký University in Olomouc. Her bachelor’s thesis focuses on a comparison between Agatha Christie’s novel *The Hollow* and its adaptations.

**Felicitas Luise Mayer**

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### **A “celebration-cum-critique-cum-parody”: Gilbert Adair’s *The Act of Roger Murgatroyd***

The whodunit has generated many returns to the genre over the decades, one of which is Gilbert Adair’s *The Act of Roger Murgatroyd* (2006), the first novel in his trilogy featuring detective novelist Evadne Mount. This locked-room mystery is a postmodern experimentation with the conventions of the Golden Age whodunit by an author who engaged with postmodernism in various literary works as well as in his essays. The novel is both a whodunit written in a style very much like Agatha Christie’s and a parody of the generic conventions it employs. Adair, considering Christie to be “arguably a more modern writer – even a postmodern writer, as we used to say – than she’s ever given credit for” (2006), makes use of the metafictional elements of the genre to address postmodern concerns. Boundaries between genre, parody and criticism blur in this highly self-conscious text in which, as its title indicates, issues of performance play a vital role: Adair takes up the ways in which the performance involved in social roles and identities is often examined in Golden Age whodunits, and uses this not only as a plot device but also to demonstrate the performance inherent in his own literary endeavour. This paper wants to emphasise the relevance and interest of the whodunit for postmodern experimentation by drawing attention to the significance of Adair’s engagement with the genre, as his trilogy is a noteworthy precursor to more recent reinterpretations of the whodunit, and yet has not received much in-depth scholarly consideration so far.

Keywords: whodunit, Neo-Golden Age, Gilbert Adair, Agatha Christie, postmodernism, parody, performance, metafiction

**Felicitas Mayer** completed her BA in English language and literature as well as philosophy at the LMU in Munich, Germany. She then graduated with an MA in English literature, language and culture from Freie Universität Berlin. As part of the research training group “Family Matters” at the LMU, she is currently writing her doctoral thesis (“The Servant’s Eye – Narrating the Family in British Crime Fiction from the Victorian Sensation Novel to the Whodunit”), investigating the roles of servant figures in British crime fiction.

## **SESSION 4: Friday, 28 June, 09:00-11:00**

### **Panel 4.1: Hybridity in US Crime Fiction (A-112)**

**Chair: Linda Ledford-Miller**

**Gabriella Vöö**

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### **Apocalypse Around the Clock: The Interplay of Agencies in Chester Himes's Harlem Mysteries**

When Edgar Allan Poe defined himself, more than once, as a “mere Magazinish,” he was complaining about the obligation of catering to the public taste and pleasing publishers whom he found ignorant. However, he was also aware of the artistic potential lying in a literary magazine and made repeated (unsuccessful) attempts to establish one. Working as an editor for several magazines and often filling almost entire issues with his own writing, he exhibited professionalism and a thorough understanding of what makes a literary periodical popular. The presentation examines the influence of the successful and innovative Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine on Poe's short fiction. In its early phase (from 1817 to cca 1840), Blackwood's was generically mixed: it published fiction, poetry, opinion pieces, dissemination of scientific knowledge, and essays, with contributors playing with form, voice, and perspective. The “Maga” was a space of generic hybridization and experimentation where novelty modulated onto convention fast, triggering other innovations. I will examine Poe's ambivalent relationship to the British magazine by discussing two types of “detection” tales, crime mysteries and hoaxes, as two faces of the same coin. Both involve puzzles or enigmas and their solution and involve ingenuity, credibility, and credulity on the part of the author and/or the reader.

Keywords: magazine article, hybrid, experimentation, parody, credit, credulity

**Gabriella Vöö** is Associate Professor at the University of Pécs, Hungary. Her fields of research are US-American Studies, 19<sup>th</sup>-century American literature, and Reception Studies. She is the author of a book on the reception of British and Irish authors in Hungary, and another one on the fiction of Edgar Allan Poe.

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**“Just how dangerous is he?” Cormac McCarthy’s Hybridized Crime Fiction**

The proposed talk will examine Cormac McCarthy’s *No Country for Old Men* as a hybrid crime novel that draws on multiple genres. While all crime fiction creates narrative tension based on the interplay of good and evil, McCarthy’s work uses genre conventions to push those opposites to extremes. Multiple genres have different ways of handling characters from opposite ends of the spectrum, but McCarthy establishes a multi-directional dialectic that refuses simple resolution. In fact, the main three characters never meet. By creating a character with an overarching, almost Biblical set of ethics and another who is “the ultimate bad-ass,” as one character puts it, McCarthy nestles genre conventions into a tensile, dynamic narrative. The novel appears at first to be a combination of thriller and Western. However, elements drawn from historical anecdote, tall tales, police procedural, historical records, pastoral description, first-person musing, and even narco-corrido songs create an adamantly non-formulaic blend. The novel was initially conceived as a film script but written as a novel and then adapted by the Coen Brothers into the film version. That film-based origin suggests a further complication of how cinematic values and visual genres are contained in the novel. Crime fiction is always a nexus of exchange between novel and film. Just as the central storyline braids the sub-plots of the three main characters, Chigurh, Moss, and Sheriff Bell, the overall story interweaves manifold genre elements into a complex crime genre hybrid.

Keywords: genre conventions, crime fiction, Cormac McCarthy, crime narrative

**Michael Pronko** is Professor of American Literature and Culture at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo, Japan. His research and seminars focus on contemporary novels and film adaptations but extend to American music, art, and indie film. He runs the website *Jazz in Japan* and contributed a chapter on Japanese jazz to the Routledge Companion to *Jazz Studies*. He is also the author of the award-winning Detective Hiroshi crime fiction series set in Tokyo.



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**Detecting African American history in Barbara Neely's *Blanche Among the Talented Tenth* (1994)**

Barbara Neely published four detective novels featuring the African American professional maid/ amateur detective Blanche White. Her novels unravel distinct issues of African American history within the format of the female hard-boiled detective story. Simultaneously, they present stages in the life of the jet-black African American female detective, who (as her doubly “white” name also indicates) battles with intense double-consciousness. These intersections of the African American historical novel and the hard-boiled female detective novel rely on a basic trope of African American fiction: the invisibility of the colored female protagonist. Blanche the detective takes advantage of her social invisibility as a maid to gather information and solve crime cases. The presentation looks into how *Blanche Among the Talented Tenth* revisits W. E. B. du Bois's tenets about the color line, double consciousness, and the Talented Tenth in the context of a New England murder case. The paper argues that Blanche's investigation explores the legacy of du Bois's ideas and debunks the interracial racism of his notion of the Talented Tenth.

Keywords: African-American novel, historical novel, hard-boiled detective story, double-consciousness, Du Bois, Talented Tenth

**Ágnes Zsófia Kovács** is Associate Professor at the University of Szeged, Hungary. Her research interests include conversions of literary modernism, popular fiction genres, and contemporary multicultural American fiction.

**Oliver Eccles**

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### **Parboiled Detective Fiction**

The hardboiled genre is as self-conscious as Philip Marlowe's affected cynicism or Dick Tracy's tough-guy exterior may suggest. It was theorised by men such as Raymond Chandler as both a response and a contrast to perceived trends of comfort, detachment and catharsis in crime fiction. McCann's *Gumshoe America* (2000) posits this vision of the genre as an expression of twentieth-century American disenchantment.

Keywords: hardboiled, Japan, Argentina, genre

**Oliver Eccles's** research on detective fiction considers the genre's earliest popularity on its broadest scale. My PhD project at UCL is entitled 'Customs and Duties: Importing the Detective Across Networks of World Literature'. By centring underexamined works from Latin America and Japan, I examine the nature of the detective's early migration at the turn of the twentieth-century. Beyond the texts, I consider the context which receives and interacts with the Western model, as well as the infrastructures of communication and publishing which propel it towards its ever-growing audience. These are the cultural and economic flows behind one of literature's most popular genres: the customs and the duties of the detective.

## **Panel 4.2: Generic Innovations and Strategies in Crime Fiction (A-213, starts at 9.30)**

**Chair: Andrew Pepper**

**Isabell Große**

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### **Murdering Mindfully – A Generic Hybrid: When Crime Fiction Converges with Self-Help Literature**

Since the Covid pandemic's onset in 2019, personal development has become one of the most dominant sectors in the book markets of the US, UK, and Germany – outranked only by crime fiction. Covering themes from work-related issues to mental health, self-help books belong to a “‘cultural pedagogy’ educating us how to behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear and desire” (qtd. in Neville 362). At the same time, the increasing popularity of “anti-self-help self-help guides” (e.g. Mark Manson's *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fuck*) and how-to fictions exploring “self-help's literary potential” (e.g. Rupert Holmes's *Murder Your Employer: The McMasters Guide to Homicide*) seem to mark a shift in the genre towards hybridity (Blum 16, 220). A striking example is Karsten Dusse's genre-blending crime novel series *Murdering Mindfully*, which debuted in 2019 and has since been adapted into various formats, including a self-help guide. While the hybridization of crime fiction has received scholarly attention (cf. Humann), its bibliotherapeutic benefits remain underexplored. Academic research on self-help literature, on the other hand, is driven largely by critical theory and treats self-help books as a malign cultural force reinforcing narcissistic self-indulgence. Adopting a constructivist approach, my paper examines whether *Murdering Mindfully* satirises self-help's quick-fix culture or uses crime fiction's generic conventions to promote “a transmedia, cross-cultural reading practice” enhancing readers' agency and well-being (Blum 3). Works Cited Blum, Beth. *The Self-Help Compulsion. Searching for Advice in Modern Literature*. Columbia University Press, 2020.

Humann, Heather Duerre. “Hybridisation”, in *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction* ed. by Janice Allan, Jesper Gulddal, Stewart King and Andrew Pepper, Routledge, 2020, pp. 57-64. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429453342>.

Neville, Patricia. “Helping Self-Help Books: Working Towards a New Research Agenda,” *Interactions: Studies in Communication and Culture*, vol. 3, issue 3, December 2012, pp. 361-79. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1386/iscc.3.3.361\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/iscc.3.3.361_1).

Keywords: hybridisation, crime fiction conventions, self-improvement, mindfulness, transmedia publishing, reading practices, critical theory

**Isabell Große** is Lecturer for Cultural and Literary Studies at Leipzig University. She acts the study programme coordinator for the extra-occupational training of teachers at the university's centre for teaching training and school research. Her thesis focuses on the uses of metafiction in contemporary detective fiction pastiches. Further research interests of her include postmodernist literary theory, historiographic metafiction, the representation of traumatised identities in contemporary TV crime dramas. Email: [isabell.grosse@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:isabell.grosse@uni-leipzig.de). Website: <https://www.zls.uni-leipzig.de/en/profile/mitarbeiter/isabell-grosse>.

**Krisztián Benyovszky**

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**Crime Fiction and Gastronomy**

In contemporary and recent literature, there are many examples of the interplay between crime fiction and gastronomy. This is partly thematic, partly poetic, and also influences the development of certain sub-genres. The gastronomic motifs in the crime novel have a specific role, defined by the genre code, which is relevant to the roles of the perpetrator, the investigator and the victim. In my presentation, I will accordingly address the figure of the gourmand detective, the role of food, cooking and eating in the execution of the murder and in the unmasking of the culprit, as well as the genre implications of certain culinary locations (kitchen, family table, restaurant, bar, café, pastry shop, etc.) and events (family lunch, festive dinner, reception, cooking competition). In the concluding part of my presentation, I will look at the main ways in which crime fiction and cookery books intersect, using examples from different literatures. The gastronomic motifs provide a new, different angle of looking at the crime novel genre, while the crime novel offers an insight into food culture from a somewhat unusual perspective. The main guidelines of my approach are the aspects of genre theory, narratology and gastrosemiotics.

Keywords: crime fiction, gastronomy, semiotics, genre hybridisation, cookbook

**Krisztián Benyovszky** was born in 1975 in Slovakia. He graduated in Hungarian Language and Literature – Slovak Language and Literature at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (1993-1998), where he also obtained his PhD in 2006 in Literary Theory and Slovak Literature. Since 1998, he has been a lecturer at the Institute of Hungarian Linguistics and Literary Studies at the University of Nitra, currently (from 2020) as a professor. In addition to modern and contemporary Hungarian, Slovak and Czech literature, literary theory, narratology, semiotics and intermediality, he has been working on popular culture since the early 2000s, with a special focus on detective fiction, on which he has published three monographs. He is also editor-in-chief of the Hungarian-language literary journal *Partitúra*.

**Réka Szarvas**

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### **Detecting Fanfiction – The Intersections of Fandom and Crime Fiction**

The greatest detective characters from the history of crime fiction, such as Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot have their respective fan bases, who are not only the consumers of the books and their adaptations but who also participate in fannish activities. If we merely consider fanfictions posted on the biggest fanfiction website Archive of Our Own (AO3) there are more than 100,000 works that feature the character Sherlock Holmes in some shape or form, many of which are detective fiction written by the fans themselves (a distinction important to note as the majority of fanfictions still belong to the genre of slash erotica and not detective stories). AO3's own Organisation of Transformative Works publishing the academic e-journal Transformative Works and Cultures had a special issue in 2017 dedicated to the Sherlock Holmes fandom. Besides that, several publications (Stein and Busse 2012; Prittard 2019) look at Sherlockian fan works from the perspective of fan activities through the lens of fannish studies, however, these works can be exciting examples of the evolution of the detective fiction genre, creating a hybrid enterprise between fannish activity and crime writing. In this paper I intend to map the intersection between traditional theorie(s) of detective fiction and fandom studies and read fannish works as crime fiction narratives.

Keywords: fannish studies, Sherlockiana, transformative works, detective narratives

**Réka Szarvas** is Assistant Professor at the Institute of English and American Studies, University of Szeged, pursuing her doctoral degree with a dissertation in progress titled "Embodied Detection: Gillian Flynn's Works through the Lens of Feminist Corporeographic Metafiction." Her research interests include crime fiction, metafiction, body studies, literary theory, gender studies, and contemporary literature.

### **Panel 4.3: Fantasy, Haunted and Weird (A-313)**

**Chair: Kerstin-Anja Munderlein**

**Nicole Kenley**

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#### **Breach, Crosshatch, and Communities of Criminality in *The City & the City* and *Europe at Midnight***

Dave Hutchinson's *Europe at Midnight* and China Miéville's *The City & the City* each present fantasy versions of European urban geographies that slip between one another as their borders collide. In Miéville's text, the cities of Beszel and Ul Qoma occupy exactly the same geographic space, with citizens living side by side in separate cities, visible to one another but forbidden from interacting. In Hutchinson's novel, Europe overlays a parallel landscape called The Community, with neither the inhabitants of The Community nor the residents of the various European countries it overlays having any sense of the others' existence. Both novels explore standard versions of crime and criminality, with Miéville's depicting a murder investigation and Hutchinson's international espionage. However, in both, the larger crimes are those of transgressive border crossing. In Miéville's novel, denizens of the two cities must constantly guard against "breach" (60) or trespassing the boundaries between the cities, by practicing "unseeing" (43). Special Breach agents tasked with policing violations contribute to panoptic societal surveillance. In Hutchinson's text, even the knowledge of the overlaid spaces is treasonous, and crossing between the spaces is punishable by death in order to safeguard the spatial knowledge of "a parallel universe...worth killing for" (376).

This paper, then, explores the relationship between criminality and spatiality in these two novels with an eye towards conceptualizing the broader relationship between crime fiction as a genre and border creation as a practice. In both texts, genres crosshatch into each other just as much as the fictional spaces the texts depict. Further, both texts represent their multiple genres as inextricable from one another, suggesting that borders, whether generic, urban, or national, create their own opportunities for trespass as they come into existence. Each text constructs space such that the crosshatching of generic borders, in form, underscores the crosshatching of national borders, in narrative, to illustrate their inherent simultaneous rigidity and permeability. Thus, as this paper ultimately argues, the texts reveal that the true crimes within their narratives are the creation of borders in the first place, the transgression of which would not have been criminal before the border's inception. Taken together, the texts indicate a growing unease over not only the additional opportunities for transgression that the generation of new borders enables, but also a mounting concern over which subgenres will have jurisdiction over the growing field of crime narrative.

**Keywords:** genre blending, borders, imagined communities

**Nicole Kenley** is Associate Teaching Professor at the University of California, San Diego. Her work focuses on the relationship between contemporary detective fiction and globalization and has appeared in edited collections such as *The Cambridge Companion to World Crime Fiction* and *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction*, as well as crime fiction journals including *Clues* and *Mean Streets*. She also co-edited *The Journal of Popular Culture*'s 2021 special issue on place, space, and the detective narrative.

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### **Exploring the Unmappable: Investigation in Weird Spaces**

Spatiality and the exploration of space are among the most important cornerstones of Weird fiction, notoriously associated by, but not restricted to Howard Phillips Lovecraft's stories, and its contemporary counterpart, the New Weird. The nature of space, as Ann and Jeff VanderMeer point out in *The New Weird*, is pivotal to the genre, which is "a type of urban, secondary-world fiction that subverts the romanticized ideas about place found in traditional fantasy, largely by choosing realistic, complex real-world models as the jumping-off point for creation of settings that may combine elements of both science fiction and fantasy" (xvi). The hybrid and elusive concepts of weird space are based on an investigation of the very space itself or an often pointless and impossible search for a conclusive, sound and rational understanding of the world. The weird investigation often follows the patterns characteristic of the classical detective story, in which the rational solution reinstates lawful order. However, the weird and the new weird, while using realistic places as a starting point, strategically undermine the traditional concepts of spatiality, which renders the exploration, detection, or the survey as a hopeless and puzzling mission. The paper looks into how the investigation process of the detective story changes in weird fiction owing to the shifting nature of physical space in "A Descent into the Maelström" (Poe, 1841), "The Call of Cthulhu" (Lovecraft, 1926), "1408" (King, 2002), and *Annihilation* (Vander Meer, 2014).

Keywords: weird, space, investigation, new weird

**Norbert Gyuris** is currently affiliated with the University of Pécs in Hungary. He received his PhD in literary theory in 2007. His main academic interests include contemporary American literature, popular culture and media, and science-fiction. His book titled *Footprints of the Old Man* (2011, University Press of Szeged, Hungary) focuses on the theoretical cross-section of authorship, hypertextuality, simulation and narratology in British and American modern and postmodern fiction. He has published several studies on cyberpunk, ribofunk, steampunk, the theory of simulation, and film adaptation.



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## **Ghosts of America: Murderous Spirits, Dualities and American Ideologies in the Crime Fantasy Hybrid**

Through its placement of supernatural and metaphysical entities within otherwise normal temporal and spatial settings, American crime fantasy hybrids create uniquely liminal narratives that are simultaneously familiar and unexpected, magical and mundane, marked and unremarkable. These intrusions of the malignant metaphysical upon the realm of the perceived benign normal, in turn, allow for a second look or a double take at what has been normalized through various dominant ideologies. Libba Bray's series of YA novels titled *The Diviners*, use the metaphysical elements associated with various crimes and a group of de facto vigilante investigators/crime fighters to highlight the flawed nature of industrial capitalism and American (ultra)nationalism. David Lynch and Mark Frost's TV series *Twin Peaks* similarly blends natural and supernatural elements within the confines of the innocuous American town of Twin Peaks. The series' constant movement between mundane narratives of affairs, business deals, drugs etc., and the metaphysical narratives pertaining to the murder of Laura Palmer highlight the undercurrents of duplicity, insincerity, and immorality that plague a seemingly idyllic locale. *Twin Peaks* satirizes the ideals that make America, portraying the dream as a recurrent nightmare, the free market as intensely monopolized, and the family as always tainted by adultery. This paper analyses these two crime fantasy hybrids to investigate how this hybridity births and/or strengthens their critical look at American society and its ideologies.

Keywords: hybridity, liminality, ideology, framing, identity, capitalism, national identity, American Dream

**Mona Raeisian** is a PhD student in American Studies at Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany. She has dual bachelor's degrees in English Literature and English Translation Studies and a master's degree in English Literature. Her dissertation is titled "The Rumpelstiltskin Effect: Identity and Ideology in Contemporary American Police Procedural Fiction." Her research focuses on the ideological construction of hero, victim, and villain narrative identities in relevance to U.S. ideologies of capitalism and individualism. Her research interests include but are not limited to identity studies, ideology, capitalism and economic equality, body studies, and popular culture.

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## **“Who needs a hero?”: Genre Dynamics between (High) Fantasy and Crime Fiction, Magic and Being a Copper in Terry Pratchett’s Discworld**

The Ankh-Morpork City Watch serve as central characters throughout eight of the 41 novels in Terry Pratchett’s popular Discworld series in what is known as the Watch arc, as well as recurrently feature in further narratives through the eyes of different story arcs’ characters. During the thirty years of writing Discworld, the setting has considerably altered from mostly comical high fantasy genre parody to more critical and serious reflections of (and on) civilisation and modernity complete with a quasi-industrial revolution. Alongside Discworld itself, the Watch has undergone dramatic developments, too, from comically (anti)heroic outcast bunch of watchmen to sometimes frighteningly effective urban police force.

In this light, Discworld arguably serves as a reflection on (and of) ‘Roundworld’ and provides a nexus for the juxtaposition of seemingly opposing concepts and perspectives, and their place within genre(s). This paper will investigate the effects produced by the collisions of magic and realism, fantasy and crime fiction, traditional heroism and law & order, as well as their impact on reading the Watch arc as crime fiction. What are the implications for crime and its detection in a genre typically de- if not confined by logic and realism if it can be done ‘simply by magic’? What is the place for coppers in a world where archetypal heroes line up to save the day for glory and fame? And what reader image does this construct of those who do the job anyway?

Keywords: Discworld, fantasy, crime

**Moritz A. Maier** is an independent researcher with a MA degree from the University of Regensburg and holds a doctorate in English Literature from TU Dresden; his first book *De/mythologizing Jack the Ripper: Fictional Appropriations as a Metanarrative* will be published by WVT in early 2024. Currently involved in the Horizon Europe project “SHIFT” in the context of accessibility and inclusion in cultural heritage, his spare time is dedicated to the quest for new academic research projects related to his interests in mythography, the fantastic, crime fiction and Postmodernism – that is, whenever he does not continue to dally with the never-ending pursuit of the ever-elusive fictional(ized) Ripper.

## SESSION 5: Friday, 28 June, 14:30-16:00

### Panel 5.1: Children's Crime Fiction (A-112)

Chair: Ruth Heholt

#### Dorothea Flothow

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### **Friedrich, Emil and the Memory of 1930s Berlin – Philip Kerr's *Friedrich the Great Detective* between Playful Detecting and Bleak Warning**

At the time it was written, Erich Kästner's *Emil und die Detektive* (1929, English title: *Emil and the Detectives*) presented a new development in both children's and crime fiction: it inspired the growing genre of the children's detective story; moreover, it was also special in that it depicted lower-class children without prejudice, nor did it show the moralizing tone many children's books at this stage still displayed.

Written about 90 years later, the innovative potential of Philip Kerr's "homage" and follow-up to Kästner's book is very different, and yet *Friedrich the Great Detective* (2017, German translation: *Friedrich der große Detektiv*) features at the intersection of different recent trends in historical crime fiction, biofiction, popular history and children's fiction, as this paper proposes to show. The story features a neighbour and avid young reader of Erich Kästner – Friedrich – as a main character, who, following his fictional examples, attempts to solve crimes in interwar Berlin. Yet this innocent pursuit soon turns sour as both his favourite author and his favourite novel become subject to political persecution. This detective story is therefore also a bleak warning of nationalist extremism; it showcases through the memory of Emil and the Detectives how the bohemian, intellectual Berlin of the 1920s became the bleak, violent city ruled by the Nazis. Presented through the ignorant eyes of young Friedrich, the novel is therefore also a powerful example of how crime fiction can shape the historical memories even of young readers.

Keywords: memory, children's crime fiction, Erich Kästner, Nazi Germany, historical crime fiction

**Dorothea Flothow** is Associate Professor at the Department of English and American Studies, Salzburg University. She holds a PhD from the University of Tübingen. Her research interests include historical fictions, Victorian literature, crime fiction, and children's literature. She has just published a study of the Restoration period in popular historiographies. She is the Conference Manager of the Historical Fictions Research Network and Editor of the Global Historical Fictions Series (Brill).

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**“Elementary, my dear Wong”: Re-imagined Golden Age Crime Fiction in Robin Stevens’s *Murder Most Unladylike* Mysteries**

Robin Stevens’s *Murder Most Unladylike* mystery series (2014–2021) pays homage to Golden Age detective fiction while introducing the genre to young readers. The eleven books (nine novels and two short story collections) are all set in the 1930s and feature two young detectives, Daisy Wells and Hazel Wong who are, like their potential readers, in their early teens. Wells and Wong are familiar with the works of Agatha Christie and other representatives of the Golden Age of crime fiction, and the series consciously and continuously alludes to Christie’s oeuvre and re-imagines renown detective stories: for instance, Stevens’s *First Class Murder* has clearly been inspired by *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934). While Stevens’s books make use of numerous established tools and tropes of the classic detective genre, as well as iconic plots and locations, they also address issues the treatment of which may have left much to be desired in the classic stories, such as ideas about the British empire and foreignness, class and queerness, as well as the approach of World War II. This paper, then, seeks to investigate the ways of innovation and questioning in the *Murder Most Unladylike* mysteries: my aim is to explore how classic plots, such as that of *Murder on the Orient Express* can be re-invented in a manner that is suitable for young contemporary audiences and, at the same time, how period-typical idiosyncrasies of Golden Age crime fiction can be re-evaluated and re-shaped.

Keywords: children’s literature, contemporary crime fiction, Golden Age crime fiction, Robin Stevens

**Brigitta Hudácskó**, Junior Lecturer and PhD candidate, University of Debrecen, teaches British culture and literature, as well as literary and general translation. Her research focuses on adaptations of Sherlock Holmes stories after 9/11, as well as detective fiction and translation studies. Her essay on Katalin Baráth’s detective series appeared in *Geographies of Affect in Contemporary Literature and Visual Culture* (Brill, 2020). She contributed an essay on Inspector Lestrade in modern adaptations to *Victorian Detectives in Contemporary Culture: Beyond Sherlock Holmes* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) and a chapter on Hungarian translations of Christie to *The Ageless Agatha Christie* (McFarland & Company, 2016).

**Jahnavi S. Das**

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### **Kid Crime Busters**

One of the most popular genres in the word today, crime fiction has changed significantly since the works of Edgar Allen Poe. However, the underlying principle governing the genre remains much the same. Detective fiction is based on resolving a seemingly implausible situation using cold facts, unassailable logic and rational thought. On the other hand, paranormal fiction fundamentally demands a willing suspension of disbelief, an absence of logic or rationale, inscrutable facts, often times with no clear resolution of the stated problem.

Keywords: detective fiction, crime, paranormal, suspense, mystery, genre study

**Jahnavi Das** is currently pursuing her PhD at Madras University, Presidency College. Her thesis topic focuses on the evolution of Indian Detective Fiction. Other areas of research she enjoys exploring are Crime Studies, gender, and Pop Culture.

## **Panel 5.2: Generic Innovation in Global Crime Fiction (A-213)**

**Chair: Fiona Peters**

**Stewart King**

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### **Time after Time: Generic Innovation in Contemporary Catalan Hybrid Crime Fiction**

Since the 1930s, but particularly from the 1980s onwards, Catalan-language writers have experimented with the crime genre. Their aim was two-fold: 1) to fill in gaps in Catalan literature, which was heavily focused towards the production of works of high culture; and 2) to create a broader readership in Catalan through popular fictional forms that would attract readers away from Castilian-language literature.

This paper focuses on three recent works of contemporary Catalan crime fiction: Jordi de Manuel's *L'olor de la pluja* (2006, "The Smell of Rain"), the short story collection, *Somnia Philip Marlowe amb xais elèctrics? Distòpies criminals en temps de pandèmia* (2021, "Does Philip Marlowe Dream of Electric Sheep? Criminal Dystopias in Times of Pandemic") and the collectively written novel *Vapor negre. Barcelona steampunk 1911* (2023, "Black Vapour: Barcelona Steampunk 1911"). In my reading of these texts, I will explore the ways in which generic innovation is linked to temporal shifts. In particular, I am interested in the ways in which Catalan writers play with the double meaning of the Catalan word "temps," which signifies both "time" and "weather," depending on the context. It is my contention that by innovating with temporal shifts and collapsing time ("temps" as time), these writers use the crime genre to draw readers' attention to the impact of climate change ("temps" as weather).

**Keywords:** Catalan crime fiction, environment, experimentation, hybridity

**Stewart King** is Associate Professor at Monash University, Australia, where he leads the ARC-funded project "World Crime Fiction: Making Sense of a Global Genre." He has written books and articles on cultural identities in contemporary Catalan- and Castilian-language narrative from Catalonia, crime fiction from Spain and world crime fiction. His most recent publications are the monograph *Murder in the Multinational State* (Routledge, 2019) and the co-edited collections *Criminal Moves: Modes of Mobility in Crime Fiction* (Liverpool University Press, 2019), *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction* (2020) and *The Cambridge Companion to World Crime Fiction* (2022). He has been a member of the editorial board of *Clues: A Journal of Detection* and is currently co-editor of *Crime Fiction Studies*.

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### **Exploring American Techno-Thrillers: Science-Fictionality and Posthumanism in Rob Hart's *The Warehouse* (2019)**

Under the wake of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, breakthroughs in biotechnology, AI, or genetic engineering are blurring the boundaries between human and machine, ushering in a potential post-human paradigm. The risks and rewards of this transition are the subject of an emerging corpus of American crime fiction works, which incorporate the speculative mood and technoscientific tropes that have historically been the hallmark of science fiction to address the social, ethical and epistemological challenges of posthumanity. This outpouring of hybrid texts has coincided with a turn toward mobile conceptualizations of genre in crime fiction scholarship, adopting a fluid understanding of generic formulae as a vehicle for cultural diagnosis of their contemporary societies.

Building on this mobile approach to genre, this paper will focus on Rob Hart's science-fictional thriller *The Warehouse* (2019) as a representative instance of this trend. At the crossroads of crime and speculative fiction, *The Warehouse* updates the conventions of the spy story to explore the intersections of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies with some of the paradigmatic concerns of the genre, such as the relationship between the individual and the state, social inequality, or corporate corruption. In so doing, this paper will contend, the novel puts forward a cautionary tale about our present and near future, shedding light on the entrenched social discrimination and loss of individual agency that may result from the collusion of techno-scientific progress, unchecked corporate power, and the biopolitics of surveillance capitalism.

Keywords: crime fiction, post-humanism, techno-thriller

**María Abizanda-Cardona** is a PhD candidate at the University of Zaragoza (Spain). She holds a four-year Research Fellowship (FPU) by the Spanish Ministry of Education to carry out her doctoral dissertation. Her work explores the representation of post-humanity in 21<sup>st</sup>-century crime fiction by American authors, focusing on the effects of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies over definitions of personhood, ethics and social relations. Her research interests include critical post-humanism, transhumanism and biopolitics.



**Andrew Pepper**  
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### **Already Too Late: Generic Mutation and Environmental Breakdown**

This paper asks what compels crime fiction to mutate or hybridise and considers how this move might be tied to the working out of socio-political problems for which there are no answers or solutions. I argue this process is a negative one insofar as it is premised on failure and breakdown in both a formal and thematic sense: the despair of the subject matter is reflected in the capacities of the detective frame to produce answers and justice. But it also a generative or productive one insofar as a new type of weird, formless, "not really" crime fiction is created via the mutations that accrue from an engagement with crisis.

I use Ben H. Winters' *The Last Policeman* trilogy – where a giant asteroid is barrelling towards earth to bring about its destruction – to think about the implications of the climate emergency for our understanding of crime fiction. In this example, crime fiction carries on, so to speak, to give readers and characters/plot a framework for grappling with the consequences of inevitable breakdown, but the affective landscape of the novels mutates to reflect on and accommodate what it means to be facing an emergency where it is already too late to act.

Keywords: global crime fiction, climate emergency, end of the world

**Andrew Pepper** is Professor of English at Queen's University Belfast. He is the author of *Unwilling Executioner: Crime Fiction and the State* (2016) and co-editor of *Contemporary European Crime Fiction* (2023), *The Routledge Companion to Crime Fiction* (2020), and *Globalization and the State in Contemporary Crime Fiction* (2016). He is also the author of a series of historical crime novels, set in 19<sup>th</sup>-century London, including *The Last Days of Newgate* (2006).

### **Panel 5.3: The Glorious Golden Age (A-313)**

**Chair: Ágnes Zsófia Kovács**

**Kinga Földvály**

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#### **Heritage and Innovation: The Hybrid Intertextuality of Shakespeare and Hathaway: Private Investigators**

Serial television is often considered the flagship format in the contemporary mediascape, where innovative cinematography is often employed, combined with daring experiments in form and content alike. At the same time, television series can also be regarded as conservative and nostalgic, for instance in the way they use intertextual references in order to grant a canonical literary prestige to the medium conventionally categorised as a low form of entertainment. In this vein Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators (2018–, created by Paul Matthew Thompson and Jude Tindall), a BBC comic crime series – with a tagline “Much ado about murder” – mixes a variety of easily recognisable visual and verbal clues for the audience’s benefit. The dominant genre framework is that of the small town murder mystery, and the series uses the setting of Stratford-upon-Avon as a key space, not so much of deceit and murder as a trademark of Englishness and cultural memory. In my paper, I intend to look at the strategies the series employs to create a hybrid form that can survive in a medium saturated with big-budget quality products and a nearly endless selection of novelties available on streaming services. I argue that a key element in the series’ success is precisely its nostalgic return to the Golden Age format of crime fiction, although behind the comic, even parodic use of generic clichés, the viewer can recognise an equally nostalgic lament over the gradual disappearance of the heritage environment, confirming that it will soon be changed out of all recognition.

Keywords: serial television, nostalgia, small town murder mystery, heritage, cultural memory, crime comedy

**Kinga Földvály** is Associate Professor at the Institute of English and American Studies at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary. Her main research interests include problems of genre in film adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays, 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century British literature, and theories of visual and popular culture. She has published widely in journals and essay collections; she is the author of *Cowboy Hamlets and Zombie Romeos: Shakespeare in Genre Film* (MUP, 2020).

**Benjamin Parris**

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### **Detecting the Grand Guignol: The Terrifying Theatrics of John Dickson Carr**

This presentation will do exactly that, performing close readings of some of the most ghoulish tricks and murders in Carr's detective novels, highlighting a hybridisation of the detective novel and the theatre of body horror; of stagecraft, magic, the uncanny, and the detective fiction formula. Whether it is a corpse maniacally driving a car across London, a severed head leering from a jar, or a man being burned alive, the Grand Guignol had a fascinating impact on an author who was himself a hugely significant figure in the history of crime fiction. Exploring the intertwining of gruesome stagecraft and fictional detection reveals a new side to interwar crime fiction, often seen as bloodless and averse to the sensational. The hybridisation seen in John Dickson Carr's work reveals the genre to be anything but.

Keywords: Golden Age detective fiction, John Dickson Carr, hybridisation, horror

**Benjamin Parris** is in the first year of his English PhD at the University of St Andrews. His academic interests lie in modern and contemporary English literature: the intersection between popular fiction, social ideology, and the publishing industry. His work aims to destabilise popular conceptions of genre through close reading and emphasis on literary production; thus, his PhD thesis looks at canon formation within Golden Age detective fiction, and the socio-political value of the crime genre. He is also a freelance reviewer of contemporary crime fiction, an author interviewer, and a bookseller.

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**Dark Secret in the Country: *Ladies' Bane* and "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches"**

Sherlock Holmes has been associated with the city, London, and often critics see him as the heroic detective who tackles the anonymity of modern city life. Regardless, Holmes famously notes in "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches" that the beautiful countryside is seethed with crimes of "hellish cruelty" and "hidden wickedness" amidst "these lonely houses, each in its own fields, filled for the most part with poor ignorant folk who know little of the law." Holmes' words seem to predict the arrival of cozy mystery in the Golden Age, mostly set in the country and a tightly knit community, and at the same time pose us two curious questions: Does true danger lie on the streets or inside home?; Is the family's dark secret retained better in the country or in the city? In order to explore the latter question and to understand underlying ideological concepts about the community in the Golden Age detective fiction, I will analyze *Ladies' Bane* by Patricia Wentworth along with "The Copper Beeches." *Ladies' Bane*, which includes a reference to "The Copper Beeches," also centers on a country house and a governess, like Conan Doyle's short story. Because of the nature of her work and incidental conditions, the governess is central to the discovery of or formation of the family secret. I will argue that the Golden Age mystery uses the governess's ambiguous social position both in stabilizing and destabilizing the sense of community.

Keywords: country, country house mystery, community, governess, Patricia Wentworth, Miss Silver, Sherlock Holmes, "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches," the Golden Age

**Chiho Nakagawa** is Associate Professor at Nara Women's University, Japan. She teaches American literature and Gothic novels, as well as feminist literature. She has published papers on 19<sup>th</sup>-century American fiction, Shirley Jackson, vampire fiction, and Yokomizo Seishi. She is also a founding member of GAA, Gothic in Asia Association. She is currently working on a monograph on houses in the Gothic and crime fiction.

## **SESSION 6: Friday, 28 June, 16:30-18:00**

### **Panel 6.1: Traces of Sherlock Holmes (A-112)**

**Chair: Dorothea Flothow**

**Sabrina Yuan Hao**

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#### **Decolonizing Sherlock: Zhou Shoujuan's Reworking of the Lincheng Train Hijacking**

In May 1923, a group of bandits derailed a blue express train running between Shanghai and Beijing in Lincheng, a rural town in Shandong province, China. Shandong was an area that had been under the colonial influence of Britain, Germany and Japan since the 19th century and had then just returned to the control of the Chinese government. Passengers on the train were held hostage by the bandits for ransom. Among them were 200 Chinese citizens and more than 30 foreign subjects from countries including Britain, Italy, the United States, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. After rounds of negotiations with the local warlord-led government, the captors' demands were met. With the release of the hostages, Chinese and foreign, the 37 days crisis came to an end. The same year the Lincheng incident caught the attention of Zhou Shoujuan (1895-1968), an important translator and author of the Republican era. Inspired by his translations of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories and Maurice Leblanc's Arsène Lupin tales, Zhou retold the incident, introducing the two renowned Western detectives as the protagonists rather than retaining the original characters. Yet surprisingly in Zhou's narrative, Sherlock Holmes, the master sleuth is no longer assigned his traditional role of a capable investigator and problem solver but is relegated to a helpless hostage relying on Lupin's aid and protection. This paper explores Zhou's decolonizing effort as a crime author in his fictional adaptation of the Lincheng incident, featuring Sherlock Holmes.

**Keywords:** Lincheng train hijacking, decolonizing Sherlock

**Sabrina Yuan Hao** is Assistant Professor at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies and Honorary Research Fellow of the Chinese Studies Centre at The University of Sydney. She has published on Shakespearean tragedy, historical crime fiction, and comparative literature. She is the author of *Robert van Gulik and His Chinese Sherlock Holmes: The Global Travels of Judge Dee* (Brill, 2023). Her current research interests include crime fiction, law and literature, comparative and world literature, translation studies, postcolonialism and globalization.

**Edit Gáll**

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### **Gothic Villains in Sherlock Holmes Stories**

Detective fiction as a subgenre of crime fiction focuses on the process of solving a mystery, and it usually features a detective who impresses the reader with his skills of ratiocination. There seems to be a critical consensus that the first full-fledged detective story emerged with the publication of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories in the early 1890s. This exactly coincided with the resurgence of the Gothic in the 1890s: these new Gothic novels featured quintessentially Gothic tropes and characters such as the double and the vampire. Likewise, many Holmes stories have Gothic characteristics. By means of drawing comparisons between Gothic genre conventions and Doyle's fiction, this paper argues that there are two strikingly Gothic features in "The Speckled Band," "The Creeping Man," and "The Sussex Vampire": first, the initial impression that there are supernatural powers at work; second, the Gothic figure of the older villain, the father, who proves to be the source of crime or, at least, anxiety in the family. The apparently supernatural element is later revealed as an unknown kind of poisonous drug. The illusion of nonhuman interference is strengthened by the presence of animals as secret instruments in wrongdoing. Detection entails the exposure of the father as a domestic tyrant who misuses his authority based on wealth, knowledge and social position to intimidate, manipulate or even kill family members. This paper concludes that Gothic Holmes stories are indicative of declining paternal authority and anxieties about physical and moral degeneration.

Keywords: detective fiction, Gothic, Sherlock Holmes

**Edit Gáll** is Senior Lecturer at the Institute of English Studies of Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. She obtained her PhD at ELTE in 2018 with a dissertation on Sylvia Plath's late poetry interpreted as social critique. Her research interests include a wide range of early and mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century English and American fiction, including both poetry and prose.

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### **Prehistoric Detection and the Science of Crime in *The Hound of the Baskervilles***

Science has been integral to crime fiction since the invention of the detective genre. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, social scientists defined crime as “primitive”, and fictional sleuths such as Sherlock Holmes—with his chemical experiments, microscopic observations, and obscure taxonomical knowledge—had emerged as scientists of detection. Scholars have argued that the rational methodologies of these early fictional detectives seek to restore a social order disrupted by the specter of expanding criminality. My paper complicates this trend with an analysis of Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Set amongst prehistoric dwellings and ancient standing stones, the novel draws on conventional representations of the isolated English moors as a locus of gothic unease and criminal activity. Undeveloped and untamed, its inhabitants were often depicted as simpleminded rustics unchanged by the industrial revolution. But during his case on the moors Holmes encounters an educated, culturally refined community of scientific practitioners engaged in fieldwork. The murderer living amongst them is a rational expert employing scientific methods to achieve criminal ends, and it’s the detective who crudely subsists in a wild habitat while employing rudimentary detection techniques to solve this crime. Countering decades of Victorian ideologies that viewed detection as an increasingly cutting-edge science and crime as the manifestation of vulgar biological urges, *Baskervilles* portrays detection as primitive and crime as technologically savvy. Analyzing the novel alongside contemporary Victorian theorists of both crime and detection, I attempt to position the Holmes canon as implicitly registering failures of detection in the face of advancements in the technology of crime.

Keywords: science and detective fiction

**Emily August** is Associate Professor of Literature at Stockton University, where she teaches courses in 19<sup>th</sup>-century British literature and culture, medical humanities, literatures of crime and detection, and creative writing. Her scholarly research focuses on medical depictions of bodies and corpses in 19<sup>th</sup>-century literary, visual, and clinical texts. Her poetry collection *The Punishments Must Be a School* examines themes of intergenerational trauma, domestic violence, educational harm, and biracial identity.



## **Panel 6.2: Postmodern Experimentations in Crime Fiction (A-213)**

**Chair: Norbert Gyuris**

**Phillip Halton**

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### **A Postmodern Framework for Studying and Writing Crime Fiction**

The term “postmodern” is broadly applied when describing cultural artifacts, especially within the field of literature. But postmodernism is a complex and varied philosophy that resists a singular definition. The result is that a wide variety of works are labeled as postmodern, often with reference to only a fragment of the overall body of theory. This paper creates a comprehensive working framework of nine postmodern concepts drawn from five key postmodern philosophers. This framework is intended for use in identifying and analyzing postmodern crime fiction, and also as a tool for its creation. By unraveling the intricacies and defining key elements of postmodern thought as they relate to crime fiction, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of this form of the genre.

Keywords: crime fiction; postmodernism; post-structuralism; historiographic metafiction

**Phillip Halton** is a Canadian Army veteran and author of five books. His latest work, *Red Warning* (2024), is a postmodern crime novel set in Afghanistan. He holds a Master of Defence Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada and a Master of Arts in Creative and Critical Writing from the University of Gloucestershire. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Gloucestershire.

**Šárka Dvořáková**

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## **American Detectives in “Golden Czech Hands”: Parody, Pastiche, and Meta-Crime Fiction**

Keywords: American crime fiction, Czech crime fiction, parody, pastiche, humor, meta-crime fiction

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the Czechs have “golden hands.” This idiom refers to their resourcefulness and ability to repair, refashion, and improvise, useful especially under the Soviet overrule during the second half of the twentieth century. This paper repurposes the phrase to underline Czech authors’ and filmmakers’ creativity in working with the themes and characters originating in American crime fiction. The two discussed films—*Adéla ještě nevečeřela* (“Dinner for Adele,” 1977), directed by Oldřich Lipský; and *Mazaný Filip* (“Smart Philip,” 2003), directed by Václav Marhoul—parody the stories of Nick Carter and Phil Marlowe, respectively. The approach of Lubomír Tomek in his novel *Mary Peson ve spárech podsvětí* (“Mary Peson in the Claws of the Underworld,” 1985) is more complex. Tomek brings together several more or less twisted versions of well-loved characters from American crime fiction to investigate the kidnapping case of the century while still letting a nearly superhuman Czechoslovak of his own creation save the day.

Tomek’s novel and the two films employ parody and pastiche, both widely used devices in the late twentieth-century Czech cultural production. All three rely on the audience’s knowledge of American crime fiction with Tomek and Lipský additionally capitalizing on the audience’s familiarity with Czech culture to represent the humorous collisions of the American and Czech world views and ways of solving crime. By making these texts accessible to an international audience, this paper seeks to explore the intersection of American crime fiction with the Czech tradition of parody, pastiche, and self-deprecating humor.

**Šárka Dvořáková** is a PhD candidate in Anglo-American Literatures at Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic. Her dissertation focuses on the representation of Scottish islands in crime fiction, but she is interested in all literary islands, taking inspiration from various theories of place and from Literary Island Studies. In her spare time, she is fascinated and sustained by the sense of humor of her countrymen. Šárka is also a passionate teacher and loves introducing new students to literary scholarship.

**Alan Mattli**

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**The Last Detective: Disassembling a Genre Through Historiographic Metafiction in Joyce Carol Oates' *Mysteries of Winterthurn***

Keywords: historiographic metafiction, Joyce Carol Oates, Gilded Age, ideology, deconstruction

Joyce Carol Oates' 1984 novel *Mysteries of Winterthurn* is a prime example of what Linda Hutcheon calls "historiographic metafiction": set in the fictional upstate-New York city of Winterthurn between the mid-1880s and the early 1910s, it chronicles, in heavily ironic fashion, three extraordinary cases from the casebook of amateur sleuth Xavier Kilgarvan, appropriating the popular image of a populist, male-dominated, rigidly classist Gilded Age in order to subversively comment on both Ronald Reagan's America and the ideology of the classic detective story. Over the course of its three novella-length mysteries, the novel traces Xavier's path from a naïve believer in "balance and justice," as gleaned from his beloved tales of C. Auguste Dupin and Sherlock Holmes, to a disillusioned veteran investigator, who is locked in a perennial struggle to make his voice heard above the din of a violently prejudiced public sphere, where everyone fancies themselves a detective. Indeed, the novel's narrative trajectory sees the main character go from styling himself as an arbiter of absolute truth and justice to abandoning the profession of criminal detection and assimilating into the anonymity of uneventful, unsuspecting bourgeois existence. Through this pessimistic view of its detective hero at the turn of the century, and through its metafictional historical gamesmanship, *Mysteries of Winterthurn* effectively declares the figure obsolete, rejecting both the promise of its intellectual authority and the normative ideology it traditionally espouses.

**Alan Mattli** is Postdoctoral Researcher and Research and Teaching Assistant at the English Department of the University of Zurich. He received a PhD in English Literature from the University of Zurich in 2023. His dissertation, entitled "The Conservative Mystery Lover Will Object: Revisionist Crime Fiction in the U.S.," offers an illustrative analysis of post-war American crime fiction as a key theatre of postmodern literature, identifying its seemingly disparate subgenres as an internally and ideologically coherent rebuttal to traditional detective fiction in the Sherlock Holmes mold. Alan Mattli also holds a BA and an MA in English Literature and Linguistics and Film Studies as well as a BA in Swiss History, all from the University of Zurich. Other research interests include postmodernism more generally, 20<sup>th</sup>-century literature, American horror fiction and film, the politics of popular art, and video game theory. He also works as a freelance film critic.

### **Panel 6.3: Forms of Violence and Ethical Dilemmas in Crime Fiction (A-313)**

**Chair: Caroline Reitz**

**Linda Ledford-Miller**

University of Scranton

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#### ***All the Sinners Bleed: A Town Haunted by History***

Keywords: southern noir, serial killer, rural setting

S.A. Cosby's 2023 novel, *All the Sinners Bleed*, takes place in Charon, a rural Southern town filled with good ole boys who honor the Confederate flag and think of the Civil War as a war of Northern aggression. Though murder has been a rare occurrence in Charon, the newly elected first Black sheriff must deal with a school shooting. Latrell, a Black former student shoots a White beloved teacher, Mr. Spearman, and is in turn shot by two White deputies. If that weren't enough of a conundrum, the investigation soon reveals that Latrell and Spearman were two members of a trio that abused and tortured Black boys and girls, and the third member is still at large. The school shooting leads to the search for a serial killer by a sheriff who is disrespected by White citizens and distrusted by Black ones. *All the Sinners Bleed* is a Southern noir thriller that parses the intersections of Southern history and heritage, policing, sex, race, class, and religion. The novel holds a mirror up to a nation where despite the Civil Rights movement, "the past is never dead. It's not even past," as William Faulkner observed.

**Linda Ledford-Miller** has a Masters in Comparative Literature from the Pennsylvania State University, and in Luso-Brazilian literature from the University of Texas at Austin, where she also earned her PhD in Comparative Literature, specializing in Literature of the Americas. She has published widely on travel writing and women writers. An avid reader of mysteries, she has shifted her focus to crime fiction. She is a member of the Book Review team for Crime Fiction Studies and serves as Coordinator for the International Crime Fiction Association Annual Book Prize.

**Roberta Garrett**

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**The Case of Sally Challen and The Bubble and Squeak Murder: Revenge, Justice and Representations of the Victim Turned Killer in True Crime Documentaries**

The paper will consider the cultural and media response to abused women who kill their spouses and question the extent to which contemporary domestic noir fiction – such as *The Girl on the Train* and *Big Little Lies* – informs social attitudes towards the victim turned murderess. It will contrast the case of the now freed Sally Challen (who was initially convicted for bludgeoning her abusive husband to death with a hammer) with the more recent case of Penelope Jackson, another long-suffering victim that knifed her husband after years of abuse and coercive control. Using approaches from feminist criminology, Catherine Belsey's articulation of the distinction between revenge and justice and Ernest Goffman's ideas of framing, it will examine the contrasting media representation of the two women in news reports and documentaries (*The Case of Sally Challen*, 2019 BBC and *The Bubble and Squeak Murder*, 2023 Amazon Prime). The paper will highlight the patriarchal assumptions that framed the public discussion of both women, resulting in the construction of Sally Challen as sympathetic victim and essentially 'good' women while Penelope Jackson's is depicted as both angry, vicious murderer and an object of ridicule. The paper will also argue that, although recent fiction representations of domestic violence show much greater awareness of the dynamics of abuse and coercive control (as understood by feminist criminology and organisations that work with victims of abuse) in their consistent choice of the heroine-victim as an innocent young wife, domestic noir novels unwittingly reinforce stereotypes that contribute to the rough justice meted out to abused women who kill.

Keywords: domestic abuse, true crime documentary, misogyny

**Roberta Garrett** is Senior Lecturer on the Creative Writing and Media programmes in the Department of Arts and Cultural Industries at the University of East London. She has published widely on representations of gender, class and race in popular literature and film. She is the author of *Postmodern Chick-Flicks: The Return of the Woman's Film* (Palgrave, 2008) co-editor of *We Need to Talk About Family: Essays on Neoliberalism, the Family and Popular Culture* (Cambridge Scholars, 2016) author of *Writing the Modern Family: Contemporary Literature, Motherhood and Neoliberal Culture* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2021) and co-editor of a new *Bloomsbury Contemporary Critical Perspectives on Rachel Cusk* (forthcoming, July 2024). She has published numerous book chapters and articles in journals such as *Clues*, *Studies in the Maternal*, *The Journal of Screenwriting* and *Feminist Media Studies*.

**Angelika Reichmann**

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### **Sins, Debts and Food: Renegotiating Feminisms in *Fargo* Season 5**

*Fargo* Season 5 (2023-24) is a blatant protest against domestic violence, with an apparently didactic message: rooted in hegemonic masculinity, WASP ideology and the commodification of human relations, domestic violence is to be fought by the sisterhood of women. That said, the series is also a blatant demonstration of how quickly crime narratives react to current social phenomena (e.g. #MeToo Movement), and how that reaction often takes the form of rewriting generic conventions – in this case, rewriting the residue of gender stereotypes present in the hypotext of the *Fargo* universe, the Coen brothers' eponymous and otherwise highly subversive thriller from 1996. I argue that Season 5 is a radical rewriting and counter-narrative to the cliché of the helpless female victim, the kidnapped wife (Jean Lundegaard), who is unfailingly represented by the Coens as a ridiculous object of business transactions, and thus a caricature of a human being. Turned into a comically heroic domestic angel cum Rambo in Season 5, Dot Lyon (aka Nadine Tillman neé Bump) is willing and able to protect at all costs her domestic idyll and motherly identity, epitomised in food and feeding. This apparently antifeminist stance, however, at the same time rejects conceptualising human relations in terms of debt and business transactions and lies at the foundation of Dot's fight against objectification and victimisation, an agenda she shares with the unlikely sisterhood that assists her rescue. Helped and adopted respectively by Judie Syfers-inspired police officer Indira Olmstead and militant feminist debt management business shark Mrs. Lyon Senior, Dot Lyon as a feminine subject reinforces a continuity among the second, first and current waves of feminism, as well as deconstructing feminist stereotypes and refuting all forms of objectification, commodification and violence – whether physical or representational.

Keywords: domestic violence, objectification, commodification, subversion

**Angelika Reichmann** is Professor of English Literature at Eszterházy Károly Catholic University. She is the author of *Desire – Identity – Narrative: Dostoevsky's Devils in English Modernism* (2012) and has published widely on English and Russian modernist rewrites of Dostoevsky's classic novel – on Andrey Bely, Fyodor Sologub, Joseph Conrad, Aldous Huxley and John Cowper Powys, among others. Her most recent studies focus on J.M. Coetzee and Dostoevsky. Apart from comparative studies of Russian and English-language fiction, her chief academic interests include adaptation theory, psychoanalytic literary criticism and the female Gothic. She is also a member of the Translation Studies Research Group at Eszterházy Károly Catholic University and co-editor of *Eger Journal of English Studies*.

## SESSION 7: Saturday, 29 June, 09:00-11:00

### Panel 7.1: Geographies of Crime (A-112)

Chair: Stewart King

**Barbara Pezzotti**

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### Geographies of Crime: Ethnographic Investigations on Mediterranean Islands

In crime fiction, the island setting is often utilised as an enlarged version of the mystery of the locked room. This use of the island as self-contained and separated from the mainland often brings with it the idea of immobility and a fixed culture and identity, and results in crime novels that reinforce stereotypical views of islands as primitive and backward. However, recent scholarship highlights that an island is far from being a “immobile” land resistant to external influences. As Chris Bongie has persuasively argued, an island is in fact “the site of double identity” that is at the same time closed and open to external influences (1998, 18). James Kneale also points out that the island separation from the mainland is more “a product of imperial thinking about space rather than a question of absolute distance” (2017, 205).

Through the analyses of English, French, and Italian crime novels set on Mediterranean islands such as Philippe Claudel’s *L’Archipel du Chien* (“Dog Island,” 2018), Marcello Fois’s *Dura Madre* (2001), and Jeffrey Siger’s *Murder in Mykonos* (2008), this paper argues that in its more innovative examples, crime fiction endorses an idea of the island as a “multiple island” (Bufalino 1993, v-vii) and becomes a privileged space to discuss multilayered identities. Ultimately, crime fiction set on islands can still reiterate stereotypical views on islands’ life and society, but also operate as a crucial platform to discuss postcolonial crime fiction and detection as well as cultural diversity and ethnographic issues.

Keywords: island literature, Mediterranean crime fiction, identity in crime fiction, post-colonial crime fiction, ethnography and crime fiction

**Barbara Pezzotti** is a Cassamarca Senior Lecturer in European Languages at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. Her research interests include crime fiction and popular culture, literary geographies and utopian literature. Her most recent monograph is *Mediterranean Crime Fiction: Transcultural Narratives in and around the “Great Sea”* (Cambridge University Press, 2023). She is also the co-editor (with Jean Anderson and Carolina Miranda) of *The Foreign in International Crime Fiction: Transcultural Representations* (London: Continuum, 2012); *Serial Crime Fiction: Dying for More* (London and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015); and *Blood on the Table: Essays on Food in International Crime Fiction* (Jefferson NC: McFarland, 2018).



**Enakshi Samarawickrama**

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### **Cosy Mystery in Sri Lanka: Nadishka Aloysius' A Sri Lankan Mystery Series**

This paper examines Sri Lankan crime fiction as a new development in Sri Lankan Anglophone fiction, looking at Nadishka Aloysius' cosy mystery series A Sri Lankan Mystery. Crime fiction as a genre is not as developed in Sri Lanka as it is in other Asian countries such as India and Japan, and Aloysius' series marks a shift towards an established murder mystery series that is both contemporary and localised. Aloysius' series is reminiscent of other successful cosy mystery series such as Alexander McCall Smith's The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency with its unique and unconventional setting and characters. The series so far consists of four novels: *The Body in the Paddyfield* (2020), *Murder at the Wedding* (2020), *Death at the Fete* (2022), and *Corpses in Colombo* (2022). Apart from being set in Sri Lankan localities, including both urban and rural settings, the characters and situations in the novels are also in keeping with the cultural landscape of the country. With its two female amateur sleuths, the novels also engage in social critiques on marriage, female empowerment, and social class. Furthermore, the novels are marketed using their setting of the exotic tropical island nation as a unique selling point. This paper will explore the significance of Aloysius' series in the contemporary Sri Lankan Anglophone literary sphere, how the series tackles contemporary social issues in Sri Lanka, and how the novels' marketing is designed to attract audiences based on the appeal of its geographical location.

**Keywords:** Sri Lankan crime fiction, Nadishka Aloysius, A Sri Lankan Mystery series, cosy mystery, murder mystery

**Enakshi Samarawickrama** is Assistant Professor of Literature in the School of English at the University of Nottingham Malaysia. She is interested in researching portrayals of gender in crime fiction, the power dynamics at play between femininities and masculinities and the concepts of female victimhood, violence, and agency. She also explores how gender intersects with other identities such as race, religion, queerness, and disability in both fiction and on social media.

**Lívía Szélpál**

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### **An Eco-Detective Reading of Donna Leon's *Earthly Remains***

This presentation offers an ecocritical reading of the 2017 crime fiction novel *Earthly Remains* by Donna Leon. This novel is the twenty-sixth in the Commissario Brunetti series set in Venice and its Lagoon. Leon considers herself an eco-detective writer with a concern for the environment. Venice's vulnerability to rising sea levels, the overwhelming impact of mass tourism on the city, and the impact of the climate crisis are recurring topics in her novels. This presentation aims to scrutinize four issues: (1) It focuses on the character of Commissario Brunetti, an empathetic police detective passionate about searching for truth and indirectly performing the epistemological function of the ecological detective. (2) The analysis focuses on the representation of the detective in the narrative compared to the "chevalier detective" of Edgar Allan Poe and the "consulting detective" of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Brunetti is more interested in conducting interviews concerning crime investigations than in building his career. (3) The discussion reads the city and its surroundings as a narrative. Venice is a central character in Leon's novels, not only as a setting of crime but also as the symbolic representation of the city's moral, social, economic, and physical erosion, which plays a vital role in the narration. In this novel, Brunetti retreats from the noise and problems of the city to a quiet island, Sant'Erasmo, one of the largest islands in the Lagoon. (4) Therefore, the presentation also explores the narrative style and reflects on the ecocritical theory and climate fiction informed by detective stories.

Keywords: Donna Leon, eco-detective, crime fiction, *Earthly Remains*, Brunetti, Venice, ecocriticism

**Lívía Szélpál** is Senior Assistant Professor at the Department of English Studies, University of Szeged (SZTE), where she teaches American and British History, Literature, and Culture. She completed her M.A. in American Studies (2004) and History (2005) at the University of Szeged (SZTE) and earned a Ph.D. in Comparative History at the Central European University in 2013. Her research interests include American Studies, the history (including the unconventional histories) of the USA, contemporary British and American literature, the issue of history on film, urban history, and modern and contemporary American culture. She is an advisory board member of AMERICANA – E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary. She is a member of the AHEA, HUSSE, HAAS, Spechel: Angol-Magyar Kulturális Egyesület and Hajnal István Kör: Társadalomtörténeti Egyesület.

**Monika Jurkiewicz**

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### **Thriller Genre and Political Criticism in Claudia Piñeiro's *Las Maldiciones* (2017)**

The following paper will examine how contemporary Argentine crime fiction writer, Claudia Piñeiro, uses the genre as a tool for political criticism in her 2017 novel *Las Maldiciones*.

The novel focuses on the experiences of the protagonist, Román Sabaté, who unwittingly becomes involved in the life of a former businessman turned politician, Rovira. As a leader of the Pragma political party and candidate for the next governor of Buenos Aires, Rovira, employs Román under a false premise, eventually coercing the protagonist to fulfil an unethical request, to ensure his own success in the upcoming elections. Often categorised as a political thriller, the novel combines a variety of narrative devices and forms, such as: elements of suspense, mystery, pursuit as well as alternating perspectives and voices, transcripts of recorded conversations, phone calls, and notes on journalistic research, in an attempt to portray the complexities of Argentina's contemporary political scene. Using this amalgamation of narrative methods, the author draws a comparison between past and present approaches to politics, to illustrate new forms of governance where political figures emerge as a result of marketing strategies, media manipulation, corruption and deceit.

Consequently, this paper will analyse how Piñeiro uses elements of the thriller subgenre within her narrative to address themes of commercialisation of politics and abuse of power, ultimately illustrating the reality of the contemporary political issues in Argentina. Furthermore, the paper will highlight the broader international relevance and application of the novel.

Keywords: thriller, Argentina, contemporary *novela negra*, politics

**Monika Jurkiewicz** is currently a third-year PhD student in Spanish Studies at the University of Galway and recipient of the National University of Ireland Traveling Doctoral Studentship in Latin American Literature. Her research centres on the work of the bestselling Argentine author, Claudia Piñeiro, and her use of the contemporary crime fiction genre as a tool for social criticism. The study primarily focuses on the theme of systemic violence and its role in Piñeiro's intricate portrayal of contemporary Argentine society. Since starting the PhD programme, she has presented her research at several crime genre specific conferences and was one of the co-organisers of The Ninth Interdisciplinary Conference of the International Crime Genre Research Network, Ireland in June 2023 at University of Galway.

## **Panel 7.2: Fascinating Precursors and Intersections in Crime Fiction (A-213)**

**Chair: Angelika Reichmann**

**Zsuzsanna Péri-Nagy**

KRE BTK, Budapest

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### **Crime and the Transcendental: Early Traditions**

Crime was a recurrent theme from the earliest traditions of fictional narratives: the genre, gaining its efflorescence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has a vast amount of antecedents in the earlier literary traditions, even from the literature of the Middle Ages. In the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, crime is a recurrent topic, for instance in several pieces of the *Canterbury Tales* it appears in multiple forms and from multiple perspectives: ranging from the burlesque folklore-like tales up to those in which the transcendental realities define and modify the interpretation of crime in theologically-philosophically sophisticated patterns. These perspectives are present in “The Miller’s Tale,” which is the representative of the gross fabliau, whereas in “The Pardoner’s Tale” and in “The Friar’s Tale,” the transcendental dimension not only defines the plot of the crime narratives but offers clues for the interpretative network as well. The presence of the otherworldly figures creates an early tradition for such works of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century high-literature crime narratives as Dostoevsky’s *Brothers Karamazov*. Even if a direct influence cannot be established between the two authors, the analysis of the working of the transcendental entities in these works may shed light on the narrative and interpretative modus operandi of these classics.

Keywords: crime, tradition, transcendental, Middle Ages, Dostoevsky

**Péri-Nagy Zsuzsanna** is Senior Lecturer teaching at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church. She teaches medieval English literature, literature of the Renaissance, introduction into literature, as well as Historical aspects of English literature and culture. Her main research fields include medieval English literature, interdisciplinary research of text and images, medieval iconography, manuscript studies, as well as medieval popular devotion and mysticism. She is also interested in the study of the works, intellectual and devotional life of the father of medieval English studies, J. R. R. Tolkien; and the works of his colleague and friend, C. S. Lewis.

**John Clarke**

The Open University, UK

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### **On Being Clever: The Collective Intelligence of The Thursday Murder Club**

Being clever is a central issue for the genre known as ‘cosy crime’. Its protagonists have to be clever – from the cunning crimes committed to the brilliant detectives who solve them. As Oskar Jensen argues, (2023), this is a genre of “cerebral, knowing crime”. In this genre, the authors are also expected to be clever in constructing plots, settings, characters and resolutions. One striking example of this has been the praise (and criticism) for Richard Osman’s cleverness in reinventing the ‘cosy crime’ genre in his *The Thursday Murder Club* series.

Keywords: cleverness, collective intelligence, cosy crime, gentrification

**John Clarke** is an Emeritus Professor of Social Policy at the Open University, UK. His work has explored a wide range of issues from the changing relations of welfare, state and nation to the crises of power and politics in the contemporary UK (most recently in *The Battle for Britain: Crises, Conflicts and the Conjecture*, Bristol University Press, 2023). He has a long-standing interest in crime fiction and has previously written about it for the Open University.

**Charlotte Adenau**  
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## **Gothic Modes in Serial Killer Narratives**

This paper is the work-in-progress of my Master's thesis. I am interested in the fascination held by the general public for serial killers, both fictional and based in real life. In particular I attempt to understand the ways in which fictional serial killer narratives represent perpetrators, victims, and investigators, which can be a first step in engaging in a more ethical way with crime fiction. As Paul Simpson notes, the prevalence of serial killer narratives led to a mystification of serial killers as "dysfunctional loners; [and] that they are all white males; they are only motivated by sex; they all travel and operate across a wide area; that they cannot stop killing; they are all insane or evil geniuses; and that they all want to get caught" (2). A way into an ethical discussion of serial killer narratives can come through the intersection between crime fiction and the Gothic. Importantly, historically, Gothic tales not only offered a delicious sense of fear and shock to their readership but also followed a very specific ideological agenda (see Miles). Furthermore, as Jenkins writes, "serial killers 'provide a means for society to project its worst nightmares and fantasies'" (qtd. in Simpson 3). These projections, then, need to be scrutinised for the ways in which they challenge or perpetuate norms held in place by hegemonic society.

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Keywords: Gothic, serial killers, othering

**Charlotte Adenau** is a third-year student of the master's program Anglophone Modernities at the University of Potsdam. She received a Bachelor's degree in English and European History from the University of Bayreuth. During her studies she became interested in crime fiction studies and has written several papers as well as her Bachelor's thesis on the representation of violence against women in crime fiction novels. In her Master's thesis she is working on the intersection between Gothic fiction and serial killer narratives and the ways in which the Gothic mode is used in perpetuating social norms and ideologies.

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### **Remoralising the Fairytale in Michael Buckley's The Sisters Grimm Series**

The typical fairytale formula comprises lessons of moral instruction, magical elements and the seemingly everlasting fight between good and evil. In classic fairytales, criminality is often portrayed symbolically through archetypes embodying evil who are ultimately defeated by representatives of the good and virtuous. Thus, the nexus of morality and criminality already lies at the core of their moral suasion. Also, the fairytale displays a quite ambivalent attitude towards crime "with many seemingly reprehensible acts either going unpunished or explicitly rewarded" (Short 2018: 171).

This paper aims to investigate the hybridity of crime fiction in Michael Buckley's The Sisters Grimm series, which intricately merges children's literature and crime fiction with a fairytale setting. By incorporating elements of the classic whodunit and detective stories, the series usurps the fairytale's paradigm of morality and criminality. Justice is served through the fairytale detectives Sabrina and Daphne, descendants of the Brothers Grimm. Within the books' fairytale setting, the Grimms are no longer 'collectors' but investigators who actively police the borders of morality. Further, The Sisters Grimm transcends the rigid boundaries between good and evil by subverting the archetypal fairytale characters and relocating their traditional functions (good vs. evil) on the moral spectrum. Thus, this paper argues that Buckley's The Sisters Grimm series remoralises the classic fairytale by transforming it into a piece of crime fiction for young readers.

Keywords: fairytale, crime fiction, children's literature, morality, detective story

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### **Panel 7.3: The Many Faces of True Crime (A-313)**

**Chair: Nicole Kenley**

**David Conlon**

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#### **True Crime and Poetry: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Innovations**

At first glance, true crime and poetry seem unlikely bedfellows. And yet, there is a historical connection between the two via the murder ballad tradition(s), not to mention the many instances of transgression that are found narrated in verse form from antiquity onwards. What is usually recognised as the beginning of the crime genre proper and poetry have a noteworthy if inauspicious point of intersection with Edgar Allan Poe's remark that "The death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world." In this paper, I look at a selection of relatively contemporary poetic works that concern investigations into femicide, offering (among other things) implicit critiques of Poe's remark: *Jane: A Murder* (2005) by Maggie Nelson, *Antígona González* (2012) by Sara Uribe, and *Drápa* (2014) by Gerður Kristný. In analysing these works, the paper will address the ways in which contemporary poetry is potentially equipped to shed light on dimensions to femicide that are less accessible to prose narrative forms, and also to subvert and critique some of the frameworks and tropes specific to modern-day true crime narrative.

Keywords: true crime, poetry

**David Conlon** is Lecturer at Maynooth University, where he teaches courses on Crime and Popular Culture in Latin America, Latin American Crime Cinema, The Short Story in Latin America, Translation, and Spanish Language. His main research interests lie in Latin American Literature and Film, with a particular focus on crime narratives. He has published work on Norah Lange, Rodolfo Walsh, and Kleber Kleber Mendonça Filho, among others, and has publications forthcoming on Jorge Luis Borges and Latin American Crime Fiction on screen.

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## **Distant Listening: Fictionality in True Crime Podcasts**

Millions of people listen to true crime podcasts on a daily basis, but what explains their popularity? In the project “Distant Listening: Fictionality in True Crime Podcasts”, I investigate the fact/fiction dichotomy in English-language true crime podcasts and analyse the role of poetic devices in suspending disbelief among their audiences. While previous research has examined the use of such devices in crime fiction, less attention has been given to their use in true crime podcasts, despite the genre’s soaring popularity and its unique aural delivery. The project applies computational methods from distant listening to an extensive dataset of true crime podcasts to assess whether true crime makes heavier use of fictionality-signalling devices than other non-fiction genres, despite its focus on factuality. A comparative approach is adopted, contrasting true crime podcasts with crime fiction novels and other (e.g. journalistic) podcast genres. In doing so, the project aims to verify the hypothesis that the specific poetics of the true crime podcast are able to enhance a sense of drama and suspense in their narratives by using techniques commonly associated with fiction. This, in turn, can increase the listener’s willingness to suspend disbelief and accept the story as true. In this presentation, I will discuss the outline of my project and reflect on the first, and perhaps most challenging, step in the research pipeline, which is the collection and processing of the audio-based data.

Keywords: true crime, podcast studies, digital humanities, fictionality

**Loren Verreyen** holds a BA in Linguistics and Literature and an MA in Digital Text Analysis from the University of Antwerp, Belgium, as well as an MA in Artificial Intelligence from the KU Leuven, Belgium. She is currently working as a PhD researcher at the University of Antwerp under the supervision of Mike Kestemont and Thomas Smits. In her research, Loren is working on the construction of fictionality in the contemporary true crime podcast using computational methods. She has previously presented at DH Benelux, ADHO DH2023, and the Computational Humanities Research Conference 2023. Loren’s research is funded by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO: application number 11PTV24N).

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## **Murder as Fine Art: Cultivation of the “True Crime” Audience in the Work of Thomas De Quincey & Edgar Allan Poe**

This paper will consider the importance of true crime narratives and their audiences in the first half of the nineteenth century, the key formative era for modern detective fiction. Using Thomas De Quincey’s “On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts” (1827) as a case study, it will argue, in part, that the Romantic representation of the true crime audience - and the parallel cultivation of a crime fiction readership - is a crucial precursor to Edgar Allan Poe’s tales of ratiocination. Generic hybridity is a virtual prerequisite for innovation in serialised crime fiction. We see a constant blurring of lines between nonfictional crime narratives / journalistic reporting in the periodical press on the one hand and fictionalisations of crime, for purposes of both satire and entertainment, on the other. The paper compares De Quincey’s use of the Ratcliffe Highway murders in his satirical essay with Poe’s fictionalisation of the case of the murder of Mary Rogers in the *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (1842). Two major motivations of the crime audience/readership are implied in the early experiments of British and American detective fiction: namely, connoisseurship and dilettantism. Arguably, the creation or cultivation of an audience with these proclivities is the most important single factor in the emergence of detective fiction as a modern genre. The paper will draw on the work of Charles Rzepka and others in outlining the context for the interaction of these formative literary texts and early ‘true crime’ consumers. It will also consider analysis of Poe’s Dupin stories by critics such as John Walsh and Richard Kopley.

**Keywords:** Romanticism, connoisseurship, Ratcliff Highway Murders, satire, True Crime

**Anthony Howell** is Senior Lecturer, Staff Tutor and Associate lecturer in the Department of English Literature and Creative Writing at the Open University. He is currently Chair of the MA in English programme. He has contributed teaching units to a variety of OU modules and developed new teaching strategies to support students in secure environments. His research interests are primarily in the field of Romanticism, in particular the work of Sir Walter Scott, William Wordsworth and John Clare. Recently, he has developed free-to-study curriculum in the field of Crime Fiction Studies, including a popular course on Agatha Christie and the Golden Age of Detective Fiction on the OU’s multi-award winning platform OpenLearn.

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**In True Crime We Trust: The Artifactuality of John Douglas and Mark Olshaker's *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI Elite Serial Crime Unit* (1995) and Netflix's *Mindhunter* (2017)**

It is often taken for granted that “true crime” will indeed, as its name suggests, convey a narrative that is wholly true to life. Many consumers of true crime are encouraged to trust in the sincerity of the genre; writers and directors take great care to deliver narratives that will be taken at face value. It is the purported “truth” of true crime that this paper seeks to deconstruct by considering the cross-generic tactics used in true crime texts. This paper will, therefore, utilise the Derridean lens of artifactuality to demonstrate how true crime seeks to construct “authentic” narratives which seek to, at the very least, obscure their unquestionable artifice. Using John Douglas and Mark Olshaker's *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI Elite Serial Crime Unit* (first published in 1995 and reprinted with an updated introduction in 2017) and Netflix's 2017 *Mindhunter* series as case studies, the paper will consider how formal, textual, and visual elements of Douglas and Olshaker's book and the Netflix series exploit the genre's flexibility to construct “authentic” narratives. The questionable “authenticity” of a text is an aspect of true crime that is being increasingly recognised as problematic in several ways; most notably, purported “authenticity” encourages passive viewing and contributes significantly to a revisionary process which erases the lived experiences of the victims and victim-survivors. Therefore, this paper seeks to illuminate some of the inconspicuous but nonetheless deceitful tools employed by true crime creators so that the artifice of the narratives may be more actively recognised by consumers.

Keywords: artifactuality, authenticity, Derrida, *Mindhunter*, true crime

**Emily Farmer** is a year-one PhD student at Hong Kong Baptist University, a venture made possible by her receipt of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme from the HKSAR Research Grants Council. The four-year scholarship enables her to research for her doctoral thesis: *Expressions of Horizontal Violence Between the Underdogs of Neo-Noir*. Her other research interests include the interactions between gender and crime fiction, particularly the representations of female criminality. This area of research interest also extends to the portrayal of victim-survivors in true crime and how they have traditionally been silenced in favour of their murderers.