

## Captivating Criminality 8: Crime Fiction, Femininities and Masculinities Bamberg, 25 to 27 November 2021

The Captivating Criminality Network is delighted to announce its eighth conference, which will be held in Bamberg, Germany, from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the conference has been postponed to late 2021, when the small town of Bamberg in Bavaria presents itself from its best side: snow, mulled wine at the Christmas Market – and an international conference on Crime Fiction and Gothic!

Building upon ideas and themes from the previous seven successful conferences, Crime Fiction, Femininities and Masculinities, will examine the ways in which Crime Fiction as a genre incorporates and (re-)negotiates gender and sex, and represents and/or questions normativity and deviance in gender and sexual identities throughout its own generic developments and also in regard to true crime and historical events.



**We are looking forward to welcoming four renowned keynote speakers to Bamberg:**

**Andrew Pepper** (Queen's University, Belfast)

Professor Pepper's research interests focus around transnational crime fiction, espionage fiction and contemporary fiction which examines security and policing issues. He has published *Unwilling Executioner: Crime Fiction and the State* (Oxford, 2016) as well as co-edited *Globalization and the State in Contemporary Crime Fiction: A World of Crime* (Palgrave, 2016) which expands and extends this focus in the contemporary era. He is also the author of five detective novels set in nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland including *The Last Days of Newgate* (2006), all published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

**Fiona Peters** (Bath Spa University)

Professor Peters' research on Patricia Highsmith is internationally recognised. Her 2011 monograph *Anxiety and Evil in the Writings of Patricia Highsmith* has been described as 'the first proper academic study of this underrated author' and has been adopted as set reading in universities across the United States. Since then, she has established the *International Crime Fiction Association* (from 2017) and the Captivating Criminality conferences (from 2014) and published widely in the area of crime fiction. In 2019, she established the Edinburgh University Press journal *Crime Fiction Studies* of which she is editor.

**Gill Plain** (University of St Andrews)

Professor Plain has published extensively on twentieth-century popular culture, crime fiction, gender, sexuality and the writing of the two world wars. Her previous books include *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar and 'Peace'* (Edinburgh, 2012), *John Mills and British Cinema* (Edinburgh, 2006), *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction: Gender, Sexuality and the Body* (Edinburgh, 2001), and *Women's Fiction of the Second World War* (Edinburgh, 1996). Most recently she has edited *Literature in Transition 1940-1960: Postwar* (Cambridge, 2019), and published articles on George Pelecanos, Agatha Christie and the changing preoccupations of crime fiction in the aftermath of World War Two.

**Catherine Spooner** (Lancaster University)

Professor Spooner's research incorporates Gothic literature, film, and popular culture, as well as fashion and costume in literature and film, within the broader spectrum of Victorian and contemporary literature and culture. She has published six books on the Gothic, such as *Fashioning Gothic Bodies* (Manchester, 2004), *Contemporary Gothic* (London, 2006) and *Post-Millennial Gothic* (London, 2017) to name a few! In 2019, *Post-Millennial Gothic* was awarded the Allan Lloyd Smith Prize for significantly advancing the field of Gothic Studies by the *International Gothic Association*.

**Call for papers:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed life as we knew it. By early 2021, we can only speculate as to the damages the pandemic will have caused on individual and global scales, but we are sure these damages – as well as the pandemic in general – will soon find its way into crime fiction. Until it does, we may look at previous pandemics and epidemic (real and fiction) and their representation in crime fiction. As we have seen during the past months, gender roles have determined our daily lives during the lockdown(s), be that in the workplace or in the care work done at home. In addition to femininities and masculinities, we would thus like to encourage papers that engage with the reality of COVID-19, its consequences, or with pandemics in general and how it has been translated into crime fiction.

Crime Fiction reaches large numbers of readers with heterogeneous interests. In other words, it provides something for everyone, yet in doing so it can either assert or scrutinise and thus renegotiate gender and sexual normativity. As such, the genre itself is both assertive of perceived normativity and at the same time deviant from socially constructed roles and rules. A crime of any kind, after all, already provides a disruption of order and sets extraordinary events in motion. The exceptional situation a crime creates thus leaves room for all kinds of agents (for queerness or normativity) to revise order and normativity. Crime, sex and gender are intricately linked, be that through the characters, the target audience, or the crime itself. Probably no other genre provides such a broad spectrum of characters, ranging from the occasionally hyper-masculine hardboiled detective and the stereotypically feminine spinster sleuth to androgynous private eyes or gender-fluid police detectives.

Moreover, a scholarly focus on gender and sex in Crime Fiction “has [...] advanced understanding of the socially constructed nature of crime” (2) as Bill McCarthy and Rosemary Gartner write in the *Oxford Handbook of Gender, Sex and Crime* (2014). Crime as a social construct inhabits a liminal position. Like gender, it crosses boundaries and is thus positioned on a perpetual threshold between what is read as “order” or “normality” and “chaos” or “deviance.” Crime Fiction provides the space to investigate this liminality and to open up stereotypical concepts of normativity in crime, gender and sexuality. Crime Fiction's relationship with sex and gender is thus fascinatingly complex and allows for a broad variety of critical angles on the topic.

Papers presented at Captivating Criminality 8 will examine changing notions of gender and sexuality and their relation to crime and Crime Fiction as well as the effects of the COVID-19

pandemic on a personal or global scale, drawing on the multiple threads that have fed into the genre since its inception. Speakers are invited to explore the crossing of forms and themes within Crime Fiction to challenge the notions of gender and sexuality within the genre. Moreover, we particularly welcome papers exploring how femininities and masculinities are represented and negotiated in the liminal space of Gothic and crime. Abstracts dealing with Crime Fiction past and present, true crime narratives, television and film studies, and other forms of new media such as blogs, computer games, websites and podcasts are welcome, as are papers adopting a range of theoretical, sociological and historical approaches. Topics may include but are not limited to:

- Crime fiction and the pandemic/pandemics
- Gender and psychological crime fiction
- Lockdown crime fiction
- True Crime
- Gothic and Crime
- Gender and the Past
- Gender vs. Sexuality
- Gender Stereotypes in Crime Fiction
- Gender and liminality
- Queerness in Crime Fiction
- Crime Fiction in the age of #metoo
- Crime Fiction from traumatised nations
- Crime Fiction and Landscape
- Revisionist Crime Fiction
- Crime Fiction and contemporary debates
- Crime Reports and the Press
- Real and Imagined Deviance
- Adaptation and Interpretation
- Crime Fiction and Form
- Generic Crossings
- The Detective, Then and Now
- The Anti-Hero
- Geographies of Crime
- Real and Symbolic Boundaries
- Ethnicity and Cultural Diversity
- The Ideology of Law and Order: Tradition and Innovation
- Women and Crime: Victims and Perpetrators
- Crime and Queer Theory
- Film Adaptations
- TV series
- Technology
- The Media and Detection
- Sociology of Crime
- The Psychological
- Early Forms of Crime Writing
- Victorian Crime Fiction
- The Golden Age
- Hardboiled Fiction
- Contemporary Crime Fiction
- Postcolonial Crime and Detection

Please send 200 word proposals to Fiona Peters and Kerstin-Anja Mnderlein, to [captivating.criminality.2021@gmail.com](mailto:captivating.criminality.2021@gmail.com) by **01<sup>st</sup> September 2021**.

The abstract should include your name, email address, and affiliation, as well as the title of your paper. Please feel free to submit abstracts presenting work in progress as well as completed projects. Postgraduate students are welcome. Papers will be a maximum of 20 minutes in length. Proposals for suggested panels are also welcome.

#### **Conference Fees:**

The fee for the conference will be announced in Spring 2021 and includes coffee breaks, lunches, and beverages. There will be a reduced fee for students.

#### **Further information:**

Please visit our conference page for current information on the programme and the development regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.uni-bamberg.de/en/englit/captivating-criminality-8-crime-fiction-femininities-and-masculinities-2021/>