

Crime (Fictions) and Nostalgia in British Culture

Call for Contributions

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When looking at people's favourite genre to either watch or read, crime (fiction) has been at the top of the list for a very long time. Currently, true crime streaming series are among the most watched programmes on the pertinent streaming platforms but other forms of fictional criminality, including thrillers, detective fiction and films, police procedurals, cosy mysteries or regional crime, are equally popular among viewers and readers. Since crime fiction started as a "proper" literary genre in the mid-nineteenth century, it has captured readers and later on listeners, audiences and viewers of all media and has come to be deeply ingrained in popular culture. Thus, crime is a ubiquitous topic and can be found across all media, from the classic prime-time TV serial of the likes of *Murder, She Wrote* (1984-96) to podcasts like *Serial* (2014-), so it is no stretch to claim that crime is one of (if not the) most consumed genres within popular culture and across media. It thus certainly merits academic attention and has in recent years generated more scholarly output than ever before.

In this special issue, the connection of nostalgia and fictional criminality will be highlighted. This topic has seen some academic interest but given that many renditions of the crime genre are influenced to a greater or lesser degree by nostalgia, there is still much to uncover. The representation of nostalgia in crime (fictions) includes longing for a memory of order and peace in a utopian past to longing for an ordered world in which everything has its place and in which the detective can restore order – the settings of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple as depicted by Margaret Rutherford, for example, easily come to mind. A nostalgic view of the past holds true particularly for the sub-genre called cosy crime, popular across media for example in such films and series as the *Aurora Teagarden Mysteries* (2015-2022) or *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (2012-2015; 2020) but also, and often surprisingly as we hope to show with this themed issue, for other crime genres less openly catering to a longing for the past in film, TV, podcasts, comic books and other media.

While catering to a desire for nostalgia, fictional criminality at the same time sports just as many instances of dismantling nostalgia and deconstructing nostalgia for its artificiality. Both remembering "simpler times" – or rather longing for an idealised past, to follow one of Svetlana Boym's notions of nostalgia – as a counter movement to the harsh realities of "today" and at the same time denouncing the dangerous effects of nostalgia have been part of the academic discourse on crime (fictions) for quite some time, and nostalgic media are produced and consumed with verve alongside texts questioning nostalgia. This goes to show how diverse crime fiction across media (and across time) has been and still is.

This themed issue of *JSBC*, entitled *Crime (Fictions) and Nostalgia in British Culture*, is thus dedicated to the influence of different types of nostalgia on crime (fiction) – or fictional criminality – from a cultural perspective, taking into account the impact and position of nostalgia on crime stories available to a large readership. To this end, we are looking for abstracts dealing with nostalgia and crime (fiction) in past and present across all media including television and film studies and new media such as blogs, computer games, websites and podcasts. All papers adopting a range of theoretical, sociological and historical approaches (and more) within British cultural studies are welcome. Topics may include but are not limited to nostalgia in/and:

- The politics of crime
- Crime genres across media
- Fictional criminality in the age of #metoo
- Crime (fictions) from traumatised nations
- Revisionist crime (fiction)
- Crime and contemporary debates
- Crime reports and the press
- Real and imagined deviance
- Adaptation and interpretation of crime fiction(s)
- Medial crossings in crime fiction
- 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
- Crime TV series (factual and fictitious)
- The Media and detection
- Retro Pop
- Postcolonial crime and detection

Please submit abstracts of 400-500 words to Kerstin-Anja Münderlein (University of Bamberg; kerstin-anja.muenderlein@uni-bamberg.de) by **1 April 2025**. Full papers (5,000 words) are due by **1 September 2025**.