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Introduction and Rationale

Crime is a phenomenon observable all around us, but to what extent are narratives surrounding real crime constructing possible worlds that are in fact far from the real one? This section explores the way in which criminal discourses are indeed needlessly constructing myths, generating fear and panic, even allowing a hindering of our personal freedoms and rights. David Wall addresses this very issue in relation to the cultural construction of cybercrime, a term whose current meaning he examines, before observing that cybercrime-related narratives have a certain assuredness. Besides, despite cybercrime originating in narratives of fiction, our understanding of it, Wall claims, shapes how we all societally react to online deviance in real life. Christiana Gregoriou and Pinelopi Troullinou scrutinise another contemporary crime-related phenomenon, the fear of terrorist air attacks, itself employed to create justification for the imposing of extreme security measures on flying passengers in some UK airports. By linguistically and philosophically investigating the ways in which the media reacted to the use of full-body scanning in given UK airports, the authors question whether such measures in fact harvest a surveillance society, paranoia, poor health and even xenophobia. In a related chapter, Tony Ward interrogates the difficulty of exploring the truth in delayed civil actions for child abuse. Can the construction of past crimes be anything more than an 'account', and how do these narratives provide structure for events from the far past that can never be fully knowable? Finally, Martyn Colebrook investigates Burn's true crime work, observing different discourses at work, similarly questioning the linkage between fact and fiction, memory and allusion.