

BLOOD

An International Guide to Fact-Based Crime Literature



& INK

Albert
Borowitz



William Probert. This original drawing from life, made before his 1825 execution for stealing a mare, was given to the Reverend Mr. Cotton, the Ordinary, Newgate prison. *Borowitz True Crime Collection, Kent State University Libraries*. See B.29.

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NOTE

The Place and Point of “True Crime”

JACQUES BARZUN

The name of the literature superbly inventoried in this book gives a clue to the kind of readers who enjoy it. True crime is the match of crime *fiction*, the detective story, commonly called mystery. It has been said that a seasoned reader of crime fiction graduates to true crime. But such a graduate does not leave the campus and its reading list; he or she only adds a new source of pleasure to the one they have been cultivating.

It should not be supposed that those who read about either sort of crime do so because of a taste for mayhem and gore. To think so is to miss the point. In good crime fiction, the victim is disposed of quickly with a minimum of physical detail. In true crime the detail may indeed form part of the recital, because the body has been found in shocking condition—in a trunk or buried in a cellar. But the evidence is soon left behind in the quest for motive and circumstance. In both genres, the deep interest lies not in whodunit but in how this is ascertained by a close examination of time and means and other probabilities.

I say “the interest,” meaning the suspense that must grace any sort of writing from riddles to theology. The *pleasure* is something else again. In both the crime offerings, true and fictional, the pleasure is literary.

This may surprise the addicts themselves, who often think their taste well beneath that of people who read high-brow novels. The truth is that great novels are often inartistic compared with the great works that retell great crimes. The qualities, besides lucid prose, that distinguish true crime are narrative skill, the right order of topics (equivalent to plot), the writer’s grasp of character and knowledge of life, wit, and judicial detachment coupled with sympathy.

To bring these talents to bear on the details of an actual crime calls for great powers, greater perhaps than are needed when the writer invents his facts; for the crimes worth writing about are those that present a murky tangle in which essential points may remain forever doubtful. Thus the famous Wallace case of the 1930s in Liverpool bewildered all true-crime fanciers for years, until the genius of Jonathan Goodman solved it by a combination of wide research and brilliant analysis. Before then, an aficionado such as the theater critic James Agate would call up a friend and say, “Come over and we’ll talk about the Wallace case.”

The exposition of notable crimes, with or without solutions, has a long history; it begins with the earliest pleadings at the bar. Cicero in 66 B.C. gave a splendid example in his defense of Aulus Cluentius; and before him the Athenians heard Socrates pull apart the

charges of his accusers. In eighteenth-century London there was the Newgate Calendar and street-vendors' broadsides—cheap and crude tales of recent crimes; in the nineteenth it was that fine critic De Quincey, who after a notorious murder wrote a long analysis for the literary public: "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts." But it mainly sang the praises of the killers.

The modern genre, more law-abiding, usually begins with excerpts from the transcript of the trial, where each side gives a version of what happened. How these slanted stories are dealt with by the later critic shows the degree of his art and judgment. Henry James took delight in the accounts by William Roughead of cases that others have written up with dissenting conclusions. In our time, Edward Radin showed that Lizzie Borden was very probably innocent of her parents' murder, which contradicts the accepted view put forth by Edmund Pearson, Mrs. Lowndes, and Victoria Lincoln.

There is no end to the speculative opportunities that an interest in true crime bestows on the devotee. Did Crippen kill his wife by accident, mistaking the right dosage of the sedative hyoscine? Was Steinie Morrison innocent after all, like Oscar Slater, who owed his release from prison to the tireless efforts of Conan Doyle? And then, as Mr. Goodman remarks on a later page, there is the perennial question: Who was Jack the Ripper?

A wag suggested Matthew Arnold, the advocate of "sweetness and light." Unfortunately, Arnold had been dead six months when the killings began. Looking up this little fact shows the attention to detail that is characteristic of the . . . the . . . What *shall* we call the connoisseur of true crime, that capacious scholarlike mind, attentive to scientific truth and wedded to legal logic? May I venture to suggest a name? As usual, the ancient Greeks had a word for "the actual murderer"; it was *authentēs*. Why not adopt *philauthentist* as our proud designation, on a par with *philatelist* and indeed with *philosopher*?

FOREWORD

Some Prescriptions and Proscriptions for “True Crime”

JONATHAN GOODMAN

The question “What makes a *classic* murder?” is posed almost as often as that other one—“What makes a *perfect* murder?”

The answer to the latter question is short but comprehensive: a murder is only surely perfect if it is not recognized as murder. Some, perhaps many, murders go quite unnoticed: they are tucked away within what the late, great Professor Sir Leon Radzinowicz called “the dark figure of crime.” They—with oh so many other unnoticed or unreported or reported but uninvestigated crimes—make crime statistics look far less worrying than the reality.

Perhaps the clearest indication that there is less to *murder* statistics than meets the eye is the fact that, according to breakdowns of the figures (I speak of British ones, but no doubt American equivalents are as unreliable), murder by poisoning is a dying, near-dead, art. Nonsense, of course, given that countless bathroom cabinets and medicine chests contain leftover prescription drugs and the like, which are toxic to some people or, overdosed, to all, and which are more complex, more difficult to detect after ingestion than the undoubted and undoubtable poisons used by murderers in the past.

With an insufficiency of forensic experts, meaning that those in practice are overloaded with work, many deaths that are considered only a mite suspicious either aren’t forensically examined or are examined inadequately. There is a maxim of the forensic sciences (though not confined to them) to the effect that if you are not searching for *something*, you don’t stand much chance of finding *anything*. And so—distressingly additional to the too many guilty parties acquitted by peculiar juries, whose peculiarities increase as the selection standards of responsibility, language comprehension, and impartiality are eroded for unsound but politically correct reasons, or who take advantage of quaint constraints on the police to evade the become-even-quainter notion of Justice—too many people are getting away with murder. (In a metaphorical sense, so are too many people who write about crime; I’ll come to some of them in a minute.)

First, however, I must tackle the former question. There is no cut-and-dried answer to that one. Considering the lots of foreign-language entries in Albert Borowitz’s book, I may as well depart from my usual English-only style, albeit briefly, just to say *à chacun son goût*. So far as the classic murder question is concerned, one man’s meat axe is another man’s

poison. I can only tell you what, in my opinion, *may* be *some* of the ingredients of a classic murder and what is perhaps the single factor that definitely makes a murder *un*classic.

I go along to quite an extent—not all the way—with Alfred Hitchcock’s comment that the factual murders that most appealed to him were “like blood on a daisy”: a shocking contrast between a killing and its compass. Yes, that quite often puts a murder into, or somewhere near, the classic category: the Borden case, for instance (of the “murder behind lace curtains” kind), or the Theodore Durrant case (murder in a place of worship).

And, instantly arguing with myself (for Durrant murdered twice), I feel that, aesthetically speaking, murder should be as special an event to the murderer as it is to his victim. Serial killers are not my cup of tea. They bore me, not merely through the repetitiousness and the sameness of their crimes, but because they themselves are so deadly boring. A sweeping statement, I know, but I am not going to water down my conviction that it is their boredom with their own dreary existences that turns them into serial killers, seeking cheap thrills at a terminal cost to others, enjoying some feeling of power that they are incapable of experiencing in any normal way, but still staying stuck in a one-killing-after-another rut. (Is it simplistic to wonder along the following lines: since bored people are usually uncreative, and therefore bored psychopaths turning to crime are inclined to commit copy-cat offenses, might there have been fewer serial killers if the gutter media had spread fewer slobber stories about serial killings?)

When I have to read—or, rather, skip through—some account of serial killings, I tend to recall the tacky-tacky tailor’s sales talk, pleading with the customer not to be critical of a roll of shoddy material: “Never mind the quality. Feel the width.”

The so-called offender-profilers—who get themselves, puffed up like pouter pigeons, onto all the news program when one of their lists of traits proves to be somewhere near the mark, but who are suspiciously tight-lipped when asked about the ratio between their partial successes and their near-complete failures—would surely be well advised to write “boring” at the top of all their lists, ahead of the presently ever-present descriptive item of “loner.”

I don’t know whether the term “serial killer” was originally applied only to repetitious murderers who kill for, among other pleasures, a sexual one, but that is how it seems to be applied nowadays. I certainly draw a clear distinction between those perverts and the persons (“multicides” used to be the catch-all term for them) who murder more than once for quite reasonable reasons. Once again, I spot classic exceptions to the one-murder-per-murderer criterion: Dr. William Palmer of Rugeley, Staffordshire, whose umpteen poisonings were occasioned by financial scrapes; and that man of several brides, and even more aliases (the cheekiest of which was “Love”), who is so wonderfully summed up in the first stanza of Ogden Nash’s altogether perfect “They Don’t Read De Quincey in Philly or Cincinnati”:

Consider, friends, George Joseph Smith,
A Briton not to trifle with;
When wives aroused his greed or wrath,
He led them firmly to the bath.
Instead of guzzling in the pub,
He drowned his troubles in the tub.

It may help to make a case a classic if there is a riddle of some kind: whodunit or, questioning whether it was a *criminal* case, whatwasit. (There are also whydidhedoit riddles, but as these are no help at all toward classic status, and as the suggested solutions to motivational mysteries are armchair-psychiatric as opposed to sensible, are no more than jargon-infested guesswork, they can be ignored.)

Whatwasits—cases (perhaps “perfect murders”) in which there is uncertainty as to whether death was caused by accident, suicide, or murder—are, I think, my favorites. At least a couple of them are classics: the burning of Evelyn Foster on the Northumberland moors on Twelfth Night 1931; and, in the same year (1931 was a red-letter year for classic cases), the passing of Starr Faithfull, whose body was found on the sands of Long Beach, Long Island, giving rise to legal and journalistic ferretings among her antecedents (and giving John O’Hara the idea for his novel *Butterfield 8*).

Speaking of cases in which someone has been found guilty of murder, there are not many *real* whodunits, ones with the verdict being open to question. In recent years, though, they have become vastly outnumbered by *retrospective* whodunits, concocted by persons, usually conspiracy theorists, determined to make readers believe (which is not at all the same as *proving*) that someone found guilty of murder was perfectly innocent, the framed victim of a miscarriage of justice. Most of these “truth-seekers” are quite content to tell whopping great lies in what they consider to be a good cause (the clearing of a name, I mean; not, perish the thought, the improved chance of selling film rights).

Probably the largest portion of the mob of revisionists comprises the Kennedy assassination confidence-tricksters, who were called to account (though none of them seems to have been listening) by Louis Nizer, the brilliant lawyer who, in retirement, wrote the excellent *My Life in Court* and subsequent books that were less good. Having coined the term “analytical syndrome,” he explained its meaning:

It is possible to take the record of any trial and by minute dissection and post-facto reasoning demonstrate that witnesses for either side made egregious errors or lied. Then, by ascribing critical weight to the exposed facts, the conclusion is reached that the verdict was fraudulently obtained. This was the process by which the Warren Commission Report [on the assassination of President Kennedy] was challenged in a spate of books. To cite just one illustration, a constable deputy sheriff described the rifle which had been found on the sixth floor of the Book Depository Building, Dallas, as a Mauser, instead of a Mannlicher-Carcano, which it was. Out of this innocent error, due to ignorance or excitement, sprouted the theory that the real assassin’s rifle had been spirited away and Lee Harvey Oswald’s rifle planted on the scene to involve him. Multiply this incident by many others, such as someone’s testimony that shots were heard coming from the mall, and the “hiding” of the death x-rays of the President (since revealed), and you have a gigantic conspiracy by foreign agents, or government officials, or New Orleans homosexuals, or lord knows what, to fix the blame on an innocent man, Oswald. Of course, all this was nonsense, and subsequent events have confirmed the accuracy of the Report.

The analytical syndrome can be used to discredit any verdict, from the commonest automobile negligence case to the most involved anti-trust or proxy contest.

Much the same chestnut-tree-sprouting-from-an-acorn methods are used by most writers on the Whitechapel murders of 1888, who have turned an interesting story into a sort of parlor game: “Hunt the Ripper”—undoubtedly a Trivial Pursuit.

Some years ago, intending to poke fun at the already excessive number of named Ripper candidates, I included an entry for Peter J. Harpick, complete with a spoof potted biography, in an unserious reference book. I was confident that everyone who saw it would cotton on to the fact that the name was an anagram of Jack the Ripper, especially as I as much as said that it was in the biography, which I was equally confident would be recognized as a spoof, for it was crammed with twaddle. Shortly after the book’s publication, I started to get letters, usually written in green ink, from Ripperologists, asking for further information about Peter J. Harpick. Even now, I still get the occasional letter of that sort from people who have come across the entry belatedly. Which goes to show that as I, not intending to deceive, have done so, any intending deceiver can, if he likes, name the Queen of Romania as Jill the Ripper, in the sure knowledge that too many people will be taken in.

The writers that I have referred to in the past few paragraphs, and others like them, are to *true* true-crime writing what acne is to skin. And they don’t appear (well, hardly at all) in this book; and so, of course, I am as pleased with what *isn’t* in the following pages as with what is.

I had better admit (*boast* is what I really mean) that Albert Borowitz and I are friends; if I don’t, some conspiracy theorist will surely assume that the favorable comments I am about to make about his book are insincere, obvious indications of a furtive Old Pals Act. But if I didn’t know him so well, I should not be able to *state*, rather than voice the opinion, that no one but he could have composed this book. His qualifications, all in all, are unique.

Whereas with a good many bibliographies at the back of books, one is suspicious that an author, aiming to impress with the ostensible depth of his desk research, has included titles that he has never seen, let alone glanced at, I *know* that Albert Borowitz has read (and nine times out of ten, *reread*) every single work that he has chosen to include. The fact that he, being multilingual, has been able to read every single one of the works, also the many that he has decided to leave out, greatly reduces the number of people who could have even considered taking on the task. And that number is reduced still more—to a solitary one: Albert Borowitz—by the necessity of conversance with the practicalities of crime writing. He is, by far, the best of American crime historians.

As if the talents I have mentioned weren’t enough to make him the uniquely qualified composer of this book, he has a fund of knowledge about several arts, particularly the performing ones, and for longer than I have known him has delighted in finding connections between art and crime, artists and criminals.

We—meaning many people as well as true-crime devotees—should be grateful that Albert Borowitz, the only person more than capable of composing this book, was prepared to accept the immense challenge of doing so.

Introduction

This guide and its annotated bibliography document the interrelations between crime history and literature. When juxtaposing fact and fiction in this area of study, it may be misleading to pose the familiar question of whether art imitates nature or nature imitates art. Both the criminal act and the creative impulse have their origin in the human psyche, and it may be pure accident whether a germinative concept is first translated into conduct or formulated as narrative.

To illustrate this point, two examples of surprising interplay between crime fact and fiction may be cited from the field of biblical literature. In the first case, a seventeenth-century French poisoning scandal required the “re-editing” of the Old Testament. Marc-Antoine Charpentier, in composing his 1688 opera *David and Jonathan* for the theater of the Jesuits in Paris, utilized a libretto of Père Bretonneau, who felt compelled to doctor the scene of King Saul’s visit to the Witch of Endor. The contemporary “Affair of the Poisons,” in which wholesale arsenic poisonings had been linked to witchcraft, made stage presentations of conjuration (even of scriptural origin) a risky enterprise. Therefore, in Bretonneau’s version, King Saul does not ask the Witch to call forth the spirit of Samuel. Instead, the so-called Prophetess (*pythonisse*) acts voluntarily in summoning a “shade” whose name is never pronounced in the text of the opera. Thus the Bible, despite its accepted divine inspiration, was not immune, at least in public theatrical presentation, to the influence of current crime reports.

If the Charpentier opera shows in its most compelling form the reinterpretation of literature in the light of subsequent criminal conduct, the Book of Tobit in the Apocrypha provides an instance in which religious literature anticipated by two millennia a bizarre category of crimes that we would be likely to regard as an innovation of our own bloody era. Jack the Ripper owes his unending fascination largely to his perpetration of a series of grisly murders in conformity with established patterns regarding the means of killing and choice of victims; he slashed the throats of prostitutes in London’s East End and disemboweled them when he had the time. In the Book of Tobit, a serial killer claims seven lives in Ecbatane, a city of Media, pursuant to an even more rigorous design. Ultimately revealed to be a demon named Asmodeus, the murderer falls in love with Sara and strangles her successive bridegrooms in her bedchamber on the wedding night. More effective than the Metropolitan Police of Victorian London, the archangel Raphael expels Asmodeus by instructing the eighth bridegroom, Tobias, to place the heart and liver of a miraculous fish on a fire in

Sara's room. Overcome by the offensive fumes, Asmodeus "fled into the utmost parts of Egypt and the angel bound him."

In the remarkable mass family slaying by Pierre Rivière, studied by Michel Foucault and his disciples (see Bibliography Item F.23), it is not even possible to determine whether the idea of the crime first originated as a literary design or as a plan of action. In Foucault's words, the young semi-literate farmer initially intended to "surround" the murder with his memoirs. He planned to begin by writing the narrative that would announce at the outset the crime that was to follow; then he would detail his parents' quarrelsome marriage and his reasons for his plan to defend his father's interests by eliminating his mother. At this point, the murder was to have been committed, and then Rivière's self-incriminating memoirs were to be completed and mailed to the authorities. Foucault refers to Rivière as a "double *auteur*," simultaneous inventor of the crime and the related narrative.

The above examples should caution against making easy assumptions about the direction of currents flowing between crime history and literature. Still, in defining the subject of this guide as "fact-based crime literature," I intend to include two principal groups of works that, despite frequent overlaps and questionable classifications (for example, the "nonfiction novels" of which I will have more to say later), are generally recognizable as distinct genres: (1) nonfictional accounts of crimes and criminal trials, including essays, monographs, journalism, editions of court transcripts, prison histories, and criminal and police biographies and memoirs, as well as autobiographies of victims' relatives, such as novelist Martin Amis's *Experience* (New York: Talk Miramax, 2000), reflecting the disappearance of the author's cousin, Lucy Partington, and her murder by a notorious serial killer, Frederick West; and (2) works of imaginative literature, such as novels, stories, or stage works, based on, or inspired by, actual crimes or criminals. In making a selection of works for inclusion in the bibliography, I have generally emphasized the literary and/or historical achievement of the author or editor rather than the fame of the individual crimes described; this stress on the work rather than on the criminal case is reflected by the organization of the bibliography, which is, with the exception of anonymous, collective, or serial works, arranged alphabetically by author. Yet, because the great writers of fact-based crime have chosen their subjects with a discriminating eye, the bibliography necessarily provides, through comment on significant literature, a survey of many of the most intriguing criminal cases of the last four centuries.

What crimes are included? Here again I have followed the lead of the writers included in the bibliography. Murder has certainly been favored by true-crime authors, as it has been by popular thriller writers, but I have not neglected other categories of wrongdoing that have had a conspicuous place in crime history and related literature since their inception: fraud, piracy, imposture, historical mysteries, treason, conspiracy, and a wide variety of crimes against property, such as theft, burglary and arson. The emphasis is on the study of specific cases in any of these categories rather than on general theories of criminality, although some criminological studies are included when they take as their point of departure the analysis of a single crime or trial record (for example, Foucault's study of Pierre Rivière, mentioned above). Occasionally, the bibliography strays into areas of aberrant or scandalous behavior that are not subject to criminal sanction. In general, I have excluded Wild

West literature, which is the subject of critical bibliographies by Ramon Adams; and I have deemphasized books on organized crime, because of my preference for studies of conduct driven by complex or elusive motives. My entries tend to become sparser with respect to publications after 1980; I believe the value of a crime work can only be judged fairly when it has aged a bit on my shelves.

One narrowing of scope is due to an embarrassment of riches. Only a few annotations have been made regarding works on Jack the Ripper, whose crimes (now seemingly modest in scope when compared to the mass and serial killings of our day) have spawned a literary industry perhaps rivaled only by the exploitation of President Kennedy's assassination. Ripperologists will perhaps forgive my neglect, since, at this writing, Richard Whittington-Egan's definitive Ripper history and bibliography is scheduled to be published soon by Patterson Smith.

The works on which I have commented are, with very rare exceptions, to be found in the Borowitz True Crime Collection, which my wife, Helen, and I have established in the Special Collections Department of the Kent State University Libraries, Kent, Ohio. In some instances, I comment on special features of the Borowitz Collection's holdings, such as important provenance or tipped-in letters or ephemera. Although the Borowitz True Crime Collection has sufficient size and breadth to be representative of the field of fact-based crime literature, it necessarily reflects my personal tastes and cannot be regarded as complete; nor could such a claim be made for any other harvest in so vast a literary field. In one respect, however, this bibliography may be wider ranging than other publications addressed to English-speaking audiences. I have collected, and include in this bibliography, not only works in English but those in many other languages, including the Romance languages, Latin, German, Swedish, and Russian; where, however, an English translation exists, I have generally preferred it to the foreign original, unless there are significant differences between the two editions. The international character of this book is not a personal whim. Although the Anglo-American tradition is one of the chief glories of fact-based crime writing, it is rivaled in scope and achievement by works of French authors and compilers, who can fairly be regarded as having invented the notion of publishing collections of trial narratives (to which they gave the generic title, *causes célèbres*). Other important fact-based crime literature has been produced in German-speaking countries and throughout the world, except where and when totalitarian governments decree for their own doctrinal purposes that crime does not exist.

To summarize the development of fact-based crime literature in various languages, the balance of this introduction will address separately the Anglo-American tradition, French works, and literature in other languages.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN TRADITION

The strong British interest in true crime has been noted with amazement, even by the French, whose own attraction to this subject must strike an outside observer as equally powerful. I have never been totally satisfied by the common explanation that dismisses reading and

writing about violence as a relatively harmless channel through which the well-behaved British vent their suppressed hostility. Without rejecting this thesis out of hand, I have suggested, in *The Woman Who Murdered Black Satin*, that the fascination of the Scots and English with their crimes also has a significant relationship to their genius for narrative expression: “The devotion of the British to their crimes must remain as great a mystery as many of the cases they treasure. It is possible, though, that this national trait . . . is related to other more significant aspects of British culture. The appeal of murder cases draws to some extent on violent instincts, but certainly it also responds to the love of drama and exciting and suspenseful narrative. Fascination with murder cases may proceed from the same facet of the British genius that created the Elizabethan drama and gave birth to the eighteenth-century novel of adventure” (81).

Another principal source of the passion for true crime, in Britain as elsewhere, is the abundance of psychological revelations that can be mined from criminal trial reports. The value of crime narratives in elucidating human motives is eloquently appraised by Friedrich Schiller in his introduction to a German edition of criminal cases published in 1792:

We catch sight here of people in the most complicated situations, which keep us in total suspense and whose denouements provide pleasant employment for the reader’s ability to predict the outcome. The secret play of passion unfolds before our eyes, and many a ray of truth is cast over the hidden paths of intrigue. The springs of conduct, which in everyday life are concealed from the eye of the observer, stand out more clearly in motives where life, freedom and property are at stake, and therefore the criminal judge is in a position to have deeper insights into the human heart.¹

Critic Jacques Barzun, in his preface to Jonathan Goodman’s *The Stabbing of George Harry Storrs*, makes a similar assessment of the allure of “true crime”:

The appeal of this last-named species of composition is manifold. It presents ordinary human beings under stress: not just the principals, but a hitherto unconnected score of persons suddenly caught in the searchlight of a police investigation. They are buffeted and bruised by newspaper reports and repeated grilling in and out of court; their earlier doings, their secrets, their abilities and pretensions, are made into a public show. It is a grim novel in action, a novel in the mode of Dickens and Dostoevsky, who in fact drew upon just such live materials for their most renowned effects.

Another advantage of the study of criminal cases by historian or novelist is the wealth of detail court testimony gives us about the way people lived in other places and other times. In the preface to *Innocence and Arsenic*, I observed that “nothing tells us more about the way

1. Introduction to *Merkwürdige Rechtsfälle als ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Menschheit. Nach dem Französischen Werk des Pitaval* [Notable Cases as a Contribution to the Human History. After the French Work of Pitaval], 4 vols. (Jena, 1792–95). Translated by the author.

people live than the strange ways in which they are sometimes done to death.” An example drawn from the dining room will illustrate the point. If asked what they had for dinner last Thursday, most people would have trouble recalling. No student of crime, however, will forget the predilection of Charles Bravo for burgundy or the gradually deteriorating mutton and broth that were served up to Lizzie Borden’s family in the sultry week that preceded the double axe-murders—a menu that was in itself an adequate motive for the crimes. To stay with this culinary theme, who among crime aficionados will fail to cherish the memory of the maid who served dinner to the murderers Thurtell and Hunt after their murder of Mr. Weare near Elstree in 1823? It had been a busy evening for the murderers, what with the disposal of their victim’s body and the rest of their chores, but there had still been a social hour before dinner, and Hunt, who was no mean tenor, obliged his hostess Mrs. Probert with a song. At the trial, the maid, who must have been a spiritual ancestress of Chico Marx, was asked whether the dinner was postponed. She replied, “No, it was pork chops.”

In England, nonfictional crime literature had its origins in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the appearance of crime and underworld chapbooks and single-sheet “broadsides,” in prose or doggerel verse, devoted to primitive accounts of murders, trials, executions, and confessions. From the beginning there was a large measure of fiction in what passed for crime reportage. Many of the broadsides (as I have learned on many occasions to my scholarly embarrassment) are completely bogus and indeed were known to the street vendors as “cocks” (perhaps an abbreviation of cock and bull). One of the most spectacular successes in the marketing of crime fiction in the trappings of fact dates from the early seventeenth century. In 1621 an Exeter merchant named John Reynolds published one of the earliest bestsellers in crime reporting, giving his collection of narratives the portentous title *The Triumphs of God’s Revenge Against the Crying and Execrable Sin of Wilful and Premeditated Murder*. Although the author stoutly insisted that his work was a faithful English adaptation of criminal records that had come to his attention while he was traveling on business in Europe, the entire book appears to be a fabrication. There is no indication that the cases of crime and punishment in *The Triumphs of God’s Revenge* were anything but Reynolds’s own invention. (One story inspired Middleton and Rowley’s murder drama *The Changeling*, so that fiction masquerading as fact became melodrama believed by its authors to be grounded in fact.) Moreover, the author’s proclaimed horror of the crimes he describes and the religious lesson he draws from providential discovery and punishment of the guilty apply a thin veneer to what is sensationalism pure and simple. However fraudulent and sanctimonious it may have been, Reynold’s work certainly found a wide readership. By 1670 it had gone into a fifth edition (the first to be profusely illustrated with woodcuts), and new editions were still appearing a century later. The curious work had not exhausted its appeal by the end of the eighteenth century when the English novel began to reflect social and political didacticism. William Godwin acknowledged Reynolds’s “tremendous compilation” as a source of inspiration for his own 1794 novel of murder and repentance, *Caleb Williams*.

In the eighteenth century, successive compilations of reports of authentic criminal cases gave rise to such famous collections as the Newgate Calendar and the State Trials. Gradually, writers in the mainstream of English literature began to take an interest in their nation’s

eminent malefactors. Capitalizing on the public craving for narratives of criminal exploits, Daniel Defoe, in addition to his *General History of the Pyrates* (1724), wrote short biographies of the housebreaker and escape artist Jack Sheppard and the archgangster of early eighteenth-century London, Jonathan Wild; it was Defoe's remarkable publicity stunt to arrange for criminals to deliver to him in their cells or at the scaffold manuscripts that he had previously furnished to them and that he was to publish immediately as their "authentic" lives.

A hundred years later, England's modern literary tradition of true crime had its birth in the essays of Thomas De Quincey. De Quincey left two distinct legacies to his successors in the genre: black humor and the highly dramatic reconstruction of murder scenes. The first strand in his crime writing is represented by the celebrated two-part essay "On Murder, Considered as One of the Fine Arts" (1827, 1839), an exercise in irony (perhaps influenced by Jonathan Swift's manner in "A Modest Proposal"), in which an imaginary connoisseur of crime lays down mock-aesthetic standards for the evaluation of the "fine murder": "People begin to see that something more goes to the composition of a fine murder than two blockheads to kill and be killed—a knife—a purse—and a dark lane. Design, gentlemen, grouping, light and shade, poetry, sentiment, are now deemed indispensable to attempts of this nature." In 1984 I was delighted to learn that this essay had, at least to a small degree, made its mark on American popular culture. That year I received from a friend a book bag with an imprint of a bloody hand and the following quotation from De Quincey: "If once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination. Once begun upon this downward path, you never know where to stop. Many a man has dated his ruin from some murder or other that perhaps he thought little of at the time."

Some readers of De Quincey in his own time and after have been troubled about the linking of humor with crime. In espousing the view that humor, if well targeted and kept within reasonable bounds, may have a place in true-crime writing, I regard myself as a follower and defender of De Quincey. Certainly, violence and personal loss are not in themselves appropriate subjects for relentless facetiousness. However, there is no reason to spare from satire the callousness of criminals, their lack of foresight, or the ludicrous explanations they give for outrageous conduct. Even in the humor of popular crime doggerel, where good taste is not king, the target is often inhumanity rather than the murder itself. To cite the most famous American example, where the joke is at the expense of the murderer's failure to feel an expected remorse:

Lizzie Borden took an axe
 And gave her mother forty whacks
 When she saw what she had done
 She gave her father forty-one.

In quite a different vein from his essay "On Murder" is De Quincey's postscript of 1854, "Three Memorable Murders," in which he includes a terrifying account of the massacres thought to have been committed by John Williams, the so-called Ratcliffe Highway mur-

derer. It is impossible to forget the scene of Williams stalking the servant Mary in the house of the slaughtered Marr family. This passage, which imaginatively re-creates the horror cumulating within Mary's mind, demonstrates that De Quincey wrote a "nonfiction novel" well over a century before Truman Capote coined the term. To quote De Quincey:

Still as death she was; and during that dreadful stillness, when she hushed her breath that she might listen, occurred an incident of killing fear . . . She, Mary, the poor trembling girl, checking and overruling herself by a final effort, that she might leave full opening for her dear young mistress's answer to her own last frantic appeal, heard at last and most distinctly a sound within the house. Yes, now beyond a doubt there is coming an answer to her summons. What was it?

On the stairs, not the stairs that led downwards to the kitchen, but the stairs that led upwards to the single story of bed-chambers above, was heard a creaking sound. Next was heard most distinctly a footfall: one, two, three, four, five stairs were slowly and distinctly descended. Then the dreadful footsteps were heard advancing along the little narrow passage to the door. The steps—oh heavens! *whose* steps?—have paused at the door. The very breathing can be heard of that dreadful being who has silenced all breathing except his own in the house. There is but a door between him and Mary. What is he doing on the other side of the door? A cautious step, a stealthy step it was that came down the stairs, then paced along the little narrow passage—narrow as a coffin—till at last the step pauses at the door. How hard the fellow breathes! He, the solitary murderer, is on the one side of the door; Mary is on the other side.

Now, suppose that he should suddenly open the door, and that incautiously in the dark Mary should rush in, and find herself in the arms of the murderer. . . . But now Mary is upon her guard. The unknown murderer and she have both their lips upon the door, listening, breathing hard; but luckily they are on different sides of the door; and upon the least indication of unlocking or unlatching, she would have recoiled into the asylum of general darkness.

What was the murderer's meaning in coming along the passage to the front door? The meaning was this: separately, as an individual, Mary was worth nothing at all to him. But, considered as a member of a household, she had this value . . . that she, if caught and murdered, perfected and rounded the desolation of the house.²

Many distinguished English and Scottish writers followed the path De Quincey had blazed in "Three Memorable Murders." His disciples included the versatile scholar and essayist Andrew Lang; H. B. Irving, the son of famed Shakespearean actor Sir Henry Irving and himself an actor-manager; the barrister J. B. Atlay; Sir John Hall; and the novelist F. Tennyson Jesse, author of the valuable *Murder and Its Motives*. However, the unquestioned master of this true-crime literary school in the first half of the twentieth century is the nonpracticing Edinburgh solicitor William Roughead, whose biography by Richard Whittington-Egan appeared

2. Thomas De Quincey, *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (London: Philip Allan, 1925), 106–8.

in 1991. To De Quincey's humor and flair for drama, Roughead added impeccable crime scholarship, legal acumen, a deep knowledge of Scottish and English literature, and a keen eye for colorful topographical detail. His work has mesmerized generations of crime aficionados, including his good friend Henry James, who, after reading one of Roughead's witch stories, implored him "to go back to the dear old human and sociable murders and adulteries and forgeries in which we are so agreeably at home."

Roughead's inimitable charm is well exemplified by his comments on the triviality of motives for many famous murders:

Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, the prince of poisoners, excused the murder of his young sister-in-law on the ground "that she had such thick ankles." But this purely aesthetic motive was doubtless alloyed by the fact that he had insured her life for £18,000. A case where the motive was startlingly inadequate is that of John Watson Laurie, the Arran murderer, with which some of my readers may be acquainted. All he got was a silver watch (which he threw away on the spot), a half-return ticket to London (which he didn't use), and a poor pound or two—if that. Yet he stoned his friend to death, like St. Stephen, upon a mountain, and spent many hours in raising an elaborate cairn to his memory—the body, incidentally, forming the foundation.³

Roughead, like Lang, Irving, Atlay, Hall, and Jesse, wrote introductions and served as editor for volumes in the brilliant series of *Notable British Trials* published by William Hodge of Edinburgh beginning in 1905. Among Roughead's ten contributions, one of the strongest is his introduction to the *Trial of Captain Porteous*. John Porteous, captain of the Edinburgh City Guard, was convicted in 1736 of unlawfully commanding guardsmen to fire on a crowd assembled at a public hanging. Porteous's defense that he had acted on prior instructions of superiors was unavailing. (Roughead's extensive account of the case will serve as an effective antidote for moviegoers seduced by the pictorial beauty of the Australian film *Breaker Morant* to accept the dangerous credo that a military commander is entitled to rely on illegal orders as an excuse for murder.)

The second half of the twentieth century has given rise to new generations of true-crime writers, of whom Edgar Lustgarten and Jonathan Goodman are two of the most important. Lustgarten, a barrister, is at his best in recreating famous trials, speculating about disputed verdicts, and analyzing successful defense strategies. The prolific Goodman brings to his oeuvre a broader array of talents, including a gift for detection (witness his famous solution of the murder of Julia Wallace) and a keen sense of times and scenes past.

Although nonfictional crime literature came to full flower in Britain only in the nineteenth century, dramatic works inspired by actual cases had been produced as early as Elizabethan times. Decades ago a theatrical joke used to run around London: "Everyone here has seen *The Mousetrap*, except the Queen, and she thinks she's seen it." There is no need, however, to guess about the taste of the Elizabethan court for crime plays of the sixteenth

3. William Roughead, "Enjoyment of Murder," in *Neck or Nothing* (London: Cassell, 1939), 10–11.

century. It is recorded that in the season of 1578 there was played at court before Queen Elizabeth I a thriller with a title worthy of Agatha Christie, *Murderous Michael*. The novelty of *Murderous Michael* was that it did not deal in the rivalries of noblemen or the assassinations of kings but with a domestic murder of no political or social significance that was based on the facts of an actual criminal case of 1550, the slaying of Thomas Arden by his wife, Alice, and her lover. The text of *Murderous Michael* has been lost, but in 1590 a new play on the same subject, *Arden of Faversham*, was first performed. This drama is one of the earliest surviving examples of a work of imaginative English literature based on a true-crime source. Adhering faithfully to the record of the Arden trial, the play chronicles the blundering efforts of a wife and her lover to dispose of her inconvenient spouse; their victim's luck runs out only in scene 14, a truly remarkable endurance record by Elizabethan standards. It was a sign of things to come that *Arden* chronicled a family murder that had no public importance whatsoever. The appearance of the play foretold the singular British passion for lurid crime narrative that became more pronounced over the succeeding centuries. A generation after *Arden*, John Webster wrote his two classic murder plays, *The White Devil* (1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1623). *The White Devil* was the dramatization of actual events that had occurred nearly thirty years before and featured as its protagonist a famous Venetian courtesan Vittoria Accoramboni; *The Duchess of Malfi* was in large part a reworking of Vittoria's fate.

George Lillo, an eighteenth-century playwright who revised the text of *Arden of Faversham*, wrote a crime drama of his own in prose that eclipsed *Arden* in public favor. Lillo's *The London Merchant*, which opened at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane in 1731, retold the murder case of George Barnwell, which was the subject of street ballads as early as the late sixteenth century. Apprentice Barnwell was led by the exactions of a "lady of pleasure," Sarah Millwood, to embezzle his master's funds and then to murder his wealthy uncle. Intended as a sermon for apprentices, it also featured an attractive femme fatale, ultimately played by Sarah Siddons; *The London Merchant* racked up 179 performances between 1731 and 1776, oddly becoming the traditional offering for the Christmas and Easter holidays. Theophilus Cibber, who managed the Drury Lane and created the role of George Barnwell, referred to the play as "almost a new species of tragedy, wrote on a very uncommon subject."

Although overshadowed by purely fictional melodramas and thrillers, English dramas based on true-crime characters and material have attracted enthusiastic audiences in subsequent periods. *The Gamblers*, a play based on the Thurtell-Hunt murder of 1823, opened at London's Surrey Theatre before the case was brought to trial and featured the horse and gig allegedly used in the crime; further performances were blocked by court order. H. Chance Newton⁴ recalls the production of Sydney Grundy's play, *A Fool's Paradise*, in which the role of poisoning victim James Maybrick was acted by H. B. Irving, later to become one of England's leading crime essayists. In a classic display of failed prognostication, Newton had advised Grundy to change the drama's original name, *The Mouse Trap*, to one "more understandable by the general public." Twentieth-century British masters of fact-based crime

4. *Crime and the Drama* (London: Stanley Paul, 1927), 29.

drama include Emyln Williams (*Night Must Fall, Someone Waiting*, etc.), Terence Rattigan (*The Winslow Boy, Cause Celebre*), James Bridie (*The Anatomist*), and Rodney Ackland (*A Dead Secret*).

Eighteenth-century English writers also introduced criminals into opera and fiction. In 1728 John Gay scandalized Handelian oratorio fans with his underworld satire *The Beggar's Opera*, starring the highwayman Captain MacHeath and his dangerous company. Gay may have named MacHeath's mistress after a London pickpocket subsequently hanged in 1740 for assiduous devotion to her craft. Born Jane Webb, this light-fingered practitioner won her famous nickname "Jenny Diver" because of great dexterity in raiding her victims' pockets. Jenny's underworld colleague Jonathan Wild was immortalized by Henry Fielding's 1743 novel in which the "thief-taker"'s elaborate system of organized crime was compared to the reputed unscrupulousness of Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole.

It is to the nineteenth century that we owe one of the supreme masterpieces of imaginative literature inspired by true crime, Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69). Browning based his long narrative poem on a parchment-covered book he found by chance in a flea market in the Piazza San Lorenzo in Florence; the volume was a collection of documents relating to an obscure triple murder committed by Count Guido Franceschini and his henchmen in Rome in 1698. In his work, Browning displays a virtuosic skill in rendering the ambiguity of courtroom testimony. With the poet as his eloquent spokesman, even the villain Guido finds much to say in the defense of a heinous crime. Another more notorious murder case of a century earlier, the murder of Count Francesco Cenci by his daughter Beatrice and her brothers, inspired Shelley to write another of the great nineteenth-century works of crime literature, the poetic drama *The Cenci* (1819), in which Beatrice is converted into a symbolic rebel against institutional repression. Historical criminal cases and personages also figure prominently in many nineteenth-century novels, including the so-called Newgate fiction of William Harrison Ainsworth and Bulwer Lytton, and, of course, the works of Scott, Stevenson, and Wilkie Collins.

Many of the leading British fact-based crime novelists of the twentieth century are women. One is Gabrielle Margaret Vere Campbell Long (1886–1952), whose early historical fiction under the pen-name Marjorie Bowen was much admired by Henry James. Long also wrote a large number of popular novels freely based on criminal cases under the pre-women's liberation name of "Joseph Shearing." A major rival of an earlier generation is Marie Belloc Lowndes (1868–1947), whose most famous novel, *The Lodger* (1913), was the source of the classic silent movie by Alfred Hitchcock and several remakes in the sound era. The Belloc Lowndes novel illustrates brilliantly how a narrative based on criminal history can serve as a touchstone for appraising social responses to deviant conduct and disaster. The "Lodger" himself is obviously a fictional reincarnation of Jack the Ripper; but in Belloc Lowndes's polite post-Victorian version he becomes a fundamentalist teetotaler who murders tiptling women and pins notes to their dresses signed with a flourish "The Avenger." The principal focus of the novel, however, is not on the mad prohibitionist but on the reactions of Mr. and Mrs. Bunting, the poverty-stricken householders who give him lodging. As the Lodger's conduct grows stranger and as his unaccountable absences from the house correspond again and again with the times of the Avenger's killings, both of the Buntings are gradually convinced in their hearts that they

are harboring the dreaded murderer. However, because of their common realization that the Lodger's rent is all that keeps the wolf from their door, they keep their suspicions from each other until very late in the game. From Belloc Lowndes's devastating portrait of the willingness of onlookers to temporize with evil for selfish considerations, it is not a very long literary step to Friedrich Dürrenmatt's devastating play *The Visit*.

Many modern detective story writers have drawn freely on themes and personalities of crime history without closely following the facts of criminal cases. Having written a book about the trial of the Mannings that inspired *Bleak House* (1852–53), I must give the place of honor to Charles Dickens. No other English novelist has left a richer or more complex body of work on crime and punishment. A firm believer in the existence of the principle of Evil, Dickens imprinted his hatred of the criminal soul on such unrelieved villains as Rigaud in *Little Dorrit* (1855–57) and Mlle. Hortense in *Bleak House*. However, at the same time that he abhorred violence, Dickens felt a strange empathy for criminals, whose impulses seemed to raise an echo from some of the darker recesses of his own personality. His favorite reading on his lecture tours was the murder of Nancy by Bill Sikes, and he persisted in its performance in the face of the advice of his tour manager, Dolby, that the strain of the scene was tearing him to pieces. Dickens displayed a similar ambivalence in his attitude toward hangings. An absolute opponent of capital punishment, at least in his early days, Dickens was nevertheless drawn by what he called the "attraction of repulsion" to attend several executions. In this respect he proved to have a stronger stomach than his less ideological contemporary Thackeray. After attending the hanging of Courvoisier and finding he could not bear to look, Thackeray turned down an invitation to another public execution in the course of travel abroad. He explained his refusal with the comment, "J'y ai été [I've been there already], as the Frenchman said of hunting."

Many of Dickens's characters are based on historical criminals. The hangman Ned Dennis appears *in propria persona* in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841). The portrait of the rascally Fagin may have been modeled after an authentic receiver of stolen goods, Ikey Solomons. In *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–44), the ambush of Montague Tigg by Jonas Chuzzlewit was strongly influenced by the Thurtell-Hunt murder case of 1823, and, as noted in my book on the Mannings, *The Woman Who Murdered Black Satin*, Mlle. Hortense is the very image of Maria Manning.

Dickens also wrote a number of insightful newspaper and magazine articles dealing with crime and punishment. These pieces include letters to the *Daily News* and the *Times* against the death penalty and public hanging; his three articles for *Household Words* on the detectives of Scotland Yard; and his perceptive essay on the courtroom demeanor of murderers.

Dickens's voice is instantly recognizable whether he writes of crime and violence in fiction or nonfiction. Compare, for example, his treatment in these two literary modes, of the theme of the "mob," a dominant image in the mind of Dickens, who had strong fears of the loss of social controls. A passage from his early novel *Barnaby Rudge* describes the storming of Newgate Prison by the Gordon Rioters:

Now, now, the door was down. Now they came rushing through the gaol, calling to each other in the vaulted passages; clashing the iron gates dividing yard from yard; beating at

the doors of cells and wards; wrenching off bolts and locks and bars; tearing down the door-posts to get men out; endeavouring to drag them by main force through gaps and windows where a child could scarcely pass; whooping and yelling without a moment's rest; and running through the heat and flames as if they were encased in metal. By their legs, their arms, the hair upon their heads, they dragged the prisoners out.

And now another mob, the mob at Horsemonger Lane on November 13, 1849, that had come to see the hanging of Frederick and Maria Manning (described in *The Woman Who Murdered Black Satin*). Dickens, who viewed the scene with friends from a rented rooftop, recorded the scene below:

I believe that a sight so inconceivably awful as the wickedness and levity of the immense crowd collected at that execution this morning could be imagined by no man, and could be presented in no heathen land under the sun. The horrors of the gibbet and of the crime which brought the wretched murderers to it faded in my mind before the atrocious bearing, looks and language of the assembled spectators. When I came upon the scene at midnight, the *shrillness* of the cries and howls that were raised from time to time, denoting that they came from a concourse of boys and girls already assembled in the best places, made my blood run cold.

... When the two miserable creatures who attracted all this ghastly sight about them were turned quivering into the air, there were no more emotion, no more pity, no more thought that two immortal souls had gone to judgment, no more restraint in any of the previous obscenities, than if the name of Christ had never been heard in this world, and there were no belief among men but that they perished like the beasts.⁵

Another juxtaposition of Dickens's crime journalism and fiction will demonstrate how he turned a real figure into what we all fondly call a "Dickens character." Dickens was an ardent admirer of the London police and especially of the detectives of Scotland Yard. One of the detectives with whom he was particularly friendly was Inspector Charles Field, whose methodical performance of duty and encyclopedic knowledge of the underworld Dickens described in an account of an evening that he spent accompanying Field on his nocturnal rounds:

Inspector Field is, to-night, the guardian genius of the British Museum. He is bringing his shrewd eye to bear on every corner of its solitary galleries, before he reports "all right." Suspicious of the Elgin marbles, and not to be done by cat-faced Egyptian giants with their hands upon their knees, Inspector Field, sagacious, vigilant, lamp in hand, throwing monstrous shadows on the walls and ceilings, passes through the spacious rooms. If a mummy trembled in an atom of its dusty covering, Inspector Field would say, "Come out of that, Tom Green. I know you."⁶

5. Letter to the London *Times*, Nov. 14, 1849.

6. "On Duty with Inspector Field," *Reprinted Pieces*, in *The Works of Charles Dickens*, vol. 8 (London: Chapman & Hall, 1881), 357–58.

of the anarchist Ravachol, the Panama Canal scandals, and the Dreyfus case. Two collections of Bataille's reports have been translated into English and edited by Philip A. Wilkins: *Dramas of the French Courts* (London: Hutchinson, n.d.); *Inside the French Courts* (London: Hutchinson, n.d.)

B.9 Bedford, Sybille *The Trial of Dr. Adams*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959.

■ Novelist Bedford alertly attended the 1957 trial of Dr. John Bodkin Adams for the murder of one of his patients, the wealthy eighty-two-year-old Mrs. Alice Morrell, who had willed him a small legacy. After what was billed as the longest murder trial ever held at the Old Bailey, Adams was acquitted. Bedford regarded it as “admirable” that, “ungrudged, day after day is spent dispassionately thrashing out whether there has been an intent to kill in one man’s mind, whether one woman’s span was cut some weeks before its time.” She is impelled, however, to qualify her praise for the judicial process: “But does it not strike us that our sense is intermittent and our conscience split? Can we not imagine that if our descendants were asked 150 years from now what struck them as most shocking and discrepant in our present time, they might point—provided they’ll be there to tell the tale—to the hair-splitting niceties of this trial combined with the acceptance of the H-bomb as an example of our staggering schizophrenia” (157).

B.10 Behan, Brendan “The Square Fellow.” In Cólín D. Owens and Joan N. Radner, eds. *Irish Drama 1900–1980*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1990.

■ This drama of a Dublin prison hanging is inspired by the execution of pork butcher Bernard Kirwan for the gory murder of his younger brother, Lawrence. Brendan Behan (1923–1964) was in Mountjoy jail at the time and knew Kirwan. One of the prisoners in the play describes the crime: “He bled his brother into a crock, didn’t he, that had been set aside for the pig-slaughtering and mangled the remains beyond all hope of identification.”

The real-life murderer applied his professional skill in filleting his brother’s body so expertly that identification was difficult. In 1936 Bernard Kirwan had received a seven-year sentence for armed robbery. While he was in prison, his mother died, leaving the small family farm in equal shares to her six children. Four of the beneficiaries had no interest in the property, but, with unlucky effect on his life expectancy, Lawrence Kirwan stayed on the farm. In November 1941, after Bernard was released from prison, Lawrence vanished. Six months later, his dismembered body was found in a bog a mile away from the farm.

When Kirwan went to the Mountjoy gallows, he balanced a cup of water on the back of his right hand to show that he was not nervous. What other prisoners considered bravery Brendan Behan took for madness. See Michael O’Sullivan, *Brendan Behan: A Life* (Boulder: Roberts Rinehart, 1999), 102–3.

The horrific nature of the condemned man’s crime renders the play’s attack on capital punishment absolute and uncompromising. The man who is to die is nameless and never appears onstage, but his doom is ever-present, as prisoners bet on his chances for a reprieve, his grave is dug in advance of the hanging, the executioner arrives, and prison life

(if it can be called that) is resumed after the hanging. Behan's spokesman is the humane Warden Regan, who continually assaults the cruelty of the death penalty and of a complicit society that tolerates it. He sermonizes, for example, to the Chief Warden: "I was reared among people that drank at a death or prayed. Some did both. You think the law makes this man's death somehow different, not like anyone else's. . . . [But] no one is going to jump on you in the morning and throttle the life out of you" (Act 3, scene 1).

B.11 Bell, Neal *Two Small Bodies*. New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1980.

- This two-character play is based on the controversial case of cocktail waitress Alice Crimmins, convicted of the 1965 murder of her two small children. See Albert Borowitz, "The Medea of Kew Gardens Hills," in Jonathan Goodman, ed., *The Lady Killers* (New York: Citadel Press, 1991), 55–73.

In Bell's strong drama, Lt. Brann, a police detective investigating the disappearance of two small children, becomes sexually obsessed with their mother, continuing his visits to her apartment even after the murders of the children have been confessed to by a male maniac. Perhaps Bell intends Brann to be motivated by the same prurient interest that Alice Crimmins's prosecutors showed in her highly active sex life, a preoccupation that led them to the dubious theory that she disposed of her children to make her home more accessible to male callers.

B.12 Belloc Lowndes, Marie *The Chink in the Armour*. New York: Longmans Green, 1937.

- Belloc Lowndes's novel adapts a Monte Carlo murder case of 1907. Marie ("Lady") Vere Goold and her third husband bludgeoned and stabbed to death the widow Emma Erika Levin when she inconveniently sought repayment of a loan she had made to them; they deposited her body in a trunk and departed for Marseilles with this interesting addition to their luggage. A goods clerk at the Marseilles station noticed blood oozing from the noisome trunk and alerted the police. After their conviction, the Vere Goolds were imprisoned at Cayenne, where Marie died of typhoid and her husband committed suicide.

The Chink in the Armour is set in a French gaming village, smaller than Monte Carlo, where murderers may move at ease among the odd assemblage of visitors. Madame Wachner and her husband, Fritz, serial killers, have a trunk awaiting their intended victim, Sylvia Bailey, but their murder plan is foiled by the widow's admirer, a French nobleman, Comte Paul de Virieu, who is suspicious of the couple after having observed them before at other casinos. The unsophisticated Bailey only begins to realize the danger when, upon looking into the Wachners' kitchen, "to her surprise she saw that a large trunk, corded and even labelled, stood in the middle of the floor. Close to the trunk was a large piece of sacking—and by it another coil of thick rope." Although previously warned of peril in a visit to a psychic, and repeatedly cautioned by several friends that the gambling resort attracted people willing to do anything for money, Bailey had trusted the Wachners as a sociable and harmless bourgeois couple.

Belloc Lowndes has created a setting where social life obscures danger. The novel's epigraph explains the title and the author's theme: "But there is one chink in the chain

armour of civilized communities. Society is conducted on the assumption that murder will not be committed.”

B.13 ——— *Letty Lynton*. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, 1931.

■ Belloc Lowndes freely bases her novel *Letty Lynton* on the Madeleine Smith poisoning case. She changes the period from mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century, introducing a car breakdown as support for Letty’s alibi. The French victim, Emile L’Angelier, becomes the Swedish Axel Ekebon, and the calculating Scottish Madeleine Smith appears as the impulsive and charming Letty Lynton. Instead of openly purchasing arsenic on three occasions, as Madeleine Smith did, Letty Lynton steals it from the laboratory of an ex-lover. Although Belloc Lowndes creates several minor characters, she follows the original case in portraying the motivation for the murder as being a desperate attempt to stop Letty/Madeleine’s lover from showing her passionate letters to her father. Letty’s fear of her strict parents was true to the original case, although in the novel the father stands by her in court, while in real life Madeleine Smith’s parents never attended her trial.

The novel became embroiled—through no fault of its author—in copyright litigation resolved by a decision of U.S. Circuit Judge Learned Hand (*Sheldon v. Metro-Goldwyn Pictures Corp.*, 81 F.2d 49 [2d Cir. 1936]). Hand ruled that the motion picture play *Letty Lynton*, created by MGM after acquiring film rights to Belloc Lowndes’s novel, infringed upon a successful Broadway play based even less faithfully on the Madeleine Smith case. Among the elements of the play borrowed by the film was the portrayal of the murderer’s victim as a Latin American who woos her with a gaucho song.

B.14 ——— *Lizzie Borden: A Study in Conjecture*. New York: Longmans Green, 1939.

■ A great friend of Edmund Pearson, Belloc Lowndes differed with his theory that Lizzie Borden committed her axe murders because she was a “dissatisfied spinster daughter”; instead, the crime novelist was persuaded that the crimes were predominantly motivated by “the passion of love.”

To elaborate on her vision of the tragedy, Belloc Lowndes invents a romance between Lizzie and Hiram Barrison, whom she meets on a French ship, *La Bretagne*. Lizzie’s stepmother threatens to tell Mr. Borden about the lovers’ rendezvous in the family barn and thereby seals her own doom. Lizzie dispatches her with a handleless axe, shielding herself from blood by pinning to her dress a movable window shade invented by a friend of her uncle. Before advancing on her sleeping father, she selects a new shield, a sheet of Parisian paper she had used in the interim to hide the murder weapon. She persuades family physician Doctor Bowen to burn the incriminating window shade.

At the end of the book, Lizzie promises to write to her lover Hiram. Belloc Lowndes adds: “But she never did.”

B.15 ——— *The Lodger*. London: Methuen, 1913; reprint, New York: Scribner, 1913.

■ In this expansion of her 1911 short story of the same name, Belloc Lowndes freely recreates Jack the Ripper as a teetotaling religious maniac named “Mr. Sleuth” who preys

A young man entered the house, stabbed Storrs several times, leaving him dying, and then escaped. There were many indications that Storrs had known the assailant's identity—or, at least, the reason for the attack. The case made legal history by being the first in which two men were separately charged with, and acquitted of, a murder.

In examining the evidence, Goodman concludes that if Cornelius Howard (who may have been Storrs's illegitimate son) had not been acquitted before another local man, Mark Wilde, was charged with the crime, then the latter might well have been convicted. Wilde's counsel was able to stress to the jury that one man had been wrongly charged and that the same could be true of Wilde. But Goodman argues, on the basis of impressive research, that a third man may have had a stronger motive for the murder than either Howard or Wilde. As in his other monographs, there is a strong evocation of place and period.

G.28 Gorin, Grigory [pseudonym of Grigory Ofshtein] *Forget Herostratus! In Stars in the Morning Sky: Five New Plays from the Soviet Union*. Trans. Michael Glenny. London: Nick Hern Books, 1989.

■ In the fourth century B.C., an arsonist hoping to acquire eternal fame burned down one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the temple of the goddess Artemis (Diana) at Ephesus. Tradition calls the criminal Herostratus, but the name merely describes his misdeed, for it means “destroyer of the shrine.” The customary date assigned to the fire, 356 B.C., would indicate that the glory desired by the arsonist was to be eclipsed: that is the year that witnessed the birth of Alexander the Great.

Introducing a twentieth-century “man of the theatre” into his cast of characters, playwright Gorin suggests a parallel between Herostratus and Hitler. The razing of the temple becomes the antetype of the Reichstag fire, and Herostratus's crime memoirs are invented as an urtext of *Mein Kampf*. Unlike Brecht's Hitler in *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1941), Gorin's villain is destroyed before he can do more harm, by the intervention of a courageous judge who declares his independence of a collaborationist satrap.

A modern arson with overtones of Herostatus's crime is the destruction of the Temple of the Golden Pavilion in Kyoto. See Yukio Mishima, *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* (M.33).

G.29 Goron, Marie-François *L'Amour à Paris: Nouveaux mémoires*. 3 vols. [*L'Amour criminel; Les industries de l'amour; Les parias de l'amour*.] Paris: Flammarion, n.d.

■ This series, written by a detective and (from 1887) Sûreté chief, is devoted to love and crime in Paris. Most of the first volume, *Criminal Love*, is devoted to the trunk murder of Toussaint-Augustin Gouffé by lovers Michel Eyraud and Gabrielle Bompard, whom Goron helped to bring to justice (see B.60).

The sequel, *Love's Industries*, deals primarily with prostitution; Goron sees little chance for the adoption of an English proposal to punish the customer rather than the prostitute since “it is the customers who make the laws and police regulations.” He also describes other love criminals, such as the fraudulent “Miss Ellen,” who bilked aspiring bridegrooms by

misrepresenting herself as a lonely widow; unscrupulous matrimonial agencies; collusive divorces based on staged scenes of adultery; crimes of vengeance inspired by infidelity; and blackmail by knowing servants.

The series finale, *The Pariahs of Love*, addresses the “disinherited of society or nature; all those crazies who know nothing of love but its bitterness and resentment; all those unhinged characters whom morbid sensitivities render incapable of tenderness.” Included in his gallery are blackmailed homosexuals, sadists, murderers of children, women in love with priests, morphine addicts and alcoholics, and polygamists.

For a biography of Goron, see Jean-Emile Néaumet, *Un flic [A Cop] à la Belle Epoque* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998).

G.30 ——— *Behind the French C.I.D.: Leaves from the Memoirs of Goron, Former Detective Chief*. Trans. and ed. Philip A. Wilkins. London: Hutchinson, n.d.

- Presenting highlights from the memoirs of Goron, who had served as head of the French Sûreté, Wilkins translated accounts of Louis Prado’s razor-slaying of Marie Aguétant (1886) and the triple murder committed by Henri Pranzini in the course of a burglary (1887).

G.31 ——— *Les mémoires de M. Goron ancien chef de la Sûreté*. 2 vols. Paris: Rouff, n.d. [Originally published in 4 vols., Paris, 1897.]

- The copiously illustrated edition, issued in 253 installments totaling 2,024 pages, is studded with detective and Sûreté chief Goron’s detailed reminiscences of many of France’s best-known late-nineteenth-century crimes, including those of Jean-Baptiste Troppmann; Henri Pranzini; Louis Prado; Eugène Allmayer, swindler who escaped from Mazas prison; the inventive thief Renard, who made a great haul at the home of the marquis de Panisse-Passis by posing as an investigator of the Panama Canal frauds; and practitioners of anarchist terror, including Clément Duval, Ravachol, Auguste Vaillant, Émile Henry, and Caserio (the assassin of the president of the republic, Sadi Carnot).

In the second volume, Goron comments on detective work of foreign police with whom he had contact as chief of the Sûreté, devoting chapters to England, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, Portugal, Turkey, Germany, Italy, and Spain. He also discusses various issues in policing, including forgeries; criminals using chloroform to perpetrate robberies; mothers who kill; suburban gangs; thieves and their techniques; government employees who murder; the repression of crime and the death penalty (Goron favored the guillotine as the “most human” mode of execution, which he had never seen malfunction).

G.32 ——— *The Truth About the Case: The Experiences of M.F. Goron*. Ed. Albert Keyser. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1907.

- This author, who claims to have met Goron some years before this publication, further asserts that this book draws upon the detective’s previously unpublished “diary.” In one adventure, Goron serves an English client falsely accused of cheating at cards by disguising himself as a boot manufacturer from Limoges.

H.28 Holiday, Billie, and Alex Meeropol “Strange Fruit.” A song introduced at Café Society, New York City, 1939.

■ First published in 1937, in a magazine of the New York teachers’ union, as a poem by Alex Meeropol (who later adopted the sons of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, executed atomic bomb spies), its devastating attack on lynching of Southern blacks is powered by the central image of the gallows tree:

Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Poet Meeropol (known professionally as Lewis Allan) initially set the words to music of his own, but the immortality of the work was ensured when Billie Holiday introduced her own version of the song at New York City’s Café Society in 1939. See David Margolick, *Strange Fruit: Billie Holiday, Café Society and an Early Cry for Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2000).

The title of the Holiday-Meeropol song has been adopted by an anthology of anti-lynching plays by female authors (*Strange Fruit: Plays on Lynching by American Women*, ed. Kathy A. Perkins and Judith L. Stephens [Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press 1998]).

Another of the immortal lynching protest songs of the 1930s is Irving Berlin’s “Supper Time,” performed by Ethel Waters in the topical revue, *As Thousands Cheer* (1933). Under a headline reading “Unknown Negro Lynched by Frenzied Mob,” Waters “delivered the magnificently understated lament of the wife of the victim, who must tell her children that they will never see their father again” (Laurence Bergreen, *As Thousands Cheer: The Life of Irving Berlin* [New York: Viking, 1990], 321).

H.29 Holmes, Richard *Dr. Johnson and Mr. Savage*. New York: Pantheon, 1993.

■ Between 1737 and 1739, the young Samuel Johnson was guided through London’s nocturnal haunts by Richard Savage, proto-romantic poet and convicted murderer. Holmes’s book is a study of the friendship between the two men and is also, in the author’s words, “the biography of a biography,” a close analysis of Johnson’s *Life of Savage* (London, 1744).

Savage’s self-image as a social outcast was based in large part on his claim that he was the illegitimate son of Lady Macclesfield and Earl Rivers. Although Holmes cites evidence tending to disprove this noble parentage, he does not believe that the poet was a conscious impostor: “Much of the evidence, documentary and otherwise, is reconciled if we assume that through the disrupted, unhappy circumstances of his childhood, Savage was genuinely deluded about his identity.”

Holmes links Savage’s persuasion of his high rank to the murder for which he was sentenced to death, only to be spared by a pardon granted through the intercession of Queen Caroline. In 1727 Savage and two cronies became involved in a brawl at Robinson’s Coffee-House (a tavern and brothel), in which the poet made a lethal sword thrust into the belly of James Sinclair, one of their antagonists. Holmes believes that although it was

William Merchant, one of the poet's drinking companions, who had initiated the affray, Savage's sense of noblesse oblige caused him to draw his sword in defense of his other friend, James Gregory, whose sword had shattered.

Holmes demonstrates how Johnson, in his account of the trial, consistently interprets the evidence in a light favorable to Savage. In making this tribute of friendship, and in writing a biography predominantly favorable to his raffish subject, Johnson did not blind himself to Savage's failings. Holmes summarizes Johnson's position as Savage's biographer: "If [Savage] was frequently a vain and self-deluded man, and an untrustworthy friend, yet the hardships he suffered should make us forgive him."

H.30 Holt, [James] C. *Robin Hood*. Rev. ed. London: Thames & Hudson, 1989.

■ Holt's work is an outstanding example of the considerable body of scholarship that has been devoted to uncovering the origins of the Robin Hood legends and to the search for an historical figure that may have originally inspired them. Impressed by discoveries that, on several occasions in the thirteenth century, the surname "Robinhood" was attributed to criminals, Holt argues that the Robin Hood legend was well known as early as 1261–62. This dating, in his view, strengthens the possibility that the original Robin Hood was a fugitive against whom penalties were assessed in the York assizes of 1225. It is not easy to disentangle fact and fiction in the Robin Hood legends, though, for Holt examines their many similarities to other early outlaw traditions, including those related to three real-life figures, Hereward the Wake, Eustace the Monk, and Fulk fitz Warin. Further, Holt acknowledges the possibility that "there was not just one original Robin Hood, real or fictional, but many. Each one acknowledged the legend by adopting the surname or by accepting it from others. Each one contributed to it and thereby became difficult to distinguish from the legend itself. Each one was real, committing real crimes, engaged in real adventures; but each one was moulded by the legend he adopted or had imposed upon him with the name."

H.31 Hood, Thomas "The Dream of Eugene Aram." In *The Poetical Works of Thomas Hood*. Vol. 1. Boston: Little, Brown, 1860. 118–24.

■ Yorkshireman Eugene Aram, schoolmaster and linguistic theorist, was hanged in 1759 for the murder of Daniel Clark in 1745. Aram and a weaver named Richard Houseman had murdered Daniel Clark, a shoemaker, and stolen his valuables; they hid his body in St. Robert's Cave, outside the town of Knaresborough where the murderers and their victim had resided. Shortly after the crime, Aram, under suspicion as one of the last to have seen Clark alive, secretly left Knaresborough, abandoning his abused wife, Anna. In 1758, when lime diggers discovered a human skeleton on Thistle Hill near Knaresborough, Houseman told authorities that it was not Clark's body but, thoroughly terrified, led them to St. Robert's Cave, where he identified the murdered man's remains. Houseman testified for the Crown against Aram, who unsuccessfully attempted suicide after his conviction.

In Thomas Hood's poem "The Dream of Eugene Aram" (1829), the first literary work in which Aram appears as the principal figure, the fugitive schoolmaster tells one of his pupils at Lynn of a dream in which the corpse of his murder victim cannot be hidden from view:

(dubbed “our Vidocq”) that the first three detectives were added to the public payroll. Lane assesses the influence of the memoirs of French detective and Sûreté chief Eugène-François Vidocq on American crime journalism and detective memoirs. According to Lane, American detective memoirs, like Vidocq’s, were “heavily inclined to romance, to disguises, deduction, lost heiresses, and missing jewels” (153).

Lane sees the “creation of a professional, preventive police” as “both a result and a cause of the inability of citizens to deal with [the business of maintaining order] on their own.” Among problems dramatizing the need for a strong police function were riots, felonious crimes (including sophisticated crimes for profit), and drunkenness.

L.8 Lang, Andrew *Historical Mysteries*. London: Smith Elder, 1904.

■ This is a superb collection of essays on historical mysteries, a genre of which Andrew Lang was a master. The titles and subjects of the chapters dealing with crime or fraud are as follows:

- “The Case of Elizabeth Canning”: Lang agrees with Henry Fielding (see F.8) that Canning told the truth when she explained her mysterious disappearance on New Year’s Day 1753 by a story of imprisonment by a gang attempting to force her into prostitution. He explains the rejection of her account: “In my opinion Elizabeth Canning was a victim of the common sense of the eighteenth century. She told a very strange tale, and common-sense holds that what is strange cannot be true.”
- “The Murder of Escovedo”: Lang is unable to propose a motive for Philip II’s order to assassinate Juan de Escovedo, the secretary of the king’s illegitimate brother, the famous Don John of Austria.
- “The Campden Mystery”: Lang suggests that there is only one rational explanation for the “Campden wonder,” the execution of Joan Perry and her two sons for the murder of Will Harrison, who had disappeared from Chipping Campden in 1660. After the Perrys’ hangings, Harrison returned home, very much alive, with an exotic tale of being attacked and kidnapped (see M.13). It is Lang’s thesis that Harrison’s two-year absence was due to his knowledge of “some secret of the troubled times: he was a witness better out of the way.” He “may conceivably have held a secret that bore on the case of one of the Regicides.” See also *The Campden Wonder*, ed. Sir George Clark (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959).
- “The Case of Allan Breck”: Lang returns to the so-called Appin Murder, which Robert Louis Stevenson wove into the narrative of *Kidnapped* (see S.52). At the beginning of his article, he refers to reports from two descendants of the Stewart faction that the hated victim nicknamed the “Red Fox,” a pro-English factor seeking to evict loyal Scots tenants of forfeited estates, was shot with the participation of Allan Breck and an accomplice whose name Lang declines to repeat. His reticence was dictated by loyalty to his sources and by doubt as to whether Allan in fact had an accessory.
- “The Cardinal’s Necklace”: This article recounts briefly the theft of the diamond necklace that Cardinal Louis de Rohan intended to present to Marie Antoinette (C.12). Lang

rejects the line of speculation that Rohan was in love with the queen, believing instead that his gift was proposed “in obedience to his dominating idea—the recovery of the Queen’s good graces.”

- “The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser: The Child of Europe”: The saga of Kaspar Hauser, the “Child of Europe,” arose when “a boy, apparently idiotic, . . . appeared, as if from the clouds, in Nuremberg (1828), divided Germany into hostile parties, and caused legal proceedings as late as 1883.” According to the romantic theory of the case, the mysterious youth “was the Crown Prince of Baden, stolen as an infant in the interests of a junior branch of the House, reduced to imbecility by systematic ill-treatment, turned loose on the world at the age of sixteen, and finally murdered, lest his secret origin might be discovered.”

Lang regards Kaspar as a humbug and believes it likely that the young man inflicted the fatal knife wound to ensure continued attention, but that the weapon pierced more deeply than he had intended. See also M.14.

- “The Gowrie Conspiracy”: It is Lang’s conclusion that the slaughter of the Earl of Gowrie and his brother at Perth, Scotland, by the forces of their guest, King James VI, arose from the victims’ plot against the throne, “as the King could not possibly invented and carried out the affair.” Lang had earlier discussed the matter at full length in his *King James and the Gowrie Mystery* (London: Longmans, 1902).
- “The Strange Case of Daniel Dunglas Home”: Lang describes the great lengths to which Victorian scientists went in unsuccessful efforts to prove that Scottish spiritualist Home was a fraud. Robert Browning, who, with his wife, had attended a séance with Home, presented him as an American impostor in his narrative poem *Mr. Sludge, the Medium*. For full-length studies of Home, see Elizabeth Jenkins, *The Shadow and the Light: A Defence of Daniel Dunglas Home the Medium* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982); and Horace Wyndham, *Mr. Sludge, the Medium: Being the Life and Adventures of Daniel Dunglas Home* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937), of which the Borowitz True Crime Collection owns the author’s corrected page proof.
- “The Chevalier d’Éon”: Lang states that the mystery of this transvestite secret agent was not his sex (he was clearly a man) but why he assumed feminine attire at age forty-two and continued to wear it for forty years. Lang’s answer: “he was obliged to clutch at some mode of keeping himself in the public eye.”
- “Saint-Germain the Deathless”: A remarkable charlatan, Comte de Saint Germain, sometimes claimed to have lived many centuries before he became the intimate and secret emissary of Louis XV. He peddled an elixir that restored youth and purported to remove the flaw from a diamond. Nobody knows when he died, and, if we are to credit his wildest assertions of longevity, he never did! Lang states, perhaps figuratively, that Saint-Germain may be the historic original of the romantic characters who pass through the ages in Bulwer Lytton’s *The Haunters and the Haunted* and Thackeray’s “The Notch on the Axe” in *Roundabout Papers*.
- “The End of Jeanne de la Motte”: This brief concluding piece compares conflicting accounts of the escape from the Salpêtrière prison by Jeanne de la Motte, the central

figure in the theft of a diamond necklace intended for Marie Antoinette. The mode of Jeanne's death seems less open to dispute: in 1791 she succumbed to serious injuries suffered when she jumped out of a window to escape from creditors.

The literary career of Andrew Lang (1844–1912) is astounding both for accomplishment and versatility. He studied folklore and produced a dozen fairy-tale books; translated Homer; composed a four-volume history of his native Scotland; and wrote books on subjects as diverse as the identity of Pickle the Spy (who kept the English informed on the activities of the defeated Bonnie Prince Charlie), Joan of Arc, Mary Stuart, Dickens's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the history of the St. Andrews golf course, and the eighteenth-century London furor over the Cock Lane Ghost. He devoted other volumes to historical mysteries of Britain and continental Europe that influenced the writings of William Roughead. Unlike Roughead, who savored domestic murders, Lang preferred to study crime and intrigue that were intertwined with political events or circumstances.

L.9 ——— *The Valet's Tragedy, and Other Studies*. London: Longmans Green, 1903.

■ In the title essay and its companion piece, "The Valet's Master," Lang argues persuasively that the Man in the Iron Mask was Martin (who became known in his prisons as Eustache Dauger), the valet of Roux de Marsilly. Dauger's master was broken on the wheel by the French after his capture on Swiss soil; his alleged crime of plotting to assassinate Louis XIV was trumped up, but he seems to have attempted to draw England into a Protestant league against France. Lang believes that Dauger may not have known what dark secret he was supposed to harbor and that his jailers over time may well have forgotten, if they ever understood, why he was to be kept masked.

In his scrupulous consideration of the murder of Protestant magistrate Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey in the course of the "Popish Plot" madness, Lang does not "propose to unriddle the mystery," contenting himself with the remarks: "We cannot deny that Godfrey may have been murdered to conceal Catholic secrets, of which, thanks to his inexplicable familiarity with Coleman [secretary of the Duchess of York], he may have had many. But we have tried to prove that we do not *know* him to have had any such Catholic secrets, or much beyond [Titus] Oates's fables; and we have probably succeeded in showing that against the Jesuits, as Sir Edmund's destroyers, there is no evidence at all."

Among the subjects of his other studies are the tennis-playing impostor who successfully impersonated Joan of Arc after her death, apparently persuading St. Joan's own brothers of her asserted survival; and Amy Robsart, whose mysterious death from a fall, according to Lang, was not compassed by either her husband, Lord Robert Dudley, or Queen Elizabeth I: "It might be a mere half-sportive attempt by rustics to enter a house known to be, at the moment, untenanted by the servants, and may have caused to Amy an alarm, so that, rushing downstairs in terror, she fell and broke her neck. . . . Or a partisan of Dudley's, finding poison difficult or impossible, may have, in his zeal, murdered Amy, under the disguise of an accident."

L.10 Lang, Fritz, and Thea von Harbou *M. Dir. Fritz Lang. Released by Nero-Film, Berlin, May 11, 1931.*

■ Despite Lang's strong statements to the contrary, he and von Harbou, his wife, probably were influenced by the case of Peter Kürten, arrested in May 1930 for serial murders in and around Düsseldorf. Unlike Franz Becker, the murderer in Lang's classic film who preyed only on children, Kürten made no distinction of age or gender in his eight murders and eleven murder attempts in 1929 and 1930 alone; he even claimed the life of a swan in an attack in a park. Kürten was also versatile in his murder methods and weapons. In addition to strangulation he favored knife, shears, stiletto, and hammer.

A bizarre detail appears to relate the investigation of Kürten's reign of terror to a famous twist in the plot of *M*. In Frederick W. Ott, *The Films of Fritz Lang* (Secaucus: Citadel, 1979), the author states: "According to a press account of the period, the underworld of Düsseldorf had pursued the killer because he had disrupted their 'legitimate' criminal activity, a situation which parallels the fiction of Lang's *M*" (155).

See Margaret Seaton Wagner, *The Monster of Düsseldorf: The Life and Trial of Peter Kürten* (New York: Dutton, 1933); Elisabeth Lenk and Roswitha Kaefer, *Leben und Wirken des Peter Kürten, genannt der Vampir von Düsseldorf* (Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1974).

L.11 Latouche, Henri de [pseudonym of Hyacinthe-Joseph-Alexandre Thabaud]

Memoirs of Madame Manson, Explanatory of Her Conduct, on the Trial for the Assassination of M. Fualdès. London: Baldwin Cradock & Joy, 1818.

■ The Fualdès murder came to light on March 20, 1817, when a woman walking by the banks of the Aveyron River outside the town of Rodez in southern France saw a body floating in the water near a mill. When the corpse was retrieved, the victim, whose throat had been cut, was identified as a well-known citizen of Rodez, the recently retired magistrate Joseph-Bernardin Fualdès. During the Revolution Fualdès had served as a juryman of the Revolutionary Tribunal and was on the jury that condemned Charlotte Corday. However, Fualdès was not a radical and had briefly served as royal procurer under the Restoration. Nevertheless, many persisted in seeing the death of Fualdès as the retributive work of the White Terror, which was still active in other parts of France.

The murder of Fualdès, though its solution remains in controversy to this day, probably had a more prosaic motivation. The police inquiry disclosed that on the evening before the discovery of his body, Fualdès had left his house for an appointment, carrying with him a bulky package. There was speculation that he was meeting to arrange for the negotiation of a considerable amount of securities that he had received as proceeds of real estate he had sold to provide for his retirement. However, Fualdès's trail led to a strange place for the transaction of such business. Investigators determined that he was murdered in the kitchen of the town's only brothel and house of assignation, operated by a couple named Bancal. Witnesses indicated that a crowd of murderers and accomplices took part in the crime and later formed a macabre cortege that brought the body to the river. (This procession was depicted in a series of drawings of Théodore Géricault.) M. Bancal was

roots. She agrees to feign a scandalous betrothal to Sebastian Wengrave so as to overcome his father's objection to Sebastian's marriage to his true love, Mary Fitz-Allard. Moll is shown to be the victim of public prejudice. She proves to be honest and courageous; her reputation as a "cutpurse" is due to her having made a study of thieves' techniques and slanging speech (cant) so that she could serve as a conduit for the restoration of stolen property. What is more impressive to the modern reader, Moll turns out to be something of a feminist, challenging a brazen gallant, Laxton, to a duel because he has mistaken her open, friendly manners as a sign of whorishness.

m.31 Miller, Arthur *All My Sons*. 1947. In *Arthur Miller's Collected Plays*. New York: Viking, 1957.

■ In what the author calls a tragedy of "unrelatedness," Joe Keller does not recognize his kinship with the twenty-one airmen whom he has sent to their deaths by supplying cracked engine heads. Miller has explained the origin of the plot of *All My Sons* in a real-life incident: "During an idle chat in my living room, a pious lady from the Middle West told of a family in her neighborhood which had been destroyed when the daughter turned the father in to the authorities on discovering that he had been selling faulty machinery to the Army. The war was then in full blast. By the time she had finished the tale I had transformed the daughter into a son and the climax of the second act was full and clear in my mind."

m.32 ——— *The Crucible*. 1953. In *Arthur Miller's Collected Plays*. New York: Viking, 1957.

■ The central figure of *The Crucible* is a strong-willed historical victim of the Salem witch trials, John Proctor, who became enmeshed in the prosecutions while attempting to save the life of his wife, Elizabeth. He made the fatal error of arguing in his petition for transfer of the trials to Boston that the actions of the Puritan judges "are very like the Papish cruelties."

Miller turned to the Salem trials as affording a parallel to the hysteria of McCarthyism. He "wished for a way to write a play that would be sharp, that would lift out of the morass of subjectivism the squirming, single, defined process which would show that the sin of public terror is that it divests man of conscience, of himself." John Proctor, as recreated by Miller, keeps his conscience intact. After refusing adamantly to name others as consorting with the Devil, he withdraws at the last moment his own signed confession of guilt: "Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life!" For a discussion of Longfellow's play on a similar theme, see L.34.

m.33 Mishima, Yukio [pseudonym of Hiraoka Kimitake] *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*. New York: Knopf, 1959.

■ Yukio Mishima's novel, based on a shocking arson case of 1950, traces the growing resentment in the mind of an ugly young novice, Mizoguchi, of the worship of eternal beauty in the Zen Buddhist temple of Kinkakuji in Kyoto. His early obsession with looking at the temple yields to anxiety over the risk of its destruction by an American air raid. At the same time as he commits acts of sadism at the instigation of an American soldier, he

tries to besmirch the honor of his Zen master by giving him the cigarettes he has received as a reward for his despicable behavior. The young stutterer's envy of the Golden Temple leads him from "small evils," such as stealing, gambling, and failing to attend classes, to the grandiose dream of committing suicide by burning down the temple. His desire for notoriety is also a strand in his design for arson. He tells a young geisha: "In a month—yes, in a month from now there'll be lots about me in the papers. Please remember me when that happens." Mizoguchi, however, decides at the last minute to flee the scene of devastation. As he gazes at the fire, he puffs on a cigarette, feeling "like a man who settles down for a smoke after finishing a job of work."

In 1976 the novel was adapted as a like-named opera by the Japanese composer Toshiro Mayuzumi.

M.34 Molière [pseudonym of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin] *The Miser*. In *Plays by Molière*. New York: Modern Library, n.d.

■ Although this play is based on Plautus's *Aulularia*, the character of Harpagon appears to have been influenced by Molière's familiarity with two renowned Parisian skinflints, police chief Jean Tardieu and his even more miserly wife Marie, who were both murdered by house-breakers in 1665 (see G.1), the year before the play's premiere. The entrance of the two victims into Hades was lampooned by Nicolas Boileau in his dialogue *Les héros de roman* (ca. 1665).

M.35 Mongrédien, Georges *L'Affaire Fouquet*. Paris: Hachette, 1956.

■ A specialist in seventeenth-century France, Mongrédien writes with equal fluency about the Grand Siècle's history, culture, and crimes. Before addressing the trial of Jean Fouquet (or Fouquet), superintendent of finances, for embezzlement and treasonous conspiracy, Mongrédien had already written volumes on the two other great causes célèbres of the era, the imprisonment of the Man in the Iron Mask (*Le masque de fer*) and the Affair of Poisons (*Madame de Montespan et l'affaire des poisons*).

Since works by earlier authors treated in detail the well-documented legal proceeding against Fouquet, Mongrédien directs much of his attention to the reflection of the trial in contemporary pamphlets and street literature, which turned predominantly favorable to the disgraced minister as the unfairness and political bias of the prosecution became apparent. Literary friends of Fouquet, including fabulist Jean de La Fontaine, Madame de Sévigné, and Paul Pellisson, also rallied to his support. The secondary charge of treason imploded before the trial ended: Fouquet, fearing that the unstable Cardinal Mazarin planned his destruction, had formulated a quixotic "project" for armed resistance should the need arise; but he took no steps to effectuate his design and had forgotten that a draft of the scheme lay hidden behind a mirror at his home in Saint-Mandé, where the authorities found it after his arrest. The principal charges against him related to financial irregularities. That some of the accusations were true there seemed little doubt. For example, he had bought up for next to nothing expired treasury bills, which he resold at their face amount after having fresh government funds earmarked for their payment. Still,

Queen Elizabeth I's favorite, Lord Robert Dudley (the future Earl of Leicester). Amy's body was found at the foot of a staircase in Cumnor Hall, the property of Dudley's retainer Anthony Forster, and the politically correct view was that she had accidentally fallen to her death. However, darker rumors implicated Dudley and Queen Elizabeth, who were suspected of carrying on a love affair and of planning to marry after the death of inconvenient Amy.

Scott's novel is replete with distortions of historical fact. Amy Robsart did not marry Dudley in secret, as Scott relates; nor did Dudley become Earl of Leicester or live at Kenilworth until after her death. Scott absolves Queen Elizabeth and Dudley of complicity in Amy's death, which he attributes to the disloyal plot of Lord Robert's henchman, Sir Richard Varney, who rigged a trapdoor through which Amy fell.

Nonfictional studies have offered varying explanations of Amy's death. George Adlard, in *Amye Robsart and the Earl of Leycester* (London: John Russell Smith, 1870), surmises that Amy fell either accidentally or as a suicide despairing of her husband's neglect. More recently, Hugh Ross Williamson, revealing his strong anti-Tudor bias, asserts that "no one who has seriously studied the matter is likely to doubt that the queen had guilty foreknowledge of the murder of her lover's wife, though the Tudor-Protestant propaganda line, obscuring this, is still potent in 'popular' history" (*Historical Whodunits* [New York: Macmillan, 1956], 63).

s.15 ——— *Rob Roy*. 1817. In *The Works of Sir Walter Scott*. Vols. 7 and 8. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912–13.

■ It is difficult to disentangle the historical Robert MacGregor Campbell (Rob Roy), who was born around 1671 and died in 1735, from his legend. Once a cattle-drover on a large scale, he was ruined financially and turned to raiding the herds of others. Still, Highland traditions portrayed him as a champion of his dispossessed MacGregor clan and "the friend of the poor and oppressed, as Robin Hood was, not given to wanton cruelty, not a monster thirsting for blood, but drawing the sword only when generous motives inspired him" (W. S. Crockett, *The Scott Originals* [New York: Scribner, 1912], 197–98).

Sir Walter Scott was an admirer of the Highland hero, acquiring a long-barreled Scottish gun bearing his initials for his collections at Abbotsford. In the novel *Rob Roy*, the outlaw plays a beneficent role as the defender of Frank Osbaldistone against the villainies of his cousin Rashleigh, who caps his transgressions by supporting the English cause in the Jacobite rising of 1715.

s.16 Sen, Mala *India's Bandit Queen: The True Story of Phoolan Devi*. London: Harvill (HarperCollins), 1991.

■ For centuries the deeply ravined Chambal Valley south of Agra, India, has been infested by bands of criminals worshipping Kali, the Hindu goddess of revenge. The Thugs, ritual stranglers who preyed on Indian travelers (see s.33), were suppressed by the British in the nineteenth century, but the armed robbers called *dacoits* persist to the present day. The dacoits prefer the designation *baghis* (rebels) and often fancy themselves as "social

bandits,” robbing the rich to benefit the oppressed. Oddly, India’s religious antagonisms are forgotten among the dacoits, but caste differences fuel gang warfare.

Against this historical backdrop, Sen has written one of the best accounts of India’s modern “bandit queen,” Phoolan Devi. Born into the Mallah (fishermen) subcaste of the lowly Sudras, Phoolan was kidnapped by dacoits and took one of the robbers, Vikram Mallah, as her lover and protector. When he was killed, she was chloroformed and gang-raped by a group of upper-caste Thakurs in the village of Behmai. In 1981, she had her revenge when twenty-two Thakur men were shot in cold blood (twenty fatally) in the so-called Behmai Massacre. She denied any involvement in the slaughter, but her companion and joint gang leader, Man Singh, admitted the responsibility of their gunmen. In 1983, Phoolan Devi and Man Singh surrendered to the police of Madhya Pradesh in a well-publicized ceremony after obtaining Indira Gandhi’s promise that they would be spared from capital punishment.

Mala Sen based her fine work on interviews with Phoolan and her relatives and utilized “prison diaries” dictated by the illiterate bandit queen. Despite the bloodiness of Phoolan’s revenge, the book is a powerful indictment of abuse of Indian women, police brutality and incompetence, and sinister ties between upper-caste string-pullers and government officials.

After her release from prison in 1994, Phoolan Devi’s life remained eventful. She was elected a member of India’s parliament in 1996 as a candidate of the low-caste Samajwadi Party for the constituency of Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh. Survivors of the Behmai massacre, unimpressed by her new political credentials, sought to put her on trial for murder. In 1998, her name was floated as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. The name “Phoolan Devi” was also proposed as a baby name that “gives you an intense desire to be of service to others.” On July 25, 2001, Phoolan was killed by masked gunmen outside her home.

See also Richard Shears and Isobelle Giddy, *Devi: The Bandit Queen* (Hemel, Hempstead: George Allen & Unwin, 1984); Phoolan Devi, with Marie-Thérèse Cuny and Paul Rambali, *I, Phoolan Devi: The Autobiography of India’s Bandit Queen* (London: Little, Brown, 1996).

s.17 Sereny, Gitta *The Case of Mary Bell*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1972.

■ Gitta Sereny, a Hungarian writer who has worked with disturbed French and German children, explores in *The Case of Mary Bell* the background of the two horrifying murders committed within six weeks in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the spring of 1968. The victims, Martin Brown, aged four, and Brian Howe, three, were found strangled in the working-class Scotswood district, the neighborhood of the eleven-year-old Mary Bell and her thirteen-year-old girlfriend, who were accused of the murders. Sereny attended the trial, held in assize court, where little interest was exhibited during the proceedings in the causes of the crime. The older girl was acquitted, probably partly due to her slow-wittedness and her obvious submission to the younger, brighter, and more dominant Mary Bell. Mary was found guilty of manslaughter rather than murder due to “diminished responsibility” resulting from her diagnosed psychopathic personality. The judge sentenced her to be detained for life and recommended that she receive psychiatric treatment, but no mental hospital would admit her.

s.51 Stephenson, Shelagh *An Experiment with an Air Pump*. London: Methuen Drama, 1998.

■ Borrowing the time-shifting device of Tom Stoppard's play *Arcadia*, Stephenson gives us a present-day perspective on the interplay of science and art during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The issues remain constant: whether scientists' devotion to research is tainted by impure passion and whether the humanism instilled by the study of art and literature is freighted by excessive preoccupation with the past.

The play takes its title and dominant image from the masterpiece (1767–68) of painter Joseph Wright of Derby, which demonstrates a cruel experiment in which a bird suffocates as air is pumped out of a glass globe, only to have its life spared at the last moment. Stephenson suggests analogies among the use of air pump; the supply of "fresh" corpses to anatomists by William Burke and William Hare, Edinburgh body snatchers and murderers (see T.9), and their English counterpart, John Bishop; and twenty-first-century controversy regarding pre-fetal genetic research.

In the course of the drama, Tom, a present-day English professor, discovers beneath his venerable house in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a skeleton with its upper spine missing. The audience knows what Tom does not: that the remains belong to an eighteenth-century hunchbacked Scottish servant named Isobel Bridie. Scientist Thomas Armstrong cynically wooed her so that he might examine her anatomical anomaly. Learning of his treachery, she unsuccessfully attempted to hang herself. When Armstrong found her still breathing, he suffocated her, like the bird in the air pump. It is implied that he later removed her hump for closer study.

s.52 Stevenson, Robert Louis *Kidnapped* and *David Balfour*. [In England *Catriona*.] In *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*. Vailima Edition. Vols. 9 and 10. New York: Scribner, 1921–23.

■ In 1752 red-haired Colin Roy Campbell of Glenure (the "Red Fox") was shot to death in a wooded ambush while walking home in the Appin area of the Scottish Highlands. Campbell, as King George II's agent, was in the process of evicting tenants from lands belonging to an exiled Jacobite landlord to whom they remained loyal. James Stewart was tried and hanged for complicity in this Appin murder; his kinsman Allan Breck, who was suspected of being one of the assassins, fled abroad. Scottish historian Andrew Lang claimed to have learned the identity of the true murderer (whom he believed to have acted alone) but refused to divulge the secret in his article on the case (see L.8).

In the novel *Kidnapped* (1886), young David Balfour witnesses the Appin slaying and comes upon his friend Allan Breck Stewart nearby. Although David suspects Allan Breck of the crime because of menacing statements he had previously made about the hated royal agent, Breck is firm in his denial, declaring that "if I were going to kill a gentleman, it would not be in my own country, to bring trouble on my clan."

David Balfour (1893; known as *Catriona* in Britain) follows the course of James Stewart's murder trial. Balfour, doubtless speaking for Stevenson, is scandalized by the address of the Duke of Argyll, presiding as Lord Justice-General, to the condemned man; seething with political partisanship Argyll told Stewart that had the rising of 1745 succeeded, the

prisoner “might have been satiated with the blood of any name or clan to which you had an aversion.” David Balfour comments: “James was as fairly murdered as though the Duke had got a fowling-piece and stalked him.” He also noted that a juryman had scandalously interrupted the speech for the defense with the words: “Pray, sir, cut it short, we are quite weary.”

S.53 ——— *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*. Vailima Edition. Vol. 7. New York: Scribner, 1921–23.

■ The image of Jekyll and Hyde (conceived in a feverish nightmare experienced by Stevenson) appears to have had its origin in a real personage of the author’s native city of Edinburgh, Deacon Brodie (1741–1788). William Brodie was a successful carpenter and cabinetmaker and so highly regarded in his craft that he became “deacon” or president of the Edinburgh carpenters’ trade. Far from having the solid churchgoing habits that his title might suggest to those unacquainted with its professional significance, Deacon Brodie spent many happy hours on Sunday mornings making wax impressions of the door locks of friends and neighbors who were at services. Brodie led a double life: by day he practiced his carpentry; at night he was a daring housebreaker.

The houses and office he raided (at first alone and later as leader of a gang of four) included many he had previously visited to make repairs or perform other work of his trade. Between blows of hammer and strokes of saw, he had taken the opportunity to make copies of keys and locks and to observe room arrangements and the arrival and departure schedules of inhabitants and workers. Some victims who witnessed his nighttime incursions thought they recognized him under his black gauze mask, but they kept their own counsel, out of either friendship or disbelief. The next morning Brodie would condole with them on their losses or would be in attendance at the town council, of which he was an ex officio member, helping formulate plans to catch the audacious criminal.

Brodie’s career ended when a member of his gang gave him away to the authorities after a disappointing raid on the Scottish Excise Office. Brodie fled and was caught in Holland, where he was making profitable use of his fugitive hours learning the art of forgery from an itinerant expert. The Deacon was hanged in 1788 at the Edinburgh Tolbooth prison. Legend has it that he was hanged on a gallows that he had built in the course of his carpentry for the city. Unfortunately, this supreme irony is not borne out by chronology.

In the night nursery where Robert Louis Stevenson slept as a child were a bookcase and a chest of drawers made by Deacon Brodie. There is little doubt that his devoted nurse, Alison Cunningham (“Cummie”), who had the odd notion that the way to put an impressionable child to sleep is to tell him terrifying stories, regaled him with the exploits of Edinburgh’s famous Deacon. When Stevenson was thirteen or fourteen years old, he made his first attempt at a play based on Deacon Brodie, and at nineteen, in 1869, he wrote a later draft. In 1879 his friend W. E. Henley (the hot-tempered, red-bearded, one-legged poet and critic who was to serve as the model for Stevenson’s immortal character Long John Silver) “fished” the 1869 draft out of a trunk and persuaded Stevenson to collaborate with him on a new version. In their play, Deacon Brodie pursues his burglar’s trade partly

for the economic purpose of restoring his sister's dowry, which he had dissipated by gambling. At the same time, Stevenson and Henley introduce a philosophical interpretation that is underscored by the play's subtitle, "The Double Life." Deacon Brodie feels that his "naked self" is stifled by the social restrictions and hypocrisy of daytime Edinburgh and leaps into his nights of crime as into a "new life." He invokes the night as "the grimy, cynical night that makes all cats grey, and all honesties of one complexion." When at the end of the play the Deacon, in a departure from his historical fate, dies in a duel with the police, he cries that he has found the "new life" at last. Unfortunately, *Deacon Brodie*, like Stevenson's other dramatic collaborations with Henley, was unsuccessful, and its American performances were not helped by the fact that Henley's brother, an untalented actor, was cast in the title role.

The disappointing fate of the play by no means ended Stevenson's fascination with the figure of Deacon Brodie or his speculations about the existence of the unknown dark sides of men whose public characters were beyond reproach. Eve Blantyre Simpson, the sister of Stevenson's close friend Walter Simpson, reports that Stevenson would pace up and down before the Simpsons' library fire and "expatiate on the double life, speaking again of the Deacon. He would wonder what burglary some esteemed citizen of his own day was guilty of in the . . . [night]." The respected Dr. Henry Jekyll and his alter ego, the unspeakable Mr. Hyde, are the permanent embodiment of Stevenson's obsession with the double soul of man.

To a modern generation, which has learned, through such studies as Steven Marcus's *The Other Victorians* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), of the unpleasant aspects of the private conduct of the Victorians, Stevenson's tale seems to be as well suited to nineteenth-century England as to Deacon Brodie's Edinburgh of a century earlier. In fact, in a striking exception to the rule that history never repeats itself, a notorious criminal case was tried at Sheffield in 1879 that presented a close parallel to the exploits of Brodie. Charlie Peace—known to his suburban community in London as "Mr. Thompson," a proper, violin-playing citizen busy with his great assortment of pets, a regular attendant at parish church services, and an outspoken critic of the pro-Turkish policies of the government—was a professional housebreaker by night. When he was arrested in the course of a burglary and his identity was discovered, it was found that he had committed two murders, one of them years before. Peace was hanged for his crimes. His violin is now one of the prime exhibits in Scotland Yard's Black Museum.

s.54 Stoker, Bram *Dracula*. London: Constable, 1897.

■ Vlad Tepes, a fifteenth-century prince of Walachia (now part of Romania), impaled masses of captives on spikes. According to legend, he took dinner amid rows of his suffering victims. From researches in the British Library, Bram Stoker, author of *Dracula*, appears to have obtained information about fifteenth-century Hungarian military campaigns against the Turks; as a result of Stoker's reading, there emerged "a composite picture—admittedly sketchy—of an authentic character who bore at least some of the characteristics of the historical Dracula" (see Barbara Belford, *Bram Stoker* [New York: Knopf, 1996], 259–60;

Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula* [Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1972], 35–81). It was Stoker, however, who was responsible for combining vampirism with the Vlad Tepes traditions to create his undead count.

s.55 Sullivan, Robert *Goodbye Lizzie Borden*. Brattleboro, Vt.: Stephen Greene, 1974.

■ This volume, written by a judge of the Massachusetts Superior Court, is the first book-length study of the Borden case by a jurist. Judge Sullivan regards as erroneous two evidentiary exclusions made by the trial judge: the ruling that Lizzie's sworn statements at the inquest could not be admitted since she was then constructively under arrest; and the exclusion of evidence that shortly before the axe murders Lizzie attempted to purchase prussic acid in order, so she said, to mothproof a fur cape. Nevertheless, Sullivan believes that the evidence before the jury established Lizzie's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Sullivan speculates that the jury may have been influenced by news reports of the unrelated axe murder of Bertha Manchester in Fall River shortly before the Borden trial began.

s.56 Swift, Jonathan "Clever Tom Clinch Going to Be Hanged" (1726) and "Blue-Skin's Ballad" (1724). In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Harold Williams. 3 vols. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press (Clarendon Press), 1958.

■ Undoubtedly the greatest contribution Swift made to crime literature was persuading John Gay to write a "Newgate pastore," which became *The Beggar's Opera*. Among his own poems, a ballad describes the hanging of "Clever Tom Clinch." Clever Tom has been identified as a highwayman named Tom Cox, who had been executed more than thirty years before the appearance of Swift's verses. The criminal's last actions were unrepentant:

And when his last Speech the loud Hawkers did cry,
He swore from his Cart, it was all a damn'd lie.
The Hangman for Pardon fell down on his knee;
Tom gave him a Kick in the Guts for his Fee. (2:399–400)

"Blue-Skin's Ballad," a 1724 poem attributed to Swift, celebrates a violent incident in the life of Joseph Blake, nicknamed Blueskin, a companion of the thief and jail-breaker Jack Sheppard. During the Old Bailey trial of Blueskin and Sheppard, Blueskin used his penknife to cut the throat of the gangster and informer Jonathan Wild (see F.10), who had betrayed them. The ballad's author rejoices:

Attend and draw near,
Good News you shall hear
How honest Wild's Throat was cut Ear to Ear
Now Blueskin's sharp Penknife has set you at Ease,
And ev'ry Man round me may rob if he please. (3:1113–15)

claim in no uncertain tones to being practical and energetic exponents of true Democratic principles” (597).

w.4 Warren, Robert Penn *All the King's Men*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1946.

■ Warren asserted that Willie Stark, the protagonist of *All the King's Men*, “was not Huey Long” but “only himself, whatever that self turned out to be, a shadowy wraith or a blundering human being.” Still, Stark’s career has many points of resemblance to the notorious governor and boss of Louisiana, including his birth in a rural district of a Southern state that enjoys only brief prosperity while its sawmills last; his self-education and door-to-door peddling of a dubious product; his rise to the governor’s mansion and ultimate assassination.

In 1935 Long was murdered in the Capitol at Baton Rouge by Dr. Carl Austin Weiss Jr. Despite fanciful conspiracy theories of some historians, the killer seems to have been actuated by revenge; Long had destroyed the judicial career of Weiss’s father by gerrymandering his district and spreading the rumor that he had Negro blood. In Warren’s novel, Willie Stark’s murder is spurred by political retaliation and “Southern honor.” The governor outrages politician Tiny Duffy by ending dealings with a corrupt contractor. Duffy gets even by informing Adam Stanton that Stark is having an affair with his sister Anne, and Adam turns assassin.

w.5 ——— *Brother to Dragons: A Tale in Verse and Voices*. New York: Random House, 1953.

■ This verse novel is Warren’s set of variations on a horrifying Kentucky murder of the early nineteenth century, the axe slaying of a slave named George by Thomas Jefferson’s nephew, Lilburn (correctly spelled Lilburne) Lewis. George had angered Lilburn by breaking a favorite pitcher of his deceased mother Lucy Lewis (see M.28). In Warren’s poem the principal figures in the case meet in eternity to reflect on the tragedy, and a commentary is provided by a poet identified by the author’s initials, R.P.W. The personality and voice of Thomas Jefferson dominate the work. Jefferson’s idealistic view of human nature has been shattered by his nephew’s crime, which has caused him to recognize the beast in man, symbolized by the Minotaur:

The beast waits. He’s the infamy of Crete.
He is the midnight’s enormity. He is
Our brother, our darling brother.

w.6 ——— *World Enough and Time: A Romantic Novel*. New York: Random House, 1950.

■ This novel is based on the so-called Kentucky Tragedy, which has spawned many works of imaginative literature, including a fragmentary play by Edgar Allan Poe (see P.17). In 1825 Jereboam O. Beauchamp, a young Kentucky lawyer, stabbed Colonel Solomon P. Sharp to death after Sharp, state solicitor-general, declined a dueling challenge. Beauchamp had won Ann Cooke’s consent to marry him on the condition that he act as her champion against Sharp, who had impregnated and jilted her. After following the

narrative of the historical case with great fidelity, Warren invented a wildly romantic ending. In real life, Beauchamp mounted the gallows after stabbing Ann Cooke to death in his cell and wounding himself. In the novel, Beauchamp's counterpart, Jeremiah Beaumont, escapes with Rachel Jordan (Ann Cooke renamed) into the wilderness; she commits suicide and he is murdered before he can return to Frankfort to give himself up. For Jeremiah, his flight westward had been a failed attempt to "embrace the world as all." See Charles H. Bohner, *Robert Penn Warren* (New York: Twayne, 1964).

w.7 Wassermann, Jakob *Caspar Hauser: The Inertia of the Heart*. 1908. Trans. and intro. Michael Hulse. London: Penguin, 1992.

■ Wassermann's influential novel revealed him as an ardent partisan of Caspar (or Kaspar) Hauser, the mysterious youth who appeared out of nowhere in 1828 to tell burghers of Nuremberg in his halting words that he had been imprisoned since early childhood and denied even a rudimentary opportunity for personality development. Many of the principal figures in Hauser's short, unhappy life are introduced by Wassermann under their actual names, with the exception of the boy's last, venomous foster parent, teacher Johan Georg Meyer, who is thinly disguised as Quandt.

Wassermann embraces a theory advanced by many writers to this day, that Hauser was the rightful heir to the princely throne of Baden (as the son of Prince Karl and his wife, Stéphanie Beauharnais), stolen in infancy to clear the path for a rival line and murdered in 1833 to hide his secret. The heroes of the narrative are Hauser's first guardian, Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800–1875); and reformist Bavarian judge Anselm von Feuerbach (1775–1833), who studied the boy's case with sympathetic belief in his veracity and suffering. Wassermann suggests, as do modern conspiracy theorists, that Feuerbach may have been poisoned for coming too close to the truth of Hauser's origin, and he identifies as archvillain Philip Henry, Earl Stanhope (1781–1855), who moves like a spider at the heart of an international plot against Hauser's life. In Wassermann's subtle portrayal, even Stanhope, Kaspar's guardian, cannot resist the charm of his ward's innocence, and he commits suicide before the murderous attack is made on the young man in a public garden of Ansbach.

In his 1921 memoir (published in the United States as *My Life as German and Jew* [New York: Coward-McCann, 1933]), Wassermann noted that his grandfather had seen Kaspar Hauser and "spoke of him as of a very mysterious person." In the same year, Wassermann commented that the idea behind his novel was "to show how people of every quality of spirit and intellect, from the coarsest to the most sophisticated, the ambitious utilitarian and the philosopher, the servile toady and the apostle of humanity, the hired scoundrel and the pedagogue, the sensual woman and the noble crusader for earthly justice, are all without exception utterly dull and utterly helpless when confronted with the phenomenon of innocence." See M.14.

The results of DNA analysis reported in the *International Journal of Medicine* in 1998 tended to prove that Kaspar Hauser was not the Prince of Baden. See <http://link.springer.de/link/service/journals/00414/bibs/8111006/81110287.htm>. A bloodstain from a garment believed to be Hauser's underpants was divided and analyzed independently by the Institute of Legal

Charlotte Corday, in preparing to stab Marat, cites Judith, slayer of Holofernes, as her inspiration, but her assumption of a martyr's role will accomplish nothing. By 1808, the date of the imaginary performance at Charenton, the legacy of the Revolution has been erased by Napoleon's bloody march across Europe. As Sade's production reaches its finale, the mad actors lead an uprising against their keepers, perhaps to reflect German dramatist Weiss's glum prediction that the cycle of repression and revolt is eternal. See Fig. 6.

w.12 Welty, Eudora *The Robber Bridegroom*. 1970. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.

■ Feared highwaymen, the Harpe brothers, William "Big" Harpe and Wiley "Little" Harpe, murdered and robbed travelers on the Natchez Trace in late-eighteenth-century America. Trapped in 1799 by a posse in the Ohio wilderness, Little Harpe escaped. But Big Harpe was less fortunate: his head was cut off by a man whose wife and child he had butchered. Four years later, Little Harpe and a member of the Samuel Mason gang he had joined decapitated their leader with an axe and carried their trophy, packed in clay, to Natchez to claim a reward. While awaiting their payment, they were recognized. Both were hanged at Greenville, Mississippi, in 1804; their heads were then severed and displayed as warnings to the miscreants of the Natchez Trace. See Otto A. Rothert, *The Outlaws of Cave-in-Rock* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1924).

The brothers Harpe (respelled Harp) appear in Eudora Welty's spellbinding novella *The Robber Bridegroom*, in which frontier legend blends with ancient myth. The king of the bandits, Jamie Lockhart, his face stained with berry juice to hide his identity, steals the beautiful Rosamond's clothing and then purloins her heart. Like Psyche, desperate to behold the features of her divine lover, Cupid, the beautiful Rosamond applies a brew to dissolve the berry stains and sends her gallant outlaw fleeing from her bed until all ends happily for the couple, who join the respectable merchant class of New Orleans.

In the course of his adventures, Jamie becomes the antagonist of Little Harp, who travels with a trunk containing the severed head of his brother, who vainly cries, "Let me out!" After they are captured by Indians seeking revenge for Little Harp's murder of a young girl of their tribe, Lockhart and Little Harp fight "the whole night through, till the sun came up," and Jamie kills his opponent.

In Welty's poetic version of the Trace, banditry and murder come to serve as symbols of the fleeting nature of human experience and joy as the seasons turn. Rosamond's father, the planter Clement Musgrove, ruminates: "Wrath and love burn only like the campfires. And even the appearance of a hero is no longer a single and majestic event like that of a star in the heavens, but a wandering fire soon lost. A journey is forever lonely and parallel to death, but the two watch each other, the traveler and the bandit through the trees. Like will-o'-the-wisps the little blazes burn on the rafts all night, unsteady beside the shore. Where are they even so soon as tomorrow? Massacre is hard to tell from the performance of other rites, in the great silence where the wanderer is coming."

In 1976 *The Robber Bridegroom* was first presented as a Broadway musical, with book and lyrics by Alfred Uhry and music by Robert Waldman. The decapitation theme is

sounded when Little Harp and the portable head of his brother sing: “Two heads are better than one, brother / When everything’s said and done.”

One of the most sensational events in the mythical narratives of Mississippi settlement that introduce the three acts of William Faulkner’s novel-drama, *Requiem for a Nun* (New York: Random House, 1951) is an escape of Natchez Trace bandits from the Jefferson jail. In time it was maintained that the imprisoned gang had included the Harpes: “twenty-five years later legend would begin to affirm, and a hundred years later would still be at it, that two of the bandits were the Harpes themselves, Big Harpe anyway, since the circumstances, the method of the breakout left behind like a smell, an odor, a kind of gargantuan and bizarre playfulness at once humorous and terrifying, as if the settlement had fallen, blundered, into the notice or range of an idle and whimsical grant. Which—that they were the Harpes—was impossible, since the Harpes and even the last of Mason’s ruffians were dead or scattered by this time.”

On the night of the sniper slaying of Medgar Evers in 1963, Eudora Welty wrote the short monologue of a bigoted assassin, “Where Is the Voice Coming From?” (*The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980]). The killer triumphs over his victim’s aspirations: “We ain’t never now, never going to be equals and you know why? One of us is dead.”

w.13 West, Rebecca [pseudonym of Cicily Isabel Fairfield] *The New Meaning of Treason*. New York: Viking, 1964.

■ The most detailed study in West’s revised book on treason is her consideration of William Joyce, known throughout England as “Lord Haw Haw” when he broadcasted for the Nazis during World War II. The conviction and execution of Joyce turned on the British court’s determination of a gnarled issue regarding the legal basis for allegiance. Born in Brooklyn in 1906, William was a U.S. citizen at birth, the son of a naturalized American from Galway and a Lancashire woman. At first glance, therefore, it seemed that Joyce committed no offense against England when he became a naturalized German in 1940 and undertook propaganda activity on behalf of his adopted fatherland. The court, however, found a duty of British allegiance arising from the fact that, after thirty years of residence in England, Joyce traveled to Germany and began his hostile activity while holding a renewed British passport that had not expired. Dame Rebecca approved, noting that a contrary ruling would have authorized resident alien spies to flit back and forth across the English Channel without fear of prosecution.

Facing the mystery of Joyce’s disloyalty, West perceives his sense of triumph over his own mediocrity: “His faint smile said simply, ‘I am what I am.’ He did not defend the faith which he had held, for he had doubted it; he did not attack it, for he had believed in it. It is possible that in these last days fascism had passed out of the field of his close attention, that what absorbed him was the satisfaction which he felt at being, for the first time in his life, taken seriously.”

Other traitors examined by West include Alan Nunn May, the Rosenbergs, Klaus Fuchs, Burgess and Maclean, George Blake, Gordon Lonsdale, and William John Christopher

w.34 Wright, Richard *Native Son*. New York: Harper, 1940.

■ Fusing literary technique of the American naturalists (such as his beloved Theodore Dreiser) with his own insight into the urban slum experience of African Americans, Wright creates the disturbing portrait of Bigger Thomas, who experiences his first sense of freedom when he kills (albeit perhaps unintentionally) Mary Dalton, the daughter of white liberal philanthropists and slum landlords. A twenty-year-old prone to violence born of fear, Bigger despises the acceptance of poverty and racism by his religious mother and his younger siblings, whom he regards as afflicted by “blindness”; yet, he feels keenly his exclusion from the mainstream of American life while he is simultaneously attracted by its materialistic lures embodied in films and magazines.

When Wright had half-completed his first draft of *Native Son*, a Chicago murder was committed that resembled the case the novelist had been imagining. Robert Nixon, an eighteen-year-old black man, was charged with entering the apartment of Mrs. Florence Johnson for the purpose of a burglary and murdering her by blows to the head with a brick when she was wakened by his intrusion (see *People v. Nixon*, 371 Ill. 318, 20 N.E.2d 789 [1939]). At Wright’s request, aspiring poet (and his future biographer) Margaret Walker mailed him every article published on the Nixon trial over a period of a year, as shocked as her friend Wright by the crudely racist epithets applied to the defendant (*Richard Wright: Daemoniac Genius* [New York: Amistad, 1988], 121–50). Nixon’s defense that his accomplice in the burglary, Earl Hicks, had wielded the brick failed; the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that, under principles of felony murder, both burglars were equally responsible for the ensuing murder. Nixon was executed in 1939. The racist atmospherics of the Nixon trial are reflected in *Native Son*, and, like Nixon, Bigger Thomas uses a brick as his murder weapon in silencing his girlfriend, Bessie Mears.

w.35 Wyatt-Brown, Bertram *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982.

■ In this greatly praised study of ethics and behavior in the antebellum American South, Professor Wyatt-Brown stresses the key role played by honor, which he defines as “the cluster of ethical rules, most readily found in societies of small communities, by which judgments of behavior are ratified by community consensus.” The ethic of honor is composed of elements that are ages old: “inner feelings of self-worth, gentility, and high-mindedness or public repute, valor for family and country, and conformity to community wishes.”

Part 3 of *Southern Honor* examines structures of social control based on honor, including the Old South’s unlovely practices that replaced or, in Wyatt-Brown’s analysis, complemented the civil and criminal justice system. These measures of community retribution included kangaroo-court procedures for the alleviation of periodic fears about slave insurrections, usually figments of imagination or the pretexts for reasserting white dominion and unity; lynch law and its less-violent alternate, the *charivari* (pronounced *shivaree*), in which the victim, freed by court processes or punished too lightly by judicial authorities to satisfy the mob, was subjected to dehumanizing rituals, such as tar-and-feathering.

Wyatt-Brown strongly advocates the close examination of literary narratives and court records as sources of social history. He brackets his monumental work with Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic story "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," describing a fictional eighteenth-century tar-and-feathering in New England, and a factual narrative of the similar ordeal of James Foster Jr. after he beat his teenaged wife, Susan, to death near Natchez in 1834. In the mob action that followed the quashing of the jury drawn up for Foster's trial, the defendant was saved from lynching only when the opposing lawyers for the defendant and for the interests of his victim joined forces to lead the crowd in the brutal charivari. Only by appearing to support this manifestation of community vengeance were the lawyers, whose professional positions commanded respect, able to save Foster from death.

w.36 Wyndham, Horace *Feminine Frailty*. London: Ernest Benn, 1929.

■ Essayist Wyndham created a large body of work divided between crime and high-society scandal. The characteristic volume, *Feminine Frailty*, features among its transgressors Maria Manning, Victorian murderess; Edith Carew, convicted by a British court in Yokohama of poisoning her husband, Walter; Lola Montez, dancer and beloved of "princes, illustrious personages, writers and painters;" *demi-mondaine* Cora Pearl; and Mary Anne Clarke, who profited from her love affair with the Duke of York by the sale of army commissions. The Clarke scandal was well remembered by the Victorians; in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847–48), frequenters of the "famous petits appartements of Lord Steyne" include "Marianne Clarke" and "the Duke of ——" (chap. 45).

X

x.1 Xenophon *Memorabilia*. Trans. E. C. Marchant. And *Apology*. Trans. O. J. Todd. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press (Loeb Classical Library), 1923.

■ Xenophon, who was in Asia at the time of the trial and execution of Socrates, devoted the first two chapters of Book 1 of his *Memorabilia* to his own defense of Socrates against the principal charges brought against him: impiety and corrupting the youth. He argued further that Socrates could not be held responsible for the political misdeeds of Critias and Alcibiades after they abandoned the philosopher's company and teachings of virtue. Xenophon concluded that Socrates deserved honor rather than death at the hands of the state: "Under the laws, death is the penalty inflicted on persons proved to be thieves, highwaymen, cutpurses, kidnappers, robbers of temples; and from such criminals no man was so widely separated as he."

Rather than setting out, as does the comparable work by Plato, to mirror Socrates's actual defense speech to his jury, Xenophon's *Apology* is primarily an informal essay on the philosopher's deliberations regarding his prosecution and death. Socrates declines to prepare a persuasive defense because he regards a painless death as a blessed release from the ills of old age. To a friend who deplores his being put to death unjustly, the Master responds with a smile: "My beloved Apollodorus, was it your preference to see me put to death justly?"