Murder done to death: parody and pastiche in detective fiction

by John Kennedy Melling.

To Mother and Barbara

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Acknowledgments

As an avalanche must start with a single pebble, so more than a dozen years' research commenced when my mother and I were staying with Barbara Miller in the elegant Blackheath Village, and I bought in a charity shop a copy of MURDER BY PASTICHE, and it is with gratitude I can record the encouragement I have received from that day forward.

First, my mother thought it was more exoteric and less esoteric than I believed, and therefore of more value than some other literary projects. Then Barbara Miller, with her great experience on stage, television and film of crime and detection suggested the title MURDER DONE TO DEATH, which I immediately secured by writing a monograph so titled in 1979.

After a couple of years through family bereavement, Gwendoline Butler encouraged me to revise, finalize and submit the manuscript.

JOHN KENNEDY MELLING

Foreword

When Dr. Watson made a list of Sherlock Holmes's salient characteristics, he noted: "Knowledge of sensational literature-immense. He appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in this century." The same comment could be applied, without change, to the author of this book—the difference being that when Holmes met Watson in 1881, there was very little sensational literature to know. It seems incredible that the very word "detective" had been in use only since 1853, when Dickens introduced Inspector Bucket (in Bleak House) as a "detective officer." It is true that the first great detective, Poe's August Dupin, had made his bow in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" twelve years earlier. But Dupin stood unique and alone until he was joined by Inspector Bucket, then by Sergeant Cuff of The Moonstone by Wilkie Collins in 1868, then by Emile Gaboriau's Lecocq in the following year. It was five years after Holmes had met Watson that the first best-selling detective novel made its appearance in Australia-Fergus Hume's Mystery of a Hansom Cab. But of course, it was the partnership of Holmes and Watson (beginning in 1887 in A Study in Scarlet) that launched the detective story on its spectacular career as perhaps the most widely popular form of literary entertainment. Jacques Futrelle's "thinking machine" Professor Van Dusen, Chesterton's Father Brown, and Ernest Bramah's Max Carrados soon expanded and added variety to the genre.

But even here, long before the Golden Age of the detective story in the 1920s, we can already see an emerging problem. The writer has to find a detective who is, in some basic way, quite unlike Sherlock Holmes. So Futrelle invents a kind of mad professor whose logical powers are so formidable that they become absurd (he learns chess in an afternoon, then beats the world champion), Chesterton decides on a mild and slightly comic little

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priest, while Bramah is forced to create a blind detective. You could say that Sherlock Holmes had condemned the detective story to becoming a parody of real police work—which Collins and Gaboriau had done their best to portray before Holmes came along. And until the appearance of Simenon's Maigret, most detective stories remained parodies.

So it could be said that Murder Done to Death is, in fact, a history of the detective story. It is undoubtedly—as the reader will soon perceive—one of the most comprehensive and informative that exists.

And who is the author of this remarkable work—which will surely find a place on the bookshelf of everyone who is interested in the "horrors perpetrated in this century," whether fictional or nonfictional? He is, as I shall show in a moment, himself a detective of some ability. But first, to the more straightforward biographical details. John Kennedy Melling is a theatrical historian who has always made a living as an accountant. I have known him—and indeed been one of his clients—since 1956, and have often had reason to bless his name, since my finances, like those of most writers, are usually in a state of indescribable chaos.

In the summer of 1956, my first book, The Outsider, became a wholly unexpected best-seller, and after it had gone through half a dozen impressions in a few months, my publisher, Victor Gollancz, told me it was time my affairs were placed in the hands of an accountant. When I asked why, he explained that a writer can claim all sorts of allowances-from typewriter ribbons to the heating and lighting in his office—and that this would greatly reduce my tax burden. Accordingly, I went one afternoon to the offices of an accountancy firm off the Strand, and was directed up to a room at the top of the building with a superb view over London's rooftops. There, a slim, rather good-looking young man dressed in a pin-striped suit, and whose age was obviously not much greater than my own (I was twenty-five at the time), jumped to his feet and said: "Colin Wilson? I'm delighted to meet you. I am an Outsider." Although I had become rather wearily accustomed to this greeting in the past six months, I must admit that on this occasion it made me smile, since I found it difficult to imagine anyone who looked less of an "Outsider."

In fact, I soon came to realize that John Melling had more of a title to that description than the majority of the aspirants I had met.

He had become an accountant because he was good at figures and because his father had been an accountant. Yet there was obviously a sense in which his heart was not quite in it. He was interested in people, in art, in gastronomy, in the theatre and cinema, in the history of the City of London. And in crime-real and fictitious. (He acquired some of his encyclopedic knowledge of detective novels as the editor of the Black Dagger editions of crime reprints.) Moreover, he greatly preferred working with writers, artists, and actors rather than with businessmen. His employers were at first delighted, since they found these bohemians more trouble than they were worth, and were glad to delegate the task to someone who enjoyed it. But when it became clear that John Melling, in spite of his artistic proclivities, was also a formidably efficient accountant, they decided to promote him to a position that would involve far more work in factories. John immediately resigned and set up his own company of accountants, in which his clients were chosen from the arts. I, naturally, moved with him, for I had already discovered the enormous advantages of having an accountant. Nearly forty years later—and in spite of his "official retirement"—he is still my accountant. More important, he is one of my oldest friends.

I owe a great deal to John. It was he who—when we were walking one day on the cliffs near my home in Cornwall—commented that the natural successor to my *Encyclopedia of Murder* and *Encyclopedia of Modern Murder* would be an *Encyclopedia of Unsolved Mysteries*. He expressed himself as perfectly willing to collaborate with me on it. I pigeonholed the idea at the time, but a year or two later, looking for a project on which I could work with my eldest son, Damon, I wrote to John asking if he would mind if I "stole" his idea. Since he had suggested it, I regarded it as his intellectual property. With typical generosity, he replied that as far as he could remember, it was my idea, but that obviously, I would be welcome to it in any case.

Now in fact, he made a number of excellent suggestions, which I was delighted to seize upon. One was the mystery of the Isleworth Mona Lisa—the Leonardo painting discovered in Bath just before World War I, which is almost certainly the original painting of "La Giaconda." Another was the mystery of whether Dillinger was actually killed by police officers in Chicago in 1934, or whether another man was killed in his place. But the third mys-

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tery concerned someone I had never come across—a mysterious writer called Harry Whitecliffe.

John first heard about Whitecliffe when he received a letter from a French author named Françoise d'Eaubonne, who in turn had come across it in a book called Nouvelles Histoires Magiques by Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, the authors of the 1960s best-seller Le Matin des Magiciens. According to Pauwels and Bergier, Harry Whitecliffe was a young writer who achieved celebrity in the early 1920s with a book of essays, another book of parodies of Oscar Wilde, then with a play called Similia, which had four hundred performances in the West End and then toured England. Whitecliffe grew tired of celebrity and vanished to Dresden, where he became a publisher of rare books. In October 1924 he became engaged to a beautiful young woman named Wally von Hammerstein. Then he disappeared again. More than a year later. Wally received a letter from him, signed "Lovach Blume." Blume was a sadistic mass murderer who had committed suicide in the condemned cell in Berlin, after being caught in his hotel room standing over the corpse of a prostitute—his thirty-first murder in Berlin. Blume confessed that he was Harry Whitecliffe, and that his terrible secret was that he felt a periodic compulsion to kill and disembowel women. He had left London after killing nine prostitutes in the early 1920s. Wally was so shattered by this revelation that she entered a nunnery.

Françoise d'Eaubonne wanted to know more, so she contacted the British Society of Theatre Research, who advised her to write to "the theatre historian John Kennedy Melling," which she did. What she wanted to know was, Did Harry Whitecliffe really exist, or was he the invention of Pauwels and Bergier-who had ignored her letters on the subject?

A glance at various reference books on the theatre revealed that there had been no playwright called Harry Whitecliffe and no play called Similia. Then what about a series of Jack the Ripper-type murders in London in the early 1920s? When John asked me about this, I said that I was fairly certain that the murders had never taken place. John checked with Scotland Yard and crime historian Joe Gaute, who supported my view.

At this point, most theatre historians would have assumed that the whole story was nonsense, and given up. But John has a persistency and an obsession with detail which makes him a good ac-

countant. Similia sounded not unlike Salome, so he approached another friend, Thelma Holland, the widow of Oscar Wilde's son. Vyvyan Holland. She could find no mention of a book of Wilde parodies among her late husband's papers. But she was an Australian by birth, and "Lovach Blume" had told Wally von Hammerstein that he had been born in Sydney of a German father and a Danish mother. Thelma Holland advised John to write to the Mitchell Library in Sydney.

Incredibly, the Mitchell Library was able to trace a Blume who had been sentenced to death in Dresden in 1922. His given name was not Lovach but William. William Blume had been a celebrated literary figure—not in London but in Dresden. His translations of British plays had been produced with success in theatres along the Rhine. He had founded a private press in Dresden which had printed limited editions. And he had committed several murders in Berlin, including one in the Adlon Hotel—and attempted another in Dresden.

There was one minor difference. Blume had killed postmen, not prostitutes. In those days, postmen often carried large sums in money and postal orders, which they delivered to consignees in their homes. Blume, it seemed, made a quick fortune by murdering and robbing postmen in the postwar chaos of Berlin. Interrupted on one occasion by his landlady while attacking a postman, he cut her throat and moved to Dresden. There he set up the Dorian Press, translated plays, and became something of a literary celebrity. He called himself Harry Whitecliffe, and invented stories about his success as a playwright in London.

Unfortunately, all the civic records in Dresden were destroyed by the Allied bombing in World War II, so we shall probably never know the whole truth about William Blume, Did he actually become engaged to Wally von Hammerstein? Did he write a play called Similia, which was presented in Germany? All we know for certain is that when his money ran out, he decided to replenish his coffers by murdering another postman. This time the crime went wrong; he was interrupted by the tenant of the house as he waited on the porch with two revolvers. He fled, tried to shoot pursuing policemen, and was captured when the revolvers misfired. In prison he attempted suicide, confessed to his other murders, and was -- we assume -- executed.

Presumably Pauwels and Bergier came across a garbled version

of the story many years later, and published it in their *New Tales of Magic* in 1978. They probably heard it from some survivor of the 1920s—in which case, it seems probable that their informant has since died. So unless the whole story can be traced in some Dresden newspaper file, the strange history of Harry Whitecliffe will presumably never be known. But John Melling's detective work has made it clear that it is one of the strangest tales of our century.

Now that he has "retired," I am hoping to persuade John Melling to settle down and write the definitive history of the detective story. Whether he does or not, *Murder Done to Death* will remain perhaps the most erudite and fascinating contribution to this delightful—if minor—branch of literary history.

-Colin Wilson

1. Early Days and Differences

"Parody is a young man's job; pastiche is for the older man."

"Parody is written with bitterness; pastiche with affection."

"If you find the proper names are distorted, it's parody; if the names are still the same, it's pastiche."

Three popular differences between parody and pastiche—and all equally wrong. Perhaps a better definition is that by Ellery Queen in 101 Years Entertainment: The Great Detective Stories, written in 1941: "A parody is a burlesque imitating some serious work; a pastiche is usually a serious imitation in the exact manner of the original author."

There are various meanings to "parody" in dictionaries and literature, ranging from a "burlesque imitation" to a "composition in which the characteristic turns of thought and phrase of an author are mimicked and made to appear ridiculous, especially by applying them to ludicrously inappropriate subjects" (Shorter Oxford Dictionary). Brewer quotes Hippomax of Ephesus of the sixth century B.C. as the Father of Parody, the term being derived from the Greek paroida (para, "beside"; oide, "an ode"—hence, an ode perverting the meaning of another ode).

Dr. Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), the headmaster of Rugby, advised boys to follow his example by never reading parodies, "as they suggested themselves to the mind for ever after in connection with the beautiful pieces which they parodied." The seventeenth-century writer Père Montespan held that the essence of parody was the substitution of a new and light for an old and serious subject, and the free use (or misuse) of the expression of the author parodied, while Lord Francis Jeffrey (1773–1850), the editor of the Edinburgh Review, in his review of Rejected Addresses subtly and acutely differentiated among various forms of parody, distinguishing between mere imitation of externals (personal imitation) and that higher and rarer art which brings before us the intellec-

tual characteristics of the original. Other writers and critics give whole or partial explanation in their own writings.

The term "parody" in current form dates back to 1598, but has had varying interpretations. In 1745 it was used to mean "to compose a parody on"; by 1801 it meant something was "little better than a parody of" the original; by 1830 it implied a travesty; and by 1875 it was used as a verb again, as to compose a parody.

So much for the somewhat classical interpretations ranging back into history, well before the genesis of the detective story. "Pastiche" is of a much later vintage. We have already had reference to "burlesque" in connection with parody, and in the nineteenth century burlesque was an established type of theatrical entertainment. Madam Vestris, the celebrated actress-manager and player of what were termed "breeches" parts, or travesti roles, could stage Don Giovanni in London, interpolating somewhat inappropriately her popular song "Cherry Ripe" to public demand, and London's famous Gaiety Theatre could stage such classics as Cinder Ellen (1891), Monte Christo Junior (1886), Carmen Up to Data (1890), by George R. Sims and Henry Pettitt, with glamorous actresses in the male leads, as with the British pantomime tradition—but not as in the American form of "burlesque." At this same period pastiche also became popular, the term dating from 1878, from the earlier term pasticcio (1752), in turn coming from French, Italian, and German, a "pasta," "paste," "pastos," sprinkled or salted, or a barley porridge, leading to the dictionary definitions of medley, jumble, hotch-potch, farrago, or a composition in literature, music, painting, or design, perhaps made up from bits of other works or imitations of another's style. Detective fiction, or literature generally, is not the only art to be the target of both parody and pastiche, then and now, but it is the former whose development we must now consider before we can see how parody and pastiche have formed fresh channels and deltas.

This is not, of course, anywhere near the first attempt to analyze these two categories. An excellent comment was in the preface, by that master of both arts, Jon L. Breen, of his *Hair of the Sleuthhound*, published in 1982, subtitled "Parodies of Mystery Fiction," but containing pastiches as well in the twenty-two chapters, each with a short, neat introduction. In his preface he gives some American dictionary definitions of "parody," lists some nonmystery anthologies, and stresses some of the differ-

ences (e.g., humorous variations of a detective's name), but he too points out that the obvious, well-known definitions mentioned above are not always definitive. One interesting comment he makes, and also quotes Nathaniel Benchley thereon, is of parody as a form of literary criticism. (Occasionally, dramatic critics write their entire reviews as parody.) We shall consider Breen's subtle and witty book, and his work generally, again, both his short stories and full-length novels.

In his *Theatrecraft*, published by Marc Europe in 1986, Nigel Forde, a broadcaster, author, and poet, wrote in chapter 6, "Writing":

The best form of literary criticism is also the best fun: it is parody, by which I mean the conscious imitation of somebody else's style. There is also another form which goes under the name of parody, where certain words of the original passage are replaced by others, in order to poke fun, as in Lewis Carroll's version of "Twinkle, twinkle, little star":

Twinkle, twinkle, little bat! How I wonder what you're at! Up above the world you fly, Like a tea-tray in the sky.

But this is not really parody at all; it is properly called burlesque. It is extremely tedious unless it is exceptionally well done, in which case it is only fairly tedious. Parody, however, is an art because, to do it well, the writer has had to understand how the mind of the original writer works, and that requires a great deal of knowledge and a large amount of sympathy if not love. Parodies done in spite are often too extreme and unconsidered—more of a scream than a statement—but to write a good parody makes you ask all the right questions: What image would he have chosen for that? What would he have thought of that? Are those words in his vocabulary? and so on. A good parody should be easily mistakable for the real thing. It is instructive and enjoyable to try writing a famous scene in a play in the style of three or four different playwrights.

There are two other terms used to describe works in this survey. The first has also been mentioned in connection with theatre—

"burlesque"—which is both a playful or jocular composition, and a deliberate exaggeration in mockery, as with women taking men's roles in otherwise straight drama. The other term frequently used for books and films is "spoof," a term coined by the great English comedian Arthur Roberts (1852–1933) for the hoaxing game he invented, hence something bogus, but now used in the sense of a joke or send-up or, of course, a form of parody.

For another and earlier distinction I am indebted to author Peter Lovesey, with whose books we shall be concerned later. In 1985 he was a guest at Rheims of 813, the French association of crime authors and fans, became a member, and receives the journal 813. In no. 14, December, 1985, he kindly sent me, was the article Les Parodies Du Roman Policier by Regis Messac, from La Revue Belge, vol. 2, no. 2. (April 15, 1930): the author specifies: "On ne pastiche que les auteurs qui en valent la peine; c'est presque un titre de glorie que de figurer dans un receuil de A la Manière de . . . De même, un genre littéraire n'obtient les honneurs de la parodie que lorsqu'il jouit d'une existence definie. d'un cercle de lecteurs assez vaste, en un mot, de la popularité." The main subjects of this long and interesting article are several parodies of Sherlock Holmes and his methods (including two plays), Stephen Leacock, Mark Twain, the French favorite Fantomas, and A. A. Milne's The Red House Mystery, with its secret passage in the library.

Another pertinent comment from the French comes in *Le Compagnonnage*, by Dr. Bernard de Castéra, in 1988: "La parodie, l'imitation ne sont pas necessairement des moqueries. Elles peuvent être le signe d'une profonde admiration."

Yet another interesting comparison by August Derleth was quoted by Richard Lancelyn Green in the introduction to his 1985 collection, *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, consisting of what are both sequels and pastiches, two of which—by Derleth and Julian Symons—we shall consider in Chapter 4. Although the thousand or more parodies and pastiches of Holmes can be only lightly touched upon here, Green, son of writer Roger Lancelyn Green, has a neat collection, with apt quotes and facts. The Derleth comment on his splendid Solar Pons pastiche was that he did not follow the "ridiculing imitation designed for laughter," preferring the "fond and admiring one less widely known as pastiche." Other stories in Green's book include an Arthur Whitaker

story once thought to be by Doyle, and others by Vincent Starrett, Stuart Palmer, creator of Miss Hildegarde Withers, and the winner of a competition.

It was said by a leading American detective fiction historian and critic, Howard Haycraft, that we could not have detective stories before we had detectives, but that has been described as too facile a comment, because the actual terms "detective," and the art of police "detection," are much older, going back many years. Two early trends are Samuel Johnson, the great lexicographer (1709–1784), described by novelist Tobias Smollett (1721–1771) as "that Great Cham of literature," and the early crime novel Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams (1794) by William Godwin (1756-1836), the father of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1797–1851) who was the wife of poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and herself the writer of the classic gothic novel Frankenstein in 1818. Historians quote the biblical stories of Susanna and Judith, and Voltaire, as well as the private police forces of the London Docks and London Magistrates, before the official foundation of British police forces in the early nineteenth century, but deduction, in the sense of Poe's "ratiocination," is now generally accepted, and the five famous short stories written between 1841 and 1844 by the American Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), "The Mystery of Marie Roget," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Purloined Letter," "The Gold Bug," and "Thou Art the Man," a quintet first selected by the detective story writer Dorothy L. Savers (1893–1957). Poe was affected by drink and drugs, so surprise and skepticism were expressed about such a writer and editor being able to produce such analytical and deductive short stories, but it has been established that these were written in the period when he was free from those effects. His detective is the egregious chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, who goes out only at night, and can follow through a logical line of thought psychologically in his companion walking silently beside him—admittedly a man whose thought processes he would naturally know better than a stranger's, which is not to detract from the feat.

In his biography of Phineas T. Barnum, a great American showman and circus owner, titled *Humbug*, Harris has an interesting comment, that America was then ripe for such men as Poe, Richard Adams Locke, and Barnum, who were all adept at exposing hoaxes and setting up hoaxes themselves, while American literature was thus ready for any problem solving, such as Poe's ratiocination.

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Various authors wrote detectives stories during the next two decades, establishing continuation of the genre, including Wilkie Collins (1824-1889), Charles Dickens (1812-1870), and others, until the Southsea (near Portsmouth) doctor who wrote short stories while awaiting patients for Strand Magazine gave impetus with the birth of Sherlock Holmes. Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) wrote his first Holmes novel, A Study in Scarlet, in 1887, and the first short story in the Strand—"A Scandal in Bohemia" for the July 1891 issue. He was to find his Holmes stories brought him more fame than his practice, war service, historical novels, and political and occult activities, much as did Arthur Sullivan find his collaboration with William Gilbert in the Savoy operettas (themselves definite parodies) outclass his "serious" operas, hymns, and oratorios, and Dorothy L. Sayers's Wimsey stories more famous than her poetic translations and excellent religious play The Man Born to Be King. Colin Wilson has an apt comment here. His books have encompassed so many different fields, including detective stories. In his early philosophical book, The Strength to Dream (1962), in references to Poe's and Jules Verne's detailed work, he notes "the imaginings have a certain authority." (This can be seen also in Poe's detective stories, as well as in the Sherlock Holmes stories, which are clearly related to them.)

At this time, it must be remembered that police forces were not popular, because of their alleged paramilitary basis, and a nonexistent bias against the working classes, so strong indeed that a police constable killed in England while endeavoring to control a mob had his death recorded as justifiable homicide. Hence these first fictional detectives tended to be amateur, or nonprofessional, often scoring off the Scotland Yard detectives, as with Holmes.

A variation of the amateur sleuth's operations is the gothic novel, with honorable roots as far back as Horace Walpole and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, a genus still very popular with writers and readers today. Donald Westlake neatly described it: "A Gothic is a story about a girl who gets a house." Gwendoline Butler has pointed out that Jane Eyre is a typical gothic tale. Invariably the heroine sets out to solve the murder mystery herself, goes off into cellar, marsh, attic, forest, or whatever, alone, then has to

be rescued by the hero or the police. "Had I but known . . ." is the invariable phrase used, to christen it the Had-I-but-Known school. Ogden Nash in his poem on the subject, "Don't Guess, Let Me Tell You," ends: I wouldn't have bought it had I but known it was impregnated with Had I But Knowns. Isaac Asimov comments in "The Three Goblets" in *The Union Club Mysteries* (1984) on mystery writers giving "brains and insights" to the Holmeses, Poirots, and Wimseys as opposed to the "Scotland Yard bunglers," to which another of his clubmen retorts that the Applebys and Leopolds are the "public hirelings" solving "the most difficult and subtle crimes." "In fact, the police procedural is now much more popular than the old-fashioned Philo Vance bit."

Charlie Chan comes in for some peculiar comments in a book described as "A Social History of the Crime Story," Delightful Murder, by Ernest Mandel (1984), written from the Marxist viewpoint, and with certain errors of both type and thought. On one page, Chan is described as the only classic sleuth not from the upper class. Later, with Maigret and Ellery Queen, he appears as the "transitional figure" from the private sleuth to the police detective, but with little support from the department. Still later, Chan, Philo Vance, Ellery Queen, Perry Mason, and Nero Wolfe are hardly different from the classical Alan Grant of Josephine Tey (1897-1952), Roderick Alleyn of Ngaio Marsh (1895-1982), among a long list of policemen. Finally, "Lord Peter Wimsey's humour, Charlie Chan's apologetic sing-song, or Ellery Queen's eccentricities" are esoteric qualities not thought by the author to command their old following—a statement unsupported by the reissue of both books and films featuring this individualistic trio.

This tendency had increased partly as a result of a sensational bribery scandal in which some high-ranking and successful senior Scotland Yard officers had been involved and convicted. Notable exceptions, however, had been Charles Dickens with his creation of Inspector Bucket of the Detective, in *Bleak House* (1852–1853), based on Inspector Field, about whom he also wrote some laudatory magazine articles stemming from his own enthusiastic support; Wilkie Collins's Sergeant Cuff was based on Inspector Whicher, who had solved the Constance Kent murder case, and the obtuse Superintendent Seagrave based on the real Inspector Foley, in *The Moonstone*, published in 1868, of whom more anon. (An interesting side effect, not always noticed, is that so many de-

tectives had anapestic names: a two-syllable given name and a one-syllable surname—such as Sherlock Holmes, Sexton Blake, Dixon Hawke, Ferrers Locke, Philo Gubb, Philo Vance, Charlie Chan, "Father" Brown, Nelson Lee, Parker Pyne, Nero Wolfe. Harley Quin, Gervase Fen, Jason Love, Dixon Brett, Daisy Bell, Falcon Swift, Martin Track, Kerry Drake, Colwyn Dane, Stanley Dare, Carfax Baines, Gordon Fox, Abel Link, Derek Clyde, Panther Grayle, Kenyon Ford, Vernon Bead, Martin Dale, and Matthew Helm, from the 1890s to the 1970s, across the whole field.) In his introduction to one edition of Agatha Christie's sensational and surprising The Murder of Roger Ackroyd (an "acroidal" book, according to H. R. F. Keating), the journalist Torquemada comments first on the respectability brought by "the lighthearted labours of three men" before World War I—Dr. Austin Freeman's The Red Thumb Mark (1907), G. K. Chesterton's The Innocence of Father Brown (1911), and two years later, E. C. Bentley's Trent's Last Case—after which he comments the war years increased the reading of John Buchan and Edgar Wallace "thrillers" and the "shockers" since a corpse or two more or less didn't seem to matter. It is in this introduction that he states he traced eightyfive clues and indirections in Christie's book.

An early recognition of the boring aspects of detailed police procedures came from Victor L. Whitechurch (1868–1933) in *Murder at the Pageant*. At the beginning of chapter 3 he referred to "that meticulous routine work which is so little known to the general public and bears such a minute part in modern detective fiction." In the first paragraph of chapter 5 he mentions dull, routine police work: "To write the real, complete story of any crime however interesting in itself, its detection and its result, would be to weary the reader intensely."

After World War I came the two decades known as the Golden Age of the detective story—from 1920 to 1940—when so many great authors flourished, like Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Ngaio Marsh, Margery Allingham, G. K. Chesterton, John Dickson Carr, John Creasey, and H. C. Bailey in Britain, and Erle Stanley Gardner, Dashiell Hammett, Jonathan Latimer, Earl Derr Biggers, and Raymond Chandler in America—to name just a few among many famous names. World War II brought a taste for more violence, realism, and harshness to the postwar writers. Other developments had been the psychological novel, more

"why" than "whodunnit," to be followed by the police procedural, in which a team of police detectives solved various cases simultaneously, as would be the case in real life, rather than a single talented sleuth.

H. R. F. Keating in his interesting analysis Murder Must Appetize has noted that the hero detective became a brand label, indicative of the usual quality expected and received when any trademarked or hallmarked product is bought. The detective story has been likened to a modern version of the morality or mystery play ("mystery" referring to the guilds, or métiers, which presented the individual scenes), in the sense of the evildoer being discovered and punished, good triumphing over evil in the end the Protestant ethos—which helps to explain why the genre was not so popular in police states. G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936), originator of Father Brown and first president of the Detection Club, said In Defence of Detective Stories: "No one can have failed to notice that in these stories the hero or the investigator crosses London with something of the loneliness and liberty of a prince in a tale of elfland, that in the course of that incalculable journey the casual omnibus assumes the primal colours of a fairy ship." The link between morality plays and the later fairy tales (although based on stories of antiquity) is stressed. Raymond Chandler (1888–1959) has his immortal line in The Simple Art of Murder (1950): "But down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid," and again following a Chesteron quote, notes: "When a policeman is made out to be a fool, as he always was in the Sherlock Holmes stories, this not only deprecates the accomplishment of the detective but it makes the reader doubt the author's knowledge of his own field." We have seen how the amateur or nonprofessional sleuth was at that time (1901) frequently scoring over the official detectives, a trend that continued.

Sherlock Holmes was frequently indifferent to the culprit's punishment by law, but the malefactor's downfall has a comforting feeling. In his book *Justice and the Press*, John Sefton, in the chapter "The Need for Scapegoats," comments that in Edmund Wilson's world nobody is guiltless or safe, and there is relief when the murderer is caught because "he is not, after all, a person like you or me. He is a villain—known to the trade as George Gruesome—he has been caught by an infallible Power, the supercilious

and omniscient detective, who knows exactly where to fix the guilt."

The trend toward realism, in literature as in the theatre, cannot be wholly successful; for example, detective story writers strive to get their facts correct on such matters as ballistics, fingerprints, or forensic science, as these steadily evolve (in all probability the Jack the Ripper murders in the East End of London in the 1890s might have been solved had, say, the science of fingerprints been more advanced), but even if in a police procedural novel or television program much of the tedium and detail can be shown, too much detail would slow the narration to complete boredom.

This brief survey is not intended to be a full history of detective and crime fiction, just a list of landmarks, as there are many historical surveys of the genre, in whole or in part, to some of which reference will be made, and many of them listed in the Bibliography. Some universities offer courses on detective fiction, and in an interview with the writer for the *Poisoned Pen* magazine (vol. 6, no. 3 [1985]), Walter Gorski, a psychologist and leading police authority in America on hostages, hijacking, and the use of deadly force, stated that detective fiction in selected cases is used in the training of police officers.

Dr. Gorski, incidentally, drew my attention to an erudite book by Stefano Tani, published in 1984 by the Southern Illinois University Press, entitled The Doomed Detective, described as the "Contribution of the Detective Novel to Post-Modern American and Italian Fiction." Tani traces the rise of the anti-detective novel upturning the traditional detective formula, and splitting the future course into three—innovation, deconstruction, and metrication an esoteric treatment in which he can make certain brief observations on the emergence of parody and self-parody. It is natural for all forms of popular culture to be analyzed in depth, and this has been happening to the detective story at least since the 1970s, and even earlier in the case of Sherlock Holmes. One writer in the excellent American University journal Clues in the 1980s pointed out that the popular television police lieutenant, Kojak, played by Telly Savalas, was a tribute to the Greeks as an ethnic minority, although his expensive tailor-made suits did not sit lightly on a lieutenant's pay.

Dr. Tani deals with such titles as the international success *The Name of the Rose*, by Umberto Eco, to which we shall turn again

under parody; Pynchon's Crying of Lot 49; and Nabokov's Pale Fire. Dealing with detective story authors he says they "cling to the conventions of the British style (P. M. Hubbard) peppered with self-parody," that Italian authors have been slow to adopt detective stories as they "favored an ironic and parodic approach over indulgence in the murder of any gruesome aspects of the narrative," that Giallo of the 1930s had "a taste for the parodic and comic sides of the foreign genre." His other comments of an academic yet thoughtful nature are, for example, that the names of characters in Jorge Luis Borges's La Muerte y la Brujula (Death and the Compass, 1942), "seem to parody the self-destructive detectivemurderer duality that is the pivot of the story," that another author, like Calvino, parodies the ending and the solution, for example, in Se una Notte d'Inverno un Viaggiatore, and, on a less cerebral note, that Silas Flannery "parodies" Sean Connery in Borges's book. This serious book does underline the popularity and prominence of detective fiction in England, America, and northern Europe, but certainly treats it as a serious branch of literature and culture, which Dorothy L. Sayers feared not to be the case.

It might have been expected that the first signs of parody or pastiche would have been from the onset of humor, which is not necessarily regarded as appropriate in the detective story. In later years the comedy-thriller made its appearance as book, film, and stage or television play, and some, as we shall see, altered the entire course of the subject. The first parodies, however, appeared as early as one year after the Holmes story in 1891. Robert Barr wrote the "Adventures of Sherlaw Kombs," in the Idler, a magazine edited by Jerome K. Jerome and himself. In this story, later titled "The Great Pegram Mystery," Dr. Whatson recounts admiringly his idol's miraculous, but completely incorrect, deductions of the missing financier shot in the Scotch Express. The story was reissued in 1979 by the Aspen Press of Colorado, which four years earlier had also republished the second parody of Holmes, which was "The Adventures of Picklock Holes" by Rudolf Chambers Lehmann, in *Punch*, the British humorous magazine, in 1893. Here Dr. Potson again recounts the brilliant, incorrect deductions of the Great Detective, interspersed with delightful non sequiturs such as "A day or two after . . . I happened to be travelling . . . through... Bokhara." Holmes has proved the main target for parody and pastiche to such an extent that more than one thousand examples have now been written. With such a vast and growing number, it is obviously impossible to deal with all Holmes's parodies and pastiches in depth, especially as there are many volumes devoted to specific parts thereof, so this study is intended to deal only with those examples which amplify the subject to a greater degree, as with the two pioneers quoted above.

In this survey of the early years of development, and pioneer parodies, we can now consider a short story which Julian Symons in his introduction to the Penguin Crime Omnibus referred to as "a parody of detective work such as Wilkie Collins's 'The Biter Bit.'" This first recorded humorous detective story was part of Collins's The Queen of Hearts, published in 1859, and consists of a series of letters between Chief Inspector Francis Theakstone and Matthew Sharpin, concerning a robbery at 13 Rutherford Street, Soho (a cosmopolitan district in the West End of London). Yatman, a stationer who has had a career of ups and downs, lives over the shop with his wife, and a lodger, Jay, and has had his savings stolen. The pompous Sharpin, with friends in high places, has been wished onto the chief inspector, who assigns him to solve the robbery. Sharpin takes lodgings with the Yatmans, suspects Jay, bores two holes in the wall connecting their rooms—one for his eye, and the other for his ear—follows Jay to a mysterious assignation with the two detectives he has demanded as backup, only to find Jay attending a wedding. After following Jay, and writing meticulously and unnecessarily detailed reports, Sharpin is taken off the case; Sergeant Bulmer resumes it to discover promptly that Mrs. Yatman, adored by Sharpin, is the thief of the two hundred sovereigns to pay her secret dressmaker's bill. Yatman forgives her, and Sharpin disappears in a huff. Interesting to note that Collins and Dickens were great friends, sharing Dickens's amateur theatricals, Dickens encouraging Collins to write his type of novel, and Collins giving Dickens the example to start the unfinished whodunnit, The Mystery of Edwin Drood (which Poe could probably have solved), and then Collins going on to pen what is the first parody of detective fiction. We shall see later that Dickens himself again used parody, both of style and of living persons, in his own writings.

The other early parody is Edgar Allan Poe's short story "Thou Art the Man" (1844), satirizing writers of crime stories. The narrator tricks one Goodfellow by what Dorothy L. Savers described.

in her introduction to the first *Great Short Stories of Detection*, *Mystery and Horror* (1928), as "a repulsive kind of jack-in-the-box" into discovery of the murder. She stressed, however, that this story established two traditions: false clues by the murderer and the "solution by way of the most unlikely person."

The similarities between Collins's and Dickens's literary careers were marked. Dickens admired his friend's stories of crime and detection, and attempted them himself. They both wrote about social evils, although Dickens's accounts were usually just after necessary reforms had started. They shared an interest in amateur theatre travels. Collins followed Dickens's lead in novel writing. Just as Dickens wrote nonfiction articles on the police of London and elsewhere, Collins in fact wrote several stories and books with crime and detection, as well as *The Woman in White, The Moonstone*, and *The Biter Bit. The Law and the Lady* (1875) was based on the trial of Madeleine Smith. *No Name* (1862) had a woman detective, and several short stories had a crime motive. Both of course parodied the new detective story.

After this brief survey of the early years and development, we shall turn to the main section, of books. Parody will cover both persons and mores, including literary styles; mass parody will cover the highlighting of more than one style of detective simultaneously. Before pastiche will come a survey of group efforts, where a handful of writers combine to write one book in parts to make a whole. There is a section on what may be termed do-it-yourself, covering dossier-style books, books and picture-type puzzles, and mystery and murder weekends in England and America.

Then will come sequels, where authors take over another's characters or plots, and finally, children's books of detection written by authors normally in the adult market. The section on the visual will cover—naturally—theatre, films, and television productions, including plays, sketches, and so on.

An early volume of parody was A Century of Parody and Imitation, edited by Walter Jerrold and R. M. Leonard, published in 1913 by Oxford University Press, for a copy of which I am indebted to Joy Wilson, wife of Colin Wilson. It has some interesting comments and pieces. In the prefatory note is quoted the remark of Isaac D'Israeli, father of the great Benjamin Disraeli, "Unless the prototype is familiar to us a parody is nothing"—

rather like watching a stage impressionist impersonating someone unknown to his audience. Another quotation is from Owen Seaman on imitations: "The lowest, a mere verbal echo, to the highest, where it becomes a department of pure criticism." The book covers the period from 1812, and there are four parodies of E. A. Poe's poetry, one of them, "Chateaux d'Espagne," having a touch of relevance to our theme. Describing a visit to the Haymarket Theatre, soon after the Lord Dundreary success, written by Henry Sambrooke Leigh (1837–1883):

I was doubtful and uncertain, at the rising of the curtain, If the piece would prove a novelty, or one I'd seen before. For a band of robbers drinking in a gloomy cave, and clinking With their glasses on the table, I had witnessed o'er and o'er. Since the half-forgotten period of my innocence was o'er; Twenty years ago or more.

Tell me who, then, was the maiden, that appear'd so sorrow laden. In the room of David Garrick, with a bust, above the door? Quoth my neighbour, "Nelly Moore."

The footnotes identify Nelly Moore as an actress famed for playing at the Haymarket with Edward A. Sothern as Lord Dundreary (1861/62), and T. W. Robertson's play *David Garrick* was produced in 1864.

Most of the parodies and pastiches, with or without the thousand on the Sherlock Holmes list, concern themselves with the written word rather than the visual entertainment, which forms the subject of a later chapter. We must first consider just what elements in the detective or crime story are available for this treatment.

As has been pointed out by many historians, the elements of a 'tecker, as detective stories are known in the book trade, are normally a victim (particularly of murder, which is the usual crime offered and expected), a detective with or without a partner, and a murderer or other criminal, occasionally with an assistant villain. Rules and regulations have been prescribed by various bodies or individuals. The Detection Club of England, founded in 1928 by Anthony Berkeley (A. B. Cox, Anthony Berkeley Cox, and Francis Iles, 1893–1970), today has each newly elected member processing in, surrounded by candle-holding members, to take a

solemn oath on an illumined skull that no unfair tricks shall be played on the reader, such as unsuspected twins, Chinamen, unknown poisons, etc. Ronald A. Knox (1888-1957), priest, don, member of the Detection Club, critic, editor of Detective Fiction, and author of such detective novels as The Viaduct Murder (1925), listed in 1929 in The Best English Detective Stories of 1928, which he coedited, his own ten rules to be followed by fairplaying authors. S. S. Van Dine (Willard Huntington Wright, 1888– 1939), author of the Philo Vance books, listed his own "Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories" in an article in 1928 for the American Magazine. Their rules included, for example, not letting the detective possess or acquire information or clues kept back from the reader, not letting the detective prove to be the criminal, and so on. Obviously these rules are sometimes broken; for example, the detective has proved to be the murderer, and not all writers follow the scrupulous example of Ellery Queen in ensuring that every clue is mentioned, however lightly.

A lesser-known observation from S. S. Van Dine is in the foreword he wrote for The Mystery Puzzle Book, by Lassiter Wren and Randle McKay (undated, but obviously from the 1920s or 1930s), a copy of which was given me by an old friend, John Fisher, a TV producer, member of the Magic Circle, and author of many books on magic, show business, and Lewis Carroll. After commenting on the reader being given a series of clues to solve and arrange, Van Dine comments: "But there is another vital element that enters into the type of puzzle which we call the detective story; and that is the appeal of the actual material of which the puzzle is fabricated." He explains the fascination crime has for the reader, as has achieving the solution, bearing in mind that most of the puzzles in that book are based on actual cases. "He has, perhaps (by projecting himself into the realities of crime), a sense of having achieved something not only mentally, but ethically, worthwhile." This brings us back to the Protestant ethos of solving crime, even at second hand or by surrogate, and seeing right triumph and evil put down.

S. S. Van Dine, in his "Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories," listed as number 3: "There must be no love interest in the story. To introduce amour is to clutter up a purely intellectual experience with irrelevant sentiment. The business in hand is to bring a criminal to the bar of justice, not to bring a lovelorn cou-

ple to the hymeneal altar." This rule was gradually and inexorably chipped away—even Marlowe married—and film and television sleuths regularly fall into amours, or more often affairs, with suspects or clients.

A crime story can be written from various viewpoints. The author can write in the first person as the sleuth—amateur or professional—as happened so often in the gothic novels, or the Had-I-but-Known school, where the narrator's full thoughts are described en passant. One must be particularly careful, if the narrator is to be the criminal, that nothing is said to mislead the reader deliberately - Agatha Christie was most punctilious in this. It can be written from the viewpoint of the detective's assistant, his Dr. Watson, admiringly, and bemusedly, and finally overwhelmed with amazement. The author can write with omniscience as he manipulates his actors on the stage of his own choice, but even here he can write from either a subjective or an objective viewpoint that is, as things appear to a character or as they should or could appear to him. The reader can thus be the detective, in a literary or practical sense, or his assistant; he will not usually be able to cast himself as the killer, except in the type of book called "inverted": the reader knows the criminal, and perhaps the crime also, and the story unfolds psychologically, showing the whyfor and whether the criminal will get away with his crime.

There is a situation where the narrator may prove to be the murderer, a situation described by H. R. F. Keating as "acroidal." We shall consider a fantastic permutation thereon by Cameron Mac-Cabe. Michiko Kakutani, a New York Times critic, writing there on January 15, 1984, "Mysteries Join the Mainstream," comments on Jorge Luis Borges and Alain Robbe-Grillet and their unexpected denouements. "In Mr. Borges' Death and the Compass, the detective winds up as the murderer's final victim, realizing that the pattern he had discerned earlier existed only in his own mind. In Mr. Robbe-Grillet's Erasers the detective and the murderer turn out to be the same person."

There are certain rules under which the genre must flourish. Obviously there must be criminal, crime, and detective. Equally obviously there must be a solution with the good triumphant and the evil conquerco and preferably punished. We may now see a likeness, as with the western, to the original morality or mystery play, based on biblical themes, like the carpenters and the building of the ark on the floats making up the religious processions round the towns. Similar carnival processions still take place today in Britain and Europe. The element of morality in detective fiction has always been stressed—Erik Routley even titling his book The Puritan Pleasures of the Detective Story—as representative of the Puritan ethos. Detectives should not be criminals, nor should they really fall in love. Detective stories did not seem to thrive in police states, like the Soviet Union. Psychologists think readers prefer the detective stories as confirming (that is, strengthening) their beliefs in law and order. Comparisons can be made with medieval knights, killing dragons or villains, rescuing damsels in distress, dispensing justice, and bestowing protection. In a New York Times article, "Super Thrillers and Superpowers" (February 19, 1984), Robert Larchman adds a postscript: "In a somewhat simpler and less cynical era, private eyes like Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe satisfied another fantasy, that of prevailing against heavy odds."

Early Days and Differences

It has been said that every detective story should teach the reader something about something, to interest him; this can be taken to excess. When the author was the British Broadcasting Corporation's only radio crime book critic in 1984/85, one murder story set in the mountains proved to have so much technical data on mountaineering as to make up a separate textbook, while others have had masses of commercial, sports, accountancy, racing, etc., data to confuse readers, especially those not necessarily sharing the interests - although books based on show business, radio, theatre, films, or festivals never seem to fall into this trap. Crime stories can be set in any milieu—country houses, universities, schools, theatres, fashion houses, football stadia, police stations, jungles, the nineteenth century—or the eighteenth, or even the fifth B.C.—on any of the five continents. Detectives can be from all walks of life-professors, private eyes, drunks, schoolboys, natives, heiresses, dilettantes, merchants, crime writers and correspondents, or homemakers—and they can follow any available trials of thought they prefer-ratiocination, scientific deduction, forensic science, psychology, psychic research, trial and error, or even blundering guesswork—any combination is allowed so long as the reader's attention is held against boredom or indifference. Every one of these factors is capable of parody and pastiche, of whatever format, so long as the target can be recognized, even if a clue may be needed.

In the Golden Age arose the phenomenon called by the Americans the age of silly-assery, in which so many private sleuths appeared to be amiable idiots, with sharp brains, puerile patter, and often monocles: Sayers's Lord Peter Wimsey, H. C. Bailey's Dr. Reggie Fortune, S. S. Van Dine's Philo Vance, Anthony Berkeley's Roger Sheringham, perhaps Christie's Captain Hastings, Leslie Charteris's Saint, Margery Allingham's Albert Campion, et al. What or who started this trend? Jane Austen, perhaps. Certainly Philo Vance was an early example, appearing in 1926 in The Benson Murder Case and oft quoted as an original, but five years earlier had appeared a book of short stories, Call Mr. Fortune. Against this can be quoted Edgar Wallace's 1908 Angel Esquire, in which a teetotal, card-playing detective betrayed distinct traces of silly-assery to advantage. It is significant that the finest exponent on television, radio, and audio books of both Lord Peter Wimsey and P. G. Wodehouse's silly ass, Bertie Wooster, has been the same actor, Ian Carmichael. Recent research into the origins of Blandings Castle, Wooster, and his man Jeeves by Norman Murphy indicates Wooster was based on an actor, light comedian, society entertainer, and Gilbert and Sullivan star, George Grossmith. The most convincing contender and the earliest is the creation of Baroness Orczy (1865-1947); her detectives included the Old Man in the Corner (Bill Owen, 1905), Lady Molly of Scotland Yard (1910), and Patrick Mulligan (Skin O' My Tooth, 1928), but in 1905 came her immortal creation, the aristocratic dandy who could disguise himself as a sans-culotte to save the French aristos from Mam'zelle Guillotine—Sir Percy Blakeney, Baronet—to say nothing of her The First Sir Percy: An Adventure of the Laughing Cavalier (1921).

To summarize and clarify, therefore, our approach mentioned above, parody of individuals, detectives, living or literary persons involved parody of mores, genre, the methods, literary styles, or even social life depicted.

Mass parody is that in which more than one detective is satirized. The next section will survey pastiche, including those books written as tributes to the period or style. Group efforts are where six or more authors wrote a book together, taking the story on by stages, sometimes in each others' literary styles. The reader and his efforts to solve the problems include a do-it-yourself format, dossiers, books, murder games, puzzles and competitions, which include film and murder weekends, where one pays to join a house

party or train to take part in the action with professional actors. Sequels will cover authors who carry on, usually with permission, the characters of other writers who may have died or ceased writing. Books for children are written by authors normally writing for an adult readership—both detective stories for children and books outside the genre.

Finally, parody, mass parody, and pastiche occur in theatre, films, and television.

We have already mentioned the emergence of humor in detective fiction, and the effect we might expect it to have on future development, from comedy-thrillers, as they were performed. This is undeniable on the three-dimensional versions—plays, films, and television productions—but humor in the written tales has proved a slight dichotomy. The rules have always leaned against the introduction of humor, as have many practitioners. For example, William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965), a playwright whose elegant classic comedy The Circle ranks with Wilde, Sheridan, and Congreve; doctor; intelligence operator; novelist and essayist—he created Ashenden, The British Agent (1928), filmed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1936 with John Gielgud in the lead; he wrote a penetrating essay, "The Decline and Fall of the Detective Story" in The Vagrant Mood (1952), in which he stressed, "I look upon the introduction of humour in a detective story as mistaken, but I see the reason for it and with a sigh accept it." Raymond Chandler (1888-1959), creator of the great "private eye," or PI (private investigator) Philip Marlowe, in 1950 wrote an excellent essay, "The Simple Art of Murder," in which he commented: "It is not a very fragrant world, but it is the world you live in, and certain writers with tough minds and cool spirit of detachment can make very interesting and even amusing patterns out of it. It is not funny that a man should be killed, but it is sometimes funny that he should be killed for so little, and that his death should be the coin of what we call civilization." Thomas E. Williams in the American University journal CLUES (vol. 1, no. 1 [Spring 1980]), wrote an article, "Martin Beck: The Swedish Version of Barney Miller Without the Canned Laughter," and said: "However, the commercialism of various plots interwoven in the story line, which struggles to be au courant, rings with the familiarity of a television situation comedy, Barney Miller, where the situation is a New York City police precinct and the comedy struggles to be relevant. In Barney Miller there is no detection, only laughs caused by char-