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## TRUE CRIME

### Philip Rawlings

'You've got me bang to rights, officer. I did the Brixton bank job, but society is to blame.'

'Yes, sir; we will be interviewing them in due course.' (old joke)

'A discipline which refuses to take into account 90 per cent or more of what constitutes its domain seems to me not only to have large zones of blindness but also to run serious risks of distorted vision in the small zone it focuses on.' (Darko Suvin, in Pawling 1984)

Crime is everywhere. Everyone has been both victim and offender. But the most frequent contact with crime is through newspapers, books, television, film, video, computer games, political speeches, and the rantings of drunks in pubs. The academic criminologist may have nothing but contempt for those - including other academic criminologists - who venture an opinion on crime, but who is best informed: the person in the pub who reads crime stories in the newspapers, thinks Dirty Harry might have a point and wants criminals to be punished, or the academic who can reel off the latest figures on crime and then demolish them or who can provide a dozen reasons why society is to blame but no solutions? Other academics have taken some notice of the treatment of crime in novels, film, television and radio,<sup>[1]</sup> but to the criminologist such work is irrelevant or at best a side-show to the main task.

There are four broad types of crime texts: crime fiction, polemics about crime which are designed to influence policy, 'popular' criminology and 'academic' criminology. In this paper I will look mainly at popular criminology. In doing so I will confine myself to a discussion of what bookshops call 'True Crime' books.

### Popular criminology - academic criminology

Popular criminology covers a wide range of apparently factual material, but is, usually, concerned with a particular crime or criminal and the process of detection. It is aimed at a non-specialist market, is cheap, easily available and easy to read. Popular criminologists use techniques familiar to journalists and crime novelists to heighten the tension and to get the pages turning. The cover of a book by Masters and Falle (1994) on the Newall case proclaims 'This book is a study in hatred, greed and clever cold-blooded deception; it also tells an extraordinary and tragic story of parental negligence and the ferocious power of anger repressed'. The tension and thrust of the narrative is generally maintained by short sentences, paragraphs and chapters, and sometimes by telling several stories simultaneously, although after a while the narrative normally funnels down to the hunt. Writers also try to impart a sense of reality through trivial detail, the use of slang and the phonetic transcription of local dialects. Although it has its fair share of poor quality writing, it is popular rather than academic criminology which is able to boast some truly excellent writing, such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* and Blake Morrison's *As If*. Popular criminologists are often a little shy of revealing their reasons for writing; although money doubtless spurs on most criminologists. Howard Dossor (Wilson 1988) claims that Colin Wilson's interest in murders was neither 'morbid nor prurient', rather 'he understood intuitively that they had something important to say about the human condition. They served to represent one side of the human psyche, the other side of which

was represented by stories of great human achievement and individual self-fulfilment' (Wilson 1988: ix)

However, Wilson has said that his interest was sparked by having contemplated murder (Wilson 1988: xv), rather in the way that Umberto Eco (ironically?) claimed to have been inspired to write *The Name of the Rose* by his urge to murder a monk.

Popular criminology has its own hierarchy and code. The title 'criminologist' is awarded by other writers, not assumed as is the case in academic criminology. Writers are keen to establish their integrity and objectivity by distancing themselves from tabloid journalism. In his book on Sutcliffe, Burn wrote,

'Fact and fiction had become hopelessly blurred in the weeks and months following Sutcliffe's arrest, largely as a result of newsmen offering hard cash for 'good copy'. And many of those who talked to me did so in the hope of setting the record straight. No money was ever offered for information; money, with one of two notable exceptions, was never asked for, and none was ever paid.' (Burn 1985: 367; also Ritchie 1993)

Others give their work the fragrance of science. So, some promise to delve into the criminal mind, such as La Bern's book on Haigh, subtitled *The Mind of a Murderer* (La Bern 1973), and Ritchie's book on Hindley, subtitled *Inside the Mind of a Murderess* (Ritchie 1993), although the psychological insights promised do not often emerge.

Academic criminology emerged in the late eighteenth century out of a debate about crime and in tandem with the bureaucratization of policing and punishment (Rawlings 1995). Unlike popular criminology, the main concerns are crime and criminals in bulk. Not only is there an ethical injunction against identifying individuals, but also the single crime or criminal is regarded as too limited a sample from which to make the sort of generalisations that are assumed to be the objective of academic criminology. There have been exceptions to this - of a sort. The Chicago School used the criminal biography (Bennett 1987), most famously with Shaw's *The Jack-Roller* (Shaw 1966), but the biographees were not identified and some were sucked in by the academic project: 'Stanley' the Jack-Roller wrote of his wish to be 'helpful to Jon Snodgrass, his associates, and to social science' (see Jack-Roller and Snodgrass 1982: 173).

Academic criminology regards itself as scientific: presenting facts, theories and conclusions in a dispassionate and undramatic manner. It avoids the accessibility which popular criminology craves through the use of obfuscatory language and footnotes, and by burying itself in the catacombs of conferences, journals and books. In the presence of other believers academic criminologists only aspire to the goal of extending knowledge and assume that this is, on the whole, incompatible with profitable writing - a view perpetuated by the research assessment exercises on which part of university funding depends. But since most of the popular media regard an academic as a buffoon, out-of-touch or incomprehensible, appearances are anyway likely to be confined to the inside pages of the *Guardian* or late night chat shows.<sup>[2]</sup>

The rejection of popular criminology by academics often seems tinged with a lofty disdain for the prurience of such work. Academics see themselves as engaged in serious, scientific toil which is detached from that sort of low fascination with crime. But why, then, do academics become interested in crime? And is their work necessarily superior, particularly in light of the general failure of academic criminology to explain, prevent or detect crime? Social historians have long recognised the value of popular crime literature in their work (Linebaugh 1975, 1977, 1991; Rawlings 1992); might there be something for academic criminologists too? Most important of all, it is popular writing about crime and criminals (fiction as well as fact) that has the greatest impact on people's understanding of crime and on criminal justice policy: Home Secretaries and their Shadows have never been noted for their interest in the views of academic criminologists.

## The emergence of popular criminology

Academic criminology begins with Beccaria. Leaving aside the question of whether *Dei delitti e delle pene* is actually a book on criminology, the fact remains that popular criminology, polemic writing on crime and crime fiction were there first.

Much early popular criminology was concerned to describe 'the criminal underworld' in fairly general terms, as is reflected in titles such as *The Fraternity of Vagabonds* (1561). Broadsheets reporting a crime or a condemned person's 'last dying speech' became popular in the seventeenth century (Sharpe 1985). Then, in the mid-seventeenth century, biographies

of individual offenders began to appear in large numbers. Initially, these consisted of a few, loosely-connected, picaresque incidents without any attempt to provide a picture of the whole of the person's life. However, as part of the emergence of the modern biography in the late seventeenth century (Hamilton 1993), criminal biographies began to provide a connected life story and a sense of location and of time passing.

The most significant event in the development of this biographical literature of crime was the regular publication of the Ordinary of Newgate's *Account* (Linebaugh 1975, 1977; Rawlings 1992). In these were biographies of all those hanged following each Old Bailey sessions. The series began in May 1684 as the result of a collaboration between a bookseller, George Croom, who was the publisher of the reports of trials at the Old Bailey (OBSP), and the Ordinary, the Rev. Samuel Smith, who was the chaplain to Newgate Prison where those condemned at the Old Bailey were confined. Smith and Croom announced that the *Accounts* would appear regularly 'to prevent for the Future all false Intelligences concerning the Confessions and Dying Speeches of Malefactors at Tyburn'. They claimed that since only the Ordinary had regular access to the prisoners, then only he could properly inform the public about them (OBSP 15-16 December 1683, 17-18 January 1684, 15-16 May 1684).

Spurred by the Ordinary's success, other publishers entered the market. By the early eighteenth century the popularity of the criminal biography was well established: *A Narrative of all the Robberies, Escapes, &c. of John Sheppard* (1724a) went through eight editions in the two months following the death of Sheppard, a famous prisonbreaker, and *The Life and Adventures of Bampfylde-Moore Carew* (1745) reached 30 editions within 50 years; the Blandy murder in 1752 combined parricide by a young woman, a treacherous lover and the suspicion of injustice, and led to around 30 pamphlets and broadsheets being published (Roughead 1904). Horace Walpole, something of a fan himself, wrote to a friend in 1750:

'You can't conceive of the ridiculous rage there is of going to Newgate; and the prints that are published of the malefactors, and the memoirs of their lives and deaths set forth with as much parade as - as - Marshal Turenne's - we have no generals worth making a parallel!' (Lewis 1937-83: vol. 20, 199)

Although true crime books remain popular, nowadays fewer cases are written up. So, why are some cases turned into books, while others barely make the national newspapers? It will hardly come as a staggering surprise to find that publishers choose only those cases which are out of the ordinary: so, while murder is a favourite topic for books, 'domestic' murders are not, unless several people in a family are killed, as in the Bamber (Caffell 1994, Wilkes 1994) and the Newall cases (Masters and Falle 1994). Otherwise the sort of case which attracts a book publisher is likely to involve a large-scale crime, a gang, a mass or serial murderer (McClaren 1993), a murderer who has been freed and has killed again (Holden 1974, Young 1973), or, perhaps, a murderer who almost got away with it (Caffell 1994, Wilkes 1994). Of the Moors murders one writer remarked, 'what was special about this case, especially sinister was that in the dock was a woman, a woman accused of killing children. It defied comprehension' (Ritchie 1993: 104).

Some cases continue to fascinate, while others fade from the publishers' lists. A current case may lead to a book reviewing similar earlier cases: presumably the Bulger murder prompted Jones's (1994) *Murderous Innocents: True Stories of Children who Kill*, as the execution of Ruth Ellis had led publishers to hurry out books on women who had been hanged (Huggett and Berry 1956, O'Donnell 1956). The Krays attract new books and reprints as gang members are released or die.<sup>[3]</sup> The Moors murders - or, rather, the murderers - continue to attract attention because of the efforts to free Hindley, and this is, presumably, also the reason why recent books have shifted the focus from Brady (Williams 1967) to Hindley - Brady does not, it is said, wish to be free and opposes Hindley's release (Ritchie 1993). Ritchie is, perhaps, correct in the view that 'if hanging had still existed, and if they had not been able to prove they were criminally insane, the Brady-Hindley story would have drawn to a close after the trial' (Ritchie 1993: 121). However, the way the case smashed into the midst of a particularly optimistic decade would probably have ensured enduring interest.

## Biography or autobiography?

As has been mentioned, it was regarded as of great importance to the Ordinary - and, therefore, also to his rivals - to demonstrate a connection to the condemned person. The usual way of doing this was to claim that the book was autobiographical. Obtaining the co-operation of a frightened, cold, hungry prisoner may not have been difficult for the Ordinary, especially when he hinted at the possibility of a pardon (something he can have had little expectation of delivering) or threatened eternal damnation. Rival publishers would claim superior sources of information to those available to the Ordinary, and would even persuade the condemned to hand over a manuscript at the gallows (*Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, 14 September 1741; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 7 February 1754). Other publishers might obtain a prisoner's co-operation in exchange for money, or the promise of a decent burial, or simply the opportunity to put the record straight. Not, of course, that any of these motivations necessarily makes the story any more or less reliable, and certainly there were often squabbles between publishers about the relative accuracy of rival biographies (e.g. Treherne 1989; also, Rawlings 1992: 35n98).

The Ordinary and his competitors acknowledged editorial intervention in the biographies to correct syntax, spelling and grammar (Anon. 1754, Anon. 1761, Rawlings 1992: 4-9), but hacks were also involved in the writing process. Defoe has been credited with writing several biographies, James Boswell wrote a brief 'autobiography' for a client he had unsuccessfully defended, and two hack-biographers, Thomas St. Leger and James Welch, were themselves hanged (Rawlings 1992: 4-9, 43-4; *Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, 26 July 1745; Anon. 1751). Indeed, the level of literacy displayed in many of the biographies leaves some doubt that the condemned had much of a hand in their writing: John Carr's autobiography of 1741 admits that he had 'little or no Education, consequently he could know but little or nothing of Religion', but then concludes with a highly-educated discourse on religion (*Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, 4 May 1741).

Similar problems face the student of modern popular criminology. The source of the information used is still regarded as of great importance. Some books claim to be autobiographies.<sup>[4]</sup> Others acknowledge collaboration between the subject of the book and the actual writer (Fraser 1994, Fry 1993, Ward 1974). These co-writers exhibit no partiality: James Morton has written biographies with 'Mad' Frankie Fraser, a member of the Krays' gang, and with 'Nipper' Read, 'the man who nicked the Krays' (Fraser 1994, Read 1991). Some books claim to have been partly based on interviews with the biographee (Jones 1992, Wilkes 1994). But for many modern writers the difficulty of getting access to a prisoner means relying on police officers, family, friends and neighbours. As in the eighteenth century, there is a tendency to criticise rival publications. Ritchie reported that Hindley and Brady hated Emlyn Williams' (1967) book, *Beyond Belief*, because of its alleged inaccuracies; Hindley was said to have been particularly angry because it made her look 'a real hard cow' and wrongly portrayed her as having 'a normal, happy child' (Ritchie 1993: 148). This internecine criticism has been developed into a fine art by writers on the Whitechapel Murders of 1888.<sup>[5]</sup>

The problem of separating out the various claims to truth in popular criminology is heightened by the difficulties posed by crime fiction posing as crime fact. The criminal biography is rooted in the long tradition of rogue fiction and has itself provided novelists with a means of revitalising the picaresque novel:<sup>[6]</sup> most famously, Defoe used the criminal-biography form in *Moll Flanders* (Defoe 1722). Some novelists have turned to write about real crime (Costello 1991, Doyle 1912, Hunt 1951, Toughill 1993), and some have based their novels on real people or real events. Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* and the profusion of novels on Dick Turpin took real people as their starting points; more recently, Tay's *The Franchise Affair* updated the kidnapping and perjury cases surrounding the disappearance in 1754 of Elizabeth Canning, about whom a novelist has also written a factual account (Machen 1926). Sherlock Holmes was probably based on Professor John Bell, one of Conan Doyle's teachers at the University of Edinburgh, and Sergeant Cuff, the detective in Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, was modelled on Sergeant Whicher, who investigated the Road murder of 1860 (Binyon 1989: 3-4; Stapleton 1861). This confusion is deepened by the statements of those who claim to be writing true crime books. In her book on the Blandy murder, Joan Morgan (1950) wrote:

'I have not deviated in any material way from history; the Trial is authentic, as is some of the dialogue. No character or incident is entirely imaginary. A minor liberty has been taken in the

introduction of the celebrated Jack Fletcher, and where no portrait existed of minor characters in the drama I have had to fill one in. In making Mary the central figure of a novel I have added just that element of fiction that makes truth less strange.' (Morgan 1950: vii)

This seems to make the book more historical novel than true crime. Firmly on the other side is David Smith's (1994) book on the Bulger murder. He claims that it 'is true to the best of my knowledge. This is a work of non-fiction, and there is no imagining, invention or embellishment of what happened' (Smith 1994: viii). Yet even he admits that to keep the length down, he has merged two or three of the people into one (Smith 1994: vii).

Of course, in trying to separate fact from fiction it is possible to cross-check true crime books against other sources, such as newspapers and court records (Linebaugh 1977), but this has obvious pitfalls since it assumes that the other sources are accurate. Moreover, any true crime writing necessarily involves the identification, selection and interpretation of 'facts' based on the writer's assessment of their value to the story he or she wishes to tell; an assessment which will depend on the writer's own ideological standpoint. In the end the problem may be less significant since both fiction and non-fiction may have a value for the study of crime, particularly since most people's understanding of crime derives from a mixture of truths, half-truths, lies and fiction (see generally Rawlings 1992).

## Readings

Some clues as to how books of popular criminology (and, for that matter, academic criminology) can be approached may be taken from techniques used in the analysis of crime fiction (Hubin 1994). Young (1996: 81) describes a typical form of the crime novel:

'The text requires a person who is uniquely able to decode the puzzle (through varying means: rationality, forensic science, re-enactment, invitation); a moment of revelation in which the enigma is explained (to the reader, who has ideally been unable to solve the puzzle, and to the other characters in the story); a sense of denouement or adjustment in which the moral order resumes its correct functioning (after the trauma caused by the crime which had to be solved in the story).'

Mandel (1984) argues that the crime novel has reflected the rise and fall of capitalism:

'If the question is asked why [the history of bourgeois society] should be reflected in the history of a specific literary genre, the answer is: because the history of bourgeois society is also that of property and of the negation of property, in other words, crime; because the history of bourgeois society is also the growing, explosive contradiction between individual needs or passions and mechanically imposed patterns of social conformism; because bourgeois society in and of itself breeds crime, originates in crime, and leads to crime; perhaps because bourgeois society is, when all is said and done, a criminal society?' (Mandel 1984: 135)

The crime novel describes a struggle between criminals and detectives conducted through the covering up and uncovering of clues. All of this takes place 'outside the specific social context and concrete historical development' (Mandel 1984: 43) that created crime. Crime fiction is about:

'Disorder being brought into order, order falling back into disorder; irrationality upsetting rationality, rationality restored after irrational upheavals: that is what the ideology of the crime novel is all about.' (Mandel 1984: 44; also Young 1996: 81)

Crime fiction has, therefore, an integrative function for 'all but extremely critical and sophisticated readers' (Mandel 1984: 47) - presumably thereby excluding himself - in that it ignores the injustices of bourgeois society and takes as a given that bourgeois social order must be restored and protected. The reason why crime fiction only became popular in the last one hundred years or so is because of its role 'as a psychological drug that distracts from the intolerable drudgery of daily life' (Mandel 1984: 70-1; 82); indeed, it repairs some of the alienating effects of capitalism since it shows capitalism as part of the natural order and, therefore, represents the causes of human problems as lying in things and events rather than in capitalism (Mandel 1984: 73). However, Mandel argues that recent crime fiction (particularly, spy fiction such as the work of Len Deighton) has revealed a degree of scepticism about the goodness of the state and the order it is seeking to defend, so that 'Its integrative function has declined, and it has actually become disintegrative' (Mandel 1984: 124, 132). The new hero or heroine is a 'petty-bourgeois rebel against a decaying bourgeois

present', but is impotent because he or she has 'no social perspective opposed to that of bourgeois society' (Mandel 1984: 133).

Mandel's work raises interesting ideas, but also problems. He treats the crime novel as a passive instrument which simply reflects reality. But no book can reproduce reality, the writer selects and interprets. Texts are:

'not mere images of conflicts fought out on another terrain, representations of a history which happens elsewhere; they are themselves a material part of those struggles, pitched standards around which battle is joined, instruments which help to constitute social interests rather than lenses which reflect them.' (Eagleton, in Bennett and Woollacott 1987: 277)

Popular literature derives its popularity in no small part from its ability to engage with contemporary issues (Knight 1980, Rawlings 1992).

'Literary forms are not related to society as to a set of external and independent conditioning relations which they then reflect, so that the task of analysis is to decipher the ways in which those relations achieve an expression in the literary work. Rather... they are *in* society, a part of it, actively contributing to the shaping of social relations through the ways in which they organize relations of class, community, nation and history - and, one might add, gender - and inscribe their readers in those relations. The task then becomes one of understanding how such forms are imbricated with, and function in relation to, other social institutions and relations -and at the same level, as 'surface technologies' - rather than excavating them to uncover a set of deeper, underlying relations on which they supposedly rest.' (Bennett 1990: 4)

Of course, it is not just the writer who works within a particular set of relations so does the reader. With these thoughts in mind, we can turn back to true crime books.

## Narrative structure of eighteenth-century biographies

As has been seen, the core of the eighteenth-century book trade in popular criminology was the criminal biography. The plot structures of these biographies often bear remarkable similarities. The subjects were usually young men from the labouring classes, the children of poor but honest and hard-working parents: like Noah Goobee who had 'very honest, but poor parents', and 'the Flying Highwayman', William Hawke, who was born of 'honest, but poor and industrious parents' (Wilson 1739: 3; Anon. 1774: 3). These parents often put their sons to an apprenticeship: Richard Keeble had 'poor but honest Parents ... who gave him some Education, and at a proper Age put him Apprentice to a Carpenter at Dowgate' (Wilson 1743: 3). At this stage many of the young men are like Jack Sheppard who, as apprentice to a carpenter near Drury Lane, 'proved an early proficient' (Anon. 1724b: 2). However, the natural inclination of young men is depicted as being to escape the constraints and poverty of apprenticeship. Nicholas Carter, who was only about 14 years old when he was hanged in 1690, had been a glove maker, 'But being Idle, and regardless of his Parents Good Admonitions, ran away from them, and joynd himself to bad Company' (*Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, 26 January 1690) Thomas Munn, the 'Gentleman Brickmaker', who was hanged in 1750 for robbing the Yarmouth coach, left a series of apprenticeships because of his dislike of 'any Restraint laid on my whimsical Humour' (Anon. 1750: 3).

This general air of chaffing at the constraints of apprenticeship might be the setting for the youth running off, but the trigger is a meeting with 'lewd women'. They entice the youth into a life of extravagance and idleness which can only be supported through crime. Of Paul Wells it was said that, 'Wine, Dainties, and Women he embrac'd with open Arms, and with great Rapidity rush'd on his Ruin' (Anon. 1749: 8-9), and of William Hawkins 'as his way of Living Provided him with Money, so he found out loose and vicious Strumpets enough to spend it upon' (Anon. 1722: 15). Richard Eades 'attributed his Destruction entirely to these wicked Women, for when once he came into their Company, they would not let him go, and he not having Power enough to resist 'em, they led him into whatever Mischief they pleased' (*Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, 31 July 1741: 7). As Rev Broughton (1763: 15) put it in his biography of Matthew Henderson, when speaking of 'lewd women':

'Their demands are high and extravagant, and they are "greedy as the grave:"... The instances of such unhappy *Malefactors*, who, in "the bitterness of their Souls," have ascribed their Ruin to their keeping Company with Lewd Women, are too numerous to be recited.' (See also Alexander 1927)

In Jack Sheppard's case, having spent several successful years as an apprentice, he 'commenced a fatal Acquaintance with one Elizabeth Lyon ... who lived a wicked and debauch'd Life ... Now was laid the Foundation of his Ruin' (Anon. 1724b: 2). It was Lyon who was 'the main loadstone in attracting of him up to the fatal Tree' (Anon. 1724b: 3) Soon after meeting her, Sheppard 'grows weary of the Yoke of Servitude' (Anon. 1724b: 2) and turns from a hard working and obedient apprentice into a criminal.

Having turned to crime, the youth's life is often described in terms which symbolize a shift into a sub-human existence. Sheppard was 'a *Dog*', 'the slippery *Ele*', and a '*Lost Sheep*' (Anon. 1724b). His relationships with other people lack the fundamental human qualities of loyalty and honour: Sheppard robs a former benefactor, persuades a servant to break the trust of his employer, and is himself betrayed first by a friend, then by his brother, and finally by Elizabeth Lyon (Anon. 1724b). The youth often becomes addicted to drink: James Selby 'was so much disguised and made insensible by drinking, that he was changed into the likeness of a Beast more than that of a Human Creature' (*Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, 2 May 1691). He lacks any normal, rational caution. A biblical simile was commonly used to describe the way offenders returned to old habits and haunts: 'like the dog, returned to his vomit; and the sow, though washed, to the wallowing in the mire' (Anon. 1782: 15). Rev. Parker piously remarked after the hanging of John Ryley in 1783 that crime blinded people to 'nature's first law', 'they lose the sense of self-preservation which first restrained them, and do not perceive the consequence of their blameable conduct, while every body else plainly sees their absolute ruin!' (Parker 1783: 5-6).

The concern with apprentices expressed in the biographies of the early eighteenth century fitted in with a more general anxiety about social order and youth. A wave of conduct books - lifestyle guides directed at apprentices and other young employees - appeared around this time. Their concern was 'the present Depravity of Servants' (Richardson 1734: v). Defoe lamented that 'the state of apprenticeship is not a state of servitude now, and hardly of subjection' (Defoe 1727: vol. i, 15), and that, as a result, 'the Great Law of Subordination' on which an ordered society depended was breaking down (Defoe 1724). Youths were thought to be particularly susceptible to vice and to being 'tainted by the bad Air of Society' (Anon. 1725: 71). For their protection and the protection of society it was the view of the conduct books that youths should be strictly confined within a disciplined apprenticeship. In other words, it was not the ability to learn a trade which recommended the apprenticeship, it was its being 'a Yoke of Servitude' (Anon. 1724b: 2).

Although the biographies might be seen as directed at the young apprentices - and, indeed, one conduct book recommended that they read them (Richardson 1734. But see also Faller 1987, Rawlings 1992) - they also carry the whiff of criticism of employers. For instance, Sheppard is alleged to have said of his apprenticeship:

'I believe if less Liberty had been allow'd me then, I should scarce have had so much Sorrow and Confinement after. My master and Mistress with their Children were strict Observers of the Sabbath, but 'tis too well known in the Neighbourhood that I had too great a Loose given to my evil Inclinations, and spent the Lord's Day as I thought convenient.' (Anon. 1724a:5).

The biographies and conduct books appeared at a time when the apprenticeship system was breaking down in the face of the growth of new technologies and new centres of manufacture. Those transformations left uncertainty and appeared to expose alarming gaps in structures of government which were more suited to agrarian communities. So, while the virtues of economic individualism were recognized by many contemporary writers, the criminal biographies were concerned with its disadvantages in terms of social control. The roots of expanding national wealth - a waged labour force which had been detached from the land and made more independent by agrarian capitalism - posed problems (Linebaugh 1991). Like Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness* (1747), the biographies can be seen as concerned with the disastrous fate awaiting the true individualist, and as criticising those who allow the breakdown of the structures of social control.

## The development of popular criminology from 1750

The criminal biographies in the early eighteenth century depicted a divine inevitability in the decline from honest youth through sin to crime and then the gallows: once sin had been embarked upon crime, capture and punishment followed. The detection process was largely ignored. But the activities of thieftakers were well known, especially after the execution in

1725 of Jonathan Wild, the self-styled Thieftaker General (Howson 1970, Paley 1989). The publication of more detailed reports of Old Bailey trials (Langbein 1983) also made it clear that the link between crime and the gallows was less direct and less certain than the early biographies implied. Further complexity was added by textbooks on criminal law, the appearance of counsel for both the prosecution and the defence, and the debates over questions of mental capacity, most notably in connection with the trials of Ned Arnold (1723) and Earl Ferrers (1759). There was also the appointment in 1748 of Henry Fielding, followed by his half-brother, John, as magistrate at Bow Street for Middlesex and Westminster. The Fieldings sought to reform the police by means of a plan which involved maximum publicity for themselves and their work. This further undercut the directness of the link between crime and punishment (Rawlings 1995). Detection and punishment did not just happen, they required the hard work of magistrates, lawyers, judges, jurors and the rest. As a result, although the criminal biographies retained the core of their original narrative structure, from the middle of the eighteenth century they also increasingly looked at the role of the criminal justice system, and, in particular, at the process of detection (e.g. Bevell 1765).

Implicit in this new literature was the view that the solution to crime lay not in a tighter apprenticeship system - this, in any case, was never likely to be particularly popular with either apprentices or employers - but in a reformed criminal justice system. Much later on the fascination with ever more sophisticated detection techniques spawned its own subgenre of books (Paul 1990, Therwald 1965, Wambaugh 1989), and there also appeared autobiographies of police officers in which the focus is on their involvement in major criminal investigations.<sup>[7]</sup> More generally, the concern of popular criminology with crime detection has meant that it is only this side of police work which is discussed in the literature; their other functions, on which many academic criminologists focus, are ignored.

Although the OBSP - reports of trials at the Old Bailey - continued to be published throughout the nineteenth century and major trials were given very full coverage in books, these were gradually supplanted by newspaper reports. So in most modern popular criminology books the trial is dealt with only cursorily. Its role is relegated to confirming the detection work and setting the seal on the restoration of order achieved by that detection. There is, in other words, an inevitability about the trial: the defendants will be found guilty and, since most popular criminology is about murder, even the sentence is pre-determined.

Not surprisingly the Ordinary of Newgate's *Accounts* went into decline after the middle of the eighteenth century. The straightforward portrayal of the decline from sin to crime to the gallows directed unerringly by both a devilish and a divine hand was no longer adequate. Such role as divine providence retains is confined merely to assisting in the detection process (Curtis 1828). It is the efficient, bureaucratic, professional criminal justice system which makes detection and punishment inevitable. The Devil is replaced by evil, greed, jealousy or madness and God by the detective. At the same time, because the *divine* inevitability of punishment had been stripped away by the revelation that the offender is generally detected by the police, books appeared which largely sidelined the biography in favour of a critical examination of the police, the trial, the law, the punishments - indeed, the whole of the criminal justice system. In the eighteenth century the Fieldings had themselves attacked aspects of the criminal justice system which, in their view, inhibited their work (Fielding 1751), and other had squabbled about the merits of convictions, most famously in the cases of Mary Blandy (1752; Anon. 1752a, 1752b; Roughead 1904), Elizabeth Canning (1754; Torre 1940) and Daniel and Robert Perreau (Anon. 1775a, 1775b). This led to the genre of books concerned to expose miscarriages of justice.<sup>[8]</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century all the elements of modern popular criminology were in place. The bulk of such work combined biography and detection. As with their earlier counterparts, twentieth-century books avoid discussion of the victims, and, although there are usually nods to the geographical (street names, descriptions of locations) and cultural (contemporary films, music) context, the political, social and economic framework which underpins the events described is rarely explored or even acknowledged. The books are organised around ideas of order/normality and disorder/abnormality. The offender is presented as initially ordinary (so, Burn's book on Peter Sutcliffe is titled ... *somebody's husband, somebody's son*), but this ordinariness is gradually peeled away. The crimes are woven into the narrative without any change of pace so that they appear a normal part of the biographee's life and, thereby, emphasise her or his abnormality. The criminal as monster is further accentuated by the contrast between the crimes and the prosaic detail of streets, places, contemporary films and music. This detail creates a realistic effect to 'prove' the

book's truth and gives a sense of order in the community and in the unsuspecting family of the criminal; an order which is then disturbed. For example, Burn (1984) is continually concerned to provide the most curious details, such as that the fondness which Sutcliffe's family had for eating offal (Burn 1984: 17); and in *Beyond Belief*, Williams continually drops in the titles of films current at the time of the Moors murders. The image of the offender as a monster is also built up by picking through the biographee's life and latching onto events which were not regarded as significant at the time, but in which, with hindsight, the writer is able to detect the seeds of the crimes. Burn (1984) writes that Sutcliffe clung to his mother as a child in a way that his father thought unnatural (p.30-3), was ashamed of his own body (p.39), was isolated and bullied (pp.44, 49, 71), developed an unhealthy interest in his work at the local cemetery (pp.56-9, 64), was embarrassed by courting couples (p.60), behaved oddly with women (pp.62-3, 68-9); Sutcliffe's gaze was unnerving (p.65), he was 'eerie' (p.90). All of this is presented against the background of the knowledge of his conviction for the murders, and implies the existence of clear predictive signs of the murders that were to follow.

## The detective and the city

The police are often discussed in terms which present them as vulnerable, human, ordinary, as opposed to the developing image of the monstrous offender: good against evil. The breaking of the case is usually attributed to the detective being able to read clues which no one else could decipher. For example, the breakthrough in the Moors murders case might have seemed to have been when David Smith, Hindley's brother-in-law, went to the police, but Ritchie (1993) lays more emphasis on the discovery by a detective of a left luggage ticket: 'a piece of meticulous detection that John Tyrell would later be praised for in court' (Ritchie 1993: 95). The obvious exception to this view of competent detective work would seem to be the Sutcliffe case. Burn's description of the police inquiry starts about a third of the way into the book, after five murders have been depicted, and from then on the inquiry is presented as a shambles.<sup>[9]</sup> However, even Burn is still centrally concerned with detection by the police, who do, eventually, arrest Sutcliffe. So, while the incompetent or the competent but atypical police officer is a commonplace of detective fiction, in popular criminology the police detective takes centre stage. And not only is there no Sherlock Holmes or Miss Marple, there is also no traffic cop or beat bobby.

So, most modern popular criminology concentrates on the struggle between the hunter and the hunted. It ignores certain aspects of the detection processes - such as oppressive questioning, illegal searches and so forth - or it presents them as a bending of the rules which is justified by the end result. The detection process is only criticized if it fails to work, as in the Brighton child murders in 1986 (Berry-Dee 1991), or it works inefficiently, as in the Sutcliffe case. Many of the books invite the conclusion that all criminals are clever, devious and do not play by the rules. The rules, therefore, only serve to hamper the police and deny protection to the innocent victims. After the first few chapters of his book on the Bulger murder, Smith (1994) largely loses sight of James Bulger and his family and concentrates instead on the efforts of the police. Early on in the investigation a boy, who soon afterwards is found to be entirely innocent, is arrested at his family's home in front of the media and an angry crowd. Smith passes over all of this rather rapidly and leaves most of the blame for the incident on inaccurate information supplied by the boy's father. For Smith the chief importance of the affair seems to be the anger and upset that criticism of this operation causes to one of the principal investigating officers (pp.75-6). Similarly, the conduct of the interviewing of the suspects is depicted as a struggle to break suspects whom the reader knows to be guilty; other issues are sidelined. It is something of an uneven struggle for the officers because they believe children to be clever liars. Smith quotes one who, we are told, had worked on child abuse cases:

'Kids were much more difficult to deal with than adults. Their imagination was brilliant and they were the best liars in the world. You only had to think back to your own childhood, to the things you'd got away with.'

The detective's rise to prominence in popular criminology and in crime fiction from the late eighteenth century was a response to the growth of apparently ungovernable, unknowable city populations. The city was the source of wealth and poverty, security and crime, philanthropy and hatred, pleasure and fear; it encapsulated order and disorder. The city's poor were aligned with crime, and crime with disorder, idleness and the siphoning off of the

wealth and power of the ruling classes. The Fieldings built their police plans by playing on the fears of the elite: London, wrote Henry Fielding (1751), 'appears as a vast wood or forest, in which a thief may harbour with as great security as wild beasts do in the deserts of Africa or Arabia'. A pattern of government which suited a rural society did not suit the modern city, so the detective stepped in and restored order. The detective 'comforts city-dwellers by suggesting that the city can be read and mastered, despite all appearances to the contrary' (Brand, in Bennett 1990: 214). Henry and John Fielding boasted of their ability to break criminal gangs by the application of obscure skills and bureaucratic techniques (Rawlings 1995). While crime is a symptom of the city's apparent lack of meaning, disorder and irrationality, it is the detective who restores meaning by the act of detection, and so re-establishes order and rationality. The detective is able to render knowable that which is unknowable to other people by picking through clues which the criminal inevitably leaves. The world, as depicted in popular criminology (and, indeed, in much academic criminology), is neatly divided into two parts, criminal/disorder and non-criminal/order, and, although the existence of this division is widely recognised, it is not easily identified without the skills that a detective possesses. The police occupy the bridge between the two worlds and, therefore, have the task of defining their inhabitants.

The enjoyment the reader finds in popular criminology lies, at least partly, in this restoration of order which is brought by the detective and the protection that such order is assumed to bring. The reading of the book is predicated on the existence of an ordered world before the crime which will be restored when the criminal is detected: what Young (1996: 91) has called 'an essential state of *crimelessness*' expressed 'through a rhetoric of nostalgia for both an imagined Elysian past and a longed-for perfect future'. Indeed, this element is of such significance that a separate literature has developed in which writers seek to solve unsolved crimes (see Appendix, 'Whodunit?'). When a solution seems difficult there may still be an attempt to reassure: Donald Rumbelow (1975) tries to smooth over the fact that the Whitechapel murderer was never identified by pointing out that he (or she?) is certainly now dead. Yet, even the detection of the offender can never truly restore an 'Elysian past'. A level of fear is left in the reader's mind. The criminal is depicted as abnormal - and abnormal before the crime - but this abnormality is only revealed through the crime, so there remains the constant threat of other potential murderers whose tendencies are hidden and against whom it is, therefore, difficult to guard. Although order is restored through detection, it is not the innocent order which existed before the crime, not least because the detective may reveal the killer, but he or she cannot always explain the evil or irrational motivation. The element of tension remains: if one monster can arise out of such ordinariness, why not others? The detective becomes essential.

## Conclusion

Although this paper has only touched upon some of the issues raised in popular criminology, it has, hopefully, demonstrated something of the depth and complexity of the literature. Popular criminology is an aspect of popular legal culture: 'that constellation of attitudes, beliefs, knowledges, half-knowledges and flat misunderstandings about law that are by and large shared among members of a social group' (Shale 1996: 44). The depiction of crime (fact and fiction) in books, newspapers, film, television and so forth has an impact on how crime is understood and, therefore, on policy, and this alone makes popular criminology worth studying. Leaving aside the possibility that popular criminologists may actually have something interesting to say about crime, there is the probability that they have a greater impact on policy than academics.

On the whole, most popular criminologists do not explicitly draw general conclusions. When they do such conclusions are often affected by the focus on rare crimes. So, for instance, Colin Wilson (1988: 278), who is amongst the most thoughtful of popular criminologists, has written:

'Women who murder their husbands are far rarer than husbands who murder their wives. Why should that be so? The obvious answer is that women are less violent than men. Indeed, a woman is unlikely to experience the same degree of hostility towards her husband unless she is more dominant than he is, or he is thoroughly unsatisfying in bed. This theory is the key to most of the famous cases of husband murder.'

Such ideas might raise an eyebrow, but the study of murder has largely been left to popular criminologists because academic criminology eschews the unusual. Similar neglect by academics has left commentary on crime detection to the popular criminologists. Since, in general, the police are depicted as a detective force, their success is judged on that basis rather than in terms of maintaining order or preventing crime. Moreover, order is portrayed as being restored through detection, and it is detection which achieves protection from crime. Therefore, the breach of procedural rules by the police is hardly considered, indeed the rules themselves are likely to be criticized if they obstruct the detective. Academic criminology focuses on the broad range of police tasks, although the process of detection is given very little consideration when compared with the work on order maintenance and the observance of procedural rules.

As has been seen, there is, however, a popular literature on miscarriages of justice (although much is of the historical-puzzle type) which is often critical of the police, supports a due process model and enables generalizations to be drawn from individual cases in a way which can influence criminal justice policy. It is in this literature - and the literature of unsolved crimes - that the image of the detective as infallible and able to restore meaning and order begins to crumble. However, these books still focus on the police as detectives and do maintain a faith in the criminal justice system which leads them merely to suggest rule changes and improvements in practice. Nevertheless, this area of miscarriages of justice does demonstrate the strengths of popular criminology. For example, the debate about whether women who have killed their abusive partners should be convicted as murderers has been made more widely accessible through the sort of personalization which popular criminology is all about and which academic criminology finds so difficult to handle. Kennedy, in her foreword to Nadel's book on the Thornton case, writes:

'Sara Thornton's case has been a watershed that has set the stage for subsequent successful cases. Now at least there is a growing awareness of the need to contextualise domestic killings where there is a history of violence, and the courts have finally begun to sanction the calling of expert testimony in appropriate cases to explain the impact of sustained abuse. Furthermore, debate is at last taking place whether there should be a change in the definition of provocation.' (Nadel 1993: xi-xii)

What might be regarded, in academic terms, as defects in the methodology of popular criminology can be positive strengths when it comes to influencing public policy. Cases like the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, the Carl Bridgewater murder and so on have been fought out primarily in the realm of popular criminology: sometimes with the result of not just securing the release of the individuals, but also altering policy.

## **Appendix: Types of Modern Non-fiction Crime Writing**

### **1. Biography**

The biography of the offender is still central to most popular criminology books, but the detection of the criminal has also come to be of equal importance. Autobiographies are now less common, and often include a strong theme of rehabilitation (Boyle 1977, O'Connor 1976). Usually, as in the eighteenth century, biographies appear soon after the trial has finished, for instance, the conviction of Hindley and Brady led to several books (Marchbanks 1966, Potter 1966, Sparrow 1966, Williams 1967), but with notorious cases books may continue to come out long after the events: such as, the eighteenth-century cases of Jonathan Wild (Howson 1970, Lyons 1936), Mary Bryant (Cook 1993); in the nineteenth century, the murder of William Weare (Borowitz 1988), Burke and Hare (Edwards nd), the Whitechapel Murders, Palmer (Barker 1935, Fletcher 1925, Graves 1957), Cream (McClaren 1993); and in the twentieth century, Haigh (La Bern 1973), Heath (Selwyn 1988b), the Chalk Pit murder (Lustgarten 1974), and Brady and Hindley. The victims are typically left in the background of all these books, although books by victims or their relatives (West 1989) do appear, and Gratus (1969) has produced a collection.

Stretching back to James Bevell's account of his search for the people who stole from the Earl of Harrington in 1765 (Bevell 1765) and to the Coventry magistrate James Hewitt's books (Hewitt 1783, 1790) in the late eighteenth century, some books have given so much emphasis to the detection work that they cannot be regarded as biographies, but might more properly be seen as progenitors of the police procedural books (Bingham 1973, Fewtrell 1964,

Marchbanks 1966, Marshall 1986). The market for books entirely devoted to trial reports has now almost entirely vanished since its peak in the nineteenth century (although see Goodman 1994).

## **2. Whodunit**

Here the concern is with the unsolved crime. The writer sifts through and interprets such evidence as he or she chooses to present. Often the police investigation is criticized, or it is claimed that there was a high-level conspiracy to cover up the facts: Fairclough 1992 famously asserted that the Whitechapel murders involved royalty, the freemasons and the painter, Walter Sickert. Usually, the writer claims to have new evidence or techniques not available to the police at the time. An early example is Stapleton's (1861) book on the murder of Savile Kent in 1860.<sup>[10]</sup> Occasionally, writers find no solution, and turn to the reason why this should be: for instance, Berry-Dee's book on a Brighton double murder in 1986 is highly critical of the police conduct of the investigation (Berry-Dee 1991).

Aside from cases which have occurred within 20 or 30 years of the books being written, there is a mass of historical cases which have been picked over in this way, such as the murder of the princes in the Tower (MacNalty 1955), the disappearance of William Harrison in 1660 (Clark 1959), the murder of Justice Godfrey in 1678 (Knight 1984), the Charles Bravo murder in 1876 (Bridges 1956, Taylor and Clarke 1988, Williams 1957), the Harsent murder in 1902 (Fido and Skinner 1990, Rowland 1962), the Sydney Street seige of 1910 (Holroyd 1960), the Wallace murder in 1930 (Goodman 1969, Hussey 1972, Rowland 1949, Waterhouse 1994, Wilkes 1984). But the case which has attracted easily the most attention is the Whitechapel Murders; indeed, there are several reference books in which the whole literature is systematized to allow the reader conveniently to peruse all the 'evidence' and theories (Begg, Fido and Skinner 1994, Sugden 1994, Wilson and Odell 1994).

Another sub-genre seeks to establish that what had previously been assumed to be an accidental death was, in fact, murder: for example, it has been claimed that Brian Jones, a former guitarist with the Rolling Stones who died in his swimming pool in 1966, was murdered (Guiliano 1994, Rawlings 1994).

## **3. Miscarriages of justice**

These are books which challenge convictions (but see Fielding 1958 for the view that the courts do not wrongly convict), and often offer new suspects. Some seek to overturn a conviction (Beltrami 1989, Foot 1986, 1989; Kennedy 1976, Mullins 1986, Parker 1965). Other books describe cases where verdicts have been overturned (Cole and Pringle 1974, Conlon 1990, Hill 1990, Hill and Hunt 1995, Ward 1993). For some, as with one of the earliest of this genre, Watkins' (1815) book on Elizabeth Fenning, the doubts are raised soon after the case, but too late to be of help. In others the cases are so old that such an objective is not considered (Broad 1952, Haining 1980, Morland 1957), although, in his foreword to Toughill's book on the Slater case of 1909, Peter Hill draws parallels with the miscarriages of the 1980s: 'The mistakes in the system of justice illustrated by the Oscar Slater case are as relevant today, perhaps even more so, as when they happened over eighty years ago' (Toughill 1993: ix).

Less frequently, writers challenge acquittals (Archer 1971, Ryan 1989, and, uniquely, a book by a trial judge, Devlin 1985). Others seek to uphold the correctness of an acquittal (Hoskins 1984, Rowland 1963).

## **4. The Underworld**

These books are amongst the earliest sorts of popular criminology, and purport to describe the practises of criminals, whom they tend to depict as a separate social class (Felstead 1923, Gardner 1931, Murphy 1993).

## 5. Polemics

Biographies and whodunits often contain criticisms of some aspect of the criminal justice process, but here a critique is the main objective, although the books take a case or group of cases as a starting point and as a way of drawing attention to a more general problem. Facts may be in dispute, or it may be that the appropriateness of a particular punishment, or other aspects of the criminal justice system may be under scrutiny. So, for instance, books have used the cases of Ruth Ellis, James Hanratty and Derek Bentley as launching pads for critiques (Blom-Cooper 1963, Marks and Bergh 1977, O'Donnell 1956, Parris 1991, Selwyn 1988a, also Smith 1923). For instance, Blom-Cooper's (1963) book on the trial of Hanratty is not a biography, nor a report of the trial or the detection process, other than as these elements are required for a more general critique of certain aspects of the system in which he seeks to show that 'the English criminal process is concerned not with the truth about the crime, but solely with the assessment of criminal responsibility. Indeed, the trial system, which is the instrument of that assessment, is contrived in such a way as to reduce to a minimum one's knowledge of the crime' (1963: 132). Along the way he does argue that, although Hanratty was probably guilty (1963: 70, 113; a view disputed by others), there was insufficient evidence to convict him and in any event he should not have been hanged because of his mental incapacity.

## 6. Biographies of officials

The concentration on the criminal justice process in modern popular criminology and crime fiction has led to the publication of biographies of officials: detectives (Andrews 1973, Bishop 1932, Burt 1959, Cherrill 1954, Fabian 1950, Greeno 1960, Hatherill 1971, Henry 1945, Higgins 1958, Jackson 1967, Jones 1966, Read 1991, Roberts 1987, Scott 1959, Slipper 1981, Topping 1989, Vanstone 1961); scientists (Browne 1976, Fletcher 1986, Jackson 1975, Simpson 1978, Smith 1959); judges (Dodson 1967, Graham 1929, Walker-Smith 1938); magistrates (Biron 1936); lawyers (Casswell 1961, Jackson nd, Marjoribanks 1929); court officials (Bixley 1957); and executioners (Pierrepont 1974). These books are generally built around the famous cases in which the biographee has been involved and demonstrate 'my part in the capture/conviction' of the offenders. The stories are threaded together with anecdotes which reveal how much on the inside the Great Man (almost always it is a man) was, how his profession might be made easier and homilies all lightly peppered with an hilarious story or two. Significantly, the biographies of chief police officers have recently begun to focus more on policy matters, politics and social comment; even so, criminal cases are still present and in the biographies of what might be called the pre-Thatcher chief officers, such as Mark and McNee, there was more than a hint of looking back to a golden age when crime work was supposedly at the forefront of all police officers' minds.

## 7. Collections

It has been the practice of publishers since the eighteenth century to collect together cases or biographies of notorious offenders (Joseph 1853). These collections may be fairly general, bearing titles like *The Directory of Infamy: The Best of the Worst*, published by those old romantics, Mills and Boon (Green 1980), in which the reference-book approach is adopted, as it is with Cyriax's (1993) *Crime: An Encyclopedia*, Nash's *Dictionary of Crime* (Nash 1992) and *A Gallery of Rogues* (Kingston 1924). Some collections concentrate on recent cases, some cover a particular period in the past, such as *The Newgate Noose* on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Culpin 1957), *'Orrible Murder: Victorian Crimes and Passion* (De Vries 1971) and *Murder in the 1940s* (Wilson and Wilson 1993), and some will draw from a longer period, such as *Sixty Famous Trials* (Hudson nd).

Often collections are themed around particular crimes, most often murder: *Encyclopedia of Murder* (Wilson and Pitman 1961), *The Murder Almanac* (Whittington-Egan 1992), *Pageant of Murder* (Jacobs 1956), and the grotesquely-titled *A Companion to Murder* (Shew 1961) (See also Humphreys 1931, Pelham 1886, Wilson 1988). There is even Morton's *The Who's Who of Unsolved Murders* (Morton 1994). Collections have also been themed around:

- types of murder victims: children (Jones 1994), police officers (Cobb 1961);

- types of offenders: women (Huggett and Berry 1956, Jones 1985, Nash 1981);
  - types of victims and offenders: lovers (Gribble 1954), royalty (Alexander 1978, MacNalty 1955), the ruling classes (Bleackley 1905), doctors, including the oddly-titled *One Hundred Years of Medical Murder* (Camp 1982; also Dewes 1962);
  - methods of murder: poison, such as Farrell's (1994) *Poisons and Poisoners: An Encyclopedia of Homicidal Poisonings* (see also Eaton 1924, Gaute and Odell 1972, Rowland 1960), serial murders, such as *The Encyclopedia of Serial Killers* (Lane and Gregg 1992), and 'accidental' murders (Church 1989);
  - locations of crime (usually murder): including a book to place alongside Egon Ronay's restaurant guides and designed for the murder-trail tourist, Tribballs' (1993) *The Murder Guide to Great Britain*; there are also regional guides, such as Lane's *The Murder Club Guide to South-west England and Wales* (Lane 1989; also Lane 1991) and various county histories of crime (Briffett 1990, Fielding 1994a, Green 1990, Harrison 1992, Murphy 1988, Yarwood 1991); histories of crime in cities in general (Sanders 1958) and particular cities, such as *Square Mile of Murder* about Glasgow (House 1961), *Murder and Mayhem in Birkenhead 1830-1930* (Malcolm nd) and the rather unfortunately titled *Murderous Bolton* (Fielding 1994b);
  - cases featured in particular branches of the media: the *Illustrated London News* (West 1994), the BBC's *Crimewatch* programme (Mills 1994) and Channel 4's *Trial and Error* (Jessel 1994);
  - particular police forces: mostly Scotland Yard, with stirring titles such as *Great Manhunters of the Yard* (Gribble 1966) and *Triumphs of Scotland Yard* (Gribble 1955; see also Ambler 1978, Dilnot 1933, Felstead 1951, Gosling 1959, Honeycombe 1982, 1993; McKnight 1967, Thomson 1936, Waddell 1993, Williams 1973);
  - methods of solving crime (Paul 1990, Thorwald 1965);
  - miscarriages of justice (Brome 1971, Cobb 1962, Jessel 1994, and a collection in which the writer seeks to prove that innocent people are not convicted - Fielding 1958); and
  - executions, such as Fielding's (1994c) *The Hangman's Record*.
- Finally, publishers have also produced themed series, such as William Hodge's *Notable British Trials* and *Notable Scottish Trials*, and Jarrolds' *Old Bailey Trials*.

## Notes

1. See Bell and Daldry (1989), Binyon (1984), Boyle (1989), Cawelti (1976), Mandel (1984), Knight (1980), Shale (1996), Young (1996), Watson (1979). [\[Back to text\]](#)
2. I am an academic, whose appearances in the popular media have been rather limited, and this is an academic paper (see Appendix and Bibliography). [\[Back to text\]](#)
3. Fraser (1994), Fry (1993), Kray (1993), Lombrianou (1991), Pearson (1994), Richardson (1991). [\[Back to text\]](#)
4. Boyle (1977), Fletcher (1972), Hill (1955), Kray (1993), Lombrianou (1991), Munro (1972), Richardson (1991). [\[Back to text\]](#)
5. See, for example, the comments on Fairclough (1992) in Begg, Fido and Skinner (1994). [\[Back to text\]](#)
6. See Bell (1991), Chandler (1907), McKeon (1988), Parker (1967), Richetti (1969). [\[Back to text\]](#)
7. See Adamson (1966), Andrews (1973), Bishop (1932), Burt (1959), Cherrill (1954), Fabian (1950), Greeno (1960), Hatherill (1971), Henry (1945), Higgins (1958), Jackson (1967), Jones (1966), Read (1991), Roberts (1987), Scott (1959), Slipper (1981), Topping (1989), Vanstone (1961). [\[Back to text\]](#)
8. See Beltrami (1989), Foot (1986, 1989), Kennedy (1976), Mullins (1986), Parker (1965), Watkins (1815). [\[Back to text\]](#)
9. Burn (1984: 184-5, 201, 214, 240-1, 252, 257, 261-2, 263, 276, 278-9). [\[Back to text\]](#)
10. See also Bridges (1954). For other cases: Abrahamsen (1992), Berry-Dee and Odell (1992), Bridges (1962), Goodman (1969, 1983), Hallworth and Williams (1983), Hoskins (1984), Marnham (1987), Morland (1955), Ranson (1994), Smith (1985). Novelists have also seen this as fertile ground: see Symons (1980). [\[Back to text\]](#)

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#### **Periodicals**

*Gentleman's Magazine*

OBSP (*Old Bailey Sessions Paper*)

Ordinary's Account (*Ordinary of Newgate's Account*)

*Whitehall Evening Post*

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## **About the author**

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