

True Crime in Nineteenth-Century Literature

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The following entry provides criticism of nineteenth-century non-fiction works about crime and works of literature based on actual crimes. For further information on the Newgate Novel, see *NCLC*, Volume 24; for further information on the Sensation Novel, see *NCLC*, Volume 80.

INTRODUCTION

There are a few examples of true-crime literature dating as far back as Elizabethan England, but the modern Western tradition of literature about real crime is generally thought to have begun in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. During this period, the spread of literacy and individualism in a mobile society with more leisure time bred an appetite for sensational news, which in turn, as Lennard Davis, in *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (1983), and others have suggested, led to the rise of the novel. Criminal biographies, told as true but often made up out of whole cloth, circulated before and after executions, and the genre gave rise to fictional criminal autobiographies like Daniel Defoe's *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders* (1721), domestic dramas about crime and punishment like George Lillo's

The London Merchant; or, The History of George Barnwell (1731), and novels about organized crime like Henry Fielding's satire *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild* (1743). But from 1750, the themes of crime and punishment ceased to be central to the novel for the rest of the century, except in William Godwin's *Things As They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794), which focuses on what the author considered the broken British system of justice, and in dark thrillers like *Arthur Mervyn* and *Edgar Huntly* (both 1799) by Godwin's American disciple Charles Brockden Brown.

The nineteenth century saw a resurgence of interest in the subject. The true-crime literature of the period falls into three somewhat heterogeneous groups. First, there is the factual reportage on crime and criminals that began in England in the late seventeenth century with texts like Francis Kirkman's *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled* (1673). This journalistic form has continued unabated into the twenty-first century. The *State Trials* series, begun in 1719 in four volumes, recounted British court proceedings in offenses against the state; it had expanded to thirty-four volumes as *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials* by 1828. The *Newgate Calendar* of criminal biographies begun in 1773 and periodically supplemented was published as a single, up-to-date compilation in 1841; rival publications took up the task afterwards. Across the channel in France, similar materials were gathered in Maurice Méjan's *Recueil des causes célèbres* (1808-1815), while as early as 1868 in Italy the publisher Edoardo Sonzogno created *I Processi celebri illustrati*, a series of cheap popular illustrated editions of criminal trials. In America the *National Police Gazette* (1845 -) was a successful if disreputable weekly newspaper disseminating lurid accounts of true crimes along with sporting events and gossip. Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851-62) allowed the criminals to speak for themselves through the

verbatim first-person accounts he collected of vagrants and beggars, grifters and thieves. Whether Mayhew can be called literature or journalism is for the reader to decide; certainly it was the raw material out of which much literature was made.

The same can be said for the *Memoires* (1828-29; *Memoirs*) of Eugène François Vidocq, a criminal whose extensive knowledge of the social folkways of crime allowed him to rise, after the French Revolution, to head the Parisian Sûreté. Like many autobiographies, Vidocq's contained a certain admixture of fiction, and he was further fictionalized, as Robin Walz notes (2003), as the ideal criminal, ideal detective, and ideal spy by other French authors. He appeared as Vautrin in an 1840 play of that name by Honoré de Balzac and under the same name in several novels in Balzac's *La Comédie humaine*, which are discussed by Rayner Heppenstall (1973). He also inspired both Jean Valjean and his double, Inspector Javert, in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* (1862), and there is something of him in C. Auguste Dupin, the detective in three of Edgar Allan Poe's tales.

Second, there are literary essays about crime and punishment by major authors, such as Charles Dickens's early studies of the Old Bailey and Newgate in *Sketches by Boz* (first series 1836; second series 1837) and William Makepeace Thackeray's "Going to See a Man Hanged" (1840). But pride of place in terms of both interest and influence belongs to Thomas De Quincey's "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts," two connected essays first published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1827 and 1839, with a postscript and revisions to the 1827 essay added in De Quincey's *Collective Edition* in 1854. Seeking a crime that held aesthetic possibilities, De Quincey focused on the Ratcliffe Highway murders of 1811 committed, as was

generally supposed at the time, by a mariner named John Williams; De Quincey reconstructed vividly the psychology of the murderer, the victims, and the witnesses. Following De Quincey's lead, in "Pen, Pencil, and Poison" (1889) Oscar Wilde argued that Thomas Griffiths Wainewright's art criticism improved after he took to insuring his relatives' lives and then poisoning them with strychnine: "His crimes seem to have had an important effect upon his art. They gave a strong personality to his style, a quality that his early work certainly lacked. . . . One can fancy an intense personality being created out of sin. . . . The fact of a man being a poisoner is nothing against his prose." These texts can be seen as precursors to the early twentieth-century crime chronicles of William Roughead and Edmund Pearson as well as later works by Truman Capote and Norman Mailer.

Finally, there are many novels in which authors, usually using invented names, represented their imagined versions of actual crimes and criminals. Sometimes a crime and its resolution was central to the plot, as in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860), discussed in a 1939 essay by Clyde K. Hyder; sometimes the crime was merely one element within a dominant theme as is the case with Augustus Melmotte's fraudulent business operations that are emblematic of a universal culture of fraud in London society in Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (1874-5). Sometimes the crimes represented belong to the past, as in *The Ring and the Book* (1868-9), Robert Browning's long narrative poem on the 1698 trial for murder of Guido Franceschini. More often the events of the story are based on news stories, as was Edgar Allan Poe's attempt to solve the unexplained death in 1841 of Mary Cecilia Rogers, in "The Mystery of Marie Roget" (1842-43), examined in the essay by Amy Gilman Srebnick (1997).

The focus on crime returned in the 1830s with what was called, pejoratively, the “Newgate novel,” after the London prison in front of which murderers were executed. As Keith Hollingsworth (1963) explains, these were romances, often set in the previous century, with dashing heroes like the real-life highwaymen Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard, whose careers ended on the gallows; both were characters in novels by William Harrison Ainsworth—*Rookwood* (1834) and *Jack Sheppard* (1839), respectively. The appeal of this fiction may be ascribed to the need for an image of the heroic individual in the growing-middle-class society, a need that can take a naïve form, as in Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s *Paul Clifford* (1830), or can be ironically refracted in essays like De Quincey’s “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts” or in novels like Honoré de Balzac’s *Illusions perdues* (1837; *Lost Illusions*), Stendhal’s *Le Rouge et le noir* (1830; *Red and Black*), and, at some remove, Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (1866; *Crime and Punishment*). The reaction to this romanticization of the criminal took various forms, as Hollingsworth notes: William Makepeace Thackeray parodied the Newgate novel in his *Catherine* (1839-40), while Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* (1838) used fierce realism to depict the savagery of the housebreaker Bill Sikes and the cruel cunning of Fagin, but depicted the businessmen and churchwardens who exploited the indigent as on the same low moral plane. Berry Chevasco (2008) explores a similar vision of the underworld as a reflection of the respectable world that reappeared in the next decade with a more strident revolutionary slant in Eugène Sue’s *Mystères de Paris* (1842-43; *The Mysteries of Paris*), to which G.W.M. Reynolds responded with *The Mysteries of London* (1845-48, and sequels to 1856). Reynolds’s tales were initially published in weekly installments for one penny, initiating the Victorian “penny dreadful” crime literature.

The 1830s also brought the beginnings in Europe and America of the modern police force, with constables to keep public order and detectives to solve crimes. Vidocq's *Memoirs* establish the character type, which was to develop in popular literature in various forms. One was the decent but colorless police detective whose incarnations include Inspector Bucket of Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853) and Sergeant Cuff in Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868)-characters based on real-life Scotland Yard detectives Charles Field and Jack Whicher, respectively. The other was the hyper-refined aesthete of ratiocination, which begins with C. Auguste Dupin of Poe's tales and develops with the connoisseur of crime, Sherlock Holmes, who was introduced by Arthur Conan Doyle in 1887 and began appearing regularly in Doyle's *Strand Magazine* stories in 1891. As crime literature shifted its focus from the criminal to the detective it became implicitly more politically conservative.

Starting around 1860 the literature of crime took a decisive turn inward, toward what critic Jenny Bourne Taylor has called "the secret theatre of home." Where earlier crime literature focused on violent crime, such as the highwayman who boldly told the respectable bourgeois to stand and deliver, the "sensation novel" of the 1860s and after tended to be about domestic crime and about fraud rather than force. Its criminals exercised power based on imaginary fortunes, or manufactured false identities for themselves, or surreptitiously stole the identities of others. In Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1857), Merdle masterminded what amounted to a Ponzi scheme and committed suicide when the fraud was about to be uncovered, just as the Irish financier John Sadleir had done in 1856. In *The Woman in White*, Wilkie Collins's villain stole his wife's identity by imprisoning her in a private madhouse and burying someone else under her name; the outré plot was based on an actual French court case of 1804 reported by Méjan. In *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, the secret was bigamy, and Lady Audley was

prepared to kill to protect that secret, just as in 1857 the real Madeleine Smith was prepared to poison a former lover who had threatened to reveal their relationship and destroy her marital plans. The 1870s began with an actual case of identity theft—the tragic farce of the Tichborne Claimant, in which a man from the Australian outback claimed to be Sir Roger Tichborne, heir to a fortune who was presumed lost at sea, and sensationally pursued his assertion. The Tichborne Claimant inspired novels about assumed identity by such disparate writers as Trollope (*Is He Popenjoy?*, 1878), and Mark Twain (*The American Claimant*, 1892).

As discussed by June Sturrock (2004), the duplicities of the sensation novel reflected the hypocritical fabric of Victorian society. But as the genre spread, there were some who resisted its popularity: Leslie Stephen wrote in “The Decay of Murder” (1869) that “sensation novels have become a weariness to the flesh. . . . The intelligent detective is a drug in the market, . . . and the virtuous avenger of blood is as insipid as the hero of a tract.” At the end of the century a new form of true crime fiction, inspired by contemporary criminological theories, turned attention to the industrial underclass, where petty theft and endemic violence are bred, and to the seemingly subhuman sociopaths who commit the most heinous crimes. Some naturalist writers like Emile Zola in *La Bête humaine* (1890; *The Human Beast*), presented criminals as the product of genetic degeneration, following the theories of Cesare Lombroso, who contended that criminal traits were inherited. Others, like Frank Norris in *McTeague: A Story of San Francisco* (1899), depicted crime as the product of a cruel and competitive milieu. But whether heredity or environment is given priority, murder was portrayed as a destiny rather than a choice.

The critical interest in true crime literature was slow to develop, which may seem strange, given how many memorable nineteenth-century novels by canonical figures center on a crime of some sort and how many of these were inspired by actual events. Critics demonstrated a certain squeamishness about the vulgarity of crime literature: they preferred Poe the symbolist poet, Dickens the social critic with a broad canvas, Dostoevsky the deep philosophical and spiritual thinker, and ignored, as much as possible, the melodramatic elements these authors' works share with narratives from the *Newgate Calendar* and the *Police Gazette*. Another reason for the relative neglect of crime literature was the critical shadow thrown by modernism in the first half of the twentieth century, which led literary scholars to focus on those nineteenth-century writers who set the course for James Joyce and Virginia Woolf and F. Scott Fitzgerald with masterpieces of style rather than works of melodrama or gritty realism. True-crime literature was also associated with the murder mystery and dismissed as subliterary genre fiction. As a result many of the most popular and influential novelists of their own day, like Collins and Braddon, Sue and Reynolds, went out of print and out of mind for over half a century. The first serious study of the sensation novel, S.M. Ellis's *Wilkie Collins, LeFanu and Others*, was not published until 1931. The "classic" detective story with a body in the library, and rules that guaranteed "fair play" for the reader matching wits with the detective, generated critiques in the 1940s and 1950s by luminaries including W.H. Auden and Jacques Barzun. But aside from the stray essay on Bulwer-Lytton or Ainsworth or the Newgate novel, true crime fiction did not become a critical topic until the publication of Keith Hollingsworth's *The Newgate Novel: 1830-1847* in 1963, and the literary analysis of Sue and Reynolds began even later, in the 1970s. Around the same time, books like Colin Watson's *Snobbery with Violence* (1971) and Julian Symons's *Bloody Murder* (1972) began to reassess the history of crime fiction, arguing that the "classic" detective story

was in serious decline and that the future of crime literature lay in realistic crime fiction and true-crime literature like William Roughead's *Twelve Scots Trials* (1913), Edmund Pearson's *Studies in Murder* (1924), and, a generation later, Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965).

Today there are many critics who no longer suppose that the masterpieces of high modernism were the goal of literary history, and the doctrines of the New Criticism have been eclipsed by a materialist New Historicism, which demonstrates renewed interest by literary scholars in the popular culture of the past, including its darker sides. Social historians such as Peter Linebaugh and Clive Emsley have attempted to understand how the justice system actually worked—and failed to work—while scholars like Harold Schechter have unearthed once obscure crime journalism, some of it by authors of renown. Crime in literature has become a crowded field, with dozens of excellent monographs that analyze the narratives, fictional and factual, with which the men and women of the nineteenth century informed and entertained themselves.

REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Anonymous

The Chronicles of Crime; or, The New Newgate Calendar: Being a Series of Memoirs and Anecdotes of Notorious Characters Who have Outraged the Laws of Great Britain.

London: T. Tegg, 1841. (Biography.)

National Police Gazette. 1845-. (Journalism.)

Notable British Trials. Edinburgh and London: Hodge, 1905-60. (Essays.)

I Processi celebri illustrati. Milano: Edoardo Sonzogno, 1868-1904. (Journalism.)

State Trials. 4 vols. London: Thomas Salmon, 1719. (Journalism.)

William Harrison Ainsworth

Rookwood: A Romance. 3 vols. London: Richard Bentley, 1834. (Novel.)

Jack Sheppard: A Romance. 3 vols. London: Richard Bentley, 1839. (Novel.)

Honoré de Balzac

Le Dernier Chouan, ou la Bretagne en 1800 [The Chouans]. 4 vols. Paris: Urbain Canel, 1829. (Novel.)

Le Père Goriot. 2 vols. Paris: Werdet et Spachmann, 1835. (Novel.)

Illusions perdues [Lost Illusions]. Paris: Werdet, 1837. (Novel.)

Histoire des Treize [History of the Thirteen]. Paris: Charpentier, 1839. (Novel.)

Une Ténébreuse Affaire [An Historical Mystery]. 3 vols. Paris: Souverain, 1842. (Novel.)

Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes [Splendors and Miseries of Courtesans]. 3 vols. Paris: Potter, 1844. (Novel.)

Mary Elizabeth Braddon

Lady Audley's Secret. 3 vols. London: Tinsley, 1862. (Novel.)

Robert Browning

The Ring and the Book. 4 vols. London: Smith, Elder, 1868-69. (Poem.)

*Georg Büchner

Woyzeck. Sämmlichte Werke und handschriftlicher Nachlaß: Erste kritische Gesamt-Ausgabe.

Ed. Karl Emil Franzos. Frankfurt am Main: Sauerländer, 1879. (Play)

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Paul Clifford. 3 vols. London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830. (Novel.)

Eugene Aram. 3 vols. London: Colburn and Bentley, 1832. (Novel.)

Marcus Clarke

His Natural Life. Melbourne: Robertson, 1874. (Novel.)

W.A. Coffey

Inside Out; or, An Interior View of the New York State Prison... by One Who Knows. New York: Costigan, 1823. (Memoir.)

Wilkie Collins

The Woman in White. 3 vols. London: Sampson Low, 1860. (Novel.)
Armadale. 2 vols. London: Smith, Elder, 1866. (Novel.)
The Moonstone. 3 vols. London: Tinsley, 1868. (Novel.)

Thomas De Quincey

“On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts.” *Blackwood’s Magazine* February 1827.
(Essay.)
“The Avenger.” *Blackwood’s Magazine* August 1838. (Short story.)
“Second Paper on Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts” *Blackwood’s Magazine*
November 1839. (Essay.)
“Postscript.” *Collective Edition*. Vol. 4. Edinburgh: A. and C. Black, 1854. (Essay.)

Charles Dickens

“A Visit to Newgate.” *Sketches by Boz*. First Series. 2 vols. London: Macrone, 1836.
(Journalism.)
“Criminal Courts.” *Sketches by Boz*. Second Series. London: Macrone, 1836. (Journalism.)
Oliver Twist. 3 vols. London: Richard Bentley, 1838. (Novel.)
Bleak House. London: Bradbury and Evans, 1853. (Novel.)
Little Dorrit. London: Bradbury and Evans, 1857. (Novel.)
“Hunted Down.” *New York Ledger* 20 and 27 Aug. and 3 Sept. 1859. (Short story.)
Our Mutual Friend. 2 vols. London: Chapman and Hall, 1865. (Novel.)

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky

Prestuplenie i nakazanie [Crime and Punishment]. *Russkii vestnik* 1, 2, 4, 6-8, 11-12, 1866.
(Novel.)
Idiot [The Idiot]. *Russkii vestnik* 1, 2, 4-12, 1868. (Novel.)

Monroe Edwards

The Celebrated and Extraordinary Trial of Col. Monroe Edwards, for Forgery and Swindling.
New York: Herald Office, 1842. (Journalism.)

Philip Farley

Criminals of America; or, Tales of the Lives of Thieves. New York: Author’s Edition, 1876.
(Biography.)

Horace W. Fuller

Noted French Trials: Impostors and Adventurers. Boston: Soule and Bugbee, 1882. (History.)

Thomas Bayly Howell and Thomas Jones Howell, eds.

*Cobbett’s Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other
Crimes and Misdemeanors, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*. 34 vols. London:
Bagshaw, 1809-28. (Journalism.)

Victor Hugo

Les Misérables. 10 vols. Bruxelles: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven, 1862. (Novel.)

Heinrich von Kleist

Michael Kohlhaas: Aus einer alten Chronik [Michael Kolhaas]. Published in *Erzählungen*. Vol. 1. Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1810. (Novella.)

Horace Lane

The Wandering Boy, Careless Sailor, and Result of Inconsideration. Skaneateles: L.A. Pratt, 1839. (Memoir.)

Henry Mayhew

London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of Those That Will Work, Those That Cannot Work, and Those That Will Not Work. Vols. 1-3. London: Woodfall, 1851-52. (Journalism.)

London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of Those That Will Work, Those That Cannot Work, and Those That Will Not Work. Vol. 4. London: Griffin, Bohn, 1862. (Journalism.)

Maurice Méjan

Recueil des causes célèbres, et des arrêts qui les ont décidées. 23 vols. Paris: P. Plisson, 1808-15. (Journalism.)

Herman Melville

Benito Cereno. *Putnam's Magazine* Oct.-Dec. 1855. (Novella.)

Frank Norris

McTeague: A Story of San Francisco. New York: Doubleday and McClure, 1899. (Novel.)

Margaret Oliphant

Salem Chapel. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1863. (Novel.)

Edmund Pearson

Studies in Murder. New York: Macmillan, 1924. (Essays.)

Edgar Allan Poe

"The Mystery of Marie Roget." *Ladies' Companion* Nov.-Dec. 1842 and Feb. 1843. (Short story.)

Charles Reade

Hard Cash: A Matter-of-Fact Romance. 3 vols. London: Low and Marston, 1863. (Novel)

George William MacArthur Reynolds

The Mysteries of London. 4 vols. London: Vickers, 1845-48. (Novels.)

The Mysteries of the Court of London. 8 vols. London: Dicks, 1849-56. (Novels.)

William Roughhead

Twelve Scots Trials. Edinburgh: W. Green and Sons, 1913. (History.)

Harold Schechter, ed.

True Crime: An American Anthology. New York: Library of America, 2008. (Essays.)

Stendhal

Le Rouge et le noir, chronique du dixième siècle [*Red and Black, a Chronicle of the Nineteenth Century*]. 2 vols. Paris : Levasseur, 1830. (Novel.)

Leslie Stephen

“The Decay of Murder.” *Cornhill Magazine* Dec. 1869. (Essay.)

Eugène Sue

Les Mystères de Paris [*The Mysteries of Paris*]. 10 vols. Paris: Gosselin, 1842-43. (Novel.)

William Makepeace Thackeray

Catherine: A Story. *Fraser’s Magazine* May 1839-Feb. 1840. (Novel.)

“Going to See a Man Hanged.” *Fraser’s Magazine* Aug. 1840. (Essay.)

William C. Townsend

Modern State Trials. 2 vols. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1850.
(Journalism.)

Anthony Trollope

The Way We Live Now. 3 vols. London: Chapman and Hall, 1874-75. (Novel.)

Is He Popenjoy? 3 vols. London: Chapman and Hall, 1878. (Novel.)

Mark Twain

The American Claimant. New York: Webster, 1892. (Novel.)

Charlotte Yonge

The Daisy Chain; or, Aspirations. London: Parker, 1856. (Novel.)

The Trial: More Links of the Daisy Chain. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1864. (Novel.)

Eugène-François Vidocq

Mémoires de Vidocq, chef de la police de sûreté jusqu'en 1827, aujourd'hui propriétaire et fabricant de papiers à Saint-Mandé [*Memoirs*]. 4 vols. Paris: Tenon, 1828-29. (Memoirs.)

Oscar Wilde

“Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green.” *Fortnightly Review* Jan. 1889. (Essay.)

Emile Zola

La Bête humaine [*The Human Beast*]. Paris: Charpentier, 1890. (Novel.)

**Woyzeck* was written in 1836 and left incomplete at Buchner’s death in 1837. It was performed for the first time 8 Nov 1913 at the Residenztheater, Munich.

FURTHER READING

Bibliographies

Herbert, Rosemary, Catherine Aird, and John M. Reilly, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing*. New York and London: Oxford UP, 1999. Print.

A compilation of signed entries on crime writers and characters, magazines featuring crime writing, and narrative techniques and genres that is centered on English-language texts but includes some Europeans.

Herbert, Rosemary, ed. *Whodunit? A Who's Who in Crime & Mystery Writing*. New York and London: Oxford UP, 2003. Print.

Supplements Herbert's *Oxford Companion*.

Harrison, Ben. *True Crime Narratives: An Annotated Bibliography*. Lanham: Scarecrow P, 1997.

Lists, with useful annotations, more than 3,000 books from the mid-nineteenth century to 1993 that detail the facts of true crimes.

Hubin, Allen J. *Crime Fiction IV: A Comprehensive Bibliography, 1749-2000*. 5 vols. Sauk City: Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, 2003.

The last print version of a bibliography that seeks to list "all mystery, detective, suspense, police and gothic fiction in book form published in the English language" through 2000 and is useful for specialists and students seeking checklists on their topic.

3/m. *Crime Fiction IV: A Comprehensive Bibliography, 1749-2000*. Oakland: Locus P, 2009. CD-ROM and Web.

Latest version of bibliography includes more than 139,000 titles in electronic format. Hubin's web site, *Crime Fiction IV*, includes periodic updates.

Criticism

Boyle, Thomas. *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead: Beneath the Surface of Victorian Sensationalism*. New York: Viking, 1989. Print.

Using *Various Trials Cut from Newspapers*, a scrapbook compilation assembled by William Bell Macdonald between 1839 and 1862, discusses the factual crimes of mid-century England that underlay the sensation fiction of Braddon, Collins, and Dickens,

Cohen, Daniel A. *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace: New England Crime Literature and the Origins of American Popular Culture, 1674-1860*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2006. Print.

Exposition of the ways in which the popular literature of crime (broadsides, criminal biographies, trial reports, newspaper accounts) supplanted the sermon and advanced the secularization of American society in the years before the Civil War.

Franklin, H. Bruce. *Prison Literature in America: The Victim as Criminal and Artist*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989. Print.

Groundbreaking analysis of writing by prison inmates from the early modern period to the mid-twentieth century, discussing the transportation system by which the American colonies were populated, and slavery as a form of noncriminal imprisonment.

Hutchings, Peter J. *The Criminal Spectre in Law, Literature, and Aesthetics: Incriminating Subjects*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Philosophical analysis of the discourses of crime, influenced strongly by sociologist Walter Benjamin and philosopher Michel Foucault. Hutchings explores the legal and aesthetic texts that shaped the image of the criminal in the nineteenth century, an image he claims endures into our own age.

Joyce, Simon. *Capital Offenses: Geographies of Class and Crime in Victorian London*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2003. Print.

Analyzes the representation of London and its neighborhoods in Victorian fiction and factual literature, particularly the contradiction between Victorian sociology, which focused on crime performed by the denizens of the London slums, and the popular literature of crime, which focused on bourgeois and upper class malefactors like Henry Jekyll and Dorian Gray.

Kalikoff, Beth. *Murder and Moral Decay in Victorian Popular Literature*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research P, 1986.

Presents a three-stage history of public attitudes toward murder and murderers through an analysis of both fiction and factual journalism in England during the nineteenth century; the image of the murderer evolves from a monster from the lower classes before midcentury, to middle-class murderers, to the end-of-the-century recognition of a dark element potentially present in all of us and of a society that “may be morally corrupt to its roots.”

Knight, Stephen Thomas. *Crime Fiction, 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Print.

Surveys crime fiction from its origins in the nineteenth century to recent times, analyzing the development of the focus on detection, the growing emphasis on murder, and the modern celebration of female and minority detectives.

Maunder, Andrew, and Grace Moore, eds. *Victorian Crime, Madness and Sensation*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2004. Print.

Collection of 15 articles tracing changes in crime and punishment and its popular literature in the United Kingdom and France from the legal and policing reforms of the 1820s to the end of the nineteenth century. Includes essays on fiction, such as Ellen Price Wood’s *East Lynne* and Trollope’s *The Way We Live Now*, and discourses on true crime in celebrated cases, such as Alfred Dreyfus and George Chapman.

O'Brien, Ellen L. *Crime in Verse: The Poetics of Murder in the Victorian Era*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008. Print.

Discusses murder as the subject of street ballads, which provided both information and titillation for readers; murderous "madness" in the works of Robert Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti; and domestic murders in the works of Browning, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and Amy Levy.

Panek, Leroy Lad. *The Origins of the American Detective Story*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2006. Print.

Analyzes the rise of the detective story in America starting with the tales of Poe, focusing primarily on developments in society, including the growth of forensic science, the crusading newspapers, and shifting capabilities of police and private detective agencies.

Priestman, Martin, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 2003. Print.

Collection of 14 articles on crime and crime writing from the eighteenth century onward in the United States, England and France, covering detective stories and thrillers as well as true-crime literature, includes Lyn Pykett's fine essay on the Newgate novel and sensation fiction.

Ruggiero, Vincenzo. *Crime in Literature: Sociology of Deviance and Fiction*. London and New York: Verso, 2003. Print.

Analyzes the literature of crime, including texts by Baudelaire, Hugo, Poe, and Zola from a sociological perspective; topics include organized crime, legal and illegal drugs, women and ethnic minorities.

Sagarin, Edward. *Raskolnikov and Others: Literary Images of Crime, Punishment, Redemption and Atonement*. New York: St. Martin's P, 1981. Print.

Argues that criminologists can learn a great deal from the psychological insights of novelists like Dostoevsky, Hugo, and Conrad about the criminal mind and the ways in which atonement and redemption can emerge.

Srebnick, Amy Gilman and René Levy, eds. *Crime and Culture: An Historical Perspective*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2005. Print.

Collection of twelve scholarly articles on a wide-ranging set of topics, focusing on the relationship between crime and its representations from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries in Europe and the United States.

Symons, Julian. *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel, A History*. London: Faber and Faber, 1972. Print.

Highly regarded short history of crime literature from the beginnings in the late eighteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. The book was published in the US as *Mortal Consequences*.

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Analyzes the ambivalence of Victorian culture about the home as a haven of privacy or the locus of hidden crime, including an excellent exposition of the Constance Kent murder case and its fictional evocations in the work of Collins, Dickens, and other later writers.

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