Thomas W. Kniesche (Ed.)

Contemporary German Crime Fiction

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Edited by
Michael Eskin · Karen Leeder · Christopher Young

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Contemporary German Crime Fiction

A Companion

Edited by
Thomas W. Kniesche

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Preface

At a meeting of the German Studies Association some years ago, Jochen Vogt asked me whether I would be interested in editing a volume on contemporary German crime fiction. He thought it would be a great way to draw the attention of English-speaking audiences to a realm of writing that had seen tremendous momentum since the 1980s, in terms of not only its quantity but also its quality. I was working on another book on the topic at the time and readily and enthusiastically agreed. This is how this book was conceived.

The volume is divided into eleven longer chapters and fourteen short author portraits. While the longer chapters are primarily concerned with broader developments within the genre and with providing overviews of certain trends in German crime fiction (such as the *Soziokrimi*, the *Regionalkrimi*, the *Frauenkrimi*, etc.), the short chapters in the last section will familiarize readers with some of the most interesting German-speaking crime novelists writing today.

Whenever the titles of books written in German are mentioned, an English translation is provided in brackets. If the translated title is followed by an asterisk (*), the book has *not* been translated into English; otherwise an English translation of the book is available.

The bibliography contains the titles of the primary and secondary sources referred to in the book and invites readers to expand their knowledge of crime fiction from German-speaking countries. The index will allow readers to navigate the pages of this volume easily and to look up the names of authors and concepts of special interest.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the friends and colleagues who contributed the chapters that comprise this *Companion to Contemporary German Crime Fiction*. I would also like to thank Dr Manuela Gerlof at De Gruyter and the editors of *Companions to Contemporary German Culture* for including this book in the series. Special thanks go to Lydia J. White for her help in copyediting the typoscript for this book.

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Thomas W. Kniesche

1 Introduction: German and International Crime Fiction

International crime fiction vs. crime writing in Germany

Crime fiction has long been considered a literary genre dominated by the Anglo-American writing tradition. This tradition started with Edgar Allan Poe's stories featuring C. Auguste Dupin, followed by the singular phenomenon of the best-known fictional detective of all times, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. It continued with the authors of the 'golden age' of crime fiction (Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Philo Vance), the American hard-boiled school of the 1920s and 1930s (Dashiel Hammett, Raymond Chandler), the police procedural (Ed McBain, P.D. James), the spy thriller (Ian Fleming, John le Carré), the forensic thriller (Patricia Cornwell, Kathy Reichs) and the serial-killer thriller (Thomas Harris, James Patterson). The importance of other distinct national traditions of crime fiction, such as the French, Scandinavian, and Italian traditions, has now also been recognized, and writers from Spanish-speaking countries have had considerable success with English-speaking audiences. On the other hand, many still view crime fiction written in German as a case of a 'missing literary tradition'.[1] A chapter on 'Crime Writing in Other Languages' in an otherwise comprehensive recent companion to crime fiction briefly mentions the Swiss author Friedrich Dürrenmatt but makes no reference to any other German-speaking writers.[2] The widespread understanding, however, that there is no tradition of crime fiction in Germany is a misconception. It is time for a more differentiated narrative to replace the myth of the missing tradition of German crime fiction.

1 Cf. Julia Karolle-Berg, 'The Case of the Missing Literary Tradition. Reassessing Four Assumptions of Crime and Detective Novels in the German-Speaking World (1900–1933)', *Monatshefte* 107.3 (2015), pp. 431–454.

2 Cf. Sue Neale, 'Crime Writing in Other Languages', in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 296–302 (pp. 298–299). Elsewhere in this volume, Erich Kästner's *Emil und die Detektive* [1929, *Emil and the Detectives*] is discussed as an important contribution to 'crime and detective writing for children'. Cf. Christopher Rutledge, 'Crime and Detective Literature for Young Readers', pp. 321–331 (p. 328).

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Due to the immense popularity of detective fiction modelled on the stories and novels of Edgar Allan Poe, Émile Gaboriau and Arthur Conan Doyle, and the dominant role played by the Anglo-American authors of the 'golden age', until the 1950s, crime fiction was largely seen as an extension of the concept of the 'whodunit'.[3] Crime fiction that employed the formulas and conventions of the 'whodunit' also gained a large following in German-speaking countries in the nineteenth century, but this was a time when other forms of crime writing also developed, competing with detective fiction. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, documentary literary styles depicted crime as realistically as possible, illuminating both the social and psychological backgrounds to criminality and the way the penal system functioned. This was largely a didactic literature that was interested in contributing to ongoing discussions of judicial, sociological and psychological concerns. These texts clearly distinguished themselves from detective fiction in other European countries and in the US, which was written and read as a literary game, where the reader would compete with the detective to solve the mystery.

The strong separation in German cultural history between 'serious', 'high' literature and 'mere' entertainment or genre literature is another reason why the notion that crime fiction has no tradition in German-speaking countries gained so much traction. Novellas and novels such as Friedrich Schiller's *Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre* [1792, *The Criminal of Lost Honour*], E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Das Fräulein von Scuderi* [1819, *Mademoiselle de Scudéri*], Annette von Droste-Hülshoff's *Die Judenbuche* [1842, *The Jews' Beech Tree*], Theodor Fontane's *Unterm Birnbaum* [1885, *Under the Pear Tree*] and Jakob Wassermann's *Der Fall Maurizius* [1928, *The Maurizius Case*] all tell tales of crime, criminals and detection. However, these texts have never been considered candidates for possible inclusion in the tradition of crime fiction and are instead allocated to the canon of 'high' or 'true' literature.

A third explanation for why crime fiction is missing from the German literary tradition is that, after the downfall of the Nazi regime in 1945, translations of Anglo-American writers dominated the crime fiction market. Authors writing in German had a hard time gaining recognition and it was only in the mid- to late 1960s that readers in Germany would take notice of home-grown crime fiction.

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3 Martin Priestman defines the 'whodunnit' as 'primarily concerned with unravelling past events which either involve a crime or seem to do so. The present action is largely static, and major attention is given to the detecting activity itself, which may be performed by virtually anyone – police of amateur – who enjoys the final approval of the law'. (*Crime Fiction from Poe to the Present* [Plymouth: Northcote House, 1998], p. 1). Other terms used for these kinds of texts include 'tales of ratiocination' (Poe) or 'clue puzzles'.

A very short history of crime writing in Germany and elsewhere

In order to elucidate and illustrate these issues we have to look back at how crime writing in German has developed and compare it with other national traditions. Just as in other European countries, in German-speaking countries, writing and publishing about crime for a wide audience goes back to the early days of printing. As sensational stories about murder and mayhem were becoming popular material for pamphlets and broadsheets in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,[4] they were also quickly gaining a captive audience in German readers. These broadsheets often featured illustrations made from woodcuts in order to include the many illiterates among the population in their audience.[5] However, the stories told in this format were not what we would consider crime fiction. They focussed on the criminal act itself, its brutality and the sordid motivations behind it. No process of detection took place; instead, it was usually an act of divine revelation that connected the criminal to the crime, for example, the corpse of the murder victim would start bleeding as the culprit approached. Broadsheets described the punishment in revolting detail in order to deter the audience from contemplating criminal acts themselves.

This situation changed in the seventeenth century, as legal scholars began employing a new narrative form, the case history, to explore crime in a fresh light. In 1649, the legal expert and poet Georg Philipp Harsdörffer published a compilation of novellas,[6] in which sinful behaviour resulting in crime was invariably met with draconian punishments. Most of the stories in Harsdörffer's collection were translations and adaptations of anthologies of novellas that the French bishop Jean Pierre Camus had been publishing since 1630. The case history combined what we now refer to as 'true crime' with elements from a variety of discourses (legal history, forensics, psychology, philosophy, etc.) to create a narrative form that would be of interest both to legal scholars and a wider audience of middle-class readers. The latter wanted to be entertained while also being informed about the origins of crime, criminal acts themselves and how the legal system would deal with them. The widespread interest in case histories

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4 Cf. Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800–2000. Detection, Death, Diversity* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 3–5.

5 Cf. Waltraud Woeller and Bruce Cassiday, *The Literature of Crime and Detection. An Illustrated History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Ungar, 1988), pp. 13–20.

6 Georg Philipp Harsdörffer, *Der Grosse SchauPlatz Jämerlicher Mordgeschichte. Mit vielen merkwürdigen Erzehlungen/ neu üblichen Gedichten/ Lehrreichen Sprüchen/ scharffsinnigen Hoffreden/ artigen Schertzfragen und Antworten etc.* (Hamburg: Nauman, 1649).

and their printed anthologies was a truly transnational phenomenon that has survived in other forms to the present day.[7] Other early examples of these fictionalized forms of true crime were the stories that would later be collected in the *Newgate Calendars*[8] (starting in 1728) and in the twenty-volume *Causes célèbres et intéressantes* [*Famous and Interesting Cases*], compiled by the French lawyer and writer François Gayot de Pitaval (1673–1743) and appearing between 1734 and 1743. Pitaval went to the archives and searched for cases that had already caused a stir in their own time. He dug out the legal documents pertaining to the cases and combined them with excerpts from the judicial literature and vivid descriptions of the culprits, the crimes and their punishments. Pitaval was the first to augment the bare facts of famous historical cases with fictionalized accounts of their psychological underpinnings, the perpetrators' sociological backgrounds and the public's response to the crimes. The formula Pitaval found would prove enormously successful and influential. The first German translation had already appeared by 1747, and in 1792, one of the iconic writers later associated with German literary classicism, Friedrich Schiller, published a four-volume selection with a preface. Schiller praised the fictionalized case history's potential for exploring the deepest recesses of the human mind and for gaining insights into anthropology, psychology, pedagogics and the medical sciences. In Germany, the Pitaval tradition continued well into the nineteenth century with the publication of the *Neuer Pitaval* [*New Pitaval*] by the novelist and lawyer Wilhelm Häring (aka Willibald Alexis, 1798–1871) and the legal expert Julius Eduard Hitzig (1780–1849). These stories first appeared in 1842 and became so popular that sixty volumes had been published by 1890.

In the nineteenth century, crime writing underwent a process of differentiation that generated a number of distinct narrative forms. In countries like Great Britain, France and Germany, these new crime stories met with varying levels of popular success, creating the impression that there was a preponderance of separate national traditions of crime fiction. The Anglo-American tradition of modern crime fiction is said to have its origins in Edgar Allan Poe's (1809–1849) stories, which feature the brilliant, eccentric amateur detective C. Auguste Dupin. Poe's 'tales of ratiocination' ushered in a new literary form, the detective story, and created a school of writing that found its adherents in novelists and writers such as Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Gilbert Keith Chesterton and Arthur Conan Doyle. Together, the detective story and the novel, the latter usually

7 Cf. *Kriminalfallgeschichten*, ed. by Alexander Košenina, *Text + Kritik*, special issue (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2014), pp. 5–6.
8 Cf. Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800–2000*, pp. 5–9.

featuring a charismatic amateur detective, constituted the dominant narrative form in crime fiction until the end of the 'golden age' of the 1950s. This period gave rise to enormously popular writers such as Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Margery Allingham, John Dickson Carr, Ngaio Marsh, S. S. Van Dine and Ellery Queen.

This tradition also heavily influenced German crime fiction, and the works of these writers appeared in translation and became just as successful as in their home countries. Crime fiction that originated in German-speaking countries, however, followed a different trajectory. The case histories of the Pitaval tradition had attempted to introduce legal thinking and an understanding of legal procedures into mainstream middle-class discourse. They had set out to engage an audience of non-experts in the exploration of legal issues and thus tried to mediate between the arcane discourse of legal scholarship and the harsh reality of crime in modernizing societies. Case histories relied mostly on authentic legal cases, which authors then supplemented with fictional material to provide a wider audience with a more interesting reading experience. However, the more fictional material the compilers and writers of case histories included in their stories, the more they were criticized for stooping to the base instincts of a mass-audience that was only interested in cheap thrills. Clearly, in a developing literary market, case histories would not be able to satisfy everybody's tastes. There was room for other forms of crime writing.

Since the 1820s, and therefore almost a generation before Poe, the crime novella (*Kriminalnovelle*) had been gaining a strong foothold in German literature. The German crime novellas of the nineteenth century highlighted the moral, psychological and social causes of crime. They used fictionalized accounts of crime to explore the moral and psychological dimensions of criminal behaviour. The most important example of the early crime novella in German is E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Das Fräulein von Scuderi* [1819, *Mademoiselle de Scudéry*]. Based on an authentic seventeenth-century string of poisonings in pre-revolutionary France, Hoffmann makes use of the historic setting and protagonists, up to and including the French king, but centres his story not on the poisonings themselves, but on a number of fictional murders, for which the widespread hysteria caused by the poisonings merely provide the background. The eponymous Mademoiselle de Scudéry takes it upon herself to investigate the baffling murders and, by using a combination of psychological insight and common sense, she ultimately manages to expose the killer. According to some literary scholars, 'Mademoiselle de Scudéry' was the first detective story, appearing more than twenty years before Poe's tales of ratiocination were published, but Stephen Knight has rightly pointed out that in Hoffmann's novella 'there is no real detection' and that the elderly

heroine merely 'supervises the unraveling of the mystery by the plot itself'.[9] More important than establishing who wrote the first detective story, however, is that Hoffmann was primarily interested in exploring the societal ramifications of crime in a given historical setting and, even more so, in fathoming the depths of unconscious desire that drives the murderer in his novella. Hoffmann's tale is not one of detection or the amazing feats of a brilliant and daring detective, but of what drives a killer to commit his crimes. 'Mademoiselle de Scudéry' is among the first in a long list of works of crime 'literature' in German, which includes Annette von Droste-Hülshoff's *Die Judenbuche* [1842, *The Jew's Beech Tree*], Theodor Fontane's *Unterm Birnbaum* [1885, *Under the Pear Tree*], Ricarda Huch's *Der Fall Deruga* [1917, *The Deruga Case*], Jakob Wassermann's *Der Fall Maurizius* [1928, *The Maurizius Case*], Heimito von Doderer's *Ein Mord den jeder begeht* [1938, *Every Man a Murderer*] and Patrick Süskind's *Das Parfum* [1985, *Perfume*]. However, due to an ingrained practice of distinguishing between high-brow or 'true' literature and 'trivial' literature or mass-produced 'trash' written merely for entertainment purposes – a practice that has formed an integral part of German cultural history – none of these works are considered 'crime fiction' in Germany.[10]

Starting in the late eighteenth century, another type of crime writing became popular in German-speaking countries. The *Kriminalerzählung* or *Kriminalgeschichte* (both translate as 'crime story') were 'accounts of authentic cases according to what is stated in the files' ('"aktenmäßiger Behandlung" authentischer Fälle').[11] One of the first writers of crime stories in this vein was the legal scholar and professor of aesthetics August Gottlob Meißner (1753–1807). Between 1778 and 1796, he published fourteen volumes of *Skizzen* [*Sketches*], in which he explored the societal background behind criminal acts. Although based on authentic cases, Meißner used his literary skills to probe the motivations of the perpetrators and to question the cruel methods of investigation and punishment. As an adherent of the Enlightenment, he promoted rational thought in dealing with crime and condemned the use of torture to extract (often false) confessions.

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9 Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800–2000*, p. 19.

10 For a discussion of twentieth-century German novels that feature crime see *Experimente mit dem Kriminalroman. Ein Erzählmodell in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts* ed. by Wolfgang Düsing (Frankfurt a. M. et al.: Lang, 1993).

11 Cf. Jörg Schönert, 'Kriminalgeschichten in der deutschen Literatur zwischen 1770 und 1890. Zur Entwicklung des Genres in sozialgeschichtlicher Perspektive', in *Der Kriminalroman. Poetik, Theorie, Geschichte*, ed. by Jochen Vogt (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1998), pp. 322–339, (p. 327).

Meißner had many followers in his attempt to make a literary contribution to a legal discourse that was feeling the effects of the philosophical, technological and societal changes brought about by modernization. His brand of 'Justizkritik' (criticism of the legal system) served as the inspiration for two types of fictionalized crime writing that emerged in the nineteenth century in German-speaking countries.[12] Stories of detection and the hunt for the criminal focused less on the perpetrator's psychological background or questions of morality in connection with the criminal act and more on the figure of the professional investigator. Two of the most important writers of this school were the lawyer, journalist and dramatist Adolph Müllner (1774–1829) and the Prussian judge and law professor J. D. H. Temme (1798–1881). Müllner's *Der Kaliber* [1828, *The Caliber*] has been called 'the first genuine detective story in the German language'.[13] Temme was forced into exile in Zurich after the failed revolution of 1848 and published thirty-four crime stories between 1855 and 1868, reaching a widespread audience. In these stories, he applied his robust knowledge of legal procedures while advocating for a practice of fair trials and the importance of civil rights.[14]

The other type of crime story that developed during the nineteenth century in German-speaking countries was that of the criminal career. Writers such as Ernst Dronke (1822–1891) and Hermann Kurz (1813–1873) embodied this type of crime writing. After obtaining his law degree, Ernst Dronke went to Berlin and launched his career as a writer. He, too, was forced into exile and finally settled in Liverpool. His literary work was heavily influenced by his socialist convictions. In this respect, and similar to Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* [1842–1843, *The Mysteries of Paris*], Dronke's *Polizeigeschichten* [1846, *Police Stories**] are a collection of novellas that show human beings as products of their social environment. Often, crime is the result of bureaucratic overreach or the actions of corrupt police officers.

What these nineteenth-century crime narratives from German-speaking countries have in common and what separates them from the Anglo-American and French traditions of crime writing is a desire to educate the public about

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12 For the following, cf. Schönert, 'Kriminalgeschichten', p. 328.

13 Cf. the note by the editors in: *Early German and Austrian Detective Fiction. An Anthology*, ed. by Mary W. Tannert and Henry Kratz (Jefferson/NC, London: McFarland, 1999), p. 9. An abridged translation of *Der Kaliber* is available in this volume (pp. 9–53).

14 Cf. Volker Neuhaus, 'Die Schwierigkeiten der Deutschen mit dem Kriminalroman', in *Mord als kreativer Prozeß. Zum Kriminalroman der Gegenwart in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz*, ed. by Sandro M. Moraldo (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005), pp. 9–19 (p. 11).

the intricacies of the legal system, its procedures and strengths, its challenges and shortcomings, but also to awaken readers' interest in crime's psychological and social background. They also strive to entertain, but this appears to be almost an afterthought. A completely different strand of crime fiction, 'the dime novel', emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century in the US. Printed on cheap paper (like its successor, the pulp magazine), it featured all kinds of adventurous and sensationalist stories, beginning with Westerns, horror stories and fantastic tales. During the 1880s, detective stories and mystery stories became the dominant types of dime novel, featuring private detectives like Nick Carter (in German translation since 1905) and Sexton Blake (in the United Kingdom since 1893). Influenced by Poe's tales of ratiocination and by Émile Gaboriau's (1832–1873) model of the French *roman policier*, dime novels soon acquired a mass following in Germany. Seen as cheap 'trash' that presented a threat to the intellectual and cultural well-being of the people (*Volk*), detective stories became the object of systematic vilification carried out by pedagogues and self-appointed guardians of good taste.[15] In spite of these efforts, translations of detective fiction written by British, American and other international authors still had a strong following in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the 1920s and 1930s, writers such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, G. K. Chesterton, Edgar Wallace (1875–1932), Ellery Queen, and Sweden's Sven Elvestad (1884–1934) were household names in Germany.

What is not well known, however, is the fact that detective fiction written by German-speaking authors also had a large following from the nineteenth century to the beginning of the Nazi-period.[16] The names of German authors of crime fiction who were quite successful during the interwar period, such as Ernst Reicher, Alfred Schirokauer and Paul Rosenhayn, have now been forgotten.[17] During the interwar years, another development changed the landscape of German crime fiction and set it apart from its international peers: 'Unlike the analytic detective story that dominated English, French, and American literature in the 1920s, the German crime story dispensed with the figure of the detective [...] and crossed

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15 These efforts were nothing new. They began as early as in the late eighteenth century, but reached a climax in 1926 with the infamous 'Law to protect the Youth against Filth and Trash' ('Gesetz zur Bewahrung der Jugend vor Schund- und Schmutzschriften').

16 Cf. Hans-Otto Hügel, *Untersuchungsrichter, Diebsfänger, Detektive. Theorie und Geschichte der deutschen Detektiverzählung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1978).

17 On German crime fiction from the turn of the century to the 1940s, cf. Knut Hickethier, 'Der Alte Deutsche Kriminalroman. Von vergessenen Traditionen', *Die Horen* 144 (1986), pp. 15–23.

over to a focus on the figure of the criminal [. . .].'[18] There was a palpable fascination with serial killers, pathological criminal masterminds and 'outsiders of society'[19] that manifested itself in crime fiction and in crime film during the years of the Weimar Republic. Iconic movies of the time, such as *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* [1920, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*] and Fritz Lang's films featuring criminal mastermind Dr. Mabuse [*Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* [1922, *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler*] and *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse* [1933, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*] and *M – Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder* [1931 *M – A City Looks for a Murderer*] reflected this fascination with the criminal.

Reading crime fiction was a favourite pastime in Nazi Germany. In 1939 alone, half a million detective novels were printed in Germany. The books of most of the famous Anglo-American authors were readily available in bookstores throughout the Third Reich, many of them even in their original language. It was only in early 1941 that book dealers were forbidden from selling detective novels by these authors and libraries were told to restrict their circulation.[20] The Nazis knew full well that crime fiction could be utilized as a means of distraction: crime fiction written by German authors had a function similar to that of film in the Third Reich: to entertain and thus divert its audience's attention from the increasingly brutal reality of the war.

German authors of crime fiction under Nazism still followed the established patterns and formulas of internationally successful crime fiction. They often wrote crime novels set in major American cities or in London and they wrote under English-sounding pseudonyms. Apparently, both critics of the genre and publishers were of the opinion that the English and American models remained unrivalled.[21] Crime stories written by German authors and set in Germany aimed above all to convey a positive picture of police work and to encourage their

18 Todd Herzog, *Crime Stories. Criminalistic Fantasy and the Culture of Crisis in Weimar Germany* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2009).

19 *Außenseiter der Gesellschaft. Die Verbrechen der Gegenwart* [*Outsiders of Society. The Crimes of Contemporary Times**] was an imprint of the Berlin publishing house *Die Schmiede*. Edited by Rudolf Leonhard, a series of fourteen short novels was published in 1924 and 1925, written by authors such as Alfred Döblin, Egon Erwin Kisch, Ernst Weiß, and Theodor Lessing.

20 Walter T. Rix, 'Wesen und Wandel des Detektivromans im totalitären Staat', in Paul G. Buchloh and Jens P. Becker, *Der Detektivroman. Studien zur Geschichte und Form der englischen und amerikanischen Detektivliteratur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), pp. 121–134 (p. 123). On crime fiction in Nazi Germany, cf. Carsten Würmann, 'Zum Kriminalroman im Nationalsozialismus', in *Verbrechen als Passion. Neue Untersuchungen zum Kriminalgenre*, ed. by Bruno Franceschini and Carsten Würmann (Berlin: Weidler 2004), pp. 143–186.

21 Würmann, 'Zum Kriminalroman im Nationalsozialismus', pp. 149–150.

readers to embrace vigilance and to cooperate with the police force, working together against 'internal enemies', be they criminals, political opponents or psychopathic serial killers.[22] Once the war began in 1939, the focus shifted to the type of spy novel that primarily dealt with protecting the 'homeland' from enemy spies. One of the motives frequently used was the supposedly nefarious stratagems of German-Americans returning to Germany to work against the new regime.

Crime fiction in Germany after 1945: The contributions in this volume

The only authors of crime fiction writing in German from the 1930s to the 1950s whose works are still read today are Friedrich Glauser (1896–1938) and Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990), both from Switzerland. Glauser was influenced by the enormously prolific and successful Belgian writer Georges Simenon (1903–1989), whose Inspector Jules Maigret is almost as well-known as Sherlock Holmes in Germany. *Syndikat*, the association of German crime writers, named its annual prize for the best crime novel written in German the Friedrich-Glauser-Prize in honour of the writer.[23] Friedrich Dürrenmatt is primarily known as a dramatist and writer of plays such as *Der Besuch der alten Dame* [1956, *The Visit*] and *Die Physiker* [1962, *The Physicists*]. He also wrote a number of detective novels, however, in which he critically explores the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the genre. Glauser and Dürrenmatt were seminal for the development of contemporary crime fiction in German and are therefore the subject of chapter 2 of this volume.

Soon after World War II, there was tremendous demand in Germany for all of the cultural products that had been banned by the Nazis. Crime fiction by British and American authors was made available in translation and took the German market by storm. Readers had been well aware of the German detective novel as a genre in its own right before 1945, but there was then a complete 'break with tradition' and the readership became primarily interested in translations of Anglo-

22 Cf. Joachim Linder, 'Feinde im Innern. Mehrfachtäter in deutschen Kriminalromanen der Jahre 1943/44 und der "Mythos Serienkiller"', *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 28.2 (2003), pp. 190–227.

23 Cf. the web page of the association: http://www.das-syndikat.com/. The various categories of the 'Glauser', as the prize is commonly called can be found under: http://www.das-syndikat.com/krimipreise/krimipreise-der-autoren/ehrenglauser.html.

American crime novels.[24] As a result, 'the German crime novel had to redefine itself in East and West [...] after 1945'.[25] Crime fiction written in West Germany in the 1940s and 1950s still by and large followed the model of the 'golden age' novels by the British and American masters. German-speaking authors preferred to set their novels in (for German readers) exotic and (for crime fiction) well-known locations such as London, Los Angeles and New York, as, for example, in the police procedurals by the Vienna-born Frank Arnau (the pseudonym of Heinrich Karl Schmitt, 1894–1976). There were certainly some initial, tentative attempts to gain a critical perspective on contemporary society and to create psychological depth in the novels' characters, but these and the generally more pronounced realism of the novels were mere precursors to a development that came into its own during the 1960s and 1970s with the arrival of the *Neuer Deutscher Kriminalroman* [New German Crime Novel], which will be covered in chapter 4 of this volume.

Like all cultural products, the development of the crime novel in the GDR had always been subject to the directives of the communist regime. The changing requirements of cultural policy pertaining to entertainment literature therefore determined what was possible in the realm of crime fiction and what was not. As a literary genre classified as 'Western',[26] the communist party had initially rejected the crime novel. It was only later that the party realized that they could use crime fiction as 'a tool to support the party's strategy on their way to a socialist political system'.[27] Because the GDR was avowedly a socialist society well on its way to communism, crime was supposed to be a by-product of capitalism. In the 'real socialism' of the GDR, capitalist property relations no longer existed, and crime was therefore impossible. If crimes were committed nonetheless, they were either committed by Western agents or by people with a fascist or capitalist agenda. In the first years of the GDR, the crime novel was therefore 'quasi-unpresentable'.[28] That changed in the 1950s, more specifically after 1953. After the attempted rebellion

24 Hügel, *Untersuchungsrichter, Diebsfänger, Detektive*, p. 207 (my trans.).
25 Thomas Wörtche, *Das Mörderische neben dem Leben. Ein Wegbegleiter durch die Welt der Kriminalliteratur* (Lengwil: Libelle, 2008), p. 21.
26 Manfred Jäger, 'Die Legitimierung der Unterhaltungsliteratur', in *Die Literatur der DDR*, ed. by Hans-Jürgen Schmitt, *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. 11 (Munich: dtv, 1983) pp. 229–260 (p. 246).
27 Reinhard Jahn, 'Jesus, Buddha, der Müll und der Tod. Spurensicherung in Sachen Soziokrimi', in *Deutschsprachige Literatur der 70er und 80er Jahre. Autoren, Tendenzen, Gattungen*, ed. by Walter Delabar and Erhard Schütz (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), pp. 38–52, (p. 48).
28 Reinhard Hillich, 'Krimi in der DDR – DDR im Krimi', in *Die DDR im Spiegel ihrer Literatur. Beiträge zu einer historischen Betrachtung der DDR-Literatur*, ed. by Franz Huberth (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 2005), pp. 105–116 (p. 106).

against the regime of June 17, crime stories were used as a means of indoctrination. The plot was always constructed in the same way: Western agents infiltrated the GDR, trying to sabotage the construction of the new state by stealing important inventions. These attempts were then thwarted by vigilant police officers and workers loyal to the regime.

By the 1960s, it had become clear that it was possible to utilize popular literature – and crime fiction as one part of popular literature – to keep the population in line. After 1968, crime novels and weekly *Heftromane*[29] [dime novels] appeared under several imprints: 'K-Series', 'NB-Novels', 'Yellow Series' or the popular 'DIE-Series' (Delikte, Indizien, Ermittlungen [Crimes, Evidence, Investigations]). With the relaxation of cultural policy in the early 1970s, there emerged a 'thriving production of crime fiction' that provided a view of the GDR that ran counter to the officially sanctioned image of the country and focused on corruption and petty crime as the norm of social and political reality.[30] At almost the same time, the GDR itself became the setting for fictional crime as a regular occurrence caused by home-grown problems.[31] Authors like Gert Prokop, Hartmut Mechtel, Barbara Neuhaus, Tom Wittgen and Klaus Möckel began exploring grievances within GDR society, such as the limited freedom of movement, the scarcity of luxury goods and a 'lack of self-determination and democracy',[32] and turned the population's general discontent into a catalyst for crime. During the 1980s, issues like prostitution, homosexuality and sectarianism became subjects of crime fiction, although they were not permitted as a topic of discussion in the media controlled by the regime.[33]

Although it was subject to extensive censorship,[34] crime fiction in the GDR was almost always *Bückware* (bottom-shelf goods). That meant that, due to its popularity and to limited print runs, you could only get your hands on it if you were on good terms with your bookseller, who would sell you the books under

29 *Heftromane* are still popular in Germany today. They appear weekly or bi-weekly, usually have 64 pages, and are printed on cheap paper. They are written by groups of authors who have to adhere to a general outline of settings and stock characters. One of the most popular (West) German *Heftroman* series is *Jerry Cotton*, which began in 1954 and features a fictional FBI agent fighting organized crime in New York.

30 Neuhaus, 'Die Schwierigkeiten der Deutschen', p. 13.

31 Walter T. Rix, 'Krimis in der DDR. Sozialistischer Seiltanz', *Die Horen* 144 (1986), pp. 71–77 (p. 76).

32 Hillich, 'Krimi in der DDR', p. 111.

33 Hillich, 'Krimi in der DDR', p. 105.

34 Rix, 'Krimis in der DDR', p. 73; Dorothea Germer, *Von Genossen und Gangstern. Zum Gesellschaftsbild in der Kriminalliteratur der DDR und Ostdeutschlands von 1974 bis 1994* (Essen: Die Blaue Eule, 1998), pp. 55–61.

the counter (and who would have to go out of his or her way to get them for you). In the 1970s and 1980s, crime fiction written in East Germany was tremendously popular, but the criticisms it contained never went beyond discussing the symptoms of political discontent. There was no tolerance for any critique of the political system itself or the regime.[35]

Crime fiction written by Austrian authors has become extremely popular among German-speaking readers since the 1990s. Writers such as Wolf Haas, Heinrich Steinfest, Edith Kneifl, Eva Rossmann, Alfred Komarek, Josef Haslinger, Manfred Wieninger and Paulus Hochgatter, to name just a few, have produced best-sellers, some of which even have been translated into other languages. Chapter 3 starts by providing a brief overview of the history of Austrian crime fiction and then looks at a number of specific features that allow us to define crime fiction written in Austria as a distinct literary entity. The chapter closes with a short discussion of two novels by Wolf Haas and Paulus Hochgatterer, *Auferstehung der Toten* [*Resurrection*] and *Das Matratzenhaus* [*The Mattress House*].

Chapter 4 is devoted to the West-German *Soziokrimi* or sociological crime novel. Although still indebted to the Anglo-American, Scandinavian and Western European traditions, the term *Soziokrimi* outlines the first step in the development of an autonomous literature of crime fiction in West Germany. It began around 1962 with the inception of the 'black' thriller series by the Rowohlt publishing house and ended in the 1980s, when a new generation of writers appeared on the scene. Important *Soziokrimi* authors include Hansjörg Martin (from 1965), Friedhelm Werremeier (from 1972), Irene Rodrian (from 1967), Michael Molsner (after 1968), '-ky' or Horst Bosetzky (from 1971) and Felix Huby (from 1977). What this group of authors – who preferred the designation *Neuer deutscher Kriminalroman* – have in common is a narrative perspective that views crime as socially determined, even produced by societal circumstances, and understands crime fiction as a form of social criticism. This view led to critical reassessments of institutions such as the police and the judiciary, but also the economy, the health care system and mass media. Crime scenes were often located in small towns in Germany, both fictional and real, imbuing many of these crime novels with a provincial atmosphere. For many authors, the books written by the Swedish writers Per Wahlöö and Maj Sjöwall between 1965 and 1975 were of tremendous importance, as was their connection to the most prominent German TV series *Tatort* (from 1970), for which many of the authors also wrote scripts.

35 Hillich, 'Krimi in der DDR', p. 115.

The regional crime story or Regionalkrimi is one of the most productive subgenres in current crime fiction writing in German-speaking countries. On the one hand, it is heavily featured in the programs of certain publishing houses, such as Gmeiner, Grafit, Econ and Pendragon, and is written by authors who strive to spruce up their stories by adding a local touch. However, there is another group of writers who bring 'local knowledge' (Clifford Geertz) into play to create multifaceted depictions of regional or urban spaces. These writers include Friedrich Ani, Jan Seghers, Oliver Bottini, Ulrich Ritzel, Uta-Maria Heim, Jörg Juretzka and Hansjörg Schneider. Chapter 5 explores how authors combine the conventions of, firstly, crime fiction writing and 'regionality' and, secondly, the 'poetics of murder' and 'local knowledge'. It will also pay attention to the question of how authors attempt to investigate issues of Germany's problematic past by focusing on local spaces.

Another subgenre of German crime fiction that has gained considerable popularity and critical acclaim is the *Frauenkrimi* (crime fiction written by women). Taking its cue from the fact that female authors have played a significant role in the writing of crime fiction since the beginning, chapter 6 shows that crime fiction written by women tends to deploy comic strategies to cut male characters down to size while engendering female empowerment. This opens up new critical innovations for the genre, particularly when looking beyond the *Frauenkrimi* as a marketing label and understanding crime fiction in a broader sense as literature about criminal behaviour, individuals and conquering criminality in a more comprehensive societal sense instead.

In recent German crime writing, revisiting German history has become a popular and successful strategy. Authors such as Petra Oelker and Volker Kutscher write about detectives and police officers who have to negotiate the complex power structures of eighteenth-century and pre-Nazi Germany respectively as well as the ever-shifting contradictions of societies very much in flux. Chapter 7 looks at the contributions this kind of historical crime fiction has made to our understanding of German history. Specifically, it looks at various types of historical crime fiction and the significant role played by paratexts before providing a brief overview of historical crime fiction written in Germany. The chapter concludes with short discussions of two popular novels by Frank Schätzing and Andrea Maria Schenkel.

As the reader will see in chapter 8, the genre of historical crime fiction is a significant component of *historical culture*, which Jörn Rüsen defines as an 'articulation of historical awareness in the life of a society'.[36] Critics usually

36 Jörn Rüsen, 'Geschichtskultur', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 46 (1995), pp. 513–521 (p. 513). 'Artikulation von Geschichtsbewusstsein im Leben einer Gesellschaft'.

distinguish between two subtypes: firstly, *historical crime novels* set entirely in a historical period that is depicted as an experienced present and, secondly, *retrospective historical crime novels* featuring present-day detectives whose enquiries lead the reader back into the historical past. However, this distinction can be redefined with regards to the different narrative strategies the novels employ in order to configure history in fiction and comment on 'canonized history'. Against the backdrop of Ansgar Nünning's typology of historical fiction (1995), chapter 9 examines the current tendency to rework the legacy of the Nazi past within the narrative framework of family history and discusses its manifold manifestations, varying from documentary recordings to metahistorical discourses.

As the genre's structure and its poetics of suspicion transform any given certainty into an – at best – plausible hypothesis, crime fiction explicitly displays culturally specific epistemological strategies to render the uncanny understandable and knowable. These strategies are now multiplying: in order to cope with the crimes of today's multicultural society, detective characters need to be able to read the clues against the backdrop of coexisting sign systems. Although this calls for an approach that (theoretically) opens up a 'third space', essentialist concepts of origin deriving from political debates on interculturality seem to sneak in through the backdoor. After providing a brief history of intercultural German crime fiction and a short discussion of the potential the genre's narrative pattern provides for intercultural reshufflings, chapter 9 begins by focussing on one specific aspect of detection strategies. It offers an analysis of strategies guided by concepts of origin, honour and terrorism discourses, and multicultural teamwork in Jakob Arjouni's *Kismet* [2001, *Kismet. A Kayankaya Thriller*], W. W. Domsky's *Ehre, wem Ehre* ... [2009, *Honour To Whom Honour* ... *], Su Turhan's *Kommissar Pascha* [2013, *Detective Inspector Pascha**] and Ulrich Noller's and Gök Senin's *Çelik & Pelzer* [2010, *Çelik & Pelzer**]. In addition to taking a rather socio-critical perspective on these and other novels, the chapter then discusses the tendency in German-speaking crime fiction to somewhat whimsically enlighten multicultural society, paying special attention to narrative modifications and the ongoing play with the concept of probability in Osman Engin's *Tote essen keinen Döner* [2008, *Dead People Don't Eat Döner**], Hilal Sezgin's *Mihriban pfeift auf Gott* [2010, *Mihriban Doesn't Give a Damn about God**], Heinrich Steinfest's *Cheng* [1999/2007, *Cheng**] and *Die Haischwimmerin* [2011, *Swimming with Sharks**].

At least one third of the German book market comprises crime fiction, and its media extensions in television, cinema, cartoons, radio plays, etc. probably have a similar reach. In contrast to this quantitative dominance, many observers still – or once again – harbour reservations about this kind of 'trivial

entertainment literature' for aesthetic, literary and political reasons. Interestingly enough, an over-supply, particularly of market-compatible, easily mass-produced German crime fiction, appears to confirm these misgivings. The intellectual and aesthetic emancipation of crime fiction which, on the whole, was believed to have been accomplished by the late 1990s, has given way to the incentives of 'the market' – as well as the competing discourse of 'serious' literature, which saw itself challenged by narratives that combined aesthetically challenging reading experiences with entertaining storylines. This over-supply, however, has also introduced a new dialectical moment: it has provoked a kind of *ennui* on the part of certain audiences, which, in turn, has triggered a more high-brow writing of crime fiction, which has been apparent for some time now. Chapter 10 analyses these developments in the literary field and illuminates their mutual interdependence vis-à-vis other narrative possibilities in crime fiction (in other media) and in comparison to other narrative strategies employed to produce either social consensus or dissent.

Some might view teaching (German) crime fiction at a college level as a dubious enterprise. Critics of the genre have pointed out its alleged shortcomings and questioned its suitability as an object of serious reading. In chapter 11, the authors take on this criticism – from Edmund Wilson to Franco Moretti – and show how these interventions, together with critical readings of crime fiction in the broadest sense, can be turned into a useful and satisfying pedagogical exercise. The chapter identifies three areas of instruction that teachers can cover using German crime fiction: basic narratological analysis, *Landeskunde* and social critique.

Chapter 12 introduces readers to authors and texts that are of special interest for contemporary German crime fiction and that the preceding chapters do not extensively comment upon. While chapters 2 to 11 are primarily concerned with broader developments in the genre and with providing overviews of certain trends in German crime fiction, the short portraits in this chapter will familiarize readers with some of the most interesting crime novelists writing today.

Since the 1980s, authors from Germany, Austria and Switzerland have been advancing innovative narrative strategies and techniques in crime fiction. They have negotiated modern and postmodern literary aesthetics and have also contributed to moving German literature towards 'readability'. In their books, they reflect on historical and contemporary social and political issues. Their works are informed by international crime fiction writing, and they are building a specific and multi-faceted oeuvre of crime fiction written in German. The contributions in this volume will explore the whole range of accomplishments that this exciting tradition has to offer.

Gonçalo Vilas-Boas

2 The Beginnings of Swiss Detective Literature: Glauser and Dürrenmatt

Detective fiction in Switzerland was a rather late phenomenon compared to the development of the genre in the Anglo-Saxon world. In nineteenth-century Switzerland, as in many other Europeans countries, there was great interest in protocols and reports on judicial cases. Some authors, such as Carl Albert Loosli (1877–1959), included some elements of this genre in their stories. But it was only in the 1930s that the genre fully entered the Swiss literary scene – first with Friedrich Glauser (1896–1938), followed by Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990). It was only in the 1980s that the genre, including the popular regional crime novel, began to play an important role in Swiss literature.

In this chapter, I will focus specifically on Glauser and Dürrenmatt, who represent the beginnings of detective fiction in German-speaking Switzerland. For the French-speaking part of the country, one would have to go back to 1904 and the works of Benjamin Valloton and his Commissaire Potterat, among others.[1] Even though the Anglo-American tradition was well known, Georges Simenon and his fictional detective, Maigret, played a major role in both parts of the country.

Glauser: Background and literary ideals

Friedrich Glauser lived a very troubled life. Since his work was intimately related to his life, I will explore his biography in some detail. I will begin with Glauser's own description in a letter he wrote to Joseph Halperin on 15 June 1937, one year before his death:

> Do you want facts? Right then: Born Vienna, 1896, Austrian mother and Swiss father. Grandfather on my father's side a gold-digger in California (*sans blague*), on my mother's side a senior civil servant (fantastic combination, don't you think?). Primary school, three years high school in Vienna. Then three years at the Glarisegg Reform School. Then three years at the Collège de Genève. Thrown out shortly before taking the school-leaving examination [. . .] took them in Zurich. Then Dadaism. My father wanted to have me locked away and placed under a legal guardian. Ran away to Geneva [. . .] detained in Münsingen for

1 Cf. Paul Ott, *Mord im Alpenglühen. Der Schweizer Kriminalroman. Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Essen: Nordpark, 2005).

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> a year (1919). Escaped from there. One year in Ascona. Arrested for morphine. Sent back. Three months Burghölzli (for a second opinion, because Geneva had declared me schizophrenic). 1921–23 Foreign Legion. Then Paris, washer-up. Belgium, coalmines. Later hospital orderly in Charleroi. Morphine again. Imprisoned in Belgium. Deported to Switzerland. Ordered to do one year at Witzwil. Afterwards one year labourer in a tree nursery. Analysis (one year) [. . .] To Basel as a gardener, then Winterthur. During that time (1928/29) wrote my Foreign Legion novel, '30/'31 one-year course at the Oeschberg tree nursery. July '31 follow-up analysis. January '32 to July '32, Paris as 'freelance writer' (as the saying goes). Went to visit my father in Mannheim. Arrested there for forged prescriptions. Deported to Switzerland. Imprisoned from July '32 – May '36. *Et puis voilà. Ce n'est pas très beau, mais on fait ce qu'on peut.*[2]

Then he went to France, together with his German girlfriend, Berthe Bendel, a nurse he had met in one of the many institutions he was placed in during his lifetime (Bürghölzli, Witzwil, Münsingen, Waldau and Prangins, among others), where he was diagnosed with 'moral insanity'. He then spent time in a clinic in Bale before going to Italy with Berthe. A few days before their wedding was set to take place, he died in Italy.

This brief text elucidates the main themes of Glauser's life: he was always escaping, always a marginal figure, prone to morphine abuse and to engaging in petty crime in order to obtain the drugs he needed, trying to make a living, but never in the conventional way. He attempted suicide five times. His mother died when he was four, his father was very hard on him, and his guardian did not always understand him.

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2 Friedrich Glauser, *Thumbprint*, trans. by Kike Mitchell (London: Bitter Lemon Press, 2004), p. 199; Glauser, *Briefe 2 (1935–1938)*, ed. by Bernhard Echte (Zurich: Arche, 1991), pp. 623–624. 'Daten wollen Sie? Also: 1896 geboren in Wien von österreichischer Mutter und Schweizer Vater. Großvater väterlicherseits Goldgräber in Kalifornien (sans blague), mütterlicherseits Hofrat (schöne Mischung, wie?). Volksschule, 3 Klassen Gymnasium in Wien. Dann 3 Jahre Landerziehungsheim Glarisegg. Dann 3 Jahre Collège de Genève. Dort kurz vor der Matur hinausgeschmissen . . . Kantonale Matur in Zürich. Dann Dadaismus. Vater wollte mich internieren lassen und unter Vormundschaft stellen. Flucht nach Genf . . . 1 Jahr (1919) in Münsingen interniert. Flucht von dort. 1 Jahr Ascona. Verhaftung wegen Mo [Morphin]. Rücktransport. 3 Monate Burghölzli (Gegenexpertise, weil Genf mich für schizophren erklärt hatte). 1921–23 Fremdenlegion. Dann Paris Plongeur [Tellerwäscher]. Belgien Kohlengruben. Später in Charleroi Krankenwärter. Wieder Mo. Internierung in Belgien. Rücktransport in die Schweiz. 1 Jahr administrativ Witzwil. Nachher 1 Jahr Handlanger in einer Baumschule. Analyse (1 Jahr) . . . Als Gärtner nach Basel, dann nach Winterthur. In dieser Zeit den Legionsroman geschrieben (1928/29), 30/31 Jahreskurs Gartenbaumschule Oeschberg. Juli 31 Nachanalyse. Jänner 32 bis Juli 32 Paris als 'freier Schriftsteller' (wie man so schön sagt). Zum Besuch meines Vaters nach Mannheim. Dort wegen falschen Rezepten arretiert. Rücktransport in die Schweiz. Von Juli 32 – Mai 36 interniert. Et puis voilà. Ce n'est pas très beau . . . '

Writing was his passion. He started with some poems, and between 1913 and 1916, while living in Geneva, he was already writing short stories and becoming acquainted with Dada writers at some of the meetings he attended. His first novel was entitled *Gourrama: Ein Roman aus der Fremdenlegion* [1940, *Gourrama: A Novel from the Foreign Legion**] and was followed by *Der Tee der drei alten Damen* [1941, *The Three Old Ladies' Tea*], his only detective novel that did not feature Sergeant (*Wachtmeister*) Studer, the protagonist of his other five crime novels, which were written in his last three years. These five novels were quite successful in his time, both serialized in newspapers and magazines, and later, when they were published as books. He also wrote a number of short stories, which he published in magazines. Some of their main themes are similar to the ones he explored in his novels – such as, for example, his experience in the Foreign Legion. Throughout his life and in his books, he was always trying to escape from the 'narrowest Switzerland' (*engste Schweiz*).[3]

Glauser was an avid reader of detective stories, and he wrote about his reading. He wrote a long letter to Stefan Brockhoff, who had published 'Zehn Gebote für den Kriminalroman' ['Ten Commandments for the Crime Novel'*] in the magazine *Zürcher Illustrierte* on 5 February 1937.[4] The magazine did not publish Glauser's response, written on 25 March 1937, in which he defended different points of view and questioned the necessity of Brockhoff's 'Ten Commandments'. He did not agree with Brockhoff that rules with the status of a set of commandments could be derived from the Anglo-American model, and he disliked the 'smart guy' detective, thinking and acting like a robot, using and abusing logical deduction. According to Glauser, suspense is not the main purpose of the novel; it should not hide what is important. He defended the idea of the protagonist as an imperfect detective, somebody with a wife or girlfriend, with everyday problems and feelings – a real person, not a schematic character. He wanted the great detective to be removed from his pedestal. Even the criminal, he said, should be a normal person, not a hero or an antihero, because anybody can become a murderer, depending on the circumstances.

3 Cf. Irmgard Wirtz, 'Verbrechen auf engstem Raum', *Quarto* 21/22 (2006) pp. 51–60 (p. 52).

4 This text was a response to Stefan Brockhoff's 'Zehn Gebote für den Kriminalroman', published in the *Zürcher Illustrierte* on 5 February 1937. 'Brockhoff' was a pseudonym used by three German writers in their detective novels. They postulated ten commandments following S. S. Van Dine's 'Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories' (1929) or 'Father Knox's Decalogue' (1929). The author must be fair to the reader; all cases must be solved; both the murderer and the detective must be presented as people – evil in the former case, clever in the latter; and other similar rules apply, some of them rather obvious, as Glauser points out in his reply.

Glauser questioned the classification of people as good or bad; he did not see any great '*Utilität*'[5] (utility) in such classifications. He wrote:

> The story of a detective novel can easily be told in one-and-a-half pages. The rest is stuffing. It depends on how you make use of it. [. . .] Not the criminal case as such, not the exposure of the perpetrator and the solution are important, but the people and especially the atmosphere in which they move.[6]

He did not like logical, deductive detectives like Poirot and Sherlock Holmes. As a model, he pointed to Georges Simenon and his great Inspector Maigret, who were much more interesting to him, even if Glauser himself did not follow all the rules of the French school,[7] especially the need to resolve the case at the end of the story. For example, Studer often says that he is not a judge; he refuses to judge others and instead tries to solve their problems and understand them. Glauser always wanted to show the truth about society through his fictional work.

He argued that detective novels should share the more general novelistic qualities of self-consciousness and reflectiveness, that they are not the poor relatives of the literary world. Instead, as Marle, a character in the novel *Der Tee der drei alten Damen*, says, 'Don't make fun of detective stories. They're the only medium today for popularizing reasonable ideas'.[8] The settings for Glauser's crime scenes, such as mental institutions and villages, are similar to locked-room scenarios.[9] This made it easier to convey the ambience – what Glauser called 'die Atmosphäre'.[10]

His characters are mainly ordinary people and are always the victims, even when they are the murderers. Sometimes he uses figures who abuse their power, such as Aeschbacher (in *Wachtmeister Studer* [1936, *Thumbprint*]) or Dr. Laduner (in *Matto regiert* [1936, *In Matto's Realm*]). The setting's atmosphere was essential

5 Cf. Patrick Bühler, *Die Leiche in der Bibliothek. Friedrich Glauser und der Detektiv-Roman* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2002), p. 105.

6 Friedrich Glauser, *Wachtmeister Studers erste Fälle*, ed. by Frank Göhre (Zurich: Arche, 1989), pp. 181–191 (pp. 185, 190; my trans.). 'Die Handlung eines Kriminalromans läßt sich in anderthalb Seiten gut und gerne erzählen. Der Rest sind Füllsel. [. . .] Nicht der Kriminalfall an sich, nicht die Entlarvung des Täters und die Lösung ist Hauptthema, sondern die Menschen und besonders die Atmosphäre, in der sie sich bewegen'.

7 Cf. Bühler, *Die Leiche in der Bibliothek*, p. 146.

8 Friedrich Glauser, *The Three Old Ladies' Tea*, trans. by Peter Kalnin (Kindle edition, 2015); Glauser, *Der Tee der drei alten Damen* (Zurich: Arche, 1989), pp. 126–127. 'Spotten Sie nicht über Kriminalromane! Sie sind heutzutage das einzige Mittel, vernünftige Ideen zu popularisieren'.

9 Wirtz, 'Verbrechen auf engstem Raum', p. 52.

10 See note 6, 'the atmosphere' or, as Glauser's translator Mike Mitchell prefers, 'the locales'.

to him – it explained many things about the way people communicated and their dependence on each other. It was less important to solve the crime than to understand why it had occurred in the first place.

Glauser's Sergeant Studer: Questioning truth

Glauser wrote quite a few detective stories featuring Sergeant Studer. But in his first detective novel, *Der Tee der drei alten Damen*, Studer does not appear. Instead, a number of characters perform the detective role: Detective Inspector (*Kommissar*) Pillevuit, State Councillor (*Staatsrat*) Martinet, a district attorney (*Staatsanwalt*) who likes to write sonnets, the Irish journalist O'Key and two Soviet spies, Agent 72 (Baranoff) and Agent 83 (Natascha). Some other characters also take part in the action, such as Dr. Magde and Dr. Thievenoz from the Bel-Air insane asylum. The story is set in Geneva, which, as the seat of the League of Nations, is a centre of international affairs. It is about a series of poisonings in Geneva that involve a professor addicted to morphine and is a mixture of detective story and a spy novel. The narrator knows a lot about the characters, so he can be very ironic, bringing order to this large cast of characters and sometimes addressing the reader directly. Some commentators argue that it is not a very good novel when compared to his others.[11] However, as with all the others, it is based on many of the author's own life experiences, and the 'atmosphere' and suspense are well presented.

I will start by characterizing the protagonist, Studer, because it is mainly thanks to him that Glauser achieved renown. Saner writes about Glauser's main character: 'Studer is both a summary of the life of his creator and his ideal'.[12] He exhibits many of the characteristics of Glauser himself, but also represents some of his ideals, those that Glauser was unable to fulfil in his lifetime and could only realize in fiction. The author was both an anarchist and a defender of law and order – but the order he found was rather frightening. In his books, the author was the critical mouthpiece of the society he knew so well, but also collaborated with the police, defending that same society. This ambivalent position can be found in his texts. He prefers to follow a moral imperative rather than a social order. Glauser shows him more as a person than as an officer of the law.

11 Cf. Ott, *Mord im Alpenglühen*, p. 36.

12 Gerhard Saner, *Friedrich Glauser*, Vol. 1: *Eine Biographie*. (Zurich: Suhrkamp, 1981), p. 484. 'Studer ist die Summe der Lebenserfahrung seines Schöpfers und zugleich dessen Ideal'.

At the same time, Glauser projects onto his character certain aspects that he would have liked to have seen in his own father. Studer does not believe in real justice, something he sees as impossible. He wants to help, but it is not up to him to judge; his task is to solve the case he is given. He does not believe in truth either – he questions its validity, just as he questions the idea of justice. Truth has nothing to do with social justice; these concepts are mere words and, as such, have no universal value. They are social, cultural, historical values. He would like to find some meaning in life, but this turns out to be a difficult quest. He feels like an outsider, and he believes in the 'imponderables' ('Unwägbares').[13] Even so, he is not a cynic; he has ideals worth fighting for, encapsulated in the battle against injustice and lies. Studer has no mercy when it comes to exposing lies; he tries to avoid injustice as much as he can, especially the injustice of the "Law" ('die Ungerechtigkeit des "Rechts"').[14]

Saner characterizes Studer as a nihilist: he enjoys his work, but he tolerates a 'there is nothing else I can do' nihilism.[15] The criminals are often no worse than the other characters. People in general are selfish, angry and avaricious; not all of them are criminals, but each has the potential to become one.

Studer once had a case involving an influential banker in Vienna that went very badly, as a result of which he was demoted from the rank of detective inspector to that of sergeant and sent back to Bern. This case is mentioned in all the Studer novels, but we are never told what really happened. Studer is quite old and round, has a moustache and is always smoking a Brissago, a popular Swiss cigar. He is fond of alcoholic drinks, likes food, dresses rather conservatively and has a family he cares for – especially his wife, Hedy. Her husband's attraction to younger women, such as Marie in *Fever*, does not bother her.

Studer is a person with whom the reader easily sympathizes. As a sergeant, he wants to discharge his duties; he does not like to be in the limelight and prefers applying his knowledge of humankind to devising elaborate detective techniques. He dislikes men in power when he ascertains that there is deceit behind their words. He tends to sympathize with the simple people, those subjected to the arbitrary decisions of those in power. He is not exactly a friendly, kind person, but he is definitely not a 'tough guy'. Studer's judgement of character was not something he'd learnt from books, it was not based on physical appearance, handwriting analysis, psychological typologies or phrenology. He just allowed

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13 Friedrich Glauser, *Fever*, trans. by Mike Mitchell (London: Bitter Lemon Press, 2006), p. 198; Glauser, *Fieberkurve* (Zurich: Arche, 1989), p. 188.
14 Saner, *Friedrich Glauser*, vol. 1, p. 488.
15 Saner, *Friedrich Glauser*, vol. 1, p. 490.

people to be themselves and relied on his instinct.[16] He does not like major police operations.[17] Glauser's writing is quite ironic, very well constructed and makes use of lively language, both on the part of the narrator and Studer himself. He also utilizes many Bernese dialect forms and French expressions, which reflect certain Swiss German language practices.

At the same time, Glauser concentrates his efforts on *intra*cultural differences. He carefully presents the seemingly idyllic places where Studer works as a sergeant in such a way that they can be extended to represent the whole world.[18] His first Studer text was the short story 'Der alte Zauberer' ['The Old Sorcerer'*],[19] in which the detective is still a *Polizeikommissär* (detective inspector), as he is in the novel *Knarrende Schuhe* [Squeaky Shoes*], one of Glauser's later Studer texts, which is set retrospectively in 1919. Some of the Studer novels were first printed in magazines and only later published in book form.

The first Studer novel was *Schlumpf Erwin Mord* [1936, The Murder of Schlumpf Erwin*], first published under the title *Wachtmeister Studer*, followed by his best-known novel, *Matto regiert*, as well as *Die Fieberkurve* [1938, *Fever*], *Der Chinese* [1939, *The Chinaman*] and *Krock & Co.* [1941, *The Spoke*]. At the same time, he wrote several short stories, published collectively as *Wachtmeister Studers erste Fälle: Kriminalgeschichten* [1936, *Detective Studers's First Cases: Crime Stories**]. In each of these novels there is a reference to 'the big case' that he is always dreaming of, in contrast to the rather small cases that he is actually working on.

In the first novel, Studer tries to show that Erwin Schlumpf, an ex-convict and ex-child labourer, was not a murderer as the investigating magistrate was trying to prove. The setting is a village, which is home to a number of 'meeting places', including a gardening school, where some of the students have already been having problems with the magistrate and, of course, the local pub. Here, Studer demonstrates his sceptical view of language. He sees lies behind it; he is aware of true and false tones in it, refusing to accept that there is only one truth. Studer is presented polyphonically; most of the characters (as well as the

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16 Glauser, *Fever*, p. 178; Glauser, *Fieberkurve*, p. 170. '[...] ist ein Nihilismus des „Es bleibt mir ja nichts anderes übrig"'.

17 Glauser, *Wachtmeister Studers erste Fälle*, p. 53. 'Der Kommissär liebte keine großen Polizeiaktionen'. Cf. 'Das uneinige Paar' ['The Divided Couple'], in which Studer has just moved to another apartment in Bern.

18 Christa Baumberger, 'Glauser in Genf: Schauplatz literarischer Selbst(er)findung', *Quarto* 32 (2011), pp. 45–50 (p. 50).

19 First published on 1 March 1935 in the *Zürcher Zeitung*. Cf. Glauser, *Wachtmeister Studers erste Fälle*, pp. 9–28.

narrator) comment on his behaviour. For instance, the examining magistrate says, '"Sergeant Studer, I would like to ask you, in all politeness, what you think you are doing? Could you explain how you came to involve yourself without authorization – I repeat, without authorization – in a case which . . . ". The examining magistrate broke off, though he couldn't have said why himself'.[20] The sergeant shuttles back and forth between Thun and the small village of Gerzenstein.[21] He meets many people – a veritable network of possible murderers. He quotes a French police officer, who claims that it is much easier to detect a crime in a town than in a village, where everyone covers for everyone else. Studer usually talks to people in a polite way and tries to understand them, even when somebody is potentially perpetrating insurance fraud. In the end, he identifies the murderer, one of the most influential men in the village, who then commits suicide.

In this novel, Glauser provides a lot of information about Studer, whom the reader will meet again in four other novels: we learn about his past and a case involving a large bank in Vienna; about his wife, Hedy; about his Brissago cigars; about his taste for alcoholic beverages; about his questionable manners; about the way he behaves towards his superiors (in this novel, the magistrate fears him, while at other times, it is Studer himself who is in charge of the case); and about his friend, Münch the notary. He also gives thematic introductions – for example, a discussion of the importance of chance and truth. Chance is one of the most important instruments of detective work, and, Studer says, one must be open to it. Another interesting characteristic is that some minor characters in the novel compare their lives with those of the characters found in cheap novels by authors like Felicitas Rose and John Kling, which Glauser's characters read. Studer despises this type of literature, which only romanticizes the harsh realities of life,[22] and he makes fun of how easy it is to solve problems in books, as opposed to in real life – a theme that Dürrenmatt will further develop, as we will see. The reader follows Studer, since he is one

20 Glauser, *Thumbprint*, p. 15; Glauser, *Wachtmeister Studers erste Fälle*, p. 19. 'Wachtmeister Studer, ich möcht Euch sehr höflich fragen, was Ihr Euch eigenmächtig – ich wiederhole: eigenmächtig! – in einen Fall einzumischen [. . .]'.

21 Cf. Peter Rusterholz, 'Der Ausbruch aus dem Gefängnis. Wandlungen des Schweizer Kriminalromans', *Quarto* 21/22 (2006), pp. 29–39 (p. 32). One could argue that this novel is instead a regional detective story (*Regiokrimi*), a type of crime fiction that is very popular in Switzerland.

22 Cf. Glauser, *Thumbprint*, pp. 83, 151, 189, 105; Glauser, *Wachtmeister Studer*, pp. 79, 141, 175, 180.

of the main focal points. Towards the end of the novel, when he is talking to the assassin, he says, 'I realize that the truth I find is not the real truth. However, I do know untruth very well'.[23]

Die Fieberkurve [*Fever*] was finished on 31 December 1935. It was first published in the *Zürcher Illustrierte* and appeared a few months later in book form, with the title *Wachtmeister Studers neuer Fall* [Sergeant Studers New Case*] It is a sort of 'adventure novel'[24] and involves an international plot, based on Glauser's own experiences in the Foreign Legion. It starts in Paris, where Studer is informed that two old ladies in Bale and Geneva are about to be murdered. The international dimension allows him to hope that this will be his 'great case', as he repeatedly calls it. And indeed, when Studer arrives at their homes, both have been killed in the same way: with gas. The matter seems to be connected to countries in North Africa, specifically near the Gurama Fortress of the Foreign Legion.[25] The motive is money, a common theme in literature, which is not very original. Studer travels to the fortress under a false name, and he has a complicated path to follow until the very end. Even then, the reader does not receive all the information for the simple reason that Studer shows no interest in handling some other minor cases, as he has solved his main case. The story is fast-paced, and it becomes quite complicated, but it is always fascinating.

Matto regiert, which is probably Glauser's best novel, is set in a mental asylum and deals with questions of power and psychiatry. Everything happens within an enclosed space, providing no opportunity for a great case. But Studer enjoys being there, since he does not have to run around, even when there is quite a lot going on. Dr. Laduner, an unconventional psychiatrist who knows Studer from the Vienna case, calls him in, even though he is not a conventional inspector, to investigate the disappearance of the director and of a patient, Pieterlein, a 'demonstration object', as Dr. Laduner calls him. The enclosed space gives the detective a lot of time to observe and to have long, self-reflexive conversations with the doctor. One very long chapter, 'Das Demonstrationssubjekt Pieterlein' ['Pieterlein: The Classic Case'], is based on a report Glauser had seen in Münsingen.[26] Studer

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23 Glauser, *Thumbprint*, p. 185; Glauser, *Wachtmeister Studer*, pp. 170–171. 'Ich weiß auch ganz genau, daß die Wirklichkeit, die ich finde, nicht die wirkliche Wahrheit ist. Aber ich kenne sehr gut die Lüge'.

24 Gerhard Saner, *Friedrich Glauser*, vol. 2: *Eine Werkgeschichte* (Zurich: Suhrkamp, 1981), p. 133.

25 In the novel he will use the spelling 'Gourrama'.

26 Cf. Hubert Thüring, 'Die Erfahrung der Psychiatrie. Friedrich Glausers *Matto regiert*', in *'Es gibt kein größeres Verbrechen als die Unschuld'. Zu den Kriminalromanen von Glauser, Dürrenmatt, Highsmith und Schneider*, ed. by Peter Gasser, Ellio Pellin and Ulrich Weber (Göttingen: Wallstein; Zurich: Chronos, 2009), pp. 13–37 (p. 24).