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BETWEEN CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: EARLY
TWENTIETH-CENTURY GERMAN-LANGUAGE CRIME
AND DETECTIVE NOVELS AND THE 'FAMILIENKRIMI'

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ABSTRACT

German-language crime and detective novels of the 1920s and 1930s have recently enjoyed scholarly attention, yet the first decade of the century remains relatively unresearched. This study explores a popular subgenre of the 'Kriminalroman' from this crucial period: novels that featured a criminal investigation in which central characters are part of an extended family, referred to here as 'Familienkrimis'. In them, the resolution of the crime requires addressing familial conflicts, which then enables the (re-)union of a romantic couple. My sample comprises five novels, *Im Haus der Witwe* (1901) by Robert Kohlrausch, *Subotins Erbe* (1905) by Gabriele von Schlippenbach, *Die Erbtante* (1906) by Margarethe Kořak, *Schatten* (1910) by Isidore Kaulbach, and *Schwarze Perlen* (1910) by August Weiřl. As I show, these 'Familienkrimis' afford a productive context for analysing the evolution of the genre in the German-speaking world. Early twentieth-century novels leaned on literary conventions present in the popular nineteenth-century family-centric crime fiction of William Wilkie Collins and Émile Gaboriau, such as intergenerational conflicts, gothic elements, and certain detective types. Whether authors of 'Familienkrimis' adhered to or innovated on established narrative conventions, the trends that emerge in this subgenre offer insight into the general catalogue of productive generic devices before 1945.

Deutschsprachige Kriminalromane der zwanziger und dreißiger Jahre erfreuten sich in jüngster Zeit wachsender Aufmerksamkeit, doch bleibt das erste Jahrzehnt des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts relativ unerforscht. Diese Studie untersucht eine beliebte Untergattung des Kriminalromans aus diesem entscheidenden Zeitraum: Romane mit einer kriminalistischen Untersuchung, in denen die Hauptfiguren Mitglieder einer Großfamilie sind, und die daher als 'Familienkrimis' bezeichnet werden. In ihnen erfordert die Lösung des Verbrechens die Auseinandersetzung mit familiären Konflikten, die dann die (Wieder-)Vereinigung eines Liebespaares ermöglicht. Meine Auswahl umfasst fünf Romane, *Im Haus der Witwe* (1901) von Robert Kohlrausch, *Subotins Erbe* (1905) von Gabriele von Schlippenbach, *Die Erbtante* (1906) von Margarethe Kořak, *Schatten* (1910) von Isidore Kaulbach und *Schwarze Perlen* (1910) von August Weiřl. Diese Familienkrimis bieten darüber hinaus einen sinnvollen Ansatz, die Entwicklung des Genres im deutschsprachigen Raum überhaupt zu analysieren. Frühe Romane des 20. Jahrhunderts stützen sich einerseits auf literarische Konventionen, die in den populären familiären Kriminalromanen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts von William Wilkie Collins und Émile Gaboriau vertreten werden, wie z. B. intergenerationelle Konflikte, gotische Elemente und bestimmte Detektivtypen. Ob die Autoren von Familienkrimis an etablierten Erzählkonventionen festhalten oder Neuerungen einführen, die in

dieser Untergattung aufkommenden Trends bieten auf jeden Fall einen Einblick in den allgemeinen Katalog gängiger Gattungselemente vor 1945.

In scholarship on German-language crime and detective novels, a perception prevailed for decades that the genre of the 'Kriminalroman'¹ only really came into being after 1945.² In response to the virtual consensus on its absence before World War II, Hans-Otto Hügel concluded in 1978 that, for many scholars, 'Über die deutsche Detektivverzählung schreiben, hieße daher, überspitzt formuliert, erklären, warum es keine deutsche Detektivverzählung gibt, bzw. begründen, warum die wenig vorhandenen so schlecht sind.'³

More recently, a growing body of scholarship has explored 'Kriminalromane' from the first half of the twentieth century. Knut Hickethier's seminal essay from 1986 offered a broad overview of its evolution between 1900 and 1945,⁴ and subsequent studies have explored the genre during the Weimar Republic,⁵ Switzerland in the 1920s and 1930s,⁶ and during the Third Reich.⁷ These contributions have significantly advanced the work of charting the literary landscape of the 'Kriminalroman', yet the first decade of the twentieth century has mostly remained *terra incognita*. In 1989, Jochen Schmidt was still writing about the period as a time when the thread of a crime-literature tradition broke off,⁸ and a 2016 volume on the German 'Krimi' devoted only a few pages to it.⁹

¹ In the German-speaking world, the term 'Kriminalroman' has long been used to describe novels that may involve some focus on a crime, including true-crime stories and thrillers, but also those works that focus on investigations carried out by criminal inspectors or other detectives; see Thomas Kniesche, *Einführung in den Kriminalroman*, Darmstadt 2015, pp. 8–9. The term 'Detektivroman' was already in use during this period, yet little substantive distinction was made between the terms until the 1920s. For the sake of simplicity, I refer to all novels in the genre as 'Kriminalromane', whether or not their plots particularly focus on the work of a detective.

² See, for example, Elisabeth Frenzel, 'Kriminalroman', *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, 2nd edn, Berlin 1958, pp. 895–9 (p. 895).

³ Hans-Otto Hügel, *Die deutsche Detektivverzählung im neunzehnten Jahrhundert: Ein Beitrag zu ihrer Gattungstheorie und ihrer Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1978, p. 12.

⁴ Knut Hickethier, 'Der Alte Deutsche Kriminalroman: Von vergessenen Traditionen', *Die Horen*, 31/4 (1986), 15–23.

⁵ Todd Herzog, *Crime Stories: Criminalistic fantasy and the culture of crisis in Weimar Germany*, New York and Oxford 2009.

⁶ Paul Ott, *Mord im Alpenglühen: Der Schweizer Kriminalroman – Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Wuppertal 2005, pp. 26–50.

⁷ Joachim Linder, 'Polizei und Strafverfolgung in deutschen Kriminalromanen der dreißiger und vierziger Jahre', in *Alltagsvorstellungen von Kriminalität*, ed. Michael Walter, Harald Kania, and Hans-Jörg Albrecht, Münster 2004, pp. 87–115.

⁸ Jochen Schmidt, *Gangster, Opfer, Detektive: Eine Typengeschichte des Kriminalromans*, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, p. 553; see also Hickethier, 'Der Alte Deutsche Kriminalroman' (note 4), 15.

⁹ Mary Tannert, 'The Emergence of Crime Fiction in German: An Early Maturity', in *Crime Fiction in German: Der Krimi*, ed. Katharina Hall, Cardiff 2016, pp. 33–50 (pp. 43–5)

Despite its relative lack of scholarly attention, the *fin-de-siècle* marked the moment when the ‘Kriminalroman’ entered the literary market as a distinct, named genre. In the 1890s, the terms ‘Kriminalroman’ and ‘Detektivroman’ were used in titles of a few book series; by the early 1900s, brand recognition was strong enough for publishing houses in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Dresden to launch their own series.¹⁰ The emergence of a new genre attracted the attention of cultural critics as well, and in the years that followed, essays appeared that attempted to capture the genre’s evolution, common plot-lines, and narrative techniques.

Such evidence suggests that there is, indeed, a thread to pick up. The present study reconstructs one of these strands by identifying and analysing a popular subgenre of the ‘Kriminalroman’ from the first decade of the twentieth century: crime novels that simultaneously presented themselves as ‘Familienromane’, or, to use a term coined by Waltraud Woeller, ‘Familienkrimis’.¹¹ These ‘Familienkrimis’ feature the investigation of a crime in which some combination of perpetrator, victim, detective, and/or falsely accused suspect are part of an extended family. Consistent with common themes of ‘Familienromane’, the works also feature intergenerational conflicts around issues of sexual morality, strategies for preserving wealth, and attitudes toward marriage. In all cases, the resolution of the crime is necessarily linked to addressing these familial conflicts, which in turn enables the (re-)union of a romantic couple. The five ‘Familienkrimis’ included in this study are *Im Haus der Witwe* (1901) by Robert Kohlrausch (1850–1934), *Subotins Erbe* (1905) by Gabriele von Schlippenbach (1846–1937), *Die Erbtante* (1906) by Margarethe Koßak (1855–date unknown), *Schatten* (1910) by Isidore Kaulbach (1862–1937), and *Schwarze Perlen* (1910) by August Weißl (1871–1922).¹²

As I show, recognising the ‘Familienkrimi’ as a popular subgenre during this period supplements – and, at times, complicates – the image of ‘Kriminalromane’ depicted in contemporary critical essays. ‘Familienkrimis’ also afford a vantage point for looking both backward and forward at the evolution of the genre in the German-speaking world, and for linking generic conventions of the nineteenth century with those of the twentieth. In particular, these early twentieth-century novels leaned on literary conventions present in the nineteenth-century family-centric crime fiction by authors such as William Wilkie Collins (1824–89) and Émile Gaboriau (1832–73), authors whose novels were regularly reprinted

¹⁰ Mirko Schädel, *Illustrierte Bibliographie der Kriminalliteratur im deutschen Sprachraum von 1796 bis 1945*, 2 vols, Butjadingen 2006, II, pp. 393–5 and 408–12.

¹¹ Waltraud Woeller, *Illustrierte Geschichte der Kriminalliteratur*, Leipzig 1984, p. 75.

¹² Robert Kohlrausch, *Im Haus der Witwe*, 1st edn 1901, Stuttgart [n.d.]; G[abriele] von Schlippenbach, *Subotins Erbe: Kriminalroman aus der russischen Gesellschaft*, 1st edn 1905, Berlin [n.d.]; M[argarethe] Koßak, *Die Erbtante: Kriminalroman*, 1st edn 1906, Berlin 1912; Isidore Kaulbach, *Schatten*, 1st edn 1910, Stuttgart [1913]; August Weißl, *Schwarze Perlen*, 1st edn 1910, Stuttgart 1917. Further references appear in the text, using the abbreviations *HW*, *SE*, *DE*, *S*, and *SP*.

in German-speaking areas well into the twentieth century. Here, I consider how aspects of Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859–60) and *The Moonstone* (1868), and Gaboriau's *L'affaire Lerouge* (1866) and *Le dossier no. 113* (1867) recur in later German-language works. Of interest are a few devices related to plot-line and character: the integration of gothic elements, the use of either an outside detective or a romantically motivated individual who becomes an amateur investigator for just one case, and the nature of intergenerational conflicts. Whether German authors chose to adhere to established narrative conventions or innovate them, many of these devices recur in later 'Kriminalromane', and may therefore help flesh out the catalogue of productive literary conventions before 1945. Before embarking on this analysis, I offer some literary context for understanding the 'Kriminalroman' in the first years of the twentieth century.

THE 'KRIMINALROMAN' IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

In 1908, two short monographs and several articles in newspapers and literary journals appeared on a new genre: the 'Kriminalroman'. Whereas only a trickle of contributions had been published in the preceding years, by the end of the first decade scholars were staking out positions regarding the literary potential (or cultural threat) of this popular form. Early essayists tended to construct a lineage between this modern genre and established popular German forms such as 'Ritter- und Räuberromane'¹³ or 'Indianergeschichten',¹⁴ but they also pointed to how international authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Collins, Gaboriau, and Anna Katharine Green had advanced the genre. In nearly all such essays, Arthur Conan Doyle was recognised as the greatest influence on the genre at the time, his works having enjoyed a meteoric rise to fame in the German-speaking world. Eight editions of Sherlock Holmes stories had appeared in German by 1908,¹⁵ and one Cologne newspaper described 'Sherlockismus' as a cultural phenomenon.¹⁶ In 1908, Alfred Lichtenstein summarised Holmes' effect on the genre in the following manner: 'Er ist der Typ der ganzen Gattung, die heute die Kriminalliteratur beherrscht, mag er auch bei anderen Autoren andere Namen tragen und einzelne Variationen aufweisen.'¹⁷

For many of these critics, the rise of Holmes signified the genre's definitive break from 'Räuberromantik', sensation, and emotion; now romance would play a lesser role as the genre focused more on the

¹³ Otto Flake, 'Vom Kriminalroman', *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 663 (19 September 1908), 1.

¹⁴ Rudolf Fürst, 'Kriminalromantik', *Das literarische Echo*, 10/9 (1908), 607–14 (609).

¹⁵ Arthur Schimmelpfennig, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Kriminalromans: Ein Wegweiser durch die Kriminalliteratur der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Dresden 1908, p. 13.

¹⁶ 'Der Sherlockismus', *Börsenblatt für den Deutschen Buchhandel*, 75/136 (1908), 6601–2 (6601).

¹⁷ Alfred Lichtenstein, *Der Kriminalroman: Eine literarische und forensische Studie mit Anhang: Sherlock Holmes zum 'Fall Haw'*, Munich 1908, p. 13.

intellectual over the sensual, observation over sensation, and science over coincidence.¹⁸ As Martin Kayman observed nearly a century later, Holmes, like the detectives in 'Familienkrimis', 'deals largely with family irregularities', but Conan Doyle particularly appealed to bourgeois male readers in his representation of the detective as a socially powerful, 'self-styled expert' and intellectual who, though appearing to show contempt for 'middle-class values', ultimately defended them.¹⁹ Readers thus came to associate Holmes with a methodology that privileged an intellectual, observation-based, scientific approach to the problems of the modern world, focalised through an idealised (though quirky) version of the 'Bildungsbürger'. In establishing this brand, Conan Doyle assured literary consistency in a genre in which, through its proliferation, marks of quality were increasingly difficult to discern.²⁰

This discourse on the Holmesian detective story is crucial for understanding the 'Familienkrimi'. Contemporary German critics, as did Kayman, assumed that the audience of modern crime and detective fiction was male. By contrast, the readership of older English and French detective novels, they assumed, was primarily female.²¹ Yet even though crime and detective novels were now asserted to be 'eine männliche Lektüre',²² the assumption that Holmesian narratives would drive all other types of crime and detective fiction to extinction oversimplifies some facets of the genre and ignores others. First, some detectives in 'Familienkrimis' also draw on methods of observation to solve their crimes; moreover, sensational elements were known to appear in Conan Doyle's stories (the eponymous *Hound of the Baskervilles* is one obvious example). Second, women continued to write and read 'Kriminalromane'.²³ In this sample of five 'Familienkrimis' alone, women wrote three of them. Perhaps 'Familienkrimis' were overlooked in some contemporary literary criticism precisely because they were devalued as women's literature and thus viewed as a relic of a less distinguished moment in the genre's development. One of the few contemporary critics who recognised that significant generic variation persisted in the 'Kriminalroman' during the first decade of the twentieth century was Arthur Schimmelpfennig. In response to Lichtenstein's focus on Sherlock Holmes and his legacy, Schimmelpfennig

¹⁸ A. Baumgartner, 'Über die Sherlock-Holmes-Literatur', *Schweizerische Rundschau*, 8/6 (1908), 479–82 (479–81); Lichtenstein, *Der Kriminalroman* (note 17), pp. 9 and 12.

¹⁹ Martin Kayman, 'The Short Story from Poe to Chesterton', in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman, Cambridge 2003, pp. 41–58 (pp. 48–50).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²¹ Fürst, 'Kriminalromantik' (note 14), p. 609; Flake, 'Vom Kriminalroman' (note 13), p. 1; Baumgartner, 'Über die Sherlock-Holmes-Literatur' (note 18), p. 480.

²² Flake, 'Vom Kriminalroman' (note 13), p. 1.

²³ Cf. Faye Stewart, 'Der Frauenkrimi: Women's Crime Writing in German', in *Crime Fiction in German: Der Krimi* (note 9), pp. 100–14.

averred: 'Das ist nicht "Der" Kriminalroman, sondern nur ein ganz kleiner, durch nichts berechtigter Ausschnitt aus demselben!'²⁴

Consistent with Schimmelpfennig's assertions, a survey of new releases between 1900 and 1910 – approximately 115 original German-language works, according to Schädel – attests to a diverse literary landscape. Some of these novels do feature crack amateur detectives in the spirit of Holmes; other investigations were undertaken by 'Untersuchungsrichter' or personally involved, one-off 'detectives'. Criminal acts included international organisations engaged in human trafficking, precious gemstones, or industrial or governmental espionage. Closer to home, nefarious acts included legacy-hunting, murder, and other forms of deception. At times, investigators descended into the 'Kaschemmen' of the Berlin underworld to flush out their prey; at times, the criminal was a 'Hochstapler' or evil hypnotist able to blend into polite society. In short, while Sherlock Holmes may have changed crime and detective fiction for all time, subgenres – including the 'Familienkrimi' – persisted, influenced by other authors and potentially appealing to other audiences.

A SELECTION OF EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY 'FAMILIENKRIMIS'

Unsurprisingly, 'Familienkrimis' show greater thematic affinity with the novels by Gaboriau and Collins than with stories by Poe or Conan Doyle. Both readers and authors of 'Familienkrimis' were probably familiar with the former two authors' works, given that Collins' and Gaboriau's novels were still in print. Gaboriau's *L'affaire Lerouge* enjoyed three German-language editions between 1900 and 1912, and *Le dossier no. 113* six editions between 1896 and 1913.²⁵ *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* were similarly re-printed in German during the late 1800s and again in the first dozen years of the next century.²⁶ All four of these novels enjoyed at least one re-issue in Robert Lutz's 'Sammlung ausgewählter Kriminal- und Detektivromane' during the same years that *Im Haus der Witwe*, *Schatten*, and *Schwarze Perlen* ran in the series.²⁷ Together with Moewig & Höffner, the publishing house in which *Subotins Erbe* and *Die Erbtante* appeared, Lutz sponsored one of the earliest and longest-running book series during the first third of the twentieth century.

When compared to the literary accomplishments of Collins and Gaboriau, the five 'Familienkrimis' in this study admittedly fall short in quality, though all the German-language novels treated here went through at least six printings, and their authors earned mention in some early essays. To varying degrees – but particularly so in the case of *Subotins Erbe* – they

²⁴ Schimmelpfennig, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Kriminalromans* (note 15), p. 4.

²⁵ Schädel, *Illustrierte Bibliographie der Kriminalliteratur* (note 10), I, pp. 288–92.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, I, p. 174.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 426–7.

lack Collins' and Gaboriau's technical sophistication, deftly interwoven plot strands, and character development. Most of the 'Familienkrimis' are also a good deal shorter than their nineteenth-century predecessors, and occasionally resort to explicit narration of the conflict in lieu of showing it. All assume either an omniscient or limited third-person narrator.

In terms of structure, 'Familienkrimis' also instantiate the genre in different ways. The two earliest works, *Im Haus der Witwe* (1901) and *Subotins Erbe* (1905), resemble thrillers in their suspenseful, parallel narration of the antagonists' plots and the detectives' attempts to expose the villain; here, the reader frequently knows more than key characters do. *Die Erbtante* (1906) and *Schatten* (1910), by contrast, focalise action through the detectives only. This gesture shifts attention away from the chase and toward the process of gathering and evaluating information, making these investigations resemble the methods practised by Holmes more closely, though readers are on a more equal footing with the one-off 'detectives' Franz Kindermann and Hans von Mellin, respectively. Finally, the latest work in this sample, *Schwarze Perlen* (1910), again presents an omniscient narrator. Although this novel draws on the less common practice of featuring several detectives, it deploys several conventions that later epitomised the genre: the existence of a limited number of suspects, the use of footprints as evidence, a secret that prevents the revelation of key testimony, and two separate crimes perpetrated by different agents which generate confounding evidence. Because these five works are not well known, I summarise them below.

Robert Kohlrausch's *Im Haus der Witwe* (1901) takes place in Hildesheim, in a multi-family residence called the 'Haus der Schatten'. The mistress of the house, Frau Ina Henniger, promised her dying husband that she would not remarry (*HW*, p. 18). After a change of heart, Ina accepts the hand of Georg Sybel, a lodger in the house (*HW*, p. 38). Dr. Jaksch, also a resident of the House of Shadows and Sybel's uncle, informs Sybel that if Ina breaks her promise, Henniger has threatened to return (*HW*, p. 72). Indeed, soon after, the ghost of Henniger is seen in the house (*HW*, p. 139). Ina acts as investigator in *Im Haus der Witwe*. She discovers that Jaksch has romantic designs on her (*HW*, p. 189), to which end he concealed a letter written by her husband relieving her of her promise (*HW*, p. 274). The 'ghost' was actually Sybel, testing Ina's resolve (*HW*, p. 300). Through a series of revelations, another resident of the house, the anarchist Franz Neuert, discovers he is the illegitimate, abandoned son of Jaksch. After a confrontation with Jaksch, Neuert detonates explosives he had been storing in the house, destroying it and killing himself and his father (*HW*, p. 334). In the end, the young couple resolves to start a new life in Munich (*HW*, p. 337).

Gabriele von Schlippenbach's *Subotins Erbe* (1905) takes place in the countryside north of Moscow. The story opens with Nicolaj Petrowitsch

Subotin and his cousin, Feodor Karmitow, travelling from Moscow on the express train (*SE*, p. 12). Subotin has just inherited a grand estate from their uncle and is returning home after eighteen years to claim it (*SE*, pp. 16 and 24). Karmitow has been less fortunate; his mother was cast out of the family for having married beneath her class (*SE*, p. 12). When the train is stuck in a snowdrift, Karmitow suggests that they walk to the next village so that they may catch a train and continue their journey. During the walk, Karmitow murders Subotin in order to assume the latter's identity.

The remainder of the story takes place on the Subotin estate. The suspense develops around whether Karmitow will be exposed in time to prevent his marriage to a neighbour, Natascha Tscherbatkin. Natascha's debt-ridden father is eager to make a providential match (*SE*, pp. 28–9). Natascha is torn between Karmitow and Alexander Kyrillowitsch Subotin, another cousin in the family (*SE*, p. 78). Michail, a manservant to Karmitow, is the primary detective in the novel. He ultimately joins forces with other characters to provide sufficient evidence to arrest Karmitow and banish him for life to Siberia (*SE*, p. 193). In the end, Alexander Kyrillowitsch Subotin inherits the family estates (*SE*, p. 194) and marries Natascha (*SE*, p. 195).

Margarethe Koßak's *Die Erbtante* (1906) takes place in Dresden. It opens with 'Kanzleirat' Kindermann receiving a letter from his long-lost aunt, Mrs Ernestine Foster, notifying him that she is returning from Australia and is planning to stay with him (*DE*, p. 7). Mrs Foster arrives with her entourage, intending to determine where she will set up her household long-term (*DE*, p. 15). The family believes that the aunt is considering which relative she will leave her estate to (*DE*, pp. 17–18). Only Franz Kindermann, a nephew of the 'Kanzleirat', refuses to kowtow to the aunt (*DE*, p. 61). In love with the daughter of the 'Kanzleirat', his cousin Else, Franz feels threatened by Baron von Budde, a new family acquaintance who is also courting Else (*DE*, pp. 39–40).

Franz serves as detective in this novel, making connections between a series of recent robberies (*DE*, pp. 80–1) and Budde and Mrs Foster's role in them. Franz discovers that Mrs Foster is really a man, Edgar, who stole Mrs Foster's papers and identity (*DE*, pp. 142–3). During an attempted robbery, Edgar's thumb is broken, becomes infected, and he ultimately dies of the injury (*DE*, p. 156). Once all is revealed, Counsellor Kindermann is so ashamed that he asks to resign his post, but his request is refused (*DE*, p. 168). The family members concede their folly, and Franz and Else marry (*DE*, p. 168).

Isidore Kaulbach's *Schatten* (1910) takes place in Berlin. It opens with the lawyer Hans von Mellin learning that 'Kommerzienrat' Edmund Rehse has been found dead, poisoned with digitalis (*S*, p. 5). Mellin is linked to the Rehse household in two ways: first, Mellin has served as lawyer for Rehse for several years (*S*, p. 7); second, the woman Mellin loves, Irmgard Weber, worked as a social companion to Rehse. That evening, Mellin reads in the newspaper that Irmgard has been arrested for the murder (*S*, p. 13).

Hans von Mellin acts as detective in this novel. Irmgard's father had had shady dealings with Rehse in the past (S, p. 163), and in an effort to protect her father, Irmgard compromises her alibi for the night of Rehse's death (S, pp. 120–5), thus drawing suspicion on herself. Another complication is that Mellin's widowed mother, Klara, had an affair with Rehse years earlier, but Rehse refused to marry her (S, pp. 180–1). Mellin discovers that his mother had borne a child by Rehse, Anna, who lives with a foster family. On the day that the foster mother, Frau Groczinsky, came to retrieve the board wages for Anna, Rehse had a heart attack and asked Frau Groczinsky to administer an emergency dose of digitalis. Not knowing the dosage, she administered too much and Rehse died (S, p. 230). Frau Groczinsky fled, fearing that she would be accused of theft (S, p. 232). When Mellin is able to piece together this chain of events, Irmgard is released (S, p. 233), Anna moves in with Irmgard (S, p. 237), and ultimately Mellin and Irmgard are married (S, p. 239).

August Weißl's *Schwarze Perlen* (1910) opens at the country estate of Baron Rodenstein outside Vienna. His daughter, Mary, a widowed Baroness, is in love with a guest of the house, Baron Leutnant Leo Walden. Because Walden has debts, Mary fears that her father will not approve of the match (SP, p. 24). During evening conversation, Mary and her father discuss a necklace of black pearls, a family heirloom, which her father has brought from Vienna so that she may wear them to a forthcoming ball (SP, p. 5). Later that evening, Rodenstein discovers the pearls are missing (SP, p. 34).

The detectives in the story are Inspector Dr. Stephan Wurmser, later assisted by Inspector Baron von Sphor (SP, p. 183). In the end, Inspector Sphor discovers that Mary switched the real pearls with an inexpensive copy so that she could pawn the original and pay off her beloved's debts (SP, pp. 288–9). Franz Rodenstein, Mary's cousin, is exposed as having used an accomplice to steal the necklace (SP, p. 269), but the replica, not the original, was taken. In order to protect Mary, Franz and his accomplice are allowed to flee the country (SP, p. 292). While the resolution is unfolding, a wealthy uncle of Walden dies. Walden may now pay his debts, and Mary and Walden marry (SP, p. 293).

SENSATION AND GOTHIC DEVICES IN GERMAN 'FAMILIENKRIMIS'

We recall that with the rise of the Holmesian detective story, some German critics predicted the decline of sensation in the 'Kriminalroman'. Yet as the plot-lines summarised above suggest, many 'Familienkrimis' still included the sorts of gothic devices associated with nineteenth-century sensational literature.²⁸ Schlippenbach's *Subotins Erbe* is the most gothic in

²⁸ Nancy Armstrong, 'The Sensation Novel', in *The Nineteenth-Century Novel 1820–1880*, ed. John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor, New York 2012, pp. 37–153 (p. 145).

tone, sporting the purported ghost of a murderous ancestor (*SE*, pp. 37–8), mysterious moaning heard in the house (*SE*, pp. 54–5), and a trapdoor into a seemingly bottomless pit (*SE*, pp. 162–3). Kohlrausch's *Im Haus der Witwe* also owes a clear debt to the sensation novel, with a ghost lurking in the appropriately named 'Haus der Schatten'. The house even contains a secret passage leading to the crypt of the town's church (*HW*, p. 317).

All the gothic mysteries featured in these five novels are ultimately explained rationally, but the gothic was not always so easily demystified in German-language crime and detective fiction. Looking beyond the current sample, Eufemia von Adlersfeld-Ballestrem (1854–1941) stands out as a prolific writer of crime and detective stories throughout the first third of the twentieth century in whose works dreams, visions, séances, and divine justice were regularly woven into the plot-lines.²⁹ Another author of note was Otto Soyka (1882–1955), whose fantastic 'Kriminalromane' dating from the 1910s to the 1930s earned critical praise. In the light of this evidence, it seems that the invocation of the gothic, with or without its defeat, remained a productive device for authors well into the 1920s. Indeed, the sustained appeal of the gothic or supernatural in 'Kriminalromane' during the Weimar era provides further evidence of the popularity of occult and mystic themes already documented by Anton Kaes.³⁰ The persistence of these plot-lines thus presents a counterbalance to contemporary declarations that 'Kriminalromane' would now focus on rational thinking, observation, and science. The presence and positive reception of such narrative devices suggest that scholars who chart the 'Kriminalroman' during the first decades of the twentieth century will need to consider such features as a common aspect of its landscape.

THE DETECTIVE

Given the particular success of the Holmesian paradigm in establishing the serialised detective as a branding strategy, it is noteworthy that among the 'Familienkrimis' examined here a range of types of detectives are at work, from the one-off 'detective' who is romantically invested in solving the mystery to multiple police investigators assigned to the case. These detectives recall Collins' and Gaboriau's investigators in almost equal measure. Only one serial detective appears in the five novels: Inspector Baron von Sphor in *Schwarze Perlen*. Yet Sphor does not even make his debut until two thirds of the way into the novel; his narrative function is more as a 'closer' than as a focalising agent. The first portion of *Schwarze Perlen* depicts

²⁹ Cf. Franz Rottensteiner, 'Die gespenstische Eufemia von Adlersfeld-Ballestrem (1854–1941)', in *Zwischen Flucht und Herrschaft: Phantastische Frauenliteratur*, ed. Jacek Rzeszutnik, Passau 2002, pp. 233–40 (pp. 233–4).

³⁰ Anton Kaes, 'Schreiben und Lesen in der Weimarer Republik', in *Literatur der Weimarer Republik 1918–1933*, ed. Bernhard Weyergraf, Munich 1995, pp. 38–64 (p. 62).

the family sphere and the crime that takes place in it, emphasising the pride of place enjoyed by the family over the detectives. As a striking contrast, many of Conan Doyle's stories both begin and end in Holmes' flat.

Three of the works considered here involve civilian investigators whose motivations echo those of Collins' heroes, Walter Hartright and Franklin Blake. In *Im Haus der Witwe*, the heroine Ina Henniger's motive for explaining the apparition of her deceased husband is the same as that in Collins' novels: to reconcile her with her beloved. So, too, in *Die Erbtante*, Franz Kindermann must expose the jewel thief posing as a distant relative in order to save his uncle from financial ruin and to win his cousin's hand. Finally, in *Schatten*, Mellin investigates the death of Edmund Rehse in order to free the woman he loves.

If romantically motivated detectives recall Collins' heroes, some other 'Familienkrimis' focus the investigation through the police, invoking Gaboriau and the clutch of law-enforcement officials at work in *L'affaire Lerouge* and *Le dossier no. 113*. Multiple policemen compete with each other in *Schwarze Perlen* to solve the theft of the black pearl necklace. In *Subotins Erbe*, the suspense builds not around identifying the perpetrator, but around seeing whether Michail can expose Karmitow in time to prevent his marriage to the beautiful and unsuspecting Natascha.

As these examples demonstrate, most 'Familienkrimis' adhere closely to mid-nineteenth-century models of detection, despite Sherlock Holmes' growing appeal. In the cases where detection is outsourced to a third party, romantic heroes and heroines play more limited roles, and changes to the social sphere upon resolution of the conflict are less significant. On the other hand, novels that feature romantically invested detectives à la Collins conclude with more dramatically altered social milieus. I address the implications of the protagonists' agency in each 'Familienkrimi' in the next section; for the present, I stay with the topic of the detective.

The mix of types of investigators portrayed in 'Familienkrimis' may, in fact, more accurately reflect the landscape of the early 'Kriminalroman' than recorded by most contemporary critics. We recall Lichtenstein's assertion from 1908 that the Holmesian detective dominated the genre, yet nearly twenty years later, Willard Huntington Wright observed that 'one rarely finds the amateur investigator – that most delightful of all detectives – as the central figure of German crime-problem stories'.³¹ Wright's comment seems to suggest that this 'most delightful of all detectives' did not gain a foothold in the German-speaking world, a conclusion that would grant further credence to Schimmelpfennig's claim that the genre was more diverse than those produced by imitators of Conan Doyle.

Two separate but related questions are at issue here: whether in the wake of 'Sherlockismus' investigators were serialised or appeared in

³¹ Willard Huntington Wright, 'The Great Detective Stories', 1st edn 1927, in *The Art of the Mystery Story*, ed. Howard Haycraft, New York 1946, pp. 33–70 (pp. 62–3).

stand-alone works, and whether they tended to be amateurs or professionals. In response to the first question, Hickethier has shown how serialised detectives were, in fact, a staple of German-language films of the 1920s as well as dime novels from the first years of the new century on.³² Similarly, in more ambitious long-format crime novels and short-story collections, early twentieth-century authors such as Eufemia von Adlersfeld-Ballestrem, Balduin Groller, and Paul Rosenhayn established recurring popular private detectives (Franz Xaver Windmüller, Dagobert Trostler, and Joe Jenkins, respectively). Yet beyond these few examples, the serialised detective ‘brand’ did not establish itself as firmly here as it did in other language areas.³³ Soyka, for instance, chose not to create a serialised hero across his dozen or so ‘Kriminalromane’, perhaps because of the limitations it imposed. As Katharina Hall has observed, ‘not having to safeguard the investigative figure for the next novel in the series allows authors to create uncompromising narratives with radical plots or dénouements’, an interpretation that could easily be applied to Soyka’s case.³⁴ Moreover, with the exception of dime-novel production, publishing practices in the German-speaking world did not appear to cultivate the hero series. It was significantly more common in the first third of the twentieth century for German-language writers to produce only one or two works – hardly fertile ground for establishing a serialised detective.³⁵ Though it is unclear whether it was a cause or an effect of the failure of the German book market to create successful serial-detective brands, book series appear to have been a much more common strategy for cultivating readers’ loyalty.³⁶

Turning to whether ‘Kriminalromane’ favoured amateur or professional investigators, a superficial review of other novels from this period does suggest a preference for detectives in the employ of the state. When domestic production picked up again during the Weimar era, for instance, one subgenre of note concerned itself more with the criminal mind than with the work of the detective.³⁷ If the rise of this subgenre reflects a larger trend, it would be difficult to imagine a role for the amateur detective in this trend. Yet instead of concluding as did Wright that German-language authors of crime and detective fiction missed a crucial, evolutionary step forward by failing to create their own versions of Sherlock Holmes, it would

³² Hickethier, ‘Der Alte Deutsche Kriminalroman’ (note 4), 15–16.

³³ Josef Schmidt, ‘Deutschland’, in *Reclams Kriminalromanführer*, ed. Armin Arnold and Josef Schmidt, Stuttgart 1978, pp. 371–4 (p. 373).

³⁴ Katharina Hall, ‘Historical Crime Fiction in German: The Turbulent Twentieth Century’, in *Crime Fiction in German: Der Krimi* (note 9), pp. 115–31 (p. 116).

³⁵ 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 für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur*, 107/3 (2015), 431–54 (437).

³⁶ Julia Karolle-Berg, ‘On the Popularity of the *Kriminalroman*: The Reception, Production, and Consumption of German Crime and Detective Novels (1919–1933)’, *German Quarterly*, 91/3 (2018), 305–21 (313).

³⁷ Herzog, *Crime Stories* (note 5), pp. 26–7.

be more productive to consider what these authors *did* do, and to what effect.

THE FAMILY AS LOCUS OF CONFLICT IN 'FAMILIENKRIMIS'

When the 'Familienkrimis' treated here appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century, the 'Familienroman' itself was enjoying a resurgence with Thomas Mann's 1901 debut of *Buddenbrooks*. As in the 'Familienroman', the family serves in these works as the site where changes in social values and structures are thematised. Here, crimes committed in the familial milieu create (or expose) familial tensions that must then be resolved. Intergenerational conflicts abound in the mid-Victorian and early German-language novels examined here, and how they are resolved indicates the milieu's tolerance of social change.

In Collins' and Gaboriau's works, family conflicts frequently originate in indiscretions, weaknesses, or outright crimes committed by the parents' generation, knowledge of which some third party seeks to exploit for personal gain. In both *L'affaire Lerouge* and *Le dossier no. 113*, re-surfaced knowledge of a long-forgotten extra-marital affair and a natural child catalyse new crimes. In Collins' two novels, the moral failing of an older generation combines with a socially vulnerable woman in the younger one to create an environment conducive to deceit.

The indiscretions of the older generation thus create instability for its descendants. Just as the theft of the diamond in *The Moonstone* undermines Rachel Verinder's attachment to Franklin Blake, so too the romantic plans of the younger generation (Albert Commarin's marriage to Claire d'Arlanges in *L'affaire Lerouge*; Prosper Bertomy's marriage to Madeleine Fauvel in *Dossier no. 113*) are suspended by the crimes that occur at the outset of Gaboriau's novels. While it seems initially that the younger generation will be made to atone for the older one's follies, the exposure of the actual criminals restores to these young people their autonomy and (re-)unites them with their intended partners.

Yet these works also intimate social promise: in intergenerational conflicts, the moral compass of the younger generation is held up against that of its forebears and found superior, and the heroes are positive social agents. Particularly in Collins' works, the younger generation (Marian Halcombe and Walter Hartright in *The Woman in White*, but also Rachel Verinder and Franklin Blake in *The Moonstone*) is actively involved in solving the mystery and establishing its own new society in microcosm.

Like the heroes and heroines who came before them, the protagonists of 'Familienkrimis' must navigate an intergenerational conflict. How much agency the younger generation has in achieving resolution serves as a bellwether of how much the social milieu will change at the novels' conclusion. Two of the works offer resolutions that present a social order in

which traditional, patriarchal values are reaffirmed with minimal alteration, while three novels present a social milieu in conflict with this patriarchy and more explicitly in flux.

Subotins Erbe and *Schwarze Perlen* present resolutions with more traditional, patriarchal outcomes, and both of these works notably take place among noble families. In *Subotins Erbe*, Feodor Karmitow recalls Noël Gerdy in *L'affaire Lerouge*, both of whom commit murder for the sake of gaining a large inheritance. Like Gerdy, Karmitow is thwarted. The impoverished but deserving cousin, Alexander Kyrillowitsch Subotin, inherits the family estate and saves his beloved Natascha from her father's designs to betroth her to Karmitow. This restoration of the social order is notably achieved with limited agency from its hero and heroine. With respect to the investigation, Kyrillowitsch Subotin only belatedly becomes involved in the campaign to expose Karmitow and bring him to justice. With respect to the characters' desire to marry for love, Natascha is powerless to oppose her father's intentions until Karmitow is exposed.

Like *Subotins Erbe*, the conflict in *Schwarze Perlen* revolves in part around a father's wishes that are at odds with his daughter's because of economic tensions. Although Mary hoped to enable marriage to her beloved but impoverished Walden by pawning a valuable pearl necklace, she falls victim to a jewel fence. In the end, order is restored when Providence bestows an inheritance upon Walden. Regarding the entanglement with Mary's pearl necklace, Inspector Baron von Sphor conceals Mary's actions, and Cousin Franz – who stole the replica – is allowed to escape to Africa. In the case of *Schwarze Perlen*, then, Mary's attempt at agency is a failed one, and the investigation is ultimately managed by external agents.

The interests and attitudes affirmed in these works thus reflect a nostalgic image of a stratified social order, with particular emphasis on an insular aristocracy. Perhaps because the threats in these novels frequently come from within the extended family, resolutions focus on re-asserting the honour of the family name: criminals are banished from 'society' (i.e., sent to Siberia or Africa), and – as an essential complement to removing criminal elements – potential scandals are kept private. Both these novels also include a providential inheritance that enables the young protagonists to marry for love. By resolving economic dilemmas through what I term an *avunculus ex machina* (the distant uncle who dies and leaves an estate), the protagonists avoid having to choose between love and money. Thus, while the young couples marry for love, this represents the limits of their power. Indeed, the conclusions of these two novels are consistent with those seen in their literary precursors. As in Gaboriau's works, resolutions reflect a social order where justice is achieved in significant measure via established authorities: power is individualised, concentrated, and lacks transparency. As with Collins, a nostalgic view of a patriarchal society is re-asserted.

By contrast, *Im Haus der Witwe*, *Die Erbtante*, and *Schatten* show the younger generation prevailing in conflicts and in social milieus marked by

forces that are, at times, violent. Unlike the first set of 'Familienkrimis', these narratives focus primarily on wealthy bourgeois families in which the male heads of household serve as high-ranking civil servants in named cities (Hildesheim, Dresden, and Berlin, respectively). Here, intergenerational tensions involve a greater assertion of agency among the young protagonists, while the stabilisation of the social sphere requires a more public processing of the crime, and marriages for love are enabled through non-economic means.

In *Im Haus der Witwe*, the intergenerational conflict is between the gothically sinister Dr. Jaksch and Sybel, his nephew. Jaksch manipulates Sybel into suspending his engagement to Ina because Jaksch wants to draw her into an affair. As a contrast to the mostly passive heroines in *Subotins Erbe* and *Schwarze Perlen*, however, Ina is assertive in her role from the outset. She has already liberated herself from austere parents and from a first husband whom she did not love. Moreover, in exposing the mysteries of the House of Shadows, Ina rejects her prospective role as gothic heroine, seeking a rational explanation of the ghostly apparition in her house (*SP*, p. 153), and initiating reconciliation with her beloved by confronting him with the truth about his uncle (*SP*, p. 305). Yet as Ina and Sybel find their way to each other, the very edifice that supported their community is destroyed. In fact, the House of Shadows burns to the ground because of an intergenerational conflict that goes unresolved. After Jaksch's illegitimate, abandoned and now anarchist son has confronted Jaksch without success, the young man detonates a bomb that levels the house and kills Jaksch and himself (*SP*, p. 334). Ina and Sybel thus resolve to leave Hildesheim and begin a new life in Munich. To be sure, Ina's fortune remains intact and she has made her desired romantic match, yet she expresses no nostalgia for the life they are leaving: 'Weißt du, ich freue mich im Grunde, daß wir unser neues Leben nicht hier beginnen. Auch meinem alten Hause der Schatten trauere ich an sich nicht nach' (*SP*, p. 342).

Although *Die Erbtante* does not depict such a violent rupture with the existing social milieu, it does expose the follies of materialism and social climbing. The very title of the work satirically invokes a plot device that other 'Kriminalromane' (*Subotins Erbe* and *Schwarze Perlen*) deployed without irony: the *avunculus ex machina*, or in this case, the inheritance from a rich aunt. The Kindermann family's hopes that it will inherit from Mrs Foster, and the exorbitant expenses it incurs in order to do so, provide an ironic and humorous plot-line that concludes like a morality play. Frau Kindermann acknowledges that her husband will have to step down from his council position, conceding that it is a 'wohlverdiente Strafe' for having tried to marry her daughter to a man whom she did not love and for attempting to come by money that the family had not earned (*SE*, p. 161).

In the end, Counsellor Kindermann is not required to resign. Yet the sentiments expressed by Frau Kindermann underscore the contradiction between embracing a middle-class work ethic and fantasising about not

having to work for one's money. It is also worth mentioning that although the jewel thief who poses as the wealthy Mrs Foster dies, the other two criminals are not apprehended. The threat to bourgeois values remains at large for those who do not guard against it.

In the final novel of this sample, *Schatten*, the extra-marital affairs and shady business ventures of the parent generation recall the scandals of the nineteenth-century 'Familienkrimis', yet here the scandals are resolved with a modern twist. In *Schatten*, as in Gaboriau's novels, the secret liaisons of the older generation must be exposed in order to acquit a young person who stands falsely accused. Mellin's investigation results in an oedipal gesture of self-recrimination, as Mellin discovers secrets in his own family that must be made public in order to free Irmgard. Mellin initially judges his mother harshly for having had an affair with Rehse (S, p. 176), but by the time Irmgard is set free, he has liberated himself from public opinion: 'Was galt ihm jetzt das Geschwätz der Menge! Dem Vorurteil einer ganzen Welt hätte er trotzen mögen' (S, p. 236). His transformation through humility and empathy enables Mellin to accept his illegitimate half-sister, Anna.

Taken in this light, the resolution in *Schatten* offers something of an inversion of the conventions present in Gaboriau. While in *L'affaire Lerouge* and *Dossier no. 113* some of the people who engaged in sexual transgressions (Madame Fauvel, Count de Commarin) survive their scandals, Mellin's mother falls ill and dies (S, p. 196). By contrast, the natural children (Noël Gerdy and Raoul Valentin Wilson) do not survive in Gaboriau's novels. Indeed, there is an outright sense of relief at the conclusion of *Dossier no. 113* when the novel's characters learn that Madame Fauvel's natural son died in infancy.³⁸ Prominent – and divergent – in *Schatten* is the assertion of a bourgeois sexual morality, yet also the implication that the younger generation cannot be held accountable for the sins of its parents. Anna earns a chance at social elevation, not least because her work ethic and optimism are consistent with bourgeois values.

As this study suggests, a broad range of devices are productive in 'Familienkrimis' that reflected anxiety about threats to the family, both internal and external: adultery, insolvency, social climbers, confidence men, shady business deals, political intrigue, and anarchists. Inasmuch as the family represented society in microcosm for middle-class readers, these anxieties reprised themes of bourgeois social distress common in German popular literature during this period. In his analysis of popular works from the *fin-de-siècle*, for instance, Jochen Schulte-Sasse suggests that precisely because of their sense of social upheaval, petit-bourgeois readers were gratified by literature that created an 'imaginary realm in which

³⁸ Émile Gaboriau, *The Blackmailers [Dossier No 113]*, 1st edn. 1866, tr. Ernest Tristan, New York [c. 1900], p. 268.

“outmoded” norms and values [were] once again revitalized’.³⁹ While some novels in the current sample feature resolutions that invoke a return to a stable, stratified social milieu (*Subotins Erbe* and *Schwarze Perlen*),⁴⁰ other works (*Im Haus der Witwe*, *Die Erbtante*, and *Schatten*) situate their plot-lines in milieus that are more urban and middle class, and more violent and in flux, in which no nostalgic return is conceivable. In the first two works, with the exception of the *avunculi ex machina*, just one death (Subotin’s murder) occurs. Otherwise, the criminals are sent away. In the second set of works, by contrast, the extrication of socially threatening or morally compromised characters involves violent ruptures: at least two people die in each of these novels, the ‘Haus der Schatten’ is destroyed, and the Kindermann’s house mutilated by renovations requested by Mrs Foster. Finally, while containment was a constituent component of resolution in the first group of novels, in the latter works, the scandals cannot be kept private. The dénouements of the bourgeois ‘Familienkrimis’ all involve a public processing of the crimes: the destruction of the ‘Haus der Schatten’, Counsellor Kindermann’s resignation, and Irmgard’s public release from prison. As we see, in the stories focused on the bourgeois milieu, intergenerational conflicts demand confrontation, reflection, and reconciliation. Social rupture is symbolically represented in them, and in the wake of these ruptures, it is not a sudden influx of money but the (re-)assertion of the younger generation’s moral compass and values such as humility, generosity, and forgiveness that re-ground the milieu.

As I have suggested above, particularly the second set of ‘Familienkrimis’ attest to how mid-nineteenth-century generic conventions evolved in a new social and cultural context. On the one hand, the positive representation of an urban bourgeoisie contrasts sharply with other literary forms popular at the *fin-de-siècle*, such as the Western and the ‘Heimatroman’, in which an ideal social milieu exists ‘far from the big city’.⁴¹ On the other hand, the criticisms of materialism and greed found in traditional popular forms⁴² are also clearly reprised in *Im Haus der Witwe*, *Die Erbtante*, and *Schatten*. Thus, while petit-bourgeois readers could still delight to see ‘their own norms and values prevail[ing] over conflicting norms and values’⁴³ in the second set of ‘Familienkrimis’, the ‘imaginary realm’ in which these norms and values obtained was now recognisably closer to home.

Did ‘Familienkrimis’ persist after the first decade of the twentieth century? Preliminary evidence suggests that the thematic complex of crime occurring within the family circle remained relatively productive. In 1925,

³⁹ Jochen Schulte-Sasse and Linda Schulte-Sasse, ‘Toward a “Culture” for the Masses: The Socio-Psychological Function of Popular Literature in Germany and the U.S., 1880–1920’, *New German Critique*, 29 (1983), 85–105 (85).

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 89.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 87.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 90.

Siegfried Kracauer indicated that the family remained a potential, albeit anachronistic, locus of action of the detective novel, and he noted that most exemplars of the genre still concluded with the union of a romantic couple.⁴⁴ In view of the dramatic social and cultural changes wrought by the end of the First World War and the creation of Germany's first democracy, it would be useful to explore how later 'Familienkrimis' represented intergenerational conflict. In either case, if critics like Kracauer intimated that the family-focused and romance-infused crime and detective novel was no longer a desirable variant of the 'Kriminalroman', it bears recalling that even the Anglo-American literary landscape included subgenres beyond those novels featuring a serialised amateur detective investigating through his or her use of intellect, observation, and science. In the United States, Mary Roberts Rinehart popularised a variant frequently known as 'Had I But Known' (shorthand: 'HIBK') stories, the first and most famous of which was *The Circular Staircase*.⁴⁵ As Woeller writes, the detectives featured in Rinehart's works were women who, for multitudinous reasons, showed 'eine gewisse Seelenverwandtschaft mit den Heldinnen des alten Schauerromans'.⁴⁶ In addition to revising notions about recurrent plotlines and characters in crime and detective fiction, HIBK novels, like 'Familienkrimis', may challenge assumptions about readership. As Julian Symons observed: 'These [HIBK novels] are the first crime stories which have the air of being written specifically for maiden aunts, and they exploited a market which, with the spread of library borrowing, proved very profitable.'⁴⁷ In terms of content (and possibly readership), it appears that HIBK novels might claim some kinship with the 'Familienkrimis' sampled here.

More generally, recent scholarship has demonstrated that a diversity of forms existed during the Golden Age of crime and detective fiction in the 1920s and 1930s. Hügel pointed out in 1978 that with the rise of the 'clue puzzle' detective story in the 1920s (i.e., those that followed the rules of fair play, the queen of which was Agatha Christie), Gaboriau's influence on the genre 'geriet vorübergehend gänzlich aus dem Blickfeld der Kritik'.⁴⁸ But John Cawelti notes that even the classical detective stories of the Golden Age 'showed a particular fascination with the hidden secrets and guilts that lay within the family circle',⁴⁹ which suggests that even as the legacy of Gaboriau and Collins was played down, a focus on the family did not

⁴⁴ Siegfried Kracauer, 'Ein philosophisches Traktat über den Detektiv-Roman', in *Werke*, ed. Inka Mülder-Brach and Ingrid Belke, 9 vols, Suhrkamp 2006, I, pp. 104–209 (pp. 126 and 206).

⁴⁵ Mary Roberts Rinehart, *The Circular Staircase*, New York 1908.

⁴⁶ Woeller, *Illustrierte Geschichte der Kriminalliteratur* (note 11), p. 113.

⁴⁷ Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel*, 1st edn 1972, New York 1992, pp. 100–1.

⁴⁸ Hügel, *Die deutsche Detektivverählung im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (note 3), p. 10.

⁴⁹ John Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Fiction*, 1st edn 1976, Chicago 2013, p. 77.

entirely fade away. Similarly, writing about the appearance of sensational elements in Agatha Christie's late work, Woeller pondered: 'Intuitionen und Gefühle – das besaßen bereits die Heroine der romantischen und der Schauerromane. Lagen tatsächlich 150 Jahre dazwischen, oder gab es da Traditionen, die den Abstand verringerten?'⁵⁰ It has been my contention here that the plot-lines and characters deployed in 'Familienkrimis' may provide evidence of a German-language tradition that does, in fact, narrow this distance.

⁵⁰ Woeller, *Illustrierte Geschichte der Kriminalliteratur* (note 11), p. 153.