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CONTENTS

"Where Do Plots Come From?": Dorothy L. Sayers on Literary Invention

Philip Marlowe, Knight in Blue Serge

John le Carré: The Doubleness of Class

Our Growing Collections

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The spiral staircase in Benson’s advertising office, where Dorothy Sayers had worked, and which she used as a plot device in her 1933 mystery *Murder Must Advertise*. 
he continued popularity of Dorothy Sayers’s mystery fiction is evident in the recent republication of a series of the Lord Peter Wimsey mysteries in Harper and Row’s Perennial Library, and in the recent Masterpiece Theatre television series shown on PBS. While never so popular as Agatha Christie, perhaps because her novels are more challenging in ways that do not relate directly to the “solving” of the purported crime, Sayers seems persistently as interesting both as a writer of mystery stories and as a commentator on the genre. Trained as a scholar at Oxford, Sayers was an inveterate “explainer.” In the 1920s, the heyday of the mystery story, she wrote what remains one of the most succinct and accurate histories of the genre in her introduction to the formidable Omnibus of Crime (1927).

Her explaining went far beyond these parochial bounds, however, for she wrote numerous expository essays on Christian doctrine, on literary invention and creativity, on allegory, on major myths such as those of Oedipus and Faust, and on Christian esthetics and morality. Many of these are now collected in one volume, The Whimsical Christian: 18 Essays by Dorothy L. Sayers (1987). In 1941, she published The Mind of the Maker, an attempt to explain and explore the difficult analogy between the idea of the creativity of God and the creativity of the literary artist. Readers of her mystery fiction will be familiar, too, with the amount of explaining that goes on in the novels on topics as diverse as the draining of the fens of East Anglia, the ringing of changes in church bells, intestacy laws, advertising strategies (circa 1933), and cricket.

Sayers’s detailed explanations suggest a strong need to know about the “real world” as well as more arcane matters, to assert that knowledge, and to communicate it. The amount of exposition that
is incorporated into her fiction does not seem entirely necessary to the complications of the plot; rather, Sayers appears to have been determined to locate her fiction in the "real world," to convince us of the probability of the action of the story, its likeliness, and to de-emphasize the degree of artifice in plot construction. Partly, I suspect, the amount of detail in Sayers’s fiction involves her respect for the model provided by Wilkie Collins, about whom Sayers had begun to write a critical biography before her death in 1957. Yet it may also serve the distinctly moral purpose of creating a probable world, in many respects quite ordinary, in which we can picture ourselves among the never overly-romanticized dramatis personae. This apparent desire to create convincingly probable representations of the social and physical world, by describing these environments in great detail, did not obscure for Sayers the importance of the fact that these worlds are fictive.

Because the motive to explain was characteristic of Sayers, it is not surprising that at some point she should attempt to explain something about the process of writing mystery fiction. Nor is it surprising that when she did so it was from a properly egotistical angle, with only occasional references to other practitioners of the genre. This is the subject of a series of notes that Sayers wrote down, at an undetermined date, with the heading, "Where Do Plots Come From?" These notes, on eight half-sheets of lined paper, suggesting lecture notes, are now in the Aaron Berg Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library. As Sayers observes, "Where do plots come from?" is the "first question people always ask." Her initial answer is "anywhere and everywhere." However, having made the point that plot ideas may come from any "passing phrase or incident," she comes to her central point that, as she writes, "You don’t ‘get’ the Plot—you make that. What you get is the Idea." And in her conclusion she writes: "Plots don’t come by inspiration—have to be hammered together."

This may seem like a rather obvious point, but it is a revealing one. After all, typically, plots themselves do not come from direct experience, for life is notoriously plot-poor. Where experience is involved at all, plots come from the reconstruction of events and from their
"Where Do Plots Come From?"

interpretation as parts of a meaningful sequence. This is exactly where the mystery story poses the most significant mystery of its own, since it supposes that events must be significantly related at the same time that it depends upon the idea that we seldom see such connections.

"You don't 'get' the Plot—you make that," Dorothy Sayers writes in her notes on the origin of mystery story plots.

Since the time of Sophocles and of the Apocryphal Scriptures (as Sayers indicated by placing the stories of Bel and of Susannah in The Omnibus of Crime), discoveries and reconstructions of invisible causal connections have raised an affect of wonder, awe, or surprise in the audience, even when such actions are fictive. If the first question “people always ask” of a writer is about where “plots come from,” it must be with the suspicion that the writer has privileged experience, is preternaturally imaginative, or is borrowing from some previous plot.

In light of her practice of creating detailed descriptions of social and physical circumstances in her fiction, it is significant that Sayers insists upon the idea that plots are constructed, “hammered together,” that they are “made things.” Anyone who has tried to write an extended piece of fiction knows how impossible it is to begin with
a fully elaborated plot. Readers of Sayers’s novels know, too, that it is difficult enough to keep all elements of the plot in mind as one reads. Even having finished a mystery novel, one may need the aid of a pencil and a piece of paper to reconstruct the plot. That complexity is part of what makes us ask a writer where her plots come from in the first place. Yet Sayers’s insistence on the making of a plot is important because it also defines her position as a pragmatic artist without romantic pretensions.

Though Sayers was a Christian apologist, she was adamantly a rationalist with respect to her ideas about literary invention. (Indeed, she was also a rationalist in her theology.) For her, if the mystery novel could carry any moral weight, it was not because it depended upon the artist’s access to privileged experience or privileged states of consciousness. Rather, one suspects that the mystery story became more interesting to her as an obliquely didactic experiment in natural theology. In the notes on where plots come from, she advises that once you begin “looking for detective ideas you will easily find them,” and she goes on to say that this is “Good for your morals, too—because you will get the idea that crimes are meant to be detected.” What better reason could there be, from the moralist’s point of view, for reading detective fiction?

To exemplify the process of invention in writing mystery fiction, Sayers offers as primary evidence the process of composing her Wimsey novel Unnatural Death (1927; published in England as The Dawson Pedigree). As she describes the process, it apparently developed from two “ideas,” the first relating primarily to method and the second to motive. The first idea was suggested in a conversation with a doctor: “Why not use an empty hypo?” The second idea was picked up from an article in a newspaper about the intestacy law of 1925. From these two plot elements, according to Sayers, follow the implications that the victim “must be a person used to injections,” that the murderer “must know how to give injection,” and that the murderer “must be a person who would have inherited in 1925 but possibly not in 1926.” The result, as developed in the novel, is that
the murderer becomes "a great-niece, trained as nurse, attending old invalid lady." This covers the three bases of the crime situation—means, motive, and opportunity. It leaves still to be invented the false leads and eventual means of detection that are essential to the comple-

Ian Carmichael as Lord Peter Wimsey in the 1974 Masterpiece Theatre television production of *Murder Must Advertise*.

pletion of the mystery plot. The dominance of rational and deliberate procedures in the composing process is clear, however, from Sayers’s description of the mode of invention used to begin the story.

Since Sayers has offered us this demonstration of the writer’s method of constructing a plot, we might speculate about how such elements were invented in another of her novels, *Murder Must Advertise* (1933). While the basic plot ideas for *Unnatural Death* came from the common sources of conversation and a newspaper story, in *Murder Must Advertise*, Sayers drew on her experience in Benson’s advertising firm in London. There, as a classical scholar and one of the first women graduates from Oxford, a "wit" in both the earlier
and more modern sense, she put her knowledge to work to promote laxatives and tinned milk. What Benson’s offered in the way of a plot idea was a spiral staircase that could be used to make a murder look like an accidental death by falling. To this Sayers added the idea, for method, of a skylight from which a criminal could fire a seemingly innocuous projectile out of a slingshot and perhaps escape without notice. Again, having invented the means for the crime, the writer could develop ideas for motive and opportunity, for alibis and modes of detection, according to rational procedures.

Quite obviously, Sayers drew on her experience with advertising in writing this novel: the spiral staircase really did exist at Benson’s, the office activities and politics appear authentic down to the “flim-sies” and petty gripes about tea, and Sayers even has Lord Peter gain kudos for inventing an advertising scheme for cigarettes that bears some resemblance to her own schemes to advertise Colman’s mustard and Guiness stout. As always, in keeping with her rationalist esthetic, these autobiographical elements are subordinate to the plot ideas. One is persuaded by the novel not to believe that these events did happen, but that they might have. This novel, like others by Sayers, though it strives for a convincing representation of a social world, lacks the kind of penetration that novels in an essentially romantic mode have. It was apparently not her intention to represent the uniquely individual case, the testament of experience; rather her purpose seems to have been to construct an exemplary tale of crime and detection.

The aspect of the composing process that Sayers emphasizes in her lecture notes is properly called “invention,” a term that normally denotes a purposeful and rational process of discovering and ordering the elements of a composition, with particular attention to the formal requirements and the decorum of a given genre. Because the mystery story had clearly defined elements, there is necessarily a great deal of emphasis on rational procedures of composition. As Sayers notes, plot ideas generally develop from the invention of “new ways of killing people,” “new ways of detecting things,” and “new ways of faking alibis and false trails.” In this respect, the mystery story is
a conservative genre in which plot structures remain relatively consistent from novel to novel, despite obvious differences of "content." It is also a conservative genre since it depends upon the convention that the crimes as plot problems can be solved by the exertion of the rational intellect, a little force, and perhaps a little courage on the part of the detective. So conceived, the genre stands in contrast to the modern novel in the larger sense of an extended prose narrative in which progress is marked by more and more acute questionings of our naive assumptions about character, cause and effect, the constitution of the self, and so on. It is these matters which, for the modern reader, have a more primary relevance as aspects of "imagination." While Sayers is distinctly rationalist and even anti-romantic in temper and in practice, there are aspects of her writing in which "imagination" in the larger sense plays a part.
While Sayers emphasizes the rational manipulation of plot elements in her lecture notes, her writing itself gives evidence of a quality of imagination that we discover only in the best of mystery writers, her precursor Wilkie Collins, for instance. Few mystery writers, for example, have Sayers’s ability to imagine the situation of what she would probably have called “a soul in peril.” While we may feel some sympathy for a character such as Arthur Conan Doyle’s Jonathan Small, who is given free rein to plead his case in The Sign of Four, or for similar criminals in other mystery novels, it is not characteristic of the genre to evoke pity or to allow us to understand anyone’s dilemma except the detective’s. Sayers, however, truly does enlist our sympathy for many of her commonly venal or morally conflicted characters. I am thinking here particularly of characters such as Tallboy and Dian de Momerie in Murder Must Advertise and Will Thoday in The Nine Tailors. Her depiction of the moral situation of the character in each case suggests an aspect of creativity which cannot easily be defined, except perhaps to say that here she allows us to think, as she must have thought, from within the terms of the character’s dilemma.

In these same two novels, too, there is other evidence of an imaginative power rare in mystery fiction. Both instances involve our seeing through the eyes of Lord Peter Wimsey when he is not playing the bon vivant detective:

Among these phantasms, Death Bredon, driving his pen across reams of foolscap, was a phantasm, too, emerging from this nightmare toil to a still more fantastical existence amid people whose aspirations, rivalries and modes of thought were alien, and earnest beyond anything in his waking experience. Nor, when the Greenwich-driven clocks had jerked on to half-past five, had he any world of reality to which to return; for then the illusionary Mr. Brédon dislimned and became the still more illusionary Harlequin of a dope-addict’s dream; an advertising figure more crude and fanciful than any that postured in the columns of the Morning Star; a thing bodiless and absurd, a mouthpiece of stale clichés shouting in dull ears without a brain. From this abominable impersonation he could not now free himself, since at the sound of his name or the sight of his unmasked face, all the doors of that other dream-city—the city of dreadful night—would be closed to him.

(Chapter XI, Murder Must Advertise)
"Where Do Plots Come From?"

The whole world was lost now in one vast sheet of water... The Wale river had sunk from sight in the spreading of the flood, but far beyond it, a dull streak showed where the land billowed up seaward, and thrust the water back upon the Fenchurches. Inward and westward the waters swelled relentlessly from the breach of Van Leyden’s Sluice and stood level with the top of the Thirty-Foot Bank. Outward and eastward the gold cock on the weathervane stared and strained, fronting the danger, held to his watch by the relentless pressure from the wind off the Wash. Somewhere amid the still surge of waters, the broken bodies of Will Thoday and his mate drifted and tumbled with the wreckage of farm and field. The Fen had reclaimed its own.

(Book IV: "A Full Peal of Kent Treble Bob Major,"
The Third Part, The Nine Tailors)

There is more to these passages than mere style, though that is one aspect of their excellence. In the first passage, there is the remarkable representation of Wimsey’s feelings of estrangement in his double masquerade as Death Bredon by day and Harlequin by night—a masquerade which causes his perceptions to be altered as by the influence of a drug or some powerful new insight. In the latter passage, Wimsey looks on the flooded fens of East Anglia after he has realized how Geoffrey Deacon died, and the waterscape provides a counterpoint to the terrifying experience of listening to the sound of the Fenchurch’s bells from inside the bell cage, the experience that presumably caused Deacon’s death. Whatever rational procedures of invention Sayers deployed in composing these novels (with no prior knowledge of bell-ringing, she schooled herself in the art to write The Nine Tailors), the passages are indicative of something other than mere "invention." They suggest the imaginative range of a writer who, in such moments, has the power to convince us that we see and feel what we have only read. They also represent something that seems incommunicable about literary composition. The issue here is not where plots or plot ideas may come from, but where such power to evoke a scene or a subjective dilemma may come from. If this is not the "first question people always ask," it is probably because people do not expect a coherent answer to it. This imaginative quality, however, is what keeps us coming back to mystery novels even when we already
know the solution of the plot problem. It is the aspect of Sayers’s writing which, in passages like the ones I have quoted, gives her writing its perennial appeal and defies neat explanations about “how to” write a mystery novel.
When Raymond Chandler’s first novel, *The Big Sleep*, was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1939, private detective Philip Marlowe made his entrance into a world that was recovering from the Great Depression even as it teetered on the brink of war. The heroic ideals of the 1936 Olympic Games were subverted in the miasma of triumphant Naziism. Although prohibition had been repealed in 1932, the barracudas of crime spawned during its heyday were not about to relinquish the wealth and power they had acquired serving a thirsty and hypocritical public. As corruption flourished, public icons failed. When Edward VIII relinquished the English throne in favor of romance, common people took a long look at their notions of duty as well. It was a time of disillusionment, and the public wanted heroes.

For readers of detective fiction, Philip Marlowe helped fill the void. Handsome, well educated, and fearless, Marlowe helps his clients in their quest for personal justice. At the age of thirty-three he has presumably sown his wildest oats while still retaining the vigor of youth. Marlowe brings a certain elegance to his profession which sets him apart from conventional private detectives. Not every “shamus” makes casual allusions to Proust and sports black socks with dark blue clocks on them. Marlowe’s clients anticipate that his performance will approach that of a medieval knight. They are flawed individuals, and the discrepancy between their expectations and Marlowe’s final resolution of their problems becomes part of the indigenous morality of the detective story.

Marlowe evolved as a very real person in the eyes of his creator; Chandler gave him a background which was concrete and thoroughly detailed. Marlowe was born in Santa Rosa, California and university educated in Oregon. First employed as an insurance investigator, he later worked in the office of the district attorney of Los Angeles county. He never spoke of his parents and apparently
had no living relatives. Chandler specified Marlowe’s preferences in movies, drinks, and guns and carefully described the layout and furnishings of his apartment. At times he would tell radio and television producers who sought to adapt the characterization to their media, “I am Marlowe,” and while Marlowe is certainly not an extension of Chandler, they had in common a pervasive sense of isolation in the notoriously chimerical society of southern California. Although he was a successful oil executive with a comfortable suburban home and a writer who enjoyed sustained critical acclaim, Chandler was a man apart who suffered from chronic feelings of loneliness and depression. An insecure intellectual, perhaps he projected Marlowe, a physically formidable man who had a way with blondes, as an alter ego. Marlowe’s arrogance, his lack of empathy with his clients and detachment from other characters mark him as the typical American detective-story hero.

Nevertheless, Chandler’s work is too complex to fit neatly into the genre of hard-boiled detective fiction. He gave his readers something extra because he believed that the detective story was not intrinsically inferior to other literary forms. In a letter now in the Frederic Dannay Papers in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, dated July 10, 1951, and written to Dannay, co-author of the “Ellery Queen” mysteries, Chandler discusses Dannay’s intention to publish a list of the ten best detective-story writers and comments upon the special quality that elevates his work to the level of literature: “All good writers have a touch of magic. And unless we are to agree with Edmund Wilson that detective fiction is on the sub-literary level, and I personally do not agree with this, we demand that touch of magic; at least I do, although I am well aware that the public does not.”

A significant aspect of Chandler’s “magic” was his ability to evoke a unique sense of place, to go beyond the conventional image of “tinsel town” and expose the underbelly of Los Angeles. In The Long Goodbye (1953), Marlowe looks out over the city from his house on Laurel Canyon Boulevard and reflects upon:
Raymond Chandler in his home in La Jolla.
the glare of the big angry city hanging over the shoulder of the hills through which the boulevard had been cut. Far off the banshee wail of police or fire sirens rose and fell, never for very long completely silent. Twenty-four hours a day somebody is running, somebody else is trying to catch him. Out there in the night of a thousand crimes people were dying, being maimed, cut by flying glass, crushed against steering wheels or under heavy tires. People were being beaten, robbed, strangled, raped, and murdered. People were hungry, sick, bored, desperate with loneliness or remorse or fear, angry, cruel, feverish, shaken by sobs. A city no worse than others, a city rich and vigorous and full of pride, a city lost and beaten and full of emptiness.

Another "touch of magic" is supplied by Chandler's hero. As a prototype of the hard-boiled detective, he is a modern knight-errant, sporting elegant attire instead of armor. In The Big Sleep, he drives a large, flashy convertible, the equivalent of the knight's noble steed and about as much trouble to maintain. Marlowe searches for dragons in human form, and, at the very least, extracts a tooth or two. While waiting to meet his client, General Sternwood, Marlowe notices a stained-glass panel over the entrance doors of the Sternwood house "showing a knight in dark armor rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn't have any clothes on but some very long and convenient hair. The knight had pushed the visor of his helmet back to be sociable, and he was fiddling with the knots on the ropes that tied the lady to the tree and not getting anywhere. I stood there and thought that if I lived in the house, I would sooner or later have to climb up there and help him. He didn't seem to be really trying." Marlowe asks no questions about the causes of the lady's situation. He is not interested in her identity or her social or economic class; it is enough that she is trapped.

Detective stories are morality plays dealing with the conflicts between good and evil, cruelty and compassion, justice and injustice. The problems of the people who consult Marlowe frequently fall outside conventional definitions of right and wrong; but, at the conclusion of Chandler's novels, evil deeds have been punished in due accord with their seriousness, and right and good are shown to have the upper hand. Thus, it really does not matter if every criminal in Marlowe's world is caught or if every crime is punished. What counts
James Garner in the title role with the two battling sisters Orfamay Quest (Sharon Farrell, top) and Mavis (Gayle Hunnicutt), in the 1969 MGM film Marlowe based on The Little Sister.
is that the guilty suffer sufficiently to satisfy the reader’s need to believe that the demands of society have been served and that, as with all morality plays, a degree of redemption is achieved through suffering. There are, of course, times when a medieval moral balance cannot be achieved in twentieth-century Los Angeles, and Marlowe suffers disillusionment. At one point in *The Big Sleep*, Marlowe comes home to find his client’s daughter in his bed. Realizing the anachronistic absurdity of chivalric behavior in this situation, he glances at a chessboard where he has been playing a solitary game: “The move with the knight was wrong. I put it back where I had moved it from. Knights had no meaning in this game. It wasn’t a game for knights.”

The moral problems of Marlowe’s clients are usually brought on by their own weaknesses. Orfamay Quest, the title character of *The Little Sister* (1949), is a greed-driven medical receptionist from Manhattan, Kansas. In her neurotic lust for money, she emulates Judas, betraying her brother Orrin for a thousand dollars. Orfamay profits by her perfidy, and the reader accepts this because Orrin was a blackmailer and a killer. Nevertheless, Marlowe drops Orfamay as a client, disassociating himself from her treachery. Spelled backwards, “Orfamay” may be read as “Yamafro” or “back to Yama,” the Hindu god of the dead. Whether or not Chandler indulged in word play with Orfamay’s name, it is undeniable that she judged her brother and found him to be worth a thousand dollars, dead.

Another of Marlowe’s morally flawed clients is General Sternwood of *The Big Sleep*. Sternwood is a grotesque parody of a familiar American hero, the self-made millionaire. Although his name suggests ties to the forces of nature, the General is an aged, desiccated husk who frequents a rank greenhouse. “The air was thick, wet, steamy and larded with the cloying smell of tropical orchids in bloom . . . .The plants filled the place, a forest of them, with nasty meaty leaves and stalks like the newly washed fingers of dead men.” Sternwood’s daughters, the vicious Carmen, and Vivian, a ruthless parasite, are his bitter fruit. They are damsels in distress but not fair
maidens. The central problem confronting the Sternwoods is the disappearance of Vivian’s husband, Rusty Regan, a former bootlegger and officer in the IRA. His love of life was like a tonic to the General, and his loss has been very painful. The family is also afflicted with other problems. Carmen takes drugs while posing for pornographic photographs, and Vivian is a compulsive gambler. Marlowe discovers that Carmen has killed Rusty after he rejected her sexual advances. In Marlowe’s scheme of things, evil is equivalent to psychic cancer; sooner or later the symptoms will point to the source of the disease.

Chandler’s detective fiction deals not only with individual but with societal disorders, manifested at times by dishonest and often malevolent members of the police force. These corrupt law-enforcement officials provide the private detective with added opportunity to enter the lists in the service of justice for the individual. When they are vanquished, his superior moral stance is vindicated. Conflicts often arise out of the detective’s endeavor to maintain the trust his client has placed in him in the face of pressures brought to bear by the authorities. Sometimes the detective is imprisoned and brutalized, mirroring the trials faced by his knightly progenitors as defenders of the right. In *The Lady in the Lake* (1943), Marlowe is arrested in Bay City, a wide-open town traditionally associated with organized crime and police corruption. He aggravates his situation when he punches one of the policemen in the nose. His antagonist ‘took his hand away from his face full of blood. ‘Jesus,’ he cracked in a thick horrible voice. ‘This is blood. My blood.’ He let out a wild roar and swung his foot at my face.” Marlowe is badly beaten and thrown in a jail cell. After he has been there for a time:

A man in the blue-gray jail uniform came along between the cells reading numbers. He stopped in front of mine and unlocked the door and gave me the hard stare they think they have to wear on their pans forever and forever and forever. I’m a cop, brother. I’m tough, watch your step, brother, or we’ll fix you up so you’ll crawl on your hands and knees, brother, snap out of it brother, let’s get a load of the truth, brother, let’s go, and let’s not forget we’re tough guys, we’re cops, and we do what we like with punks like you.
As a consequence of his putting his life in jeopardy for his client, in a relationship that is elevated to the level of a covenant by his commitment to it, Marlowe emerges as larger than life, above the petty concerns that circumscribe the lives of ordinary mortals. He devotes himself to a life of service without regard for the material things that make the world go round for most people. Rather, he is a man with a calling who deliberates upon his way of life and accepts its ramifications. In *The Long Goodbye*, Marlowe ponders the vicissitudes of his profession: "What makes a man stay with it nobody knows. You don't get rich, you don't often have much fun. Sometimes you get beaten up or shot at or tossed into the jailhouse. Once in a long while you get dead. Every other month you give it up and find some sensible occupation while you can still walk without shaking your head."
Then the door buzzer rings and you open the inner door to the waiting room and there stands a new face with a new problem, a new load of grief, and a small piece of money.’ Marlowe accepts the renewed challenge and the cycle is repeated.

Chandler lived through two world wars. In June of 1918, as a soldier in the Canadian army, he was wounded near Château Thierry in a German artillery barrage that killed everyone else in the outfit, leaving him the sole survivor. Between the wars he observed the spiraling rise of violent crime in American cities. As daily life became more like the one depicted in the hard-boiled detective story, it seemed impossible to make the outrages of art exceed those of daily life. In a letter in the Dannay Papers, to Lawrence E. Spivak, dated September 4, 1951, Chandler reflected that, “The writing of mysteries or detective stories has never been easy, and it seems to me that it is getting more difficult all the time. A good deal of the apparatus is pretty worn. The formal elements are beginning to seem rather silly, and the threat of fictional violence grows less and less.” The genre was evolving into something closer to what Chandler called the “straight novel,” and the experience of the reader was one of verisimilitude rather than escape.

Yet, in the real world things are often not what they seem, and the detective story is based upon the notion that falsehood masquerades as truth, validating the reader’s life experience. The detective novel continually explores the discrepancy between the individual’s belief in a rational universe and in justice, and what happens in the shifting environment of the detective protagonist. It is emotionally satisfying to learn that Philip Marlowe will rush into danger to defend the weak and imperfect individual. To his early admirers, the world of bootleggers and speakeasies where Marlowe spent so much of his time served as a constant reminder of their own hypocrisy. Readers of today appreciate Marlowe for essentially the same reason, although the framework for hypocritical behavior has been radically altered. Marlowe still pursues what the reader recognizes as the best quality of justice the client can expect in a universe of murky distinctions.
The conflict between good and evil has been in progress since men took sides against one another. The best detective writers, like Chandler, provide glimpses into the primordial depths where the battle is fought and lead the reader along the kaleidoscopic edges of the dark side of life as well.
John le Carré: The Doubleness of Class

WILLIAM WALLING

When Adam delved, and Eve span,
Who was then a gentleman?
—John Ball, 1381

Pseudonyms invariably suggest some kind of doubleness. It may be a doubleness as uncomplicated as the one evoked by a simple change in name such as the transformation of William Sydney Porter into O. Henry. Or, it may be one as uncannily resonant as a "Mark Twain," with its very denotation declaiming the doubleness that so often seemed to obsess Samuel Clemens as a writer. In any case, pseudonyms, even at their most innocuous, remind us of the inevitable disjunction between public and private realms.

Exactly how far from innocuous is the pen name chosen by David Cornwell almost thirty years ago remains a matter of speculation. What is beyond speculation is the fact that his choice—John le Carré—ranks easily today as the most widely recognized pseudonym among all contemporary English novelists. There is also nothing especially mysterious about his decision to publish under a pseudonym, for at the time of his first novel, Call for the Dead in 1961, David Cornwell was working for the British Foreign Office, and regulations there prohibited publication of a book under his own name.

His recourse to a pseudonym, then, seems uncomplicated enough. The specific one chosen, however, is rather another matter. In a 1974 interview, Cornwell himself claimed he had taken "John le Carré" from the sign on a London shop; but it was a claim soon subverted both by the inability of anyone to verify such a shop's existence and by Cornwell's subsequent revisions in the original story. Moreover, the irony of le Carré as a pseudonym for
the kind of fiction Cornwell wrote from the start seems far too rich for the randomness of a fortuitous shop viewing.

From the start, in fact, with *Call for the Dead* combining elements of a mystery and spy novel, it has been Cornwell’s strategy to pre-

Alec Guinness as Smiley in the 1980 Masterpiece Theatre television production of *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*.

sent a superior knowingness at the center of his narrative. That he also began by creating a George Smiley to personify this superior knowingness is surely worth remarking, since Smiley has figured significantly in seven of Cornwell’s eleven novels to date. Indeed, Smiley may be credited, by his reappearance near center stage in
John le Carré: The Doubleness of Class

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy (1974), with restoring the reputation of John le Carré as an author of international best sellers, after the disastrous reception of The Naive and Sentimental Lover (1971), the one novel by Cornwell to dispense entirely with the conventions of spy and mystery fiction. (For the record, the latest two novels published by le Carré—The Little Drummer Girl, 1983, and A Perfect Spy, 1986—contain no reference at all to Smiley; but as Cornwell himself has indicated, Smiley’s retirement is at least partly owing to Alec Guinness’s great success in portraying Smiley on BBC television in 1980, so that the actor’s representation seemed to be intruding imperiously upon the author’s own imagination.)

Still, Smiley or not, it is this superior knowingness in the novels that makes le Carré as a pseudonym so prophetically, and reflexively, ironic. It is an irony that has not gone unnoticed. For one thing, the choice of a pen name that translates into being “square,” within the context of American slang, coupled with a series of novels whose success rests prominently upon the ability to convey a bleak sophistication about betrayal, has helped to make clearer the disturbing pervasiveness of deception in the typical le Carré plot. For another, it is this very atmosphere of deception which runs directly counter to some of the most standard English meanings of square—for example, “honest,” “true,” “not crooked.”

Arguably, then, the reader of a le Carré novel should take the pseudonym as a kind of forewarning, a bit like a Socratic protestation of ignorance. Yet other ironies suggest themselves, ironies that extend well beyond the pseudonym. All too predictable, of course, is the doubleness of le Carré’s reputation. On the one hand, he is the preeminent writer of “spy novels” in contemporary literature; on the other, because his work is so closely identified with a particular genre, traditional literary criticism has tended to deny him such stature as a novelist in the stricter, that is, the more honorific, sense of the term.

With such distinctions, however, we are in an area of judgment rather like the one in which class consciousness operates. Although it would be an excessively crude analogy to liken genre fiction to
the so-called ‘‘lower classes,’’ few of us today are quite so innocent as we once were about the class and gender biases embedded in literary canons. Surely, at any rate, Cornwell himself was aware of the invidious power of literary distinctions at the very moment he was poised to become the world-famous John le Carré. Writing a brief description for an American publisher in 1963 of his third novel, The Spy Who Came in from the Cold, Cornwell remarked that he knew the book was ‘‘a thriller,’’ but he also had hopes it would prove to be ‘‘a novel.’’ What The Spy Who Came in from the Cold proved to be above all else was an enormous best seller, helped along by Graham Greene’s famous verdict that it was ‘‘the best spy story’’ he had ever read.

Viewed from this perspective of literary hierarchies, the ill-fated Naive and Sentimental Lover thus becomes Cornwell’s one full-fledged attempt to enter the mainstream of what is grandly called ‘‘literature,’’ an arbitrary construct which another part of Cornwell (more appropriately here, le Carré) seems rightfully to disdain. In any case, it is the actual class consciousness in le Carré’s work that provokes a much richer signification than the mere rankings to be found in literary categorizations.

As one might suspect, le Carré’s representations of class consciousness have grown more complex during the almost thirty years he has been a practicing novelist. At the head of this paper I quoted the text John Ball used for his sermon at Blackheath at the height of the Peasants’ Revolt in June of 1381. With its simple vision of a classless society, the couplet has retained a curious power, and William Morris alluded to it when he wanted to convey to nineteenth-century England the changes he thought were needed in an inequitable social system (A Dream of John Ball, 1888). It is to this same couplet of Ball’s that George Smiley alludes near the close of the first le Carré novel, Call for the Dead.

Smiley is meditating upon the sad necessity which has led him into killing Dieter Frey, a student-friend from Smiley’s earlier years in Germany but more recently a dangerous adversary in the East German-Soviet bloc:
David Cornwell, who writes under the pen name of John le Carré, in Hamburg in 1964 after the success of *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold.*
Dieter was dead, and he had killed him... They had come from different hemispheres of the night, from different worlds of thought and conduct. Dieter, mercurial, absolute, had fought to build a civilisation. Smiley, rationalistic, protective, had fought to prevent him. "Oh God," said Smiley aloud, "who was then the gentleman..."

The contrast, along with its complications, is clearly defined. The "civilisation" Dieter has been trying to build is a collective, and potentially classless, one; and Smiley, rooted in the traditions of Western individualism, must do all he can to thwart its fruition. At the same time, as his allusion to Ball reveals, Smiley is unable to resist responding as well to the ideality of a more just "civilisation" than the England he is compelled to defend.

With le Carré's second novel, *A Murder of Quality* (1962), the consciousness of class divisions is both narrower and more pointed. Set for a crucial part of its narrative in Carne, a prestigious, and maddeningly pretentious, public school for boys, the novel makes use of the conventions of a traditional murder mystery to evoke the hollowness at the core of an entrenched system of class privileges. (It surely deserves noting that Cornwell taught at Eton for two years before entering the Foreign Office.) Indeed, as the title ironically suggests, there is now a fatal disjunction in the English social system between genuine "quality" (including, to be sure, moral distinction) and the unearned assumptions of class superiority.

It is this disjunction which animates most of the subsequent novels, with varying degrees of subtlety. Leamas, for example, the central figure and ultimate victim in *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, is obviously "not quite a gentleman" and is therefore an appropriate sacrificial pawn in his superiors' policy. Taylor, fatally struck down by a car in the first chapter of *The Looking Glass War* (1965), had the lower-class air of someone "straight off Brighton Pier"; thus, when his superior Leclerc (who, with fitting insularity, conceived the pointless mission that cost Taylor his life) visits the widow, he is appalled at the squalid surroundings in which Taylor lived, musing reflexively: "This was not the society they protected."
Even in the two novels which seem to be farthest from le Carré's customary range of representation, *The Naive and Sentimental Lover* and *The Little Drummer Girl*, there are ample signs of his ongoing meditation about the cost in human terms of social hierarchies. Undeniably, the earlier novel is the more transparent. Reading at times like a twentieth-century updating of *Great Expectations*, *The Naive and Sentimental Lover* opens with its central figure, Aldo Cassidy, fantasizing about becoming a landed gentleman with one swift purchase of a country estate, and then moves on to portray his sustained encounter with a bohemian couple who place into question all his social assumptions.

*The Little Drummer Girl*, on the other hand, with its focus on the Middle East, challenges what one might call the class assumptions of ethnicity, in particular, the post-Holocaust assumption of the Jew as archetypal victim. In terms of le Carré's overall career, the novel represents a bold reversal. From his customary exploration of the inhumanity promoted by unexamined assumptions of superiority, *The Little Drummer Girl* shifts to a dramatization of the inhumanity fostered by a certitude that one's own ethnicity constitutes a final stage in victimization. (In fairness to le Carré, who has been attacked from virtually all political persuasions for the novel, *The Little Drummer Girl* seems to implicate both Israeli and Palestinian in a shared fantasy of exoneration from moral responsibility.)

With le Carré's latest novel, however, we have returned to some of the central themes of his work. Indeed, *A Perfect Spy* might be said to be a culmination of sorts in le Carré's career, were it not more than a little foolishly premature to speak of conclusions for a productive writer still in his fifties. Nonetheless, this eleventh novel of le Carré's does recapitulate the divided consciousness of his first, although now the narrative elaboration is enormously more sophisticated and the suggestion of division a great deal more complex.

Magnus Pym, the perfect spy of the title, is, like the George Smiley of *Call for the Dead*, an Englishman with a significant place
in British intelligence but also with strong emotional ties to an agent in the opposing political camp. For Smiley, it will be recalled, it was the East German Dieter; for Pym it is the Czech Axel. But while Smiley remains loyal to his Englishness by destroying Dieter,

Richard Burton as Alec Leamas in the 1965 Paramount film, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold.*

Magnus arrives at a private rapprochement with Axel, and the two go on to advance each other’s career in espionage by the mutual exchange of state secrets.

At issue here, clearly, is Magnus’s ambiguous Englishness. The division in the Smiley of *Call for the Dead* remains, as we have seen,
relatively simple. Smiley is able to understand the abstract appeal of his opponent’s idealism, but his roots as an Englishman enable him to go on functioning as an effective agent of his own inequitable system. (Emblematic of the later Smiley is his unexpected appearance at the close of *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*: there, as the duped Leamas is shot down, Smiley watches in dismay; but it is a Smiley who stays unambiguously on the West side of the Berlin Wall.) Precisely a quarter-century later, in *A Perfect Spy*, Magnus has no such roots.

The reason for a good part of Magnus’s instability is dramatized for us in what may be le Carré’s single-most ambitious characterization to date: that of Magnus’s fabulously fraudulent father Rick. Still, it is a characterization that cuts, with Rick’s fantastic and often ruthless dreams of splendor, to the heart of the emptiness that haunts so many in the kind of class civilization England has evolved. Unmistakably vulgar at all times, Rick schemes endlessly to become “upper class” and to shape Magnus into a “gentleman.” (This time, fifteen years after *The Naive and Sentimental Lover*, the characterization of Rick reads like an updating of *Great Expectations* from the perspective of Uriah Heep or Alfred Jingle.) Yet Magnus’s natural English father, with his thoroughly fraudulent gentility, is balanced by a second English father who, as surrogate, would seem to embody the positive values of a class system. Unfortunately, the name given this surrogate father, Jack Brotherhood, indicates how unusually hard le Carré is straining after resonance, a straining that makes itself felt in several other places of *A Perfect Spy*. In any event, the explicit strain for the character of Magnus is such that he is destroyed, unable to reconcile the intense divisions within him.

What these divisions reveal, moreover, is how fundamentally English has been the struggle within Magnus’s consciousness. On the one hand, he has for father the fraudulent and finally pathetic Rick, with his “neverwozzers” of great expectations; and on the other, for surrogate, he has Jack Brotherhood, indomitable and class-confident, like a belated Winston Churchill on a smaller scale.
As for the Czech Alex (as, in truth, for the Dieter of the first novel), the entire conception remains shadowy despite its elaboration, little more than an allegorical reminder of that larger world outside a declining England, the obverse side to the American "Cousins."

No doubt David Cornwell will write other novels. *A Perfect Spy*, however, has made even clearer how much the energies of self-analysis have been at work, however obliquely, in the ten novels of genre fiction. (In a recent interview Cornwell has indicated that Rick is based on the memories he has of his own father.) Indeed, this novel might be said to reveal what has always been a crucial theme of the fiction, beneath all the admirable plotting: the dilemma confronting an English consciousness of high intelligence in a universe jointly transformed by England's precipitous loss of power and by an increasingly insistent "democratic" rhetoric made commonplace by the mass media.

Thus, it seems to me, the resolution of this latest novel of le Carré's hasn't been read with sufficient alertness. Ostensibly morbid, it is actually a writerly resolution, supported in its biographical detail by Cornwell's decision some years earlier to resume residence in England in spite of unfavorable tax laws. Magnus's final hiding place is, after all, the Devon coast, not so very far from Jane Austen's Lyme Regis, reminding us of the relative innocence of Empire, before its corruption and decline. An even earlier and spiritually richer England is evoked for us by another choice of Magnus's. It is a choice, furthermore, that inevitably reminds us as well of the first truly great flowering of English as a literary language. For the name under which Magnus chooses to die, the final pseudonym of all in a life of deception, also marks the fresh beginning of a magnificent literature. Magnus, it will be recalled, chooses to die under the pseudonym of "Canterbury."
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KENNETH A. LOHF

Blake gift. Mrs. Edith Blake has presented the papers of her late husband, Henry Beetle Hough (B.Litt., 1918), publisher and editor of the Vineyard Gazette, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, from 1920 to 1965, and author of numerous books of essays about the Vineyard and the editing of a country newspaper, as well as of short stories and magazine articles. In addition to lengthy files of manuscripts and research materials, the more than twenty thousand items contain extensive correspondence relating to the editorial and financial matters of the Gazette, Hough family history, and the personal interests of both Henry Beetle Hough and his first wife, Elizabeth Bowie Hough (B.Litt., 1919), such as wildlife conservation, bird watching, and various civic interests. Among the correspondents are Calvin Coolidge, Max Eastman, Emily Post, Helen Keller, and John F. Kennedy. There is also a lengthy file of letters from James Reston, who purchased the Gazette from the Houghs in 1965. Accompanying the papers is a collection of 350 volumes from the library of Mr. Hough, including many of his own publications, books presented and inscribed to him by fellow residents on the Vineyard, and books that were owned by the Hough family.

Bulliet gift. Approximately 450 letters and manuscripts have been donated by Professor Richard W. Bulliet for addition to the papers of his grandfather, the drama critic Clarence Joseph Bulliet, including correspondence from Edward F. Albee, Edward Everett Horton, Robert B. Mantell, and Vera Zorina; numerous manuscripts of poems, short stories, and articles on the theatre; and photographs, primarily from the 1920s, of performers in the theatre, film, ballet, and fashion worlds. Also presented by Professor Bulliet are several hundred political pamphlets, press books,
and literary first editions, among which are works by Merle Armitage, John Dewey, J. B. Priestley, and Leon Trotsky, as well as a long series of books issued by the Trovillion Press.

Butcher gift. Professor Philip Butcher (Ph.D., 1956) has added to the collection of his papers approximately seventy-five manuscripts and letters and thirty-three volumes of literary works relating to his research on George W. Cable, William S. Braithwaite, and other black writers.

Caldiero estate gift. As a gift from the estate of Frank M. Caldiero we have received a collection of 1,741 volumes, primarily in the fields of American and English literature, murder trials, and juridical history. Volumes singled out for inclusion in the collection of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library include first editions of James M. Cain, T. S. Eliot, William Faulkner, William Hazlitt, Ezra Pound, and Virginia Woolf.

Clifford gift. The research papers relating to Professor James L. Clifford’s biographies, Young Samuel Johnson (1955) and Dictionary Johnson: Samuel Johnson’s Middle Years (1979), have been presented by Mrs. Virginia Clifford. Comprising approximately 8,500 letters, drafts and manuscripts, photographs, reviews, and printed materials, the papers include extensive subject and chronological files pertaining to all aspects of Johnson’s life, his contemporaries, and events of the day.

Feinberg gift. The papers of the late Professor Miriam J. Benkovitz have been donated by her niece, Ms. Miriam Jo Feinberg. The more than nine thousand letters, manuscripts, notes, and printed materials relate to Professor Benkovitz’s published biographies of Aubrey Beardsley, Ronald Firbank, and Frederick Rolfe, Baron Corvo, as well as to her bibliography of Firbank and the two volumes of Richard Aldington’s correspondence which she edited.
Our Growing Collections

Goodrich gift. Mrs. Anne Goodrich has donated, for addition to the papers of her husband, the late Professor L. Carrington Goodrich (A.M., 1927; Ph.D., 1934), more than five thousand pieces of correspondence, notes, and manuscripts dealing primarily with his research on Chinese history and early printing in China, his lectures and course materials, and various publications.

Henry Beetle Hough, publisher of the Vineyard Gazette, photographed by his wife, Edith Blake, at the Intertype, 1972.
(Blake gift)

Hobson bequest. By bequest we have received the papers of Laura Z. Hobson, author of the acclaimed 1947 novel on anti-Semitism in America, Gentleman's Agreement. From the 1920s to the 1940s, Mrs. Hobson worked as an advertising copywriter, a reporter for The New York Post, and director of promotion at Time, Inc., as well as writing stories for Colliers', Ladies Home Journal, McCall's,
Cosmopolitan, and other magazines. After Gentleman's Agreement, she published other best sellers based on contemporary social problems, including The Celebrity, First Papers, Consenting Adult, and The Tenth Month. The last four years of her life were devoted to the

Portion of the first page of the manuscript of Laura Hobson’s Gentleman's Agreement. (Hobson bequest)

writing of her two-volume autobiography, Laura Z: A Life and Laura Z: Years of Fulfillment. The research notes, drafts, typescripts, and galley proofs of her articles and essays, short stories, novels, and autobiography comprise the major portion of Mrs. Hobson's papers. Also among the more than seven thousand items are correspondence files with readers of her controversial books, publishers and editors, and authors and novelists, such as Roger N. Baldwin, Edna Ferber, Moss Hart, John Hersey, John Edgar
Our Growing Collections

Hoover, Hubert H. Humphrey, Ernest Jones, John F. Kennedy, Henry and Clare Boothe Luce, Thomas Mann, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Dorothy Thompson.

Kruger gift. A collection of nearly 150 pieces of twentieth-century sheet music has been donated by Mrs. Linda Kruger (M.S., 1965; D.L.S., 1980) in memory of her father, Leon Markson. The American musical theatre is heavily represented in the gift by popular songs written by Irving Berlin, Hoagy Carmichael, Duke Ellington, and Jerome Kern, among numerous other composers.

Macmillan Publishing Company gift. The Macmillan Publishing Company, through the courtesy of Mr. Charles Scribner III, has presented the archival records of two landmark reference works which the firm has published, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1968) and *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967). The approximately 129,000 papers in the former, dated 1960–1967, comprise editorial, office, and production files, and includes correspondence with social scientists and historians throughout the world who contributed essays to the *Encyclopedia*, typescripts and galley proofs with holograph corrections, and minutes and memoranda of the Editorial Advisory Board; and the latter comprises approximately 31,500 papers of similar archival material documenting editing and production activities for the period, 1961–1966.

Random House gift. A major addition to the Random House Papers was recently received from the publisher; covering the period, 1958–1984, the gift comprises extensive editorial files numbering more than 125,000 letters and publishing records, including papers of Donald Klopf and editors Jason Epstein, Toni Morrison, James Silverman, and C. A. Wimpfheimer. Noted Random House authors are also represented in the gift by files of letters from Woody Allen, W. H. Auden, John Barth, Truman Capote, Robert Graves, John Knowles, Norman Mailer, V. S. Pritchett, Muriel Rukeyser, Carl Sagan, Stephen Spender, Alvin Toffler, Honor Tracy, Gore Vidal, Eudora Welty, and Colin Wilson.

Rapport gift. Twelve rare literary editions and illustrated books, ranging in date from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, have been presented by Dr. Kenneth D. Rapport (A.B., 1958). Among the early books are fine copies of John Suckling’s Aglaura, London, 1648; George Wither’s An Improvement of Imprisonment, Disgrace, Poverty, into Real Freedom; Honest Reputation; Perdurable Riches; Evidenced in a few Crums & Scraps lately Found in a Prisoners-Basket at Newgate, London, 1661; and the Jacob Tonson edition of Julius Caesar’s Works, London, 1712. In addition to three Limited Editions Club books illustrated and signed by Arthur Szyk, the gift includes twentieth century editions with etchings and lithographs by Constantin Brancusi, Jean Charlot, André Lhote, and Maurice Utrillo; there is also an impressive work illustrated by Joan Miro, Peintures Murales, 1961, one of 150 copies signed by the artist.

Saffron gift. An important eighteenth-century manuscript relating to The Grub-Street Journal has been presented by Dr. Morris H. Saffron (A.B., 1925; A.M., 1949; Ph.D., 1968). Edited by Richard Russel and John Martyn, the Journal, a weekly paper issued from 1730 to 1737, satirized in its columns contemporary issues and such literary works as Richard Bentley’s edition of Paradise Lost; some of the attacks on Bentley’s edition, in the form of letters, are
signed "Zoilus," a pseudonym frequently used by Martyn. The eighty-two page manuscript presented by Dr. Saffron, most likely in the hand of Martyn himself, is a compendium of the texts of the "Zoilus" letters attacking Bentley's Milton, many of which were published in the *Journal* in 1731-1732.

Miniature from the Papal Bull of Paul III depicting the burning of the books of the Jews and other non-Christians at the behest of the Dominican friars. (Schaefler gift)

*Schaefler gift.* Among the most impressive of the rarities presented recently by Mr. and Mrs. Sam Schaefler is the apparently only known complete copy of the Papal Bull of Pope Paul III, printed on vellum by Antonio Blado in Rome between 1540 and 1549.
Printed in Blado's magnificent italic type, the broadside, measuring approximately 29 by 24 inches, established the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament at the Dominican monastery at Fanjaux, France, and was specially illuminated for presentation to that institution with nine miniatures within a wide, hand painted floral border; the remarkable series of miniatures includes one that depicts the books of the Jews and other non-Christians being relegated to the fires at the behest of Dominican friars, as well as others depicting St. Catherine of Siena, St. Francis, St. Thomas Aquinas, the Virgin and Child, St. Peter Martyr, and St. Matthew.

Also presented by Mr. and Mrs. Schaefer are sixteen fourteenth-century documents pertaining to commercial transactions of the Jewish community at Apt in Provence, France; a group of eighteenth-century letters pertaining to New York; nine French documents relating to the American Revolution, including three letters written to James Madison; more than a hundred literary letters and manuscripts written by French, American, and English authors, including Anatole France, Victor Hugo, Harold Lasky, Edwin Markham, John Howard Payne, Romain Rolland, and Sir Walter Scott, among numerous others. Of special note among several printed items in the Schaeflers' gift is an 1841 Nathaniel Currier color lithograph, imprinted "In Memory," which is among the lithographer's early work.

Trilling gift. A group of fifty-four letters and papers have been presented by Mrs. Diana Trilling for addition to the papers of Professor Lionel Trilling. Dealing primarily with publishing matters, The Mid-Century Book Society, and activities of the English Department, the papers donated, dating from 1936 to 1975, also include two important literary letters: one written in 1949 by E. M. Forster, discussing his own libretto for Benjamin Britten's Billy Budd and Professor Trilling's book on Matthew Arnold, and the other by Stephen Spender in which he writes at length about Trilling's novel The Middle of the Journey.
Mogul painting of a Hindu sage, from the collection of Sivaji, the great Mahratta ruler, ca. 1660. (Woods bequest)
Winchell memorial gift. The friends and associates of the late Constance M. Winchell (M.S. in L.S., 1930) have contributed funds in her memory for the acquisition of a rare and elegantly printed first edition by Edna St. Vincent Millay: one of thirty-six copies on Japan vellum, signed by the poet, of *Conversation at Midnight*, a long satirical poem, published by Harper & Brothers in 1937, in which a group, representing various shades of interest and opinion, discuss controversial social, political, and aesthetic issues of the time. The edition was printed by Arthur, Edna, and Elaine Rushmore at their Golden Hind Press in Madison, New Jersey, and the copy acquired has the added distinction of being the Press’s own copy with the book label of Edna and Arthur Rushmore, the latter of whom was the designer of the Millay books published by Harper & Brothers. Miss Winchell, who died in 1983, served as Columbia’s reference librarian from 1941 until her retirement in 1962 and was the compiler of several editions of *The Guide to Reference Books* and its supplements.

Woodring gift. A group of seven literary first editions and association volumes has been presented by Professor and Mrs. Carl Woodring, including works by Philip J. Bailey, S. T. Coleridge, Thomas Gurney, H. Cotton Minchin, Laurence Oliphant, Robert Southey, and D. G. Rossetti. Among the association books and limited editions, the following may be singled out for special mention: John Masefield’s copy of Rossetti’s *Poetical Works, Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 1936, extra-illustrated with numerous engraved portraits; and Minchin’s *The Legion Book*, privately printed in 1929 by The Curwen Press in a numbered signed edition, containing contributions by most of the major British writers and artists of the time.

Woods bequest. By bequest from Louise T. Woods we have added four art works to the George D. Woods Collection: an oil painting by Yves Brayer, “Village Espagnol,” painted in the 1920s and
Our Growing Collections

presented to Mr. Woods by his colleagues at the World Bank on the occasion of his retirement as President and Chairman on March 29, 1968; and three exceptionally fine seventeenth-century Mogul paintings, depicting Nawab Fakar Khan with a hawk perched on his right hand, a Hindu sage seated under a tree with a lion, and a group of Sadhus engaged in religious discourse. The last-named is signed by Mansur, a master of Mogul painting. Each of the paintings is mounted on an album leaf, and each has on its verso calligraphic verses or seals of former owners.
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