A TAXONOMY *OF* MYSTERY TRICKS

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Introduction

The two longest essays in this collection are "An Examination of British and American Mystery Short Stories" and "The Peculiar Criminal Motives of Mystery."[1] Both were serialized in *Jewel* (*Hoseki*) magazine a few years ago. Shortly before writing those essays, I read the "Locked Room Lecture" in John Dickson Carr's novel *The Hollow Man*, and found it fascinating. It sparked a kind of ambition in me, and I thought it might be interesting to write something like it, covering all of mystery fiction's tricks.

So, with the intention of accumulating material, I began taking notes on the tricks in British and American mysteries. Fortunately, I had already read a considerable number of post-war novels, and taken simple notes. I decided to use them as a starting point, and focus on gathering short stories, which I hadn't read much of until then. At the time, I owned about a dozen British and American short story masterpiece collections. I read through them, created cards for each work, and prepared a table of trick frequencies. Then, I read almost every back issue of *New Youth* (*Shin Seinen*) and the other mystery magazines, created cards for each translated story, and made a frequency table for them as well, which I compared with the frequency table for the British and American collections. In this way, I gathered trick cards for some four or five hundred short stories. "An Examination of British and American Mystery Short Stories" and

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[1]"A Taxonomy of Mystery Tricks" was published as part of Rampo's 1954 essay collection *The Illusion Castle Continued* (*Zoku Geneijo*). The other essays are not included in this standalone edition.

"The Peculiar Criminal Motives of Mystery" were both byproducts of this effort. Upon rereading those essays, I found traces everywhere of the fact they were written as preparation for creating a taxonomy of tricks. I realized it would be inconsistent to include them in this collection, while omitting the fundamental discussion on tricks. It would be like having an introduction and no main argument; not only would readers find it unsatisfying, I would be unsatisfied as well. So I hurriedly decided to write down a trick catalog and explication.

I attempted to create a taxonomy after the aforementioned articles were serialized in *Jewel*, but was not satisfied with the results. At first, I simply took my notes on British and American masterpiece novels and short stories, generalized them into categories, and tried to list them in as orderly a fashion as possible. Since my categories weren't arrived at deductively, the taxonomy was strangely irregular. I redid the classification several times, but it never felt quite right.

Thus, I chose to consult with some mystery enthusiasts from the Mystery Writer's Club. Until that point, I had also not written any notes on Japanese works. I wanted to get additional examples from people well-versed in Japanese material, so I made several trips to the third floor of *Jewel*'s publisher, Iwaya Shoten.

Every Saturday in the reception room on the third floor of Iwaya Shoten, there is a gathering of some of the mystery fiction lovers from the Mystery Writer's Club. Although its members have changed over time, during my visits, the club regulars were Kenji Watanabe, Takehiko Takeda, Ryūji Kurobe, Kawatarō Nakajima, and Eiji Katsura. I also saw many near-regulars, like Eizō Ninomiya, Toshiyasu Uno, Yūzō Chiyo, Shachihiko Okada, Kyōsuke Kusuda, and Saburō Washio. I believe I visited every Saturday for four weeks. I read out my taxonomy and 700-plus trick examples, and asked for their advice.

700-plus tricks may seem like a lot, but the people gathered there

were all well-versed in mysteries, foreign and domestic. In many cases, just mentioning the author and title was enough for them to know the trick involved. I only had to briefly explain the works that people hadn't read. After four four or five hour sessions—roughly twenty hours—my task was complete.

Among the members, the ones who gave me the most advice were Eizō Ninomiya, Eiji Katsura, Kenji Watanabe, Kawatarō Nakajima, and Kyōsuke Kusuda. I wrote down works that hadn't been included in my catalog as I listened, and so was able to add a large number of Japanese stories with different tricks.

However, this method was, of course, imperfect. When I explained the trick taxonomy, the people around me spoke if they had more examples of a particular kind. Since they only told me what they could recall on the spot, things that no one thought of at the time are omitted. The Western examples are limited to the works I read and a few that Mr. Ninomiya and some others added, while the Japanese examples are limited to what came to people's minds during the four meetings. Looking over the examples for each trick listed below, I see many places where I think someone will point out that I'm missing an important work, especially a Japanese work. In fact, I'm anticipating such feedback. I hope readers who notice an important work missing will take the trouble to inform me.

But while I consulted with the connoisseurs of the club and did what I could, that doesn't mean I immediately completed the taxonomy. In fact, I made no progress until today. When I consider why, several reasons come to mind: the 700-some trick examples were still not enough; the classification wasn't as good as I thought it would be; and writing in a manner similar to Carr's "Locked Room Lecture" would require many pages and more than just incomplete notes, such that I'd probably have to reread each work. I began to doubt whether it was worth spending so much time and effort on this task.

Moreover, unless I named the original works when explaining each trick, it wouldn't be very interesting, but doing so would be like revealing the secret behind a magic trick. Readers who hadn't yet read the work would have their future enjoyment halved. On the other hand, writing without disclosing titles would require long explanations, be incredibly tedious, and halve the value of the trick discussions themselves. Many days passed while I vacillated over what to do.

Additionally, I thought it would be interesting to investigate stories from literature and history, before the birth of mystery as a genre. That way I could find the origins of each trick, and discuss its lineage. I managed to trace a few tricks, like "Faceless Corpses," "Locked Rooms," and "The Culprit and the Victim Are the Same," but it was impossible to quickly research all the tricks in this way. So a desire to wait until those investigations were complete also contributed somewhat to my delay.

However, as I mentioned before, in a book centered on "An Examination of British and American Short Stories," I could not simply exclude a discussion of tricks. I therefore decided to at least note down the items from my trick catalog, and add a minimum of explanation. This way I could give myself some peace of mind and ask for the reader's sympathy. If I had the inclination to write a book on tricks as detailed as Carr's "Locked Room Lecture" within the next year of two, I could simply attach a disclaimer to this book and be satisfied (the four essays after this, from "Ice as a Weapon" to "The Desire to Transform," expand on some of the tricks touched on here; if every trick were discussed that way, it would make for a sufficiently thick book). But I don't want to invest significantly more time writing about tricks, so if a skeleton isn't put to print, the trick taxonomy I took such pains to create may end up never seeing the light of day. To avoid such a regrettable situation, I am

hastily jotting down an outline of my taxonomy, fully aware that it is a highly incomplete, unfinished product.

Now, onto the classification of tricks. Initially, my desire to create something resembling a coherent classification system led me to three major categories: "Tricks Concerning Humans," "Tricks Concerning Space," and "Tricks Concerning Time." I tried to sort everything into these boxes, but doing so left me with embarrassingly few examples purely concerning time. I tried various other unifying principles, but none left me satisfied. One reason is probably that I grew disheartened and put the task aside. However, given the above circumstances, I must now somehow organize things so I can present them here. Therefore, I'm shelving the notion of a formal classification system. Instead I will focus on simply listing all the tricks I collected, generalizing inductively.

The main text intersperses categories with explanations, which may make the classification scheme unclear, so I will include a sort of table of contents[2], to allow you to see all categories at a glance. The number following each category represents the number of matching examples listed in the main text. By dividing these by the total number of examples, 821, you can find the percentage of examples that fall under that category.

As you can see, there are nine major categories. However, sections 7-9 use different characteristics from the preceding categories. From a classification perspective, they should be separated, but to avoid that hassle, I have simply listed them in parallel. Also, sections 1-6 don't form a classification system either. Section 6 especially is quite disorganized. It's simply a loose collection of tricks that were difficult to put in any of the preceding categories, but I had no better ideas.

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[2]The table of contents has been moved to the beginning of this edition.

Due to time and page length limitations, the text that follows has numerous spots where you may need to guess at what I mean. Some parts may be difficult for readers unaccustomed to mystery fiction to understand, but to write in a way that is interesting and understandable to everyone would require many more pages, so I can only ask for your understanding. The explanatory text varies in complexity; tricks from works without a Japanese translation are described in more detail, while stories that everyone is familiar with are written about as succinctly as possible.

Some examples have been included in multiple categories. Removing duplicates might have reduced the total count of examples by about ten to twenty percent, but for the sake of writing convenience, I wasn't too strict about it. The tricks from many Japanese works are common knowledge, so I mention both author and title. For Western examples, I often mention only the author. The titles are preserved in my original notes.

1. Tricks Concerning the Culprit's Identity (225)

1.1 One Person, Two Roles (130)

Of the 821 trick examples I collected, 130 fall under "One Person, Two Roles," making it the most frequently seen trick. The next most frequent are "Locked Room" tricks with 83 examples, which I will describe later. Whether "One Person, Two Roles" or "Locked Room," the repeated use of a trick may seem absurd to those outside the mystery fiction world. However, even with the same trick, there can be many variations, and as long as this room for variation and creativity is made use of, repetition needn't invoke disgust. Now, I've divided the "One Person, Two Roles" trick into subcategories as follows:

1.1.1 The culprit disguises themselves as the victim (47) This category includes uses of "One Person, Two Roles" where the culprit pretends to be the victim, or something similar. It is further subdivided as follows:

1.1.1.1 The culprit disguises themselves before the crime (16)

The culprit may temporarily pretend to be the victim, in order to remove themselves from suspicion. Among well-known works with a Japanese translation, Percival Wilde's *Inquest* is an apt example. This category also contains two novels by Agatha Christie, novels by A.E.W. Mason and Ngaio Marsh, and short stories by Christie and Ernest Bramah, for a total of 7 examples.

Alternatively, the culprit may swap identities with the victim. These stories involve soldier impersonating a wealthy fallen comrade, or the survivor of a shipwreck impersonating a wealthy victim whose identity they know well, and returning home after many years to secure a fortune. The purpose of this swap may be to commit a crime. A well-known example is Freeman Crofts' *The Ponson Case*. Also in this category are novels by Helen MacInnes, Virgil Markham, G.D.H. Cole, Anthony Hope, and Mary Chalmondely, and short stories by Seishi Yokomizo, Edogawa Rampo, and Nicholas Brady, totaling 9 examples.

1.1.1.2 The culprit disguises themselves after the crime (31)

After killing the victim, the culprit may disguise themselves as the victim and pretend they are still alive, in order to create an alibi. A suitable example is Crofts' *Sir John Magill's Last Journey*. This category includes novels by Carter Dickson, Ellery Queen, Raymond Chandler, and short stories by Christie, E.C. Bentley, G.K. Chesterton (four examples), James Hilton, and J.D. Beresford, totaling 14 examples.

Alternatively, the culprit may switch places with the victim, by disguising themselves as the person they killed and continuing to live that way. The oldest example of a work that uses this trick, to my knowledge, is Charles Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge* (released 1841, the same year as "Murders in the Rue Morgue"). I discuss this in detail in a separate essay, "Dickens' Pioneering." More modern examples include Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Valley of Fear*, novels by John Dickson Carr, Michael Innes, Kay Cleaver Strahan, Harrington Hext, Crofts, and Erle Stanley Gardner, and short stories by H.C. Bailey, Teignmouth Shore, Doyle, Dickson, Chesterton (three examples), Christie, and Rampo, totaling 17 examples.

1.1.2 An accomplice disguises themselves as the victim (4) An accomplice of the culprit disguises themselves as the victim, is seen

by others, and creates an alibi for the culprit. Desides Carr's *It Walks by Night*, this category includes novels by Christie and Rampo, and a short story by Dickson.

1.1.3 The culprit disguises themselves as one of the victims (6)
Besides S.S. Van Dine's *The Greene Murder Case*, this category includes novels by Christie, Stanislas Steeman, and Queen, and two short stories by Chesterton.

1.1.4 The culprit and victim are the same person (9) I find it particularly interesting to see how stories violate the common-sense notion that culprit and victim, being enemies, can never be the same person. There are three cirumstances in which this can occur:

1.1.4.1 The culprit steals their own belongings (4) Someone may break into their own safe and simulate a robbery in order to avoid repaying debts. An old short story by Arthur Morrison, "The Stanway Cameo Mystery," even has a character sneak into their own home. Further examples include two short stories by Melville Davisson Post, and one by Chesterton.

1.1.4.2 The culprit wounds or poisons themselves (4) The culprit wants to ensure outsiders see them as the victim of an attempted murder. This is slightly different from the "Suicide Disguised as Murder" trick I will discuss later. One example is my short story "Who" ("Nanimono"). This category also includes novels by Queen and Raymond Postgate, and a short story by Saki.

1.1.4.3 The culprit plays two roles, erases a fictitious identity, and pretends to be the murderer (1) This unusual idea is found only in one of Ronald Knox's short stories. The protagonist wants to commit suicide due to an incurable disease, but lacks the courage to do so. He fakes a murder so he can be sentenced to death—a truly unconventional premise. The plot is described in more detail in my essay on "The

Peculiar Criminal Motives of Mystery," under "Another Example of Escape."

1.1.5 The culprit disguises themselves as a third party (20)
There are numerous instances of a culprit using a disguise to cast suspicion elsewhere in both foreign and domestic mystery, making it impossible to record them all without omission, but examples include Eden Phillpotts' *The Red Redmaynes*, and novels by Gaston Leroux, Christie (two examples), Émile Gaboriau, Crofts, Queen, Hext, Hilton, Dickson, Maurice Leblanc, and Junichirō Tanizaki. This category also includes two short stories by Doyle, three by Chesterton, and examples by Christie, Baroness Orczy, and Dorothy Sayers.

1.1.6 The culprit disguises themselves as a fictional character (18)

1.1.6.1 The culprit lives a double life, erases their own identity, and commits the crime as a fictional character, thereby obfuscating the motive (10) Examples include John Rhode's *The Murders in Praed Street*, novels by R. Austin Freeman, Crofts, Israel Zangwill, W.F. Harvey, Anthony Abbott, and Dickson, and short stories by Doyle and Chesterton, as well as my own short story "Pomegranate" ("Zakuro").

1.1.6.2 The culprit lives a double life, commits crimes under their fictional identity, then erases that fictional identity (7) One example is Doyle's "The Man with the Twisted Lip." Other examples include novels by Christie and Roger Scarlett, and short stories by Knox and Chesterton (3 examples).

1.1.6.3 The victim happens to play two roles, making it appear as if one identity killed the other and disappeared, but in reality someone disguised as that identity was the killer (1) The only example of this elaborate trick is A.A. Milne's *The Red House Mystery*.

1.1.7 The culprit uses a body double (19) The category involves creating an alibi and avoiding suspicion by using someone else as a body double. Various tricks that are more accurately "Two Persons, One Role" rather than "One Person, Two Roles" are included, as well as tricks where twins play a single role. Besides Christopher Bush's *The Perfect Murder Case*, this category includes novels by Carr, Mignon G. Eberhart, Strahan, Chandler, MacInnes, Cole, Johnston McCulley, Takatarō Kigi, and Rampo, and short stories by Doyle (three examples), Christie, Chesterton (two examples), Clouston, Vakkel, Mallock, and Austin.

1.1.8 One Person, Three Roles and others (7) These are included as extensions of "One Person, Two Roles," and are not too numerous. For "One Person, Three Roles," there's Phillpotts' *The Red Redmaynes*, Cole's *The Death of a Millionarie*, my *Beast in the Shadows*, and Chesterton's eccentric short story of human disappearance, "The Blast of the Book." For "Three Persons, One Role," there's Carr's *The Unicorn Murders*. For "Two Persons, Four Roles," there's Sayers' *Strong Poison* and Saburō Kōga's "The Invisible Thief" ("Sugata Naki Kaitō").

1.2 Unexpected Culprits (75)

1.2.1 The detective is the culprit (13) The beginnings of "the detective is the culprit" can be seen in Poe's "Thou Art the Man," but to my knowledge, the first story to actually use this trick was Zangwill's novel of 1891. After that came *Michael Dred, Detective* (1899), a more obscure collaborative work by Marie and Robert Leighton, then Leroux's well-known *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* (1907). Subsequent novels with this trick include works by Leblanc, A.E. Fielding, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Christie (two examples), Queen, and Shirō Hamao. It is also featured in two short stories by Chesterton.

1.2.2 The judge, policeman, or jailer is the culprit (16) This trick, where the judge is the culprit of the very case they are adjudicating, is indeed a unique one. Though the concept seems like it could be traced back quite far in both Western and Eastern contexts, I lack specific knowledge of its early appearances. Of the examples I do know, an early one is the short story "The Broken Jug" by German writer Heinrich von Kleist (died 1811). In mystery fiction, Post's "Naboth's Vineyard" (included in his 1918 short story collection) is an early example. There's one instance in Chesterton's short stories, and in recent years, this trick has been used in a Queen novel as well. Cases where the culprit is not a judge but a prosecutor include A.K. Green's *Dark Hollow* and Akimitsu Takagi's *The Noh Mask Murder Case* (*Nomen Satsujin Jiken*). Stories where a police officer is the culprit include Jūran Hisao's *Demon City* (*Mato*), which makes the police chief the culprit, and Carr's *The Lost Gallows*, which makes the deputy chief the culprit. Other works where a police officer is the culprit include short stories by Dashiell Hammett, C. Daly King, Thomas Burke (in his famous work "The Hands of Mr. Ottermole"), Chesterton, and Bailey. The "jailer is the culprit" trick appears in a Queen novel and a Chesterton short story. Additionally, one Carr novel features an impossible crime where a currently imprisoned inmate is the perpetrator.

1.2.3 The discoverer of the crime is the culprit (3) It's not uncommon in reality for the person reporting a murder to be the true culprit. As such cases are mundane, they are not included here. Also, since there is a section on "Locked Rooms" later, examples in which the discoverer of a locked room is the culprit are omitted here as well. Remaining examples include two novels by Christie, one of which is *The Secret of Chimneys*, and a short story by Bentley.

1.2.4 The narrator is the culprit (7) This category also omits examples that are part of a "Locked Room" scenario. The first work

to use this trick was Swedish author S.A. Duse's *Dr. Smirno's Diary* (originally published 1917, almost a decade before Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, 1926). Works by Anthony Berkeley, Virgil Markham, Nicholas Blake, Seishi Yokomizo, and Akimitsu Takagi also fall under this category.

1.2.5 A seemingly incapable minor or elderly person is the culprit (12) Examples of minors as culprits can be found in Queen's *The Tragedy of Y*, and novels by Beresford, Doyle, Queen, Postgate, and Blake, as well as short stories by Doyle and Saki. Examples where the elderly are the culprits include Wilde's *Inquest* and works by J. Jeffrey Farjeon, Takatarō Kigi, and Unno Jūza.

1.2.6 A disabled or ill person is the culprit (7) Among stories with disabled culprits, "Strange Tracks," a short story by Austrian author Balduin Groller, is the most notable. Other examples include two novels by Carr, one by J.S. Fletcher, and one by Unno Jūza in Japan. While I believe there are stories where an ill person is the culprit in the West, I have not read any. Japanese examples can be found in *Broken Reeds* (*Oriashi*) by Takatarō Kigi, and works by Kazuo Shimada.

1.2.7 A corpse is the culprit (1) A truly outlandish concept where a pistol is placed in a corpse's hand, and rigor mortis causes the finger to pull the trigger, killing a victim in the room. There is just one example: Arthur J. Rees' "The Finger of Death." Additionally, Van Dine mentions a real-life instance of this occurring in Chapter 13 of *The Kennel Murder Case*.

1.2.8 A puppet is the culprit (1) A wooden puppet holds a pistol, and as water drips from the ceiling, the wood swells, causing the puppet's finger to move and fire the weapon. Green describes a French novel of this sort in an essay, though both author and title are unknown (refer to the October 1928 issue of *New Youth*).

1.2.9 An unexpectedly large number of people are culprits (2)
Examples of this include Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* and
Knox's short story "The Murder at the Towers."

1.2.10 An animal is the culprit (13) These stories aim to sur-
prise the reader with the realization that what they believed to be
a human culprit was, in fact, an animal. First was Poe's orangutan
in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"; then came Doyle's adder in
"The Adventure of the Speckled Band;" then a phantom hound, a
horse, a lion's jaw, a bull's horn, a unicorn, a cat, a venomous spi-
der, a bee, a leech, and a parrot (as a thief). The authors of these
works include Doyle (three examples), Thomas Hanshew, Freeman,
Crofts, Christie, Hubot, Anthony Wynne, Victor Whitechurch, and
Morrison.

1.3 Culprit Self-Erasure (14)

1.3.1 The culprit fakes their death by fire (4) Often, people will
falsely believe that someone died in a fire. If human bones are
discovered in the ashes, they could turn out to be animal bones or
anatomical specimens. There are also intricate cases where one is
led to believe this trick was used, but in fact it wasn't. This category
includes one short story by Doyle and two by Freeman, as well as a
novel by Crofts.

1.3.2 The culprit fakes their death by other means (3) Instances
where someone pretends to drown and then assumes another identity
were already discussed under "One Person, Two Roles," so they're
not included here. This leaves only a few other examples. There are
two stories, from Steeman and Christie, where several characters
seem to die mysteriously, but in reality, one survives. Addition-
ally, Dickson once employed a technique used to play dead upon

encountering a wild animal in the mountains. A man is found lying on a rocky seashore during a storm. When a friend discovers him and checks his pulse, it seems to have stopped. While the friend rushes to town for help, the man quietly gets up and leaves. It's later believed he was swept away by the waves, but in fact, he used a trick to make it appear as if his pulse had stopped. Some say it's done with willpower, but it's actually done by placing a small ball or something similar under your armpit, and pressing on the artery.

1.3.3 The culprit undergoes a physical transformation (3) While there are many examples of self-erasure by scarring one's face or burning it with sulfuric acid, both writers and actual criminals have considered going a step further, and using plastic surgery to completely change a person's appearance. Since these examples involve changing one's appearance to become someone else, formally, they belong in the "One Person, Two Roles" category. However, some simply don't fit that description, and so are included here. Some of the works listed under "One Person, Two Roles" 1.1.6.1 also fall into this category, but examples where the emphasis is on transformation include a collaborative work led by Abbott, *The President's Mystery* (described in more detail in my essay on "The Peculiar Criminal Motives of Mystery," under "Escape"), Kuroiwa Ruikō's translated work *The Phantom Tower* (*Yureito*), and my own short story "Pomegranate" ("Zakuro").

1.3.4 The culprit disappears (4) These involve a literal disappearance. Historically, E.T.A. Hoffman wrote about a human disappearance in *Mademoiselle de Scuderi*. When a person vanishes in a situation where vanishing is seemingly impossible, such as while scaling a wall or running away, it essentially creates a locked-room mystery, but outdoors. Hoffman settles on having a hidden door in the wall, which works because it's not a mystery novel, but having a secret door in a "locked room" isn't particularly interesting. Mysteries

from the Cabriolet era often described a culprit fleeing into a dead end enclosed by high walls, and vanishing as if they had evaporated. These scenes still appear in recent adventure mysteries, but they're seldom masterful tricks. Margery Allingham's *Flowers for the Judge* is one of the better novels to feature a culprit disappearance, but the solution is more physical technique than magic trick, so I don't find it particularly noteworthy. The magician-author Carr has, of course, made use of disappearance tricks several times. *The Curse of the Bronze Lamp* centers around a human disappearance, but the trick is a simple one where the master switches places with a servant, which is not all that impressive. The trick in Herbert Brean's recent work *Wilders Walk Away* seems interesting in comparison. It is a human disappearance novel, and a few of the tricks in it are quite well executed. Tricks like someone disappearing from a locked room with a window on a festival day, or footprints suddenly vanishing on a sandy beach, are purely illusionist in nature, but nevertheless interesting. I feel there is more to write about self-erasure, but my notes on these tricks are incomplete enough that I cannot recall more at this moment.

1.4 Unusual Victims (6)

Examples of tricks involving victims are relatively few and insignificant, so instead of putting them into a separate section, I will address them here. Besides mysteries concerning the culprit's identity, method, and motive, naturally there can also be mysteries concerning the victim. Mystery stories been written where instead of seeking the culprit, the investigator seeks to identify the victim. Take, for example, a work by Pat McGerr. In a place far from their homeland, several individuals get hold of a newspaper from back home, and read an article about a crime. However, the victim's name is torn

and unreadable, so using the newspaper article, they guess who the victim might be. In addition, while not precisely about searching for a victim, there are stories where, due to the victim being unusual, the reason for the murder is completely inscrutable. As the motive is unknown, one might argue for these examples to be recorded in the section on motives, but there are some that stress the "mystery of the victim" more than the "mystery of the motive," so they're included here. Many works of this type involve multiple seemingly unconnected victims, whose murders appear to be the aimless acts of a homicidal maniac, but ultimately have some rational explanation. Christie's *And Then There Were None*, Cornell Woolrich's *The Black Angel*, Rhode's *The Murders in Praed Street*, Craig Rice's *The Fourth Postman*, and Steeman's *The Six Dead Men* belong in this category.

2. Tricks Concerning Exiting the Scene (106)

2.1 Locked Room Mysteries (83)

One of the earliest detective novels to take the "impossibility" of the locked room as its theme was Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." Both Poe's work and Leroux's much later *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* were inspired by a real incident. Around forty years ago, I read George Sims' account of that incident in the December 1913 issue of *The Strand Magazine,* and have kept my notes on it to this day. According to Sims' account, the incident occurred roughly a hundred years before his time (at the beginning of the 19th century). Back then, a young lady named Rose Delacourt lived on the top floor of an apartment building in Montmartre, Paris, in a room was about sixty feet above the ground. When she didn't wake up by noon one day, police broke into her room and found her dead, stabbed in the chest while lying in bed. The weapon was still embedded in her body, and seemed to have been thrust with such force that the tip protruded from her back. The window was locked from the inside, as was the room's only door. The key was still in the keyhole, and even the bolt secured. The sole passage was the fireplace chimney, but upon inspection, it was impossible for even the skinniest person to pass through. No items were stolen, and no known grievances were uncovered during the investigation. Although the case was discussed many times over the years by crime researchers, it was reportedly still unsolved a century later, in 1913. However, stories

involving locked room mysteries can be traced even further back. Herodotus's *Histories,* from the 5th century BC, contains a tale from around 1200 BC about the Egyptian king Rhampsinitus, which offers an early example of locked room mystery. A builder, commissioned to construct the king's treasury, secretly builds in a flaw for his children, and leaves instructions for its use in his will. Hs sons use the flaw to sneak in and steal the treasures. Another Greek writer from the 2nd century BC, Pausanias, tells a similar story about the architects Agamedes and Trophonius, involving a locked room mystery with a secret flaw.

Another ancient example can be found in the "Story of Bel," from the Apocrypha of the Old Testament. The king of Babylon worships an idol god named Bel. Despite presenting offerings of sheep, grain, and numerous other items, then locking the temple doors to prevent anyone from entering or leaving, the offerings disappear overnight—a locked room mystery. The belief is that the god Bel is consuming these offerings, until a young man named Daniel, playing the role of a detective, exposes the secret mechanism: a secret passage under the temple altar, through which priests may sneak in during the night and take the offerings.

In both Herodotus and the Biblical Apocrypha, there is a secret entrance, so by today's standards these would be considered unfair locked-room mysteries. In fact, on reflection, even Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" could be considered unfair, because the window nail was broken from the inside. So, what would be the first "locked-room" story without such flaws? Doyle's "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (included in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, published 1892) and Zangwill's novel of 1891 were written around the same time. Compared to the relatively simple "The Speckled Band," the latter novel is a much more satisfying locked-room read. Though Zangwill's book has not received much attention in the West,

it ought to be recognized for using the most advanced locked-room trick of its time, and for pioneering another major trick.

I have broadly categorized locked room tricks into cases where the culprit was not in the room at the time of the crime, cases where the culprit was in the room at the time of the crime, and cases where neither the culprit nor the victim were in the room at the time of the crime. These are further subdivided as seen below. While it goes without saying that I referred to Carr's "Locked Room Lecture," the classification system is my own, and I have added some tricks that were not mentioned there.

2.1.1 The culprit is not in the room at the time of the crime (39)

2.1.1.1 A mechanical devices within the room is used (12) Examples include: a bullet from a telephone (a short story by Cole), an electrocuting telephone receiver (a novel by Arthur B. Reeve), a lockhole pistol device (a novel by Van Dine), a gunshot timed with a clock (from Carr's lecture), a falling dagger (a novel by Phillpotts), a pendulum set to inflict a blow (a short story by Sayers and "Crime Scene" ["Hanzai no Ba"] by Takashi Asuka), a suffocating bed (I recall reading a translation by Kuroiwa Ruikō, probably of a story by Fortuné du Boisgobey, where a canopy bed automatically folds into a box, suffocating the sleeper), a poison gas-emitting bed (a novel by Phillpotts), a pistol or other device fired by the melting of ice or the expansion of freezing water (Carr's lecture), an arson timed with chemical reaction (Saburō Kōga's "The Amber Pipe" ["Kohaku no Paipu"]), and arson timed with a clock and electrical bomb (a novel by Richard Hull). Most of these tricks are overly mechanical and, with few exceptions, cannot escape being deemed childish.

2.1.1.2 The murder is conducted from through a slightly opened window—entry from the window being impossible as the room is above the third floor—or

some other small gap in the locked room (13) Examples include: firing a dagger from a gun from a window in the opposite building (a short story by Freeman), firing a bullet made of rock salt through a window from afar (a novel by Dickson; the rock salt dissolves inside the body), hanging the victim when they stick their head out of a window, using a looped rope lowered from the floor above, then lowering the body to the ground to simulate suicide (a short story by Chesterton), and shooting a pistol from outside the room, then throwing it inside to make it appear as though the culprit was in the room (a novel by Dickson). In cases where the room is on the first floor, examples include: using a Reggie Tongue (a claw toy with XXXXXs that expand and contract) to extract the murder weapon from a table inside the room via a gap in the window curtains, and exchanging it with another weapon, obliterating the evidence (a novel by Dickson), using a *Judas Window* trick (a novel by Dickson; I will avoid revealing the secret), and shooting a poisoned dart tied to silk thread through a gap and then pulling it out (a novel by Dickson). Tricks that cannot be explained in a few lines can be found in novels by Walter Harich and Scarlett, and short stories by Knox, C.E. Roberts, Jacques Futrelle, and Dickson.

2.1.1.3 The victim is led to cause their own death, which is not a suicide (3) A pertinent example is Carr's *The Red Widow Murders*. This trick can also be found in a novel by Allingham, and Carr's lecture describes a story where "the victim is pre-emptively instilled with psychological fear, becomes nearly frenzied with terror, and is led to die by mishap."

2.1.1.4 A suicide is disguised as a murder (3) Diguised suicides that do not involve a locked room are discussed later on in Section 6. Within this category are Seishi Yokomizo's *The Honjin Murders* and a short story co-written by Edgar Jepson and Robert Eustace. Similar to these is a story where the victim puts on a one-person show inside a locked room, inflicts a wound upon themselves, then pretends they

were wounded by an evil spirit (a short story by Carr).

2.1.1.5 A murder is disguised as a suicide (2) Those not involving a locked room are discussed later, as previously noted. Examples include the aforementioned Chesterton work, where the victim is hanged from an upper story window, then made to appear as if they hanged fromselves from a tree on the ground, and a short story by Knox which cannot be easily summarized in a few words.

2.1.1.6 The culprit is non-human (6) This overlaps somewhat with Section 1.2, but examples that involve both a non-human culprit and a locked room include short stories by Poe, Doyle, and Morrison, as well as works by Post, Leblanc, and Rampo (via a "sun and water bottle" trick).

2.1.2 The culprit is in the room at the time of the crime (37)

2.1.2.1 A door mechanism is used (17) The culprit exits the room after committing the crime, inserts the key into the lock from inside, and employs a mechanism to secure the bolt or latch from outside. Examples include a novel by Van Dine, short stories by Jenkins and Frank Froest, Akimitsu Takagi's *The Tattoo Murder Case*, novels by Carr and Edgar Wallace, a novella by Christie, and a short story by Kyōsuke Kusuda. Specific scenarios include using a magnet to move the bolt (a novel by Wallace); entering and exiting by unhinging the door while keeping it locked, then restoring the hinge from outside (works by Zangwill and Clayton Rawson); propping a body against the door, so that its weight creates a locked room (a novel by Queen); locking the door normally from outside, blending in with the people breaking into the room, and quickly inserting the key into the broken door lock from inside (works by Zangwill, Rawson, and Carr); inserting the key from the inside, exiting, closing the door, sticking a tweezer-like tool called an "oustiti" (reportedly well-known in the American criminal community) into the keyhole from

outside, and using that to pinch and rotate the key (observed in a criminology text); and using a double key trick, where the culprit has two of the same key, leaves one inside the lock, exits, closes the door, then inserts the second key from outside to make the first fall inside the room, before locking the door and removing the second key (a work by Zangwill).

2.1.2.2 The crime is made to appear as if it occurred later than it did (15) This has some overlap with the section below about "Time Tricks Involving Sound" (3.3), but methods include playing a record with the victim's voice in the locked room after the crime (novels by Christie and Van Dine), triggering a gunshot sound in the locked room after the crime (novels by Rees, Carr, Dickson, and Scarlett), creating a fake gunshot sound by bursting an inflated paper bag (a novella by Christie), and rigging a large clock to fall and make a noise, to imply the crime happened at that moment (a novel by Isabel Myers). One can also utilize ventriloquism (a novel by Carr), or trick an eyewitness into seeing an already dead victim as still alive. Examples include adjusting the position of a seated corpse to cast its shadow on the window curtain (a novel by Scarlett), and hanging a large sheet of yellow paper from a string to mimic the back of a person in a gown (when viewed through glass from a distance), then pulling the paper into a stove with another string to burn it (a novel by H.H. Holmes). If it's hard to understand these two examples from description alone, imagine all other aspects of the situation are conveniently constructed to allow for the trick. Another method is for the culprit or an accomplice to disguise themselves as the victim. While this overlaps with Section 1.1.1, examples of the trick in the context of a locked room can be found in works by Bentley and Carr, and two novels by Dickson.

2.1.2.3 The crime is made to appear as if it occurred earlier than it did (2) The person who discovers the crime is the culprit. The victim is

administered a large number of sleeping pills beforehand. When there is no response to knocking on the door, the culprit breaks in, commits murder in that instant, and makes it appear as if the victim was killed before the door was broken (a novel by Zangwill and a short story by Chesterton). Examples of "the discoverer of the crime is the culprit" in non-locked room scenarios were discussed earlier in Section 1.2.3.

P.S. I forgot to include a particularly elaborate trick that belongs in this category. It involves lifting part of the ceiling of the locked room with a jack, to create a gap through which the perpetrator can enter and exit. This trick was featured in the short story "The 51st Sealed Room" by Robert Arthur, which was a finalist in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*'s contest last year (Akizo Yamashita translated it for the June 1953 issue of the Kyoto fanzine *Locked Room*). Later, Saburō Washio built on this idea in a short story where not just part of the roof, but the entire roof of a hut is lifted with a jack to enter and exit, then returned to its original state. An even more extravagant idea, heard from Jūzaburō Futaba and thought to be from a work by Herbert Brean, involves killing someone outdoors, then hastily constructing a hut over the corpse to create a locked room. Since a simple hut can be built overnight, this isn't impossible. Building the house after the murder feels like a magic trick Chesterton would have thought of; I find the concept very interesting.

2.1.2.4 After the discoverers of the crime force open the door and rush in, the culprit hides behind the door, and escapes while the others look towards the victim (1) This method may seem absurd, but by defying the expectations of mystery readers accustomed to complex solutions, it paradoxically provides a surprising twist. It is featured in a novel by Rawson, a master of trick-based storytelling.

2.1.2.5 The locked rooms is on a train (2) The murder takes place in a train compartment, electric locomotive, or the like. Especially

while it is moving, a train is an ideal locked room, as it is isolated from the outside. Examples include a novella by Crofts and Sōhei Shibayama's *The Electric Locomotive Murder Case* (*Denki Kikansha Satsujin Jiken*). Cabin rooms on ships have similar properties, which were made use of in a short story by Christie. If one considers the entire ship to be a locked room, there are several more examples, but most were not intended as locked rooms by their authors.

2.1.3 The victim is not in the room at the time of the crime (4) It may seem strange to say that the victim was not in the room during a locked-room incident, but this can occur if the culprit brings a body killed elsewhere into the room, then creates a locked room, or if the victim enters the room after being seriously injured and, for some reason, locks the door from the inside before dying. I've found no examples of the former scenario, where the locked room is created after bringing in the body, possibly because simply moving the body is enough to establish an alibi. As for the latter scenario, the victim may create a locked room in order to protect the culprit, or out of fear of being pursued by an enemy. An example of the former is a short story by Leblanc, and an example of the latter is "Glass House" ("Garasu no Ie") by Kyūhei Shima. There are also stories where, after the victim sustains a fatal injury and enters the room, another criminal comes in, unaware that the victim has already died, and shoots them with a pistol, then creates a locked room (a novel by Van Dine). Alternatively, a body killed outside may be thrown into a locked room through a high window (a novel by Dickson).

2.1.4 A locked room escape trick is used (3) These stories concern escaping from prison. The three examples I know of are *The Escape of Arsene Lupin* by Leblanc, *The Problem of Cell 13* by Futrelle, and *The Headless Lady* by Rawson, all of which were well done. More interesting real-life examples of escape tricks can be found in biographies of the late, great American magician, Harry Houdini. He traveled the

world, demonstrating prison escapes in various countries, and performing magic tricks where he was locked inside a safe and showed how he could break out.

2.2 Footprint Tricks (18)

Examples of this include walking backward to make it appear as if the path taken to the crime scene was actually the path taken to leave, or vice versa (a novel by Nicholas Blake, and my "Who"); walking on one's hands while upside down (short stories by Groller and Dickson); having a horse make cow hoofprints (a short story by Doyle); using stilts to disguise footprints (a novel by Dickson and my "Black Hand Gang" ["Kurotegumi"]); using two identical pairs of shoes to leave false footprints and confuse the investigation (a novel by Crofts); and attaching horseshoes to human shoes, to mimic horse tracks (described in an essay by George Sims). There are also various ways to leave no footprints at all, such as by moving through the air like a cable car (Akimitsu Takagi's "Snow White" ["Shirayuki Hime"]), throwing a boomerang (described in a short story by Chesterton), having a hot air balloon's anchor accidentally hit and kill a person on the ground (this is mistaken for a murder by bludgeoning in one chapter of a Sexton Blake story), or by some method that cannot be explained so briefly, as in a novel by Dickson, and two short stories by Chesterton. Tricks involving tire tracks are also featured in short stories by Doyle and Chesterton.

Footprint tricks have a long history. While more precisely a "footprint discovery" trick, in Biblical Apocrypha's "Story of Bel," which I cited earlier, flour is spread ahead of time on the floor of the room where the culprit appears, and footprints left in it are used as evidence. This is similar the trick in Doyle's "The Adventure of the Golden

Pince-Nez," where Holmes discovers a person hiding in the room by dropping cigarette ashes all over the floor.

2.3 Fingerprint Tricks (5)

Fingerprints, palm prints, lip prints, and the like are often used as clues, but in the collection I gathered, they are hardly ever used as tricks. Doyle used a fingerprint-forging trick quite early on, at a time when fingerprint investigation was not yet widespread, in "The Norwood Builder," and Freeman often made good use of fingerprints (his novel *The Red Thumb Mark* is representative), but though forging fingerprints can be interesting in a true story, it's not particularly interesting as a trick. A "negative fingerprint" trick (where ink remains in the indentations between ridges of a finger after it is wiped off, causing negative fingerprints to appear in photographs, and mislead identification) is used in my story "The Twins" ("Sōseiji"), and in a novel by Carr.

Mark Twain invented the fingerprint novel, and several examples exist from the period between Twain and Doyle, but all use fingerprints as evidence for suspect identification, and are not examples of fingerprint tricks. I detailed the history of these fingerprint novels in another essay, "Meiji Era Fingerprint Novels," so I won't repeat that information here.

3. Tricks Concerning the Time of the Crime (39)

These tricks aim to construct an alibi by creating a situation where it was temporally impossible for the culprit to have been at the scene of the crime when it occurred. The trick of killing someone, then disguising oneself as the victim, which I mentioned earlier, is also, broadly speaking, a temporal alibi. Here, however, only tricks directly related to time are collected.

3.1 Time Tricks Involving Vehicles (9)

Soon after bicycles were invented, they were still unknown in the countryside, and stories were written in which the culprit secretly uses a bicycle to travel to and from the crime scene at unimaginable speed, thus creating an alibi (Boisgobey's *The Nameless Man* [*Kaitei no Jūzai*], a short story by Milward Kennedy). There is also a novel by Wallace in which an alibi is created by using an airplane instead of a train, at a time when passenger planes did not yet exist. Crofts is a master at creating tight time alibis through the clever use of trains and automobiles; vehicle tricks can be seen in many of his works, including *The Ponson Case*. There are stories in which the culprit skis or swims somewhere that would be too far away overland in order to create an alibi (both novels by Christie), as well as stories in which the culprit uses tidal currents (Yū Aoi's "Kuroshio Murder Case" ["Kuroshio Satsujin Jiken"], a short story by Takashi Asuka),

or temporarily adds a second motor to a boat to double its speed (a novel by Crofts).

3.2 Time Tricks Involving Clocks (8)

The hands of a clock broken during a murder can be adjusted afterwards to create a false impression of the time (novels by Duse and Earl Biggers, and a short story by Doyle). Alternatively, at night, someone may mistake the reflection of a clock for a real clock, and interpret the time backwards (a novel by Mason). Electric clocks too, may err due to a voltage drop (Takatarō Kigi's *Broken Reeds*). A particularly inventive trick involves a man living in a country house setting every clock inside, from wall clocks to the servants' pocket watches, to the same wrong time, so that the servants believe the man left at a different hour. After fulfilling his objective, he resets all these clocks back to the correct time (a novel by Bush). This category also includes a novel by Carr and a play by Armstrong.

3.3 Time Tricks Involving Sound (19)

Alibis can be forged using a telephone (novels by Crofts, Carr, and Allingham). Witnesses can hear the voice of a murder victim after their death, through the use of a record player (novels by Christie, Van Dine, and Scarlett)—these examples overlap with those described earlier under "Locked Rooms" (2.1.2.2). Another example of this is Yoshio Inoue's "Alibi Story" ("Aribai no Hanashi"), from the 1936 spring special edition of *New Youth*. Creating an alibi via radio is possible, too (a novel by J.C. Masterman and a short story by Hilton). A pistol murder can committed using a silencer, and a fake gunshot sound produced later to create an alibi (novels by

Rees, Fielding, Carr, Dickson, and Scarlett, and a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Some of these overlap with the fake gunshot sound tricks described in "Locked Rooms" 2.1.2.2). One can also make a loud noise at night to give the impression that a murder occurred at that time (novels by Dickson and Myers), or use ventriloquism (a novel by Dickson and a short story by Chesterton). I recall an old Japanese tale using vocal mimicry, but I can't think of its title at the moment.

3.4 Time Tricks Involving Weather or the Seasons (3)

The confusion of transitioning between standard time and daylight saving time can be exploited to forge an alibi (Yūzō Chiyo's "The Feast of Fools" ["Chijin no Utage"]). Though not a natural phenomenon, the date change that can occur during an ocean voyage can be used similarly (a novel by Rufus King). In cold countries, one can make use of the fact that lamp oil freezes late at night (Kyōsuke Kusuda's "Snow ["Yuki"]). Tricks involving the weather on the day of the crime, as well as solar or lunar eclipse tricks, also belong in this category.

4. Tricks Concerning Weapons and Poisons (96)

4.1 Tricks Concerning Murder Weapons (58)

These tricks complicate the investigation by using a weapon or technique that is not generally considered to be a means of murder. There is such a wide variety of these tricks, a systematic classification isn't possible, so I will list several subcategories in no particular order. Many of the examples in this section overlap with those listed earlier under "Murder through a slightly opened window" (2.1.1.2). Duplicates are not excluded.

4.1.1 The victim is killed by an unusual blade (10) If the victim is stabbed with a thin shard of ice, the weapon can melt away without a trace (a short story by Jepson and Eustace). The same thing can happen in a stabbing by icicle (Sunao Ōtsubo's "The Luck of Early Spring" ["Risshun Daikichi"]). Ice has a variety of other uses, spanning several different categories, which are detailed in a separate essay on "Water as a Weapon." Other unusual blade tricks include stabbing the victim with a shard of glass, then hiding it by wiping off the blood and submerging it in a large bowl of water (a short story by Dickson); firing a dagger from a gun (a short story by Freeman); using the art of knife-throwing (a novel by Carr and a short story by Post); using the hands of a large clock as weapons (a novel by Carr); murder by boomerang (two short stories by Chesterton), and murder by harpoon (a short story by Doyle).

4.1.2 The victim is killed by an unusual bullet (12) Murders may be carried out with the sun and a water bottle (short stories by Post, Leblanc, and Rampo). The victim may be shot with rock salt (a novel by Dickson), an ice bullet (a short story by Green), or an ice arrow (an epigram by the Roman poet Martial from the 1st century BCE, a story from Hanshew's *Cleek: The Man of the Forty Faces*), and the murderer can rig explosives to the end of a golf club (a short story by Bentley). Other bullet-related tricks can be found in a novel by Marsh, and short stories by Rhode, Cole and Leonard Gribble.

4.1.3 The victim is killed by electrocution (6) A strong electric current may be administered via telephone receiver (a novel by Wallace). The victim may be kiled by an electric bath (a novel by Dickson, a short story by Woolrich, "The Electric Bath Case" ["Denkiburo no Kaishi Jiken"] by Unno Jūza), and a death by electrocution may be disguised as a death by lightning strike (a short story by Bramah). Running a current through a chessboard is used in a short story by Christie.

4.1.4 The victim is killed by blunt-force trauma (10) One trick in this category involves the victim dying when their iron helmet is broken by a hammer thrown from a great height (a short story by Chesterton). Other tricks include murder by hot air balloon anchor (a Sexton Blake story), murder by pendulum (a short story by Sayers, "Crime Scene" by Takashi Asuka, and *The Ancient Tomb Murder Case* [*Kofun Satsujin Jiken*] by Kazuo Shimada), murder by a falling block of ice (Rampo's "Death of a Sleepwalker" ["Muyūbyōsha no Shi"]), and murder with a mandolin (a novel by Queen). Paradoxically, the earth itself can also be a weapon (short stories by Poe and Chesterton). A trick of this kind appears in a short story by Frank King.

4.1.5 The victim is killed by crushing (3) Tricks in this category include crushing the victim inside a giant cylinder (a short story by Doyle), rigging a statue to fall on someone (a short story by

Chesterton), and crushing someone with the lid of a stone coffin (a short story by Chesterton).

4.1.6 The victim is killed by strangulation (3) By pressing down on the lid of a large trunk, one may strangle a victim who has stuck their head inside to search (a novel by Carr). By hanging the victim upside down with their legs tied, one can make their murder look like a natural death (a short story co-written by L.T. Meade and Robert Eustace). Alternatively, cloth woven from plant fibers which contract when wet can be arranged around the neck of the victim, such that during a sudden rainstorm, they contract rapidly, and cause death (an example is cited in *Murder Theory* [*Satsujin Ron*] by Fuboku Kosakai).

4.1.7 The victim is killed in a fall (5) All of the examples I gathered involve the use of an elevator (novels by Biggers, Everhart, and Scarlett, and short stories by Chesterton and Robert Winton).

4.1.8 The victim is killed by drowning (2) Examples include forcing the victim's face into a washbasin to induce suffocation, then making it look like a drowning (a novel by Crofts), and lurking underwater in a diving suit to drown a swimmer (a novel by Van Dine).

4.1.9 The victim is killing by an animal (5) Many of these overlap with tricks described previously under "Unexpected Culprits" (1.2.10), so only five examples will be listed here. By attaching a lion claw-like fixture to the end of a stick before beating someone to death with it, a murder can be disguised as a lion accident (a short story by Doyle). A lion can be given sneezing powder to induce it to sneeze, and so bite the head a lion tamer who puts their head inside the lion's mouth for performances (a short story by Hanshew). A cow sticking its head out of a passing freight train may gore a woman who was sticking her upper body out of a passenger car window,

with the accident being misidentified as a murder (a short story by Freeman). Unicorn legends can be blamed for a killing with a horn-shaped weapon (a novel by Carr). Doyle's "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" also falls in this category.

4.1.10 The victim is killed by some other outlandish weapon (2) The victim may be confined to a small room next to the bells of a church tower, causing nerve strain that leads to their death (a novel by a famous British author). A woman may bite off someone's tongue while seeming to bestow a kiss, and so commit multiple murders (Bakin Kyokutei's *The Eight Dog Chronicles* [*Nansō Satomi Hakkenden*]).

4.2 Poisoning Tricks (38)

While countless crime and mystery stories involve poison, those that use poison as a trick are not as numerous. Introducing strange and unknown poisons can in fact detract from the fun of a mystery, so such examples will not be included here. Interesting uses of poison can be found more often in Western medieval history, especially Italian history, than in mystery fiction. There are many books on the history of poisoning in the West, but the most interesting Japanese works are Dr. Fuboku Kosakai's *Poisons and Poisoning* [*Doku to Dokusatsu*] (Volume 1 of the Complete Works of Fuboku), which was serialized in *New Youth* at the end of the Taisho era, and Dr. Tanemoto Furuhata's *Stories of Poison and Poisoning* (*Doku oyo Dokusatsu Monogatari*), which is currently being serialized in the *Journal of Criminology* (*Hanzai Gaku Zasshi*).

In toxicology, poisons are classified by their chemical properties, but in mystery fiction, the chemical formulae of poisons are not crucial, and in some cases the identity of the poison is not clearly described.

Thus, it is more convenient here to divide poisons into three types: those that enter the digestive system through the esophagus, those that enter the bloodstream through the skin, and those that enter the lungs in gaseous form.

4.2.1 The victim ingests the poison (15) While many stories deal with ingested poisons, few are worthy of being listed in a taxonomy of tricks. Arsenic was often used in old crime novels, but in recent years, cyanide compounds have become the most popular choice. Memorable poisons from recent mysteries include poison mushrooms (a short story by Bramah), wolfsbane (a novel by Hull), and pathogenic bacteria (a novel by Francis Iles). The poison may be administered by hiding it in chocolate (a novel and two short stories by Berkeley), or by adding it to a sandwich (a novel by Iles and a short story by Irvin S. Cobb). Tricks for extending the acting time of the poison to establish an alibi include coating with sugar, placing just one poison pill at the bottom of a bottle (a novel by Crofts), using a heavy liquid poison that settles to the bottom of a medicine bottle (a novel by Christie), and adding frozen poison to a drink, with the perpetrator demonstrating the drink's safety by tasting it while frozen, but having the victim drink after it melts. This last trick is used a novel by Dickson, but I also remember seeing something similar in a work from *Jewel*'s special edition new author collection. Alternatively, a dentist can fill a cavity with poison during treatment (a novel by Christie); someone can add curare poison, which has no effect until mixed, to alcohol, then arrange for the victim to drink it themselves (a novel by Dickson); and poison can be applied to stamp backs, book pages, and pencil tips, in anticipation of them being licked (a short story by Queen). A cup can contain a mechanism for dispensing poison, and a poison pill may be transferred from mouth to mouth during kissing (both examples are from Western history). The culprit can learn to throw poison, by throwing a cup

of water long distances without scattering, then use this skill to poison the aquarium inside a locked room with a window (a short story by Roberts); and though not technically a poison trick, the technique of crushing glass into a fine powder and mixing it into food has also been frequently used (for example, in a short story by Stacy Aumonier).

4.2.2 The victim is injected with the poison (16) Examples of this include a chair with a poison needle (a short story by Jepsen and Eustace), a table knife that injects poison into the palm when gripped (a real case from Western history), and a ring that injects a dose of poison during handshakes (mentioned in Western history and I believe in a novel, though I can't recall which). Poison can also be applied to the fingers of a six-fingered skeleton (a short story by Hanshew), a bundle of needles (a novel by Queen), or the legs of a wire spider (a novel by Baynard Kendrick). A venomous snake can be mistaken for a patterned band (a short story by Doyle), and a small one can be concealed in hair (a short story by Fulton Oursler), or within a walking stick (a Western short story I can't recall). A living venomous lizard can be placed on a pipe and disguised as sculpture (a work by an unknown author in a collection by Julian Hawthorne), and a scenario can be engineered where death occurs upon being stung by a bee (a short story by Wynne). Poisoned arrow tricks have been used in a short story by Queen, a novel by Dickson, and two works by Doyle. A flautist may put a small poison dart into their flute, so that when it is played, the dart is blown into a dancer's neck, causing death (a short story by Goodrich). Additional examples include poisoned shirts, sheets, and shoes (all from Western history). With a poisoned shirt, poison is soaked into the area around the waist, which continuously rubs against the skin, causing tiny scratches that allow the poison to enter the bloodstream. Though not poison in the traditional sense, air has also been used for

murder, by injecting it into a vein (a short story by Sayers, Akimitsu Takagi's *The Noh Mask Murder Case*).

4.2.3 The victim inhales the poison (7) Examples of inhaled poison tricks include murders conducted using an indoor gas lamp or gas fireplace (a short story by Futrelle, Junichirō Tanizaki's "On the Way" ["Tojō"]), a poison gas-emitting bed (a novel by Phillpotts), poison matches (a novel by Chesterton), a poison lamp (a short story by Doyle), and poisonous flowers (found in Western history and in a story by a Japanese newcomer, though I can't recall who). Other examples include poison candles (Western history), liquid poison spread on a wall, which becomes poison gas upon a rise in temperature (a novel by Reeve), and liquid air, used to fill a room with carbon dioxide (Saburō Akanuma's *Devil Apocalypse* [*Akuma Mokushiroku*]).

5. *Tricks Concerning Hiding Things (141)*

5.1 *Hiding a Corpse (83)*

5.1.1 The corpse is hidden temporarily (19) Corpses have been hidden in many strange locations, including in a barrel (Crofts), in a wool bale (Marsh), in a coffin with a second body (a short story by Doyle), inside a snowman (a novel by Nicholas Blake, a Sexton Blake story), as a waxwork figure (a novel by Carr), and mixed with shooting range targets (a novel by Dickson). I myself have often made use of iki dolls and chrysanthemum dolls, for example in *Vampire* (*Kyūketsuki*). Other hiding places include a large trash can (a short story by Chesterton, my *The Dwarf* [*Issun Boshi*]), a pile of war dead (Chesterton), a large postal bag (Chesterton), a refrigerator (Udaru Ōshita's *The Cook of Kurenai-Za* [*Kurenaiza no Hōchū*]), a coat on a coat rack (Chesterton), a chair cover (Dickson novel), a double bass case (Seishi Yokomizo's *The Butterfly Murder Case* [*Chōchō Satsujin Jiken*]), a large picnic basket (a short stoy by Carr), and a trunk (a short story by Christie, Rampo's *Incident at the Lakeside Inn* [*Kohantei Jiken*]).

5.1.2 The corpse is hidden permanently (30)

5.1.2.1 The corpse is buried (2) This can be in either an already excavated tomb (a short story by Bailey), or under the pretense of filling in an old well (Rampo's "The Twins").

5.1.2.2 The corpse is submerged in water (1) A short story by Poe.

5.1.2.3 Balloons are attached to the corpse to bury it in the sky (2) Jun Mizutani's "O Sole Mio," a short story by Kazuo Shimada.

5.1.2.4 The corpse is cremated (5) Henri Landru burned bodies in an oven, and his is technique common in mysteries as well. If only the face is burned, this becomes the "faceless corpse" trick mentioned later. Examples include short stories by Doyle and Freeman, novels by Fletcher and Crofts, and Rampo's *Incident at the Lakeside Inn*.

5.1.2.5 The corpse is dissolved (1) In Western history, there are examples of a large chemical tank being created to dissolve people one after another. I can't recall an example from Western mystery fiction at the moment, but Junichirō Tanizaki's *Daytime Demon Talk* (*Hakuchū Oni Gatari*) is themed around this trick.

5.1.2.6 The corpse is walled in (5) Examples include Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado," Honoré Balzac's "La Grande Bretèche," a novel by Carr, a short story by Chesterton, and my "Panorama Island" ("Panorama Shima").

5.1.2.7 The corpse is transformed into something else (11) This can be a mummy (a novel by Freeman, short stories by Doyle and Henry Wade), corpse wax (Rampo's "Daydream" ["Hakuchūmu"]), or a plaster statue (Chesterton). The body may be plated and turned into a bronze statue (a novel by Dickson and a short story by Sayers), ground and turned into sausages (a true story from Germany, a short story by Kyosuke Kusuda), thrown into a cement furnace and turned into fine powder (Yoshiki Hayama's "The Letter in the Cement Barrel" ["Semento Taru no Naka no Tegami"]), shred and mixed with pulp to make paper (Kyosuke Kusuda's *Human Poems* [*Ningen Shishu*]), or frozen with dry ice and shattered into pieces (a short story by Hiroshi Kita).

5.1.2.8 The corpse is fed to an animal (3) It may be swallowed by a reptile like a large snake (a short story by Unno Jūza), eaten by birds (a

short story by Williams), or eaten by the human culprit (a short story by Lord Dunsany), though the last option is not usually considered consumption by an animal.

5.1.3 The corpse is moved as a deception (20) While not literally hiding it, the act of moving the corpse can be used to conceal a crime.

5.1.3.1 The corpse is moved a short distance (9) A fatally wounded victim may walk and change position on their own (novels by Van Dine and Carr), or the corpse may be thrown (a novel by Dickson, Sunao Ōtsubo's *Tengu,* and a story by a new Japanese writer whose title escapes me, where a snowplow train flings a corpse far away). There are many other interesting examples, but as I can't explain them in so few lines, I will simply list them by author: short stories by Chesterton and Allingham, and novels by Dickson (two examples) and Scarlett.

5.1.3.2 The corpse is moved a long distance (11) The corpse may be placed on the roof of a freight train to transport it to a distant location (a short story by Doyle, Rampo's "Demon ["Oni"], and Yokomizo's *Detective Fictions* [*Tantei Shōsetsu*]. The same idea is applied to a double-decker bus in a novel by Brian Flynn), or moved by tidal current (The collaborative work *The Floating Admiral,* Aoi's"Kuroshio Murder Case," and Shimada's *Society Page Reporter* [*Shakai Bu Kisha*]). Other examples that can't be explained briefly include novels by Carr and Dickson, and two short stories by Chesterton.

5.1.4 The corpse is made faceless (14) Methods include burning or disfiguring the face (novels by Doyle, Dickson, Chandler, Rhode, Christie, and Queen, and short stories by Chesterton and Bramah), decapitating and hiding the head or swapping it with another (an episode in Herodotus' *Histories,* novels by Queen, Rice, and Rawson, and a short story by Chesterton), and hiding the torso (Akimitsu

Takagi's *The Tattoo Murder Case*). This trick is explained in detail in a seperate essay on "Faceless Corpses."

5.2 Hiding a Living Person (12)

A living person may be hidden as a hospital patient (a short story by Doyle, Rampo's "Demon"), kept in prison for a minor offense (a short story by Christie), left in a coffin together with a corpse (a short story by Doyle), or concealed within a large drum (*Parallel Cases from Under the Pear Tree* [*Tang Yin Bi Shi*]). An escaped prisoner may blend into a masked ball, pretending to be costumed as a prisoner (Chesterton). Someone may quickly disguise themselves as a scarecrow in a field (Chesterton), or transform into a postal worker or conductor, right in front of one's eyes (a short story by Chesterton, a novel by Queen). They may also wear two different colored swimsuits before removing one (Udaru Ōshita's "Dr. Hirukawa" ["Hirukawa Hakase"]), or pretend to be a doll or plaster statue (a Zigomar story by Léon Sazie, many of my works).

5.3 Hiding an Object (35)

5.3.1 Gemstones are hidden (11) Gemstones may be pushed into a wound (a short story by L.J. Beeston), swallowed by geese or camels (short stories by Doyle and Wells), swallowed by the culprit (no examples in my collection), hidden in a bar of soap (a short story by Christie), embedded in a plaster statue (a short story by Doyle), placed in an antique pot (a novel by Morrison), or hidden in makeup cream (my *The Dwarf*). They may also be buried in the soil of a potted plant (a short story by Crofts), hung on a necklace amidst the shiny decorations of a Christmas tree (a short story by Sayers), put

inside the leg of a Go board (Saburō Kōga's "The Crystal Faceted Ball" ["Suishō no Kakudama"]), or kept in a pipe (a short story by Beeston).

5.3.2 Gold coins, gold bars, or banknotes are hidden (5) A box of gold bars can be made to look like plated screws and smuggled (a short story by Freeman). Gold coins can be melted and flattened to resemble paper, then stuck under wallpaper throughout the house (a short story by Robert Barr), or dissolved and invisibly preserved in aqua regia (a shōnen mystery novel by Fuboku Kosakai). Banknotes can be rolled up and disguised as candle wicks (example not recalled), or hidden inside a radiator (a short story by Dickson). Gold bars can be hidden in a mine (a novel by Leblanc).

5.3.3 Documents are hidden (10) Documents can be nonchalantly exposed, to hide them in plain sight (Poe's "The Purloined Letter"). Alternatively, they may be placed inside the cover of a book, such as the Bible (short stories by Post and Samuel H. Adams), between the lining and the outer fabric of a hat (novels by Queen and Leblanc), or inside a glass eye (Leblanc). Other tricks in this category can be found in works by Christie, Doyle (two examples), and Allingham.

5.3.4 Miscellaneous objects are hidden (9) A ship or car can be rapidly repainted (a novel by Crofts), the color of a horse can be changed by applying paint over its body (a short story by Doyle), and wooden sticks can be thrown into the sea, under the guise of practicing fetch with a dog, before one throws away a cane (a short story by Chesterton). A door can be painted to cover up the smell of a corpse (a short story by Doyle), objects at the scene can be turned upside down to hide a clergyman's collar (a novel by Queen), and a paper tape can be tied to a pistol, with the other end given to a sheep, so that as the sheep eats the paper, the tape is pulled along, causing the pistol attached to it to be hidden in straw (a short story

by Kyosuke Kusuda). Other tricks in this category can be found in two short stories by Dickson, and one by Gaul.

5.4 Replacing a Body or Object (11)

A fake signal light can be created, in order to make a train derail (a short story by Bramah). A burning oar may be mistaken for a lighthouse, and so lead a ship into a reef (a short story by Chesterton). A fake red post box on a street corner may create a false sense of place (Jiro Kuzuyama's "The Woman Who Bought Red Paint" ["Akai Penki wo Katta Onna"]). Other examples include faking a corpse (a novel by Christie), a wrist (a short story by Chesterton), human bones (a novella by Chesterton, a short story by S.B. Thompson), a masterpiece painting (a novel by Fuller), photographs (Takagi's *The Tattoo Murder Case*, Rampo's *The Dwarf*), and a movie (Rampo's *Fruit of the Bizarre* [*Ryōki no Hate*]).

6. Miscellaneous Other Tricks (93)

Notable tricks that do not belong to any of the previous categories have been collected here. Many of them could be described as "hiding the crime" tricks, as opposed to the previous section's "hiding people or objects" tricks, but not all fall under that umbrella.

6.1 Mirror Tricks (10) A case of mistaken identity may arise from reading someone's initials in reverse, from a reflection in a mirror (a novel by Christie). A clock face can similarly be read backwards (an already mentioned novel by Mason). Various magic tricks with mirrors have been used in mystery fiction (a short story by Dickson, a novel by Rawson, a short story by Freeman, and Kikuo Tsunoda's *Miraculous Bolero* [*Kiseki no Borero*]). A large mirror can be used to make one person appear as two, and create a locked room (a novel by Carr), and one's own reflection in a mirror on the back of a door can be misinterpreted as another person standing in the hallway (a short story by Chesterton), or even mistaken for an enemy and fired upon (another short story by Chesterton). A novel by Scarlett also falls under this category.

6.2 Optical Tricks (9) Color blindness tricks can be found in short stories by Dickson and Post, a novel by Queen, Yokomizo's "Crimson Mystery ("Shinku no Nazo"), Koga's *Green Crime* (*Midoriiro no Hanzai*), and Kigi's "Red and Green" ("Aka to Midori"). Nearsightedness tricks can be found in short stories by Poe and Doyle, and a lattice trick appears in "Murder on D-Hill" ("D-Zaka") by Rampo.

6.3 Distance Tricks (1) Someone may be blindfolded and taken on a carriage ride for a long time, making it seem like they've been transported somewhere far away, when in fact they've just been sent in circles and dropped off near their point of departure. I belive there are examples other than Doyle's "The Engineer's Thumb," but I didn't find them while gathering this collection.

6.4 Confusing Chaser and Chased (1) While there is only one example, it's interesting as a magic trick, and so is included here. There's a rakugo tale in which a fast man chases a thief and accidentally overtakes him. When a passerby asks, "Where's the thief?", the man answers, "He'll be along shortly." Chesterton wrote a short story, "Red Wins, Blue Wins" ["Ako Kate Ao Kate"], using this psychological illusion, where it's unclear who is the victim and who is the culprit. Similarly, another rakugo tale, *Soba Haori,* makes use of confusion between "the eater and the eaten." After a large snake swallows a human, it's seen licking a certain herb, which makes its belly shrink. Accordingly, a competitor prepares the herb for a soba eating competition. However, upon licking the herb, the man's body is dissolved, leaving only a pile of soba sitting there, wearing a haori. Before his death, I saw Mr. Kosakai write down that this could be the basis for a mystery story.

6.5 Slight of Hand Murders (6) These are tricks where someone is killed with a move too fast for the eye to see, ensuring the act goes unnoticed. A prime example is Chesterton's "The Vanishing of Vaudrey," which is analyzed in more detail in a separate essay, "An Examination of British and American Mystery Short Stories." Similar techniques are used in novels by Masterman and Queen, and in another short story by Chesterton. These tricks can also be part of a locked-room mystery, as in a novel by Zangwill and another short story by Chesterton.

6.6 Murders Committed Amidst a Crowd (3) The idea behind

these tricks is that it may be paradoxically safer to commit murders in public, much like how "The Purloined Letter" taught us that the best hiding place is often in plain sight. Examples can be found in a novel by Rice and two short stories by Chesterton.

6.7 "Red Headed" Tricks (6) These tricks are named after their archetype, Doyle's "The Red-Headed League." The idea is to recruit red-haired individuals as bizarre camouflage for a major crime behind the scenes. Variations on this concept can be found in three of Doyle's short stories, as well as in short stories by Robert Parr and Georges Simenon, and a novel by Bush.

6.8 "Two Rooms" Tricks (5) The short story "Two Rooms" ("Futatsu no Heya"), which was translated for *New Youth*'s August 1922 special edition, left a deep impression on me. In *New Youth*, it was credited to Robert Winton, but when it was later included in *The Complete Collection of Mysteries*, the author was was F.G. Hurst. It's unclear which name is correct, and neither is particularly well-known[1]. However, the story's premise is quite interesting. It revolves around a building with two completely identical rooms, one on the ground floor and another on a higher floor. The victim is tied up on the ground floor, and a time bomb set next to them with a warning about an impending explosion. They are then drugged and transported to the identical room on a higher floor. Upon awakening, the victim believes the explosion is imminent, and tries to escape through the door. However, just beyond the door of this room is an elevator shaft, so the victim falls and dies without the culprit ever directly laying a hand on them. Dickson's "Crime of the Non-Existent Room" employs a similar trick, though not for killing. Queen's *The Lamp of God* (which I translated shortly after the war) uses two identical buildings instead of rooms. In popular fiction, there is a *Fantomas* story that features two identical rooms, stacked vertically to create a

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[1]"Two Rooms" may in fact be an original story by Seishi Yokomizo

large elevator. A murder takes place in the upper room, but when the elevator is raised, the completely identical lower room takes its place as the crime scene, erasing any trace of the crime. I borrowed this idea for my novel *The Golden Mask* (*Ogon Kamen*).

6.9 Crime of Probability (6) Junichirō Tanizaki's "On the Way" uses a trick of this type, and Robert Louis Stevenson's "Was It Murder?" is an older story that could arguably belong in this category. Within mystery fiction, it is used in Phillpotts' *Portrait of a Scoundrel* and Christie's *Poirot Loses a Client,* and in "The Finger Man" by Jerome and Harold Prince. All of these were written after "On the Way." My own work "The Red Room" ("Akai Heya") also falls in this category.

6.10 Crimes Exploiting a Profession (1) If a doctor turns evil, they could use their profession to kill without arousing suspicion. Among the most interesting examples of this is a short story by Gribble called "The Case of Jacob Heylyn." In it, a dentist kills a patient during treatment by firing a gun into their mouth. After the body is moved elsewhere, the patient's murder is thought a suicide due to the manner of death, thus diverting any suspicion.

6.11 Self-Defense Tricks (1) These tricks involve disguising a killing as a necessary act of self-defense, when it is in fact a premeditated murder. My story "The Cliff" ("Dangai") aimed for this concept, but was unable to execute it well. I'm unaware of other works that use the idea.

6.12 Double Jeopardy Tricks (5) In criminal proceedings, once a case has been tried and a final verdict rendered, the same issue cannot be tried again (Article 39 of the Japanese Constitution; similar laws exist in the UK and the US). The same principle is used in this trick. In a murder case, the real culprit may fabricate evidence that they committed a lesser crime related to the incident, quickly confess

to that, get sentenced for it, and thereby evade the charge of murder. This trick is employed in Christie's *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, Post's short story "The Man with Steel Fingers," and George Bancroft's novel *The Ware Case*. I also recall it being used in part of Van Dine's *The Scarab Murder Case*. Also, about a decade ago in the UK and US, there was a fad for mystery novels containing real pieces of evidence, like printed court records, letters, telegrams, newspaper clippings, hair samples, torn photographs, and train tickets. A representative work of that genre, Dennis Wheatley's *Who Killed Robert Prentice?*, is built around this "Double Jeopardy" trick.

6.13 Murders Witnessed by the Culprit From Afar (2) Witnessing the crime from a distance can help the culprit establish a rock-solid alibi. During the war, I used a trick of this sort for a spy story serialized in the magazine *Sunrise* (Hinode), though as it depicts the US as an enemy nation, I've refrained from publishing it in book form. After the war, when I read Carr's *The Emperor's Snuff-Box*, I realized he had used the same trick in a different way, and felt a kind of kinship with his ideas.

6.14 Nursery Rhyme Murders (6) This is more a type of plot than a type of trick, but it involves creating an eerie atmosphere by having murders unfold according to a nursery rhyme. Examples include Harrington Hext's *Who Killed Cock Robin?*, Van Dine's *The Bishop Murder Case*, Christie's *And Then There Were None*, Queen's *Double, Double*, Elizabeth Ferrars' *I, Said The Fly* and Queen's short story "The Adventure of the Mad Tea Party."

6.15 Scripted Murders (6) Stories in this category aim to create a sense of eeriness, much like nursery rhyme murders. The concept of horrifying events unfolding as described by an ancient text, or the words of the dead, is an ancient one. It appears in old Japanese fables, and is related to the dread brought on by the prophecies and divinations of Greek oracles and Chinese oracle bones. It is often

incorporated into scriptures like the Bible, but can also be applied to mystery fiction, to create scripted murders. Examples include Junichirō Tanizaki's *The Cursed Play* (*Noroi wa Reta Gikyoku*), Christie's *The A.B.C. Murders*, Queen's *The Tragedy of Y*, Blake's *There's Trouble Brewing*, and Seishi Yokomizo's *Gokumon Island* (which features haikai murders) and *The Village of Eight Graves*.

6.16 Letters from the Dead (3) These stories involve letters that appear to have been written by the deceased not before, but after their death. The supernatural phenomenon ultimately turns out to be a trick. Examples include Beeston's "Letter from the Dead," Leblanc's *The Teeth of the Tiger*, and Masayuki Jō's "Dead Man's Letter" ("Shibito no Tegami").

6.17 Maze Tricks (4) A maze is a visual representation of the idea of mystery, so there's an intrinsic connection between mazes and mystery fiction. However, there aren't many examples of mazes themselves being used as tricks. Examples include J.J. Connington's *Murder in the Maze*, Kenneth Whipple's *The Killings in Carter Cave*, Carr's *The Twisted Hinge*, and a short story by Queen.

6.18 Hypnotism Tricks (5) Since one can seemingly achieve anything with hypnotism, it doesn't align well with the rationalism of mystery fiction; according to Van Dine's twenty rules, using it is a "foul." It is seen more often in stories from when hypnotism was still a novelty, but few of those tales have become classics. An exception is M.P. Shiel's novella "Prince Zaleski," which still has a place in mystery fiction history. The author appears to have written many other works involving hypnotism, including a novel, *Dr. Krasinski's Secret*. More recent works with this trick include Dickson's *The Red Widow Murders*, and short stories by Austin and Gilbert Frankau.

P.S. Brean's recent novel *The Darker the Night* also centers around hypnotism.

6.19 Sleepwalking Tricks (4) Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* is a good example of this sort of trick. While tackling sleepwalking head-on can disrupt the logic of a mystery story, I have read other examples, namely Henry James Forman's *Guilt* (1924) and Sax Rohmer's "Tragedies in the Greek Room." My own "Death of a Sleepwalker" also falls in this category.

6.20 Amnesia Tricks (6) This is also more a type of plot than a type of trick. After the war, psychological thrillers involving amnesia became very popular in Europe and America, but pure mystery stories had been using this trick for some time. Examples include two short stories by Collins and one by Arnold Port. I remember reading a mystery translated by Ruikō in which a character loses their memory due to a train collision, and the strange old man in Yūhō Kikuchi's translation of *The Tickencote Treasure* would probably also be considered an amnesia patient today. Moreoever, a few years ago, when E.C. Bentley, the author of *Trent's Last Case*, released the psychological thriller *Elephant's Work* (his first novel after a long hiatus), it too had amnesia as its central theme.

6.21 Outlandish Thefts (2) It may seem strange to put these tricks here, but I don't know of a better place, so I'll mention them now. One example is the vanishing carriage incident, where a trick is used to steal a specific carriage from a cargo train while the train is moving. This is used in a short story by Whitechurch, "Sir Gilbert Murrell's Picture." An even bolder trick involves the entire train vanshing, as in Doyle's "The Lost Special."

6.22 Murder Exchanges (1) Person A wants his father to die sooner so he can inherit his wealth; Person B despises his unfaithful wife and wants to get rid of her, having found a new lover. Despite being strangers with no prior relationship, by chance they learn of each other's secret desires, and decide to engage in a murder exchange: A will kill B's wife, and B will kill A's father. Since A has no connection

to B's wife, and B has no connection to A's father, neither culprit has a discernible motive, which ensures neither is suspected of a crime. The American author Patricia Highsmith wrote a novel around this concept titled *Strangers on a Train* (1950). A film adaptation by Raymond Chandler was recently released (in 1953), so it's probably fresh in readers' minds.

7. Cryptographic Techniques (37)

Back in my student days, I created a taxonomy of cryptographic techniques. I included this taxonomy in my 1925 publication "Detective Hobby" ("Tantei Shumi") and again in my 1931 essay collection "Villainous Aspirations" ("Akunin Shigan"). Since then I have made revisions to that original classification, which I present here.

Cryptography has changed significantly since 1931, thanks to advancements made during the war. Complex combinations are now crafted using automatic computing machines. However, as cryptography grows increasingly mechanized, the element of ingenuity that once made it so captivating has vanished completely, making it less suitable material for novels. This is likely why cryptographic stories have nearly disappeared from contemporary fiction.

For my collection, I was able to gather a mere 37 examples of cryptographic fiction. However, when classified according to my taxonomy, it's clear they fall mostly under categories 7.3 "Allegorical Codes" and 7.6 "Intermediary Ciphers." This suggests readers appreciate clever cryptographic techniques. If a category has no number beside it, that means I was unable to find any stories that fit that specific category.

7.1 Transposition Ciphers

According to Plutarch's *Lives*, ancient Spartan generals could encrypt messages using a rod called a scytale. Both sender and receiver needed rods of the same thickness. The sender would wrap a strip of leather or parchment around their rod, and write a message across the seams. The recipient could then read the message after wrapping the strip around their own rod, but someone without the correct diameter rod would find decrypting the message difficult. This is the principle of encryption by transposition. Several other techniques, like the grille cipher, are based on the same principle.

7.2 Pictographic Codes (4)

These techniques involve simplifying the shape of an objects or route into a basic drawing, much like a child's doodles. Examples can be found in Leblanc's *The Hollow Needle* and Saburō Kōga's "The Amber Pipe." A primitive form of this technique is used when vagabonds and thieves write peculiar symbols with chalk on roadside stones and fences to convey messages only understandable to their peers. Military semaphore signals fall into this category, as do the sign languages used by criminals and geisha alike.

Pictographic codes can also serve as a form of shorthand. The monks of old who abbreviated kanji with special symbols can be seen as employing a form of shorthand encryption. A related technique is the "picture-hunt cipher," which is used in mysteries like M.P. Shiel's cryptographic novel "The S.S.," and Swedish mystery author Frank Hellar's *The Emperor's Old Clothes*. Similarly, real life spies might use a drawing of a butterfly, where the pattern on its wings is actually a map.

7.3 Allegorical Codes (11)

Cryptic allegories have been used to communicate since ancient times. Examples include ancient Japanese love poems, Takanori Kojima's cherry tree verse, and Western riddles. This cryptographic technique is not a mechanical process, but rather something primarily constructed and deciphered using wit, making it a popular choice for mysteries. The content of the cryptogram in Poe's "The Gold-Bug" is an allegorical code, as is the curse in Ruikō's translation of *The Phantom Tower*. Other notable examples I've collected include Doyle's "The Musgrave Ritual," Post's *The Great Cipher*, Bentley's "The Ministering Angel," M.R. James' *The Treasure of Abbot Thomas*, O. Henry's "Calloway's Code," Sayers' "The Learned Adventure of the Dragon's Head," Allingham's "The Case of the White Elephant," Bailey's "The Violet Farm," and Bentley's "The Inoffensive Captain."

7.4 Permutation Ciphers (3)

This technique involves rearranging letters, words, or phrases in an unusual sequence to deceive the reader. Several forms of this method exist.

7.4.1 Basic Permutation Ciphers (1)

7.4.1.1 The characters are read in reverse This involves reversing the order of characters, turning the word "face" into "ecaf," "seed" into "dees," and "bag" into "gab." In some old, simplistic cryptographic novels, letters were written in reversed script, though I can't recall a specific example at the moment. Another old technique is to replace each letter with the next in the alphabet, substituting "A" with "B,"

or the Japanese character *i* with *ro*. This method is described in the section on "Substitution Ciphers" below.

7.4.1.2 The characters are read perpendicularly (1) This involves reading several lines of similar text vertically (for English) or horizontally (for Japanese), to derive a meaningful message. Part of my "Black Hand Gang" code employs this technique, and I think Western cryptographic novels have used the method as well.

7.4.1.3 The characters are read diagonally This is just like the method described above, except with the characters aligned diagonally.

7.4.2 Mixed Permutation Ciphers Letters, words, or phrases may be jumbled according to a mutually agreed upon rule, rather than read in a straightforward order, making the message appear chaotic at first glance. The complexity of this method varies by the rule. A word-level mixed permutation cipher was famously used by the Earl of Argyle during his conspiracy against James II.

7.4.3 Null Insertion Ciphers (2) This technique involves inserting unnecessary letters, words, or phrases into a message, to hide the intended meaning. An example of a word insertion cipher can be found in Doyle's "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott." The phrase "The game is up" is hidden within the longer sentence "The supply of game for London is going steadily up." The other words are unnecessary. Ideally, the full sentence, with inserted words, would also carry a different meaning. The same principle applies to the "Phrase Insertion Cipher." Doyle's "Adventure of the Greek Interpreter" falls into this category, as someone inserts hidden Greek phrases into a conversation. However, the conversation's overall meaning does not remain consistent.

7.4.4 Grille Ciphers These can be considered a type of null insertion cipher. Although only slightly different overall, they are worth mentioning here. A simple version involves using a square piece of

cardstock or cardboard, with horizontal and vertical lines drawn on it to create a grid similar to manuscript paper. A few randomly chosen squares are cut out to create windows, the resulting grille is placed over a sheet of paper, and the intended words written one letter at a time through the windows. After this, the grille is removed, and random letters used to fill the blank spaces between the original letters, obscuring the message. If the recipient has an identical grille, they can place it over the text and easily read the intended words, which anyone without the grille would find difficult to decipher. This is a basic grille cipher.

To complicate things, after writing letters through the windows of the grille, you can rotate the grille 45 degrees to the right or left (ensuring the previously writen letters do not show through the new windows), and continue writing the next part of the message. By rotating the grille in 45-degree increments, four different sections of the grille will open up, allowing four times as many letters to be written, before the remaining blank spaces are filled wih random letters. The recipient, who also has the grille, can also rotate it in 45-degree increments to read the message in order. There is a circular version of this, too. Though a disc doesn't have clear 45-degree rotations like a square grille, it can still be rotated strategically to reveal a message.

7.5 Substitution Ciphers (10)

According to cryptography books, there are main cryptography techniques: transposition and substitution. Transposition aligns with what I call "permutation ciphers," while substitution is used by "substitution ciphers." Clearly, these are the two main sects in cryptography, with substitution being especially crucial. All modern

mechanical ciphers belong in this category. Substitution involves re-placing letters, words, or phrases with other letters, words, phrases, numbers, or symbols to obscure their meaning. In most cases, a "keyword" known only to the communicators is required to decrypt the message.

7.5.1 Simple Substitution Ciphers (7)

7.5.1.1 Symbolic Substitutions (2) These include dot substitutions, like Braille and Morse code, which were often used by spies to communicate. Line substitutions, like the famous line segment cipher invented by King Charles I, as well as the "zigzag cipher," work similarly. One writes the alphabet horizontally, places a piece of paper underneath, and draws lightning-shaped lines beneath the letters. The recipient, who has a piece of paper with the same alphabet and spacing, can place it on top to understand the message. The ciphers in Poe's "The Gold-Bug" and Doyle's "The Adventure of the Dancing Men" are further examples of this technique, as is the Masonic cipher, which uses sections of a grid to represent each letter of the alphabet.

7.5.1.2 Numerical Substitutions (2) One can represent each letter of the alphabet with a single number or several numbers (for example, "A" may be represented by 1111, "B" by 1112, "C" by 1121, and so on). Wynne used a cipher of this sort in his novel *The Double Thirteen*. There is also an inverse tecnhnique, where numbers in a text are represented using a cipher. Freeman's short story "The Puzzle Lock" is based on this idea. In it, Roman numerals (IVXLCM) are picked out from a text, and rearranged to form the combination to a safe.

7.5.1.3 Alphabetical Substitutions (3) Each letter of an original text can be replaced by another letter or sequence of letters. In F.A.M. Webster's short story "The Secret of the Singular Cipher," each letter of the alphabet is represented by another letter; in Lillian de

la Torre's short story "The Stolen Christmas Box," the letter F is represented by "aabab," in an example of multi-letter substitution; and in Alfred Noyes' "Uncle Hyacinth," the phrase "Bon voyage" is used as a substitute for "U-boats," demonstrating word-level substitution. Alternate readings of kanji in Japanese can be used to convey different playful meanings, and a similar technique can be used in English as well. An example is writing "ghoti" to mean "fish." This works because "gh" is pronounced "f" as in "enough," "o" is pronounced "i" as in "women," and "ti" is pronounced "sh" as in "ignition," resulting in "fish."

7.5.2 Complex Substitution Ciphers (3)

7.5.2.1 Vigenère Ciphers (1) To setup a Vigenère cipher, one must first arrange the alphabet in a square grid, with each row starting with a different letter, shifting by one letter each time. The first row should start with A, the second row with B, the third row with C, and so on, until there are enough rows to create a square. Then, write the standard alphabet horizontally above the first row of the square, and vertically along its left side. These two alphabets serve as the basis for creating the cipher. In cryptography, this square is referred to as the "Vigenère Table," after its inventor, Blaise de Vigenère. There are three essential elements in the ciphering process: the original message (referred to as the plaintext), the keyword (the key), and the resulting encrypted message (the ciphertext). To encrypt a message, place a slip of paper containing the plaintext and key next to the alphabet square. Say the plaintext is "ATTACKATONCE," and the key "CRYPTOGRAPHY." Now, find the first letter to be sent, A, in the horizontal alphabet of the square. A is the first column. Next, find the first letter of the key, C, in the vertical alphabet of the square. C is the third row. Now, draw a vertical line down from the A at the top, and find where it intersects with the row for C, to find the first letter of the ciphertext. In this case, it is the first letter of the

third row, which is C. Next, find the second letter of the plaintext, T, in the horizontal alphabet, and the second letter of the key, R, in the vertical alphabet. Where the lines from both intersect, you will find K. So, the second letter of the ciphertext is K. Following this method ensures the ciphertext does not always represent A with the same letter, C. Instead, it is sometimes P, or G. Frequency analysis usually allows decipherers to know that the most frequently seen letter in the ciphertext means E, based on the frequency of letters in English, but here it is inapplicable. Moreover, if the square grid contains numbers instead of alphabets, the ciphertext will also consist solely of numbers. The cipher is thus difficult for others to break, but remarkably easy to decrypt with the keyword, as the aforementioned encryption process can simply be reversed. Modern mechanical cryptography is essentially a highly complex version of this technique, though they may have already progressed to using a cube, rather than just a square. If old ciphers are linear, then what is described here could be called planar, and mechanical ciphers volumetric. I remember once reading about a very simple version of a Vigenère cipher in a Sexton Blake story. The technique has been known for quite a long time.

7.5.2.2 Slide Rule Ciphers (1) These operate on the same principle as the Vigenère cipher, but adapt its square to resemble a slide rule, a tool often used by engineers. First, create two long, ruler-like strips of thick paper (or plastic or something). On one strip, write the alphabet from A to Z, and on the other, write the alphabet from A to Z twice, making it twice as long. Call the first strip the "Index" and the second strip the "Slide." Arrange them so that the "Index" is fixed, while the "Slide" can move left and right. At this point, a keyword should be chosen. Find the first letter of the key on the Slide, and align it under the first letter (A) of the Index.

Then, find the first letter of the message you want to encrypt on

the Index. The letter directly beneath it on the slide is the cipher-text letter. Repeat this process for the entire message to encrypt it. A recipient with the same slide rule can decipher the message by reversing this process. Within mystery fiction, this technique was described and used in Helen McCloy's novel *Panic*.

7.5.2.3 Disc Ciphers (1) Just as there are disc-based calculators, there are also disc-based cipher encoders. The principle is the same; you have a stack of two discs with one labeled "Index," and the other "Slide." Instead of sliding strips left and right, you simply rotate the discs to find your answer. A disc cipher is used in Elsa Barker's short story "The Key in Michael."

7.5.2.4 Mechanical Cipher Machines Currently, such machines are pre-dominantly used for military and diplomatic purposes. Their operating principle can be said to have evolved from planar to volumetric, and they may even employ mathematical tables, like a table of random numbers. However, they are no longer well suited for cryptographic novels focused on wit and deduction.

7.6 Intermediary Ciphers (9)

These involve using various intermediary media to create the ciphers. There are many examples of this technique in mystery novels, as it involves a good dose of wit. One example is typewriters. Some old typewriters had numbers and symbols on the same key, which allows one to represent numbers and letters through those symbols. Once you realize the typewriter is the intermediary, you can solve the cipher right away. Arthur Marchmont's *Miser Hoadley's Secret*, which I read a long time ago, is built around this concept. Book codes are another intermediary often seen in novels. The sender writers a set of three numbers to indicate the page, line, and position

in a book of each word or character of the plaintext, and the recipient must have the same book to decode the message. The Bible and well-known novels are commonly used for this purpose, though Doyle's *The Valley of Fear* employs an almanac, and Crofts' *Inspector French's Greatest Case* uses a stock exchange report. Christie's "The Four Suspects" uses a florist's catalog, Boucher's "QL 696.C9" uses a library catalog, and Doyle's "The Adventure of the Red Circle" uses classified advertisements. Another technique is flashing lights, which are also used in "The Red Circle." Percival Wilde's "The Pillar of Fire, features cigarettes as a means of sending Morse code signals in the dark, and Leblanc has a short story where sunlight is reflected with mirrors from window to window to communicate. My own"The Two-Sen Copper Coin" (Nisen Dōka) also belongs here, as it employs an intermediary medium. One of the most ingenious examples, however, is an anecdote from Herodotus's *Histories*, where a human is used as the medium. During wartime, to avoid the danger of sending a written letter, a slave's head is shaved under the pretense of treating an eye condition, and a message tattooed on his scalp. After waiting for his hair to grow back, the slave is sent to the recipient's camp, where the message is read by shaving his head again.

There exist many other cryptographic techniques, including aburidashi, invisible ink, musical substitutions, and musical notation ciphers. One can also encode messages as knots in rope or string, or use Jindai Moji characters. Nevertheless, I believe the most common techniques were covered.

8. Unusual Motives (39)

I've discussed in detail the motives of mystery fiction in a previous essay on "The Peculiar Criminal Motives of Mystery," so here I will just list the categories. Though it would be interesting to catalog and compile statistics on the motive in every mystery I've read, I don't have notes on everything, so I can list only the most unusual examples. But perhaps that's only appropriate in a taxonomy of tricks, as motives in general aren't particularly tricky.

8.1 Crimes of Emotion (20)

8.1.1 Romantic Crimes (1)

8.1.2 Revenge Killings (3)

8.1.3 Superiority Complexes (3)

8.1.4 Inferiority Complexes (4)

8.1.5 Escapes (5)

8.1.6 Altruistic Crimes (4)

8.2 Crimes of Greed (7)

8.2.1 Inheritance (1)

8.2.2 Tax Evasion (1)

8.2.3 Self Defense (3)

8.2.4 Protecting a Secret (2)

8.3 Crimes of Abnormal Psychology (5)

8.3.1 Homicidal Manias (2)

8.3.2 Murder as Art (2)

8.3.3 Oedipus Complexes (1)

8.4 Crimes of Belief (7)

8.4.1 Religious Beliefs (1)

8.4.2 Ideological Beliefs (2)

8.4.3 Political Beliefs (1)

8.4.4 Superstitions (3)

9. Tricks for Solving Cases (45)

My notes primarily focus on documenting the tricks used by culprits. However, whenever I noticed an ingenious method of uncovering the criminal, I made sure to record it as well. Upon organizing my notes, I found that I had accumulated a small collection of such tricks. One might call these byproducts, not substantial enough to warrant their own section, but I've decided include them anyways.

To tell the truth, it would have been interesting to note down every clue leading to the culprit's discovery across all works, and to analyze the clues statistically. However, even if I had done that, I doubt I would have found many truly tricky and innovative clues.

Since they are called detective novels, one would expect the detective's reasoning to be the focus of creativity. However, in reality, the appeal of mystery fiction lies more in the carefully thought-out, ingenious, and original techniques used by the criminals to conceal their crime. As a result, authors pour most of their creative energies into those aspects of the story, often relegating the detective to mere explanation.

Interesting techniques on the part of the detective are found not so much in mystery fiction, as in histories of real-life criminal cases, and books on forensic science and investigation. They are all straightforward and lacking in novelty and, as a result, less interesting from a novelistic perspective. Freeman is an author who tried to focus on the detective's reasoning, but this approach actually made his works

somewhat tedious. Simply repeating what is written in forensic textbooks does not make for a particularly engaging read.

Identifying blood stains, fingerprints, footprints, hair, and bullets; examining dust and other microscopic particles; analyzing forged documents and handwriting; using composite photographs and lie detectors; all are interesting bits of practical knowledge. However, when a novelist simply describes them as they are, the result is not very impressive. In novels, originality is paramount.

Since I therefore did not include such thoroughly explored techniques, we are left with a rather meager collection of tricks. Moreover, not all are within the realm of forensic and investigative science. They are just the examples I was able to find.

9.1 Phsyical Clues (17)

9.1.1 A needle is stuck into the sole of a shoe A clever trick from Biggers' *The Black Camel*. Where the suspect walked, and where they stopped, is determined through the almost invisible needle marks left on the linoleum floor of the room.

9.1.2 A needle is leaned against the bottom of a door A trick to check if someone has sneaked into a room during the night. No matter how gently the door is opened, the leaned needle will fall, and the intruder will likely not notice. I think there is an example of this in a famous Western work, but I cannot recall it at the moment. Alternatively, one may use thin thread, stretched across like a spider's web.

9.1.3 Fresh grass is seen under a stone In Doyle's "The Boscombe Valley Mystery," the fact that the grass under a stone is still alive

proves that the stone was moved there recently. This inspired my short story "The Ticket."

9.1.4 A characteristic knot is identified The most common example is a "sailor's knot." Occupation can be deteremined from the way something is tied, so when a knot appears at a crime scene, investigators, as a rule, do not untie it. Instead they cut the rope with scissors elsewhere. Examples of knots as clues can be found in Doyle's "The Adventure of the Abbey Grange" and "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box," as well as in my own work, "Who." Moreover, according to forensic science books, one can deduce a person's occupation by looking at their hands and noting where calluses have formed.

9.1.5 Mud splatter on trousers is analyzed Sherlock Holmes amazes one of his clients at their first meeting by accurately guessing which part of London they came from, using the color of the mud on their trousers. He does this by correlating the mud on the trousers with the mud found on specific roads, and deducing direction of travel. Both Doyle and Freeman frequently employed this kind of reasoning in their works. Mud and dust analysis is now an important part of forensic science, and pioneers in the field like Hans Gross and Edmond Locard have even said they have much to learn from mystery novelists about the analysis of microsopic particles.

9.1.6 Fingerprints are analyzed While fingerprints are in the realm of forensic science, mysteries were incredibly quick to adopt their use for individual identification (see my other essay "Meiji Era Fingerprint Novels" for more details). This shows that techniques from forensic science and investigation can be fascinating in mystery fiction, if they are utilized before becoming common knowledge.

9.1.7 Broken glass is reconstructed In Freeman's "The Case of Oscar Brodski," fragments of a broken eyeglass lens are found at

the crime scene, and reassembled. Among the fragments, pieces are discovered that differ in quality and curvature. They are ultimately identified as pieces of a broken wineglass, which leads to confirmation of the culprit. Other examples include piecing together torn photos or documents, and deciphering burnt letters. Nowadays, these techniques are all common knowledge in the field of forensic science.

9.1.8 The lengths of shadows are analyzed By analyzing the length of shadows in a photograph, the time the photo was taken can be determined, which can debunk false time claims. This technique is used in Connington's *The Sweepstake Murders*. Another common technique is checking the weather conditions on the day of the crime against astronomical records to expose false claims.

9.1.9 Left-handedness is identified Noticing that someone is left-handed can be crucial in determining the perpetrator. This is used in several works, including Christie's "Murder in the Stables" and Queen's *The Tragedy of Z*.

9.1.10 A sudden increase in appetite occurs A sudden increase in the amount of food a character consumes can indicate they are harboring and sharing meals with someone in their room. Detectives often understand that a sudden increase in appetite may mean someone is being concealed. This is used in Doyle's *The Valley of Fear* and "The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez," and in Carr's *The Eight of Swords*.

9.1.11 A retinal optogram is used The face of the culprit, seen at the victim's moment of death, may be imprinted on the retina and revealed by autopsy. This idea is explored in Roberts' short story "The English Filter." Despite being used in novels, the phenomenon has been scientifically disputed, though there are recent studies that support it.

9.1.12 The shooter of a firearm is identified Though this is actually done in investigations, it is among the newest identification techniques, so it's worth mentioning briefly. When a pistol is fired, tiny particles of gunpowder can bounce back onto the shooter, and adhere to the hand holding the pistol, as well as the sleeve, shoulder, and chest. These particles are invisible to the naked eye but can be made visible through a chemical treatment, which can quickly reveal who among a group of people fired a gun, without requiring tedious detective work. While it narrows the scope of mysteries, just like fingerprints did, countermeasures analagous to the use of gloves to avoid leaving fingerprint will surely be developed. Clayton Rawson's 1940 novel *The Headless Lady* is one of the earliest examples I've come across of mystery fiction incorporating this new identification technique.

Various other physical clues and techniques are included in my notes: Difficult-to-read writing on blotting paper can be seen by reflecting it in a mirror, as in Doyle's "The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter." Holmes is an expert at identifying different types of tobacco ash. The arrangement of blood vessels in the retina varies from person to person, and can be used for individual identification. When someone is stabbed with a blade, the hole in their clothing may be smaller than the blade due to the fabric's elasticity—a fact that can cause misunderstandings (the same applies to skin and muscle). Other tricks include determining the manufacturer of a pencil using its shavings, and using handwriting analysis to identify a criminal by realizing that a document was written half by a parent and half by their child, as in Doyle's "The Adventure of the Reigate Squire." None of these are particularly groundbreaking, however.

9.2 Psychological Clues (28)

9.2.1 The criminal makes an oversight There are many examples in literature of detectives exploiting oversights made by criminals. Examples include the painted wall in *Crime and Punishment,* the damaged folding screen in my "Psychological Test" ("Shinri Shiken"), the raindrops in Scarlett's *The Back Bay Murders* and the banknote serial numbers in their *Murder Among the Angels* (which I adapted into *The Triangle House Terror*), and the culprit's delusion and ultimate downfall in Carr's *The Emperor's Snuff-Box.* In both Bush's *The Perfect Murder Case* and Kelman Frosts' "The Terrible Evening Paper," the culprit tries to use the act of purchasing the evening paper to create a time alibi, but because he is unaware the paper was delayed, the alibi fails. Post's "An Act of God" displays a similar kind of ingenuity. The story describes Uncle Abner uncovering a forged document by noticing that misspellings supposedly made by a deaf-mute are not visual mistakes in letter shape, but the phonetic mistakes of a hearing person.

9.2.1 Even and Odd and Strawmen There's a famous quote from Dupin in "The Purloined Letter" regarding the game of "even and odd." He says, "I knew a boy about eight years of age, whose success at guessing in the game of 'even and odd' attracted universal admiration… One player holds a number of marbles in their hand, and demands of another whether that number is even or odd… Of course the boy I allude to had some principle of guessing; and this lay in mere observation and admeasurement of the astuteness of his opponents. For example, an arrant simpleton is his opponent, and, holding up his closed hand, asks, 'Are they even or odd?' Our schoolboy replies, 'Odd,' and loses; but upon the second trial he wins, for he says to himself, 'the simpleton had them even upon the first trial, and his cunning is just sufficient to make him have them

odd upon the second; I will therefore guess odd'… a simpleton a degree above the first will propose to himself upon the first impulse the same variation; but a second thought will suggest this is too simple, and finally he will decide upon putting it even as before… The boy's success thus consisted in identifying his intellect with that of his opponents." This approach of reasoning according to the intelligence of one's opponent is key to detective work.

"Strawmen" similarly comes from a remark of Uncle Abner's. "The criminal of the lowest order gives the authorities no one to suspect. The criminal of the second order sets up a straw man (false lead) before his own door, hoping to mislead the authorities. But the criminal of the first order sets it before the door of another, expecting the authorities of the state to knock it down and take the man behind it." This can be seen as an advancement of Dupin's investigative philosophy.

9.2.3 Mind reading is used In general, great detectives excel in the art of discerning human nature. However, what I'm referring to is specifically the mind-reading displayed by Dupin in Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." In that story, Dupin accurately deduces the thoughts and feelings of the narrator by observing his subtle behaviors. Holmes similarly deduces Watson's thoughts and feelings in Doyle's "The Resident Patient" and "The Cardboard Box." The above examples are anecdotes not directly related to the solving of the crime, but Van Dine made a concerted effort to incorporate this technique in his cases, as in *The Benson Murder Case*.

9.2.4 The criminal leaves an aesthetic clue People with a keen sense of aesthetics can intuitively sense if something is amiss in a room they've never seen before, even if the anomaly is quite subtle. By relying on this aesthetic intuition, they can infer the existence of missing items and so successfully identify the perpetrator. An

example can be found in Chesterton's "The Worst Crime in the World."

9.2.5 Too much evidence is found When a detective comes across two or three pieces of evidence too easily, they must be cautious. Often, this is a sign that the real culprit has planted false evidence to cast suspicion on someone else (they have placed a strawman at someone else's doorstep). Classic examples include Poe's "Thou Art the Man" and, in modern times, Van Dine's "The Scarab Murder Case." A reverse strategy, where someone intentionally leaves evidence against themselves, is also possible. By making the evidence too obvious, they can make it seem like they couldn't possibly be the real culprit. Christie employs this tactic in parts of "The Mysterious Affair at Styles."

9.2.6 A decoy is used Sometimes, the culprit can be baited into actively making a "criminal mistake," through decoy tactics. A prime example is in Milne's *The Red House Mystery*. Investigators loudly announce their plans to search a pond for crucial clothing, prompting the culprit to beat them to the punch and search the pond themselves, only to be caught in the act.

9.2.7 Surveillance is used If "third degree" interrogation can be deemed a form of torture, then so can persistent surveillance. The strategy is to follow the suspect without making any direct moves. The constant presence of a man tailing them day and night, no matter where they travel, can be enough to wear down the nerves of the guilty party, and lead them to give themselves away. I remember there being two or three examples in fiction, but I can't recall titles at the moment. This tactic can't really be called a "clue," but as it came to mind, I've included it anyways.

9.2.8 Psychological Mysteries While we're discussing psychological clues, I'd also like to touch on the topic of psychological mysteries.

Since the beginning of my career as a writer, I've believed mysteries based on psychological evidence to be deeper and more interesting than those based on physical evidence. My 1925 work "The Psychological Test" was an expression of this belief. My short story "Doubts" ("Giwaku") also took a psychological approach, but it ended up being a failure. "Psychological Test" was inspired by psychologist Hugo Munsterberg's 1911 book *Psychology and Crime*. It tells the story of a criminal trying to deceive a psychological test. The test involves a pulse meter, which could be considered a predecessor to the modern lie detector, and the measurement of reaction times in a word association test. Ultimately, the deception fails due to an "oversight." However, I realized I needed some physical evidence to conclusively solve the case, so I borrowed a technique from Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, which has an interrogation about whether a wall was repainted. In my story, I used scratches on a gold folding screen instead. Van Dine debuted after me as a writer, but he clearly also attempted to use psychological reasoning, rather than conventional physical evidence, in his first and second novels, *The Benson Murder Case* (1926) and *The Canary Murder Case* (1927). However, he too had to incorporate physical evidence for his cases to hold up in court. After *The Greene Murder Case*, his initial ambition for psychological mystery novels faded, and he ended up producing ordinary mysteries, albeit embellished with pedantry and culture.

Van Dine's interest in psychological detective work is well expressed in his famous introduction to the *World's Great Detective Stories* anthology. In it, he mentions two authors of psychological mystery fiction before him, and enthusiastically describes their representative works. They are Anthony Wynne's *The Sign of Evil* (1925), and Henry James Forman's *Guilt* (1924). I haven't had a chance to read the former, as I couldn't get hold of a copy, but I did read a novel by the same author, *The Double Thirteen*, which was not at all interesting. The latter book,

Guilt, I was able to get a copy of, and I found it somewhat interesting. The author uses Freudian reasoning to solve a murder stemming from a romantic relationship. (See Appendix 1 for more).

Ellery Queen's history of short form mystery fiction, *Queen's Quorum* (1951), cites Harvey O. Higgins' short story collection "Detective Duff Unravels It" (1929) as a pioneering work of psychoanalytical mystery fiction. The description states: "Every crime is committed in two places—at the physical scene of the crime, where the police investigate it, and in the mind of the criminal. Detective John Duff follows the second trail—deep in the mind of the perpetrator. He unravels one murder mystery by analyzing the victim's dreams; he discovers the identity of a thief who steals gold picture frames by probing the unconscious fears of the owner's wife; he solves a kidnaping by uncovering the suppressed desires of a beautiful debutante; he even invents a love charm as a psychiatric aid to detection."

Japan's Takatarō Kigi published his first psychoanalytic mystery, "Retinopathy" ("Mōmaku Myaku Shishō") in 1934. Some of his early psychological short stories also incorporated his medical specialty, Pavlovian conditioning. More recently, between 1949 and 1950, he has serialized a full psychoanalytic novel, *The Sins of My Schoolgirl Days* (*Waga Jogakusei Jidai no Hanzai*).

Most of the works I've listed add psychological reasoning to the traditional structure of mystery fiction. However, over the past two decades, a different form of novel called the "psychological thriller" has developed and become popular enough in Europe and America to overshadow traditional mystery fiction. As the genre is not constrained by the need to logically solve mysteries, extensive psychological and literary exploration is possible. I think authors who are tired of puzzles and formal logic should seriously consider venturing into this area.

I wrote the above in haste, so it is inevitable that there will be omissions and inconsistencies. Section 9 in particular was not pre-planned, and the entire work is incomplete, but I have decided to leave corrections and revisions for a later date. For now, this is the first draft of my trick taxonomy. I look forward to your corrections.

Appendix: Psychological Mysteries

The following is an old article draft I wrote for the December 1946 issue of *Jewel*. I've included it here as a description of the two psychological mysteries mentioned earlier.

In Van Dine's discussions on detective fiction, there's a section where he touches upon psychological mysteries: "The alienist detective is not a far cry from the pathologist detective, and though there have been several doctors with a flair for abnormal psychology who have enacted the role of criminal investigator, it has remained for Anthony Wynne to give the psychiatrist a permanent place in the annals of detection. In his Dr. Hailey, the Harley Street specialist (the best of whose cases is related in *The Sign of Evil*), we have an admirable detective character who mingles neurology with psychoanalysis and solves many crimes which prove somewhat beyond the ken of the Scotland Yard police. It was Henry James Forman, however, I believe, who gave us the first strictly psychoanalytical detective novel in *Guilt*—a story which, despite its unconventional ending and its singularity of material, makes absorbing reading."

I wanted to read these two works for a long time, but kept putting it off. Finally, at the beginning of this year, I read Anthony Wynne's *The Double Thirteen* (1925), and very recently, Henry James Forman's *Guilt* (1924) (I still haven't been able to get my hands on *The Sign of Evil*). *The Double Thirteen*, featuring Dr. Hailey, was not very interesting. It concerns a murder linked to the conflicts of an international secret society, focuses on the tedious deciphering of a lengthy cipher, and

shows little creativity. Though the term 'psychoanalysis' frequently appears in the text, the novel itself is not at all psychological. Even Sherlock Holmes is more psychological than the Dr. Hailey of this novel. I have two other books by Wynne, *The Horseman of Death* and *The Mystery of the Ashes*, but am not yet inclined to read them. However, I would still like to read *The Sign of Evil*.

Forman's *Guilt* was somewhat better in comparison. But that's not to say I would recommend it be translated. Van Dine wrote that it deviates from the conventions of mystery novels, but I think its deviations are still too mundane. If it had strayed further while maintaining the structure of a mystery, it could have been far more interesting. Besides the real culprit, two other characters are suspected. The first feels forced and uninteresting due to a weak connection to the overall plot. However, the motive of the second suspect is purely psychological, and quite intriguing.

A and B have been close friends since childhood. Both are single, and share an apartment like brothers. Miss C is A's girlfriend, and lives in the same apartment. She eagerly wishes to marry A, but no matter how long she waits, A never proposes. Miss C thinks A is not considering marriage because he is content with his current life, especially his close friendship with B. She concludes that if B were out of the picture, she could marry A. Killing B is her only option, which is why she falls under suspicion. However, regardless of whether this explanation is correct, the killer turns out to be someone else. In the end, it is revealed that A is the true culprit. The motive is a Freudian complex. His subconscious harbors an intense hatred for his close friend B, whom he does not consciously despise at all. This complex causes him to unconscious kill his friend during a sleepwalking episode. The culprit attempts to recreate his somnambulistic state through self-hypnosis, and ultimately exposes the truth himself. The plot is indeed unique, but I'm rather lukewarm

about the way it progresses. It's very formulaic, and some of the tricks used are similar to those of *The Moonstone*, so it feels unoriginal. That Van Dine chose these novels to represent world psychological mystery fiction is quite disconcerting. In terms of sophistication, Japan's Takatarō Kigi is far superior.

However, there is another reason Van Dine showed interest in this sort of story. Early in his career, he envisioned a broader kind of psychological mystery. When I revisited his works during the war, I got the sense that when he first ventured into mystery fiction, he aimed to revolutionize the genre by creating a method of detection based solely on psychological evidence, rather than physical clues. His arduous efforts are apparent in his first novel, *The Benson Murder Case*, which is imbued with the deep meaning and naive ambition of an epoch-making author, more so than *The Greene Murder Case* or *The Bishop Murder Case*. However, to reason solely on psychological clues is an extremely difficult task, and even a master could not completely succeed. (Though I think Van Dine's ideas were realized to a degree in some older works, like Zangwill's *The Big Bow Mystery*, and a few of Chesterton's short stories) By his second novel, *The Canary Murder Case*, psychology alone was no longer sufficient, and he had to adopt physical evidence. By *The Greene Murder Case*, physical evidence had overwhelmingly taken precedence.

Psychological mystery stories in the strict sense might be defined as those with psychopathology and psychoanalysis, like the novels of Wynne and Forman; reflexology, like Takatarō Kigi; or psychological testing, like Munsterberg. If so, what Van Dine aspired to create was a broader category. There is also a third, even broader category of psychological novel, which in general literature includes authors ranging from Proust to Dostoevsky. Within mystery fiction, Simenon's works would fall under this category. The adjective "psychological" can be used describe any of these three distinct categories, and I have a

fondness for all three, but examples of the first, most strictly defined type are not scarce, both in Japan and internationally. One could call the genre somewhat conquered. What I hope for is the exploration and development of the second and third categories. My dream for the future of mystery fiction is to use the methods of psychological novels (the third type) to reason through psychological mysteries (the second type).

Now, on the subject of psychological mystery fiction, I would like to quote the following two texts.

From "Preface to The Illusion Castle"

In my essay on "The Future of British and American Mystery Fiction," I described Margaret Millar's *Wall of Eyes* on the basis of James Sandoe's review, and suggested it may point to a new direction for honkaku mystery fiction. Recently, I had the chance to read *Wall of Eyes* myself, and now I must admit my imagination may have taken me a little too far. Millar's novel is written in a psychological style almost like "stream of consciousness," and the perpetrator is kept hidden until the very end. But while a major trick is employed, I did not feel it demonstrated the level of originality needed to herald a new direction for honkaku mystery. The novelty of this work lies mostly in its psychological narrative techniques, but I found the trick used to conceal the culprit somewhat ordinary, and not well aligned to the writing style. That characters with such great psychological insight would all fail to notice the Lupin-esque deception feels rather unnatural, especially given the entire narrative is psychologically drawn.

In my description of the book, I mention that a psychiatrist plays the role of the detective. In fact, while a psychiatrist does appear in *Wall of*

Eyes, they don't play a significant role. Instead, a police detective does the psychology, and performs most of the deductions. I also write that, "the author achieves the seemingly impossible: By depicting the culprit's psychology through countless carefully selected fragments, she allow readers to fully experience their fear, without knowing their identity." This was taken directly from Sandoe's review, and in truth was the aspect I had the highest expectations for. However, upon actually reading *Wall of Eyes*, I did not feel that way at all. The way the culprit's identity is hidden is not much different from traditional mysteries, and I didn't find the portrayal of their fear before being discovered exceptionally well-written either. Though it does do these things, I feel many traditional works are actually better in this regard (e.g. *The House of the Arrow*). Nevertheless, the methods of psychological description used in the narrative are fresh, and a major trick is hidden at the end, so the book is still a novel attempt at the genre, and well worth a read.

From "A New Example of Psychological Mystery"

Originally published in the August 1953 edition of Locked Room *magazine.*

I would like to write a few words about American author Margaret Millar's *The Iron Gates*, which I finished reading just last night. I was particularly impressed by it, hence my desire to write.

James Sandoe, the American critic, has described Millar's *Wall of Eyes* and *The Iron Gates* as "psychological thrillers that fully retain the interest of a true mystery novel." I repeated this statement in my essay on "The Future of British and American Mystery Fiction" in *The Phantom Castle*. From Sandoe's description, I imagined these novels could provide a new direction for psychological mystery fiction

(not "psychological test" fiction, but stories that center around the mysteries and tricks of psychology itself). I thus read *Wall of Eyes* with high hopes, but it didn't live up to my expectations (I noted this in my preface to *The Phantom Castle*). I also read her well received novel of last year, *Vanish in an Instant*, and found it even less interesting. Consequently, I gave up on Millar.

I was unable to acquire *The Iron Gates* for quite some time, but recently I finally had the opportunity to borrow it from someone. Upon reading it, it became clear to me that James Sandoe's comments about the book were not exaggerations. Perhaps because I read it without high expectations, I found myself incredibly impressed, particularly by the riveting intensity of the sections near the end. It stands on par with, and in some ways even surpasses, post-war works like William Irish's *Phantom Lady*, Agatha Christie's *A Murder is Announced*, and Josephine Tey's *The Daughter of Time* (which I discussed in last February's edition of *Chuo Koron*).

Explaining exactly why I found it so impressive would require more than just a few short paragraphs (I hope to write about it in detail somewhere else in the future). It's a psychological novel, yet a major mystery remains hidden until the very end. Psychological hints are scattered throughout the narrative, which upon reflection align perfectly, just like the clues in a traditional mystery. These hints, which must be understood from the perspective of psychoanalysis, aren't concrete evidence in a legal sense, but may resonate more strongly on a psychological level than physical proof. It hints at what I have long spoken of: a world of true mystery fiction, featuring psychological techniques.

I cannot call Millar's novel a perfect example of this new type of mystery. Certain aspects, such as the killer's motive, leave something to be desired. However, it offers something fresh and entirely different from the combination of mystery and psychological description

found in Millar's other work, *Wall of Eyes*. In *The Iron Gates,* I sense the dawn of a new age of true psychological mysteries.

About the Author

Edogawa Rampo (1894-1965), born Tarō Hirai, is known as the "Father of Japanese Mystery." In Japan, he remains among the most well-known and influential writers of the genre. His debut work, 1922's "The Two-Sen Copper Coin," took inspiration from classic Western detective stories like Edgar Allen Poe's "The Gold Bug" and Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Dancing Men," but incoporated elements of Japanese culture and tradition, to create what is generally considered the very first honkaku mystery. When it was published in *New Youth,* it was praised as one of the few domestic short stories to match the quality of Western fiction. He would follow up with more works in the same vein, including the first Japanese locked room story, "Murder on D-Hill," and the first inverted mystery, "The Psychological Test," both featuring series detective Akechi Kogoro. The continued publication of these stories led to him becoming perhaps the first full-time mystery author in Japan.

Rampo's earliest works are considered honkaku, or "orthodox," mysteries. Such stories follow in the footsteps of writers like S.S. Van Dine or John Dickson Carr, and value puzzling climes, fair cluing, and rational deduction over dramatic suspense or surprise twists. In addition to pioneering the genre, Rampo also worked closely with some of its key figures. His friend Seishi Yokomizo was the author of the Kosuke Kindaichi novels, and Rampo's editor for some time pre-WWII. However, Rampo himself achieved greater success with

stories that emphasized the erotic and grotesque, like 1925's "The Human Chair," 1927's *The Dwarf*, which was made into a film the same year, and 1934's *The Black Lizard*, which was adapted into a play by Yukio Mishima. Though he considered the novels he wrote in this style inferior to his early work, they were widely popular, and among the few pre-war novels never go out of print after the end of the conflict.

After about 1935, Rampo stopped writing as much fiction for adults, and turned towards stories for children. *The Fiend with Twenty Faces*, the first installment of his *Boy's Detective Club* series, came out in *Shonen Club* in early 1936. It featured Akechi Kogoro together with his young assitant Kobayashi, and was very popular with its audience, dominating Rampo's output after the war. It also spawned numerous radio, movie, and TV adaptations.

Around the same time he turned to children's fiction, Rampo also became more active as a critic. His first collection of essays, *Demon's Words* was published in fall 1935, followed by *Lord of the Illusion Castle* in 1947, *The Illusion Castle* in 1951, and *The Illusion Castle Continued* in 1954. His appraisals of works like Akimitsu Takagi's *Tattoo Murder Case* and Matsumoto Seicho's *Points and Lines* were critical to their success. In 1947, he founded in the Mystery Writer's Club, later to become the Mystery Writers of Japan, after his home, which survived the firebombing of Tokyo, became a place for mystery authors to borrow and discuss books. The Mystery Writers of Japan Award and the Edogawa Rampo Prize, both organized by the club, remain important paths to discovery for new authors to this day.