Homicide in American Fiction, 1798–1860

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PART THREE

The Fundamental Motive

NOW we know everything—except why the murder was actually committed. —SIGMUND FREUD

Reason is the conscious explanation a man makes for himself or an outsider makes for him before, during, and after a deed. Motive is the real driving force which is at least partly unconscious and which can be understood only as part of a continuing and developing process. In the medico-legal discussions and proceedings of this case these two terms were constantly confused.

—FREDERIC WERTHAM