Chapter 1

Introduction

We are today in the presence of a discrepancy between two essential manifestations; no longer is there one single esthetic norm in our society, but two; the same measurements do not apply to “high” art and “popular” art. (Todorov 1977:44)

The society that we live in has always been a centre of social disparities. At the base of various social norms and practices are certain ideologies which are being disseminated by those who intend to exercise their power, authority and dominance. This practice has led to the construction of hierarchical superstructures that operate in almost all domains of human endeavor. This is also visible in the world of literature where some works are considered to be more serious and hence more respectable than others. This categorization is set upon certain bench mark of standards that in turn situate some genres in the domain of literary canon, while the excluded lot gets marginalized to the periphery. The term canon stands to accord a degree of excellence to works by distinguishing between good and bad works. Works which draw considerable recognition about its excellence enjoy an advantage in terms of serious significance and are therefore inculcated into the educational program or framework of various academic institutions. The canonical status of a literary work mainly depends on this politics of inclusion and exclusion. However, this classification is mostly based on the subjective analysis of literary critics or scholars; but the tendency to prioritize such works has been a universal phenomenon.
Popular literature is one such domain which has been trying hard to relocate itself to the center. The term ‘Popular Literature’ applies to all those genres of fiction that has always been conveniently sidelined to the periphery of literary canon on grounds of being ‘non-serious’. Science fiction, horror fiction, fairy tales, detective fiction et al. are some of the most widely read genres of popular literature. Their popularity rests on the large scale readership from across the globe. But such stories often find it hard to make its way to mainstream or ‘high’ literature, since they are considered unfit to conform to the notions of the grand canon. Popular literature is mostly looked down upon as inferior and not literary enough to deserve critical acclaim. The principle reason behind this is the labeling of the genre as ‘popular’ which is almost taken to be equivalent of being non-serious. Valued on mere grounds of ‘entertainment’, the genre has long been facing discrimination, struggling to find its place within the grand literary canon.

Crime thrillers, popularly known as Detective Fiction is one of the many branches of popular literature and is arguably one of the most widely read genres. Often denigrated as pulp-fiction, the genre has always been treated as unsuitable for serious literary scholarship. A look back through the pages of world history will speak for the immense popularity that detective fiction has received since its early years of inception. Amidst the continual politics of the literary canon that excludes the genre from literary recognition; detective fiction has come a long way from its nascent days to its modern versions recreating itself with changing times and by drawing inspiration from contemporary life. Though writers in all ages have composed narratives based on crime and detection, this very style of writing evolved as a genre primarily in the nineteenth century. The archetypal story involves a crime, followed by its investigation wherein the detective
disentangles the mystery with the aid of his or her extraordinary intelligence, superior reasoning faculty, shrewd observation and an inquisitive mind.

Noted theorist Tzvetan Todorov makes an extensive discussion of the genre in his essay, “The Typology of Detective Fiction” (1977). In this essay he discusses the various kinds of detective fiction and suggests that a ‘classical’ detective fiction narrative consists of two stories. He says that such novels “contains not one but two stories: the story of the crime and the story of the investigation” (Todorov 1977:44). Of these two stories, the former emerges only at the end of story of investigation. Todorov makes a more detailed study and explains:

It is no accident that it is often told by a friend of the detective, who explicitly acknowledges that he is writing a book; the second story consists, in fact, in explaining how this very book came to be written. The first story ignores the book completely, that is, it never confesses its literary nature (no author of detective fiction can permit himself to indicate directly the imaginary character of the story, as it happens in “literature”). On the other hand, the second story is not only supposed to take the reality of the book into account, but it is precisely the story of that very book. (Todorov 1977:45)

Most detective fiction narratives are seen to focus on a crime of some particular nature, but some stories do not deal with any conventional crime. In many stories the narrative revolves around a mystery often structured as an intricate puzzle, where the narrative is oriented towards solving this central puzzle. This puzzle element require the readers to do more than just a passive reading of the stories and involve their own reasoning faculties.
to understand the intricacies of the mystery as an ongoing puzzle; that almost appears like a maze. The plot along with various other aspects like the investigator, the mystery involved along with the investigation which follows, are yoked together to generate an exciting puzzle that even challenges the readers to engage their reasoning faculties to solve the mystery along with the investigator.

Despite the genre’s continual upsurge on the popularity charts, it has been degraded as less literary and excessively formulaic. It is believed that the popularity which the genre enjoys is due to the thrill and entertainment that the genre provides. However, such criticisms have been outlasted by the genre’s widespread popularity that has left critics intrigued by such questions like, what do these formulaic fictions offer that makes them a sustainable as well as compelling addiction for readers. But many critics believe that this addiction spurs the readers away from serious literature. In 1945, American critic Edmund Wilson in his article, “Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd” degraded the genre and suggested that any indulgence in such stories is wastage of time. This work came as a response to the reviews he received for another article, titled “Why Do People Read Detective Stories?” (1944). In his over simplified review of the genre he finds that most stories are mere duplication of the traditional Holmes model and hopes to read no other book by Agatha Christie as he finds her writing excessively mawkish. This article generated a lot of protest among the loyalist of the genre which included both readers as well as writers. In his response he wrote, “Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd”. The following extract from the essay quoted from William W. Stowe’s essay “Popular Fiction as Liberal Art” reveals his attitude towards the genre. He says:
Friends, we represent a minority, but Literature is on our side. With so many fine books to be read, so much to be studied and known, there is no need to bore ourselves with this rubbish. (Stowe 1986:646)

The archetypal formula based detective fiction still flourishes and continues to appeal to readers. People love reading detective fiction not simply because it provides good entertainment. Detective fiction narratives work on the archetypal notion of ‘the right’ being triumphant over ‘the wrong’, which is something that we subscribe to as part of our moral-ethical order. A close study will reveal that such stories primarily revolve around a set of binaries, highlighting the age old conflict between the forces of ‘good’ and ‘evil’. With the victory of light over darkness it restores the notions of righteousness, which is something which we always conform to. While reading such stories this always operates at the back of our mind and thus sustains our interest. But, still the genre is chiefly viewed as a source of recreation- an activity of leisure. The skepticism associated with the rise of the detective fiction is not only voiced in the title of Edmund Wilson’s 1944 essay, “Why Do People Read Detective Stories?” but time and again the genre has faced similar questions. Infact, the emergence of the genre and its popularity is primarily seen to be in response to certain social and ideological forces, along with the advent of industrialization, urbanization and creation of the law enforcement figure in England and the United States.

In recent years, our approach towards detective fiction has undergone considerable change. Following years of negligence, the genre now calls for a fresh approach to examine the whole politics of inclusion and exclusion initiated by the proponents of the literary canon. In this regard one must analyze the genre to study the
very notions of being non-serious and therefore popular. New age studies have
galvanized the genre into a domain of academic respectability by embarking on new
studies which explores the complexity of the genre and validates its significance by
arguing that the genre deserves serious reading and interpretation. Exploring the various
aspects of the genre, theorists of detective fiction have ushered a new wave in the history
of the genre, to challenge the harsh criticisms often imposed upon the genre of being
limited in scope with its dose of thrill and entertainment. But prior to any serious
discussion of the genre, it is fundamental to understand the very idea of what it takes to
be a classic detective and how the very notions of crime and detection made their way to
literature.

Detective fiction as a genre evolved mainly in the nineteenth century. Although in
its nascent years it bloomed in periodicals and full-length novels came much later in the
nineteenth century. Interestingly there was no detective, nor was there any idea of
detection in the initial years. Prior to the development of printing technology in Europe,
accounts of crime saw the light of the day in the form of pamphlets which were circulated
with elaborate illustrations and sensational titles. Such pamphlets which started appearing
from sixteenth century onwards dealt with various crimes ranging from murder to thefts.
In his book *Crime Fiction since 1800* (2010), Stephen Knight records that *Blood and
Knavery* is an anthology which provides access to such pamphlets including *Sundry
strange and inhumaine Murthers, lately committed* (1591). Those which gave detailed
descriptions of pick pocketing, gambling et.al were known as ‘cony-catching pamphlet’
(Knight 2010:3), while some others provided detailed accounts of the execution of the
criminals. These illustrated narratives were aimed at drawing the attention of the readers
in order to disseminate the power of the state and warn its subjects against any acts of crime. Gradually these early crime narratives started appearing in various formats. Broadside was one such early form of publication which consisted of a single sheet of paper on one side. Usually made of rough paper, these verse or prose narratives were simple narration of the life of the criminal and were light on the pockets of both printers as well as buyers. Another format known as the Accounts provided insights into the lives of the convicted prisoners of London’s Newgate Prison. Being published by the Chaplains or the Ordinaries, the religious renderings of such accounts is evident. They dealt with criminals narrating their lives of crime, their eventual confession and finally their execution. In addition, the stories also ensured authoritative and monetary benefits for the Chaplains. These accounts were expensive than the Broadsides, making it affordable for a particular section of the society. Later in the eighteenth century publishers brought expensive anthologies of such accounts often in the form of a book which came to be known as Newgate Calendars. These accounts were also thought to be based on fact but owing to a chain of constant republishing they ended up as more fiction than fact. *The Malefactor’s Register or the Newgate and Tyburn Calendar* (1779), *New and Complete Calendar* (1795), *The New Newgate Calendar* (1826) are such editions that were reissued several times. Although they appeared at various times yet these accounts like the Broadsides, the Ordinaries’ Accounts, the Newgate Calendars mainly emphasized on the criminal’s life focusing on his acts of crime and his execution. However, some of the later editions of the Calendars which came in the nineteenth century show the criminals defying the motif of confession, prevalent in the previous versions. These early
narratives of crime laid the foundation stone for the genre and paved the way for what came to be known as Newgate novels.

As the name suggests, the Newgate novels not only took its title from the Calendars but also embraced their style and focused mainly on the life of the criminal. Although the protagonists and other characters were inspired by real life criminals but these novels vary from the Calendars. According to Heather Worthington, the novels “presented their criminal heroes sympathetically as victims of society and circumstances or as glamorous adventurers in the Robin Hood mode.” (Worthington 2011:106) But prior to the Newgate novels, there existed a similar trend of novels in the eighteenth century with a criminal hero taking us back to the early formats like the Ordinaries’ Accounts. Henry Fielding’s The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great (1754[1743] ), Daniel Defoe’s True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild (1725) were based on the real life criminal, Jonathan Wild, Thief-Taker General. Defoe’s Moll Flanders (1722) also deals with the life of a real life criminal heroine. Like these novels the nineteenth century sub-genre of the Newgate novels also glamorised the life of the criminal. Novelists like Edward Bulwer Lytton, Charles Dickens, William Harrison Ainsworth et.al utilized the popularity of such novels and made themselves known as Newgate novelists. Edward Bulwer Lytton’s Eugene Aram (1832) and Lucretia (1846) are based on real criminals, while Paul Clifford (1830) is fictional. William Harrison Ainsworth’s Rokwood (1834) and Jack Sheppard (1839-40) are the fictionalized accounts of actual criminals Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard respectively. Dicken’s Oliver Twist (1837-9) also falls in the same line.
The romanticized figure of the criminal hero as depicted by the Newgate novels were controversial because of their alleged role in invoking criminality in the reader’s mind, a claim backed by the rising criminal activities in the contemporary society. In the meantime, various private and state-funded crime regulatory organizations came into existence. With this the genre witnessed the slow but steady evolution of its new hero - an investigative figure who would investigate the crime. In 1749, novelist Henry Fielding laid the foundation of Bow Street Runners, a privatized mobile crime detecting body in London. The Runners; commonly referred to as thief-takers operated in plain clothes until 1839 but their reputation as a crime detecting body was effected due to their similarity with the unpopular spy-system operational in France after the French Revolution. Their presence in contemporary literature was also very thin and insignificant. *Oliver Twist* (1838), *Richmond: Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Runner* (1827) are some of the few works which feature the Runners. Around that time the state-funded police forces also developed and in 1829 the New Metropolitan Police and later in 1842 the Metropolitan Detective Police came into being. Slowly but gradually the investigative figure gained prominence. This development was discernible in contemporary literature as memoirs of such investigative figures and policeman hero made their way into the world of fiction.

Purporting to be the real-life accounts of the investigative figure these accounts dealt with real life adventures of police detectives with some factual add-ons. The pioneer of this trend was Francois Eugene Vidocq who served as a soldier, secret police spy and as the head of the French Surete in 1812. But prior to this he belonged to the world of crime and was actually a ‘thief- turned-thief taker’ (Wothington 2011:18). His own
experience as a criminal proved handy and he used them to track down criminals. Later he published the partly autobiographical work, *Memoirs of Vidocq* in 1828. Soon England saw a proliferation of similar accounts in various periodicals. With the establishment of the New Metropolitan Police in 1829, the police man hero was seen competent enough in checking crime and criminals. However, Edgar Allan Poe’s proto detective C. Auguste Dupin, who made his appearance in the 1840s, was not only shown to assist the police but he also solved cases. This motif which presented the police detective as inferior to the private detective was prevalent right up to the nineteenth century. But from 1850 onwards writers have extensively dealt with police detectives and one of the most noteworthy writers in this regard is Charles Dickens. His “Detective Police Anecdotes” (*Household Words*, 1850-53) is a collection of articles based on the Metropolitan Police Detectives. Another such work is William Russell’s “Recollections of a Police Officer” (*Chamber’s Edinburgh Journal*, 1849-53; later reissued as *Recollections of a Detective Police-Officer*, 1856). Slowly the number of fictional police detectives multiplied and some notable works are; *The Detective’s Notebook* (1860) and *The Diary of an Ex-Detective* (1860) by ‘Charles Martel’ (Thomas Delf), *Curiosities of Crime in Edinburgh* and *The Sliding Scale of Life* (1861) by real-life detective James McLevy, *The Irish Police Officer* (1861) by Robert Curtis, William Russell’s *The Experiences of a Real Detective* (1862). Some works also featured female detectives, who were not directly associated with police but they used to assist the male police detectives. In 1864, British writer James Redding Ware under the pseudonym, Andrew Forrester created one of the first female detectives in the history of the genre in his aptly titled work, *The Female Detective* (1864). The work demands special mention, because at a time when there were hardly any women
who served in the police department it featured Mrs G - a female detective who was no less than her male counterparts. The author conveys the relevance of the work through the words of the protagonist herself:

I am aware that the female detective may be regarded with even more aversion than her brother in profession. But still it cannot be disproved that if there is a demand for men detectives there must also be one for female detective police spies. Criminals are both masculine and feminine - indeed, my experience tells me that when a woman becomes a criminal she is far worse than the average of her male companions, and therefore it follows that the necessary detectives should be of both sexes. (Forrester 1868:3)

This new trend was also subject to duplication and soon in the latter half of 1864 followed William Stephens Hayward’s *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, featuring Mrs. Paschal. Though the coming of such female detectives was a welcome move, but towards the end of the nineteenth century the trend began to lose its ground.

However, the quintessential detective was yet to arrive. Though the very idea of detection was prevalent, but the figure of the detective was still hazy. A look at the dictionary will show that the terms detect and detection was in common usage right from the fifteenth century. But these words were scarcely associated with any idea of crime and were usually used in the sense of finding out or discovering something. But from nineteenth century onwards, the terms possessed a revised if not a totally different meaning. Some critics and historians of detective fiction believe that the term ‘detective’ made its first appearance in print in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”
which appeared in the Graham’s Magazine in 1841. Heather Worthington writes that the earliest possible use of the term was made in the 1843 issue of Chamber’s Journal and also mentions about R.F. Stewart’s And Always a Detective, in which he claimed that the evolving style of writing was first described by the term ‘detective fiction’ in an 1886 article published by the Saturday Review.

However, from the early thief-turned-thief takers to the police detectives, the investigative figure was gradually developing. Though the police detectives continued to appear in the world of fiction, they failed to represent the ideal detective or what modern readers today understand by the term since they were mere investigators of crime with no eccentricity in character. So the next significant development in the history of the genre was the arrival of the private detective at both professional and amateur levels. As the police detectives received an elevated status at the hands of many fiction writers, the idea of detection was slowly adapted by people outside the police department. However, with rapidly changing social order, crimes were no more confined to the lower classes of the society and incidents of criminal activities became more rampant in the higher and middle classes of the society. These developments necessitated the presence of an additional investigative figure other than the police detectives in order to address the problems of the common people. Heather Worthington explains:

…the police were created specifically to deal with what was seen as the criminal class and policeman were recruited from the lower classes, there was a problem when it came to police detectives dealing with middle and upper classes and this is very apparent in fiction. (Worthington 2011:20)
Following the popularity of the police detectives some enthusiasts carried out the job of investigation out of mere curiosity. These individuals who worked in private capacity came to be known as amateur detectives. This marked the entry of the private investigator. Gradually some amateur detectives made themselves available for personal assignments as they took the job of detection to the professional level. In course of time they were paid proper remuneration for their job.

Another discernable development was the arrival of some pseudo-factual tales by people from other professions like doctors or physicians, barrister, attorney et.al, where they were seen in the role of the quasi-detective. This development was also reflected in the world of fiction and we can find many such characters in stories of detection, where the investigation was carried out by some individual who came from a different profession. For instance, Ezra Jennings (physician) in Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone*, Mr. Tulkinghorne (lawyer) in Charles Dickens’ *Bleak House*, Mr. Raymond (lawyer) in Anna Katharine Green’s *The Leavenworth Case*, V.I. Warshawski the lawyer-turned-private detective in Sara Paretsky’s *works et.al.* It is interesting to note that the figure of the detective had a lot in common with that of the physician as well as the lawyer. Infact, the very act of detection can be seen in the lights of diagnosis done by a physician, Heather Worthington explains, “… a professional investigator can be seen in the figure of the physician. The doctor, after all, looks for evidence of disease, traces the causes of illness, names the culprit, and each patient he sees is a case, to be opened and closed with diagnosis and cure.” (Worthington 2011:22). Almost in a same manner the detective exposes the criminal after diagnosing the cause of the crime. Just as a legal professional helps the public to find justice in the court of law, similarly the detective too delivers
justice by unmasking the criminal. All these factors helped in shaping the genre and hence two important influences that helped in shaping the genre are those of science and law.

Often in popular cinema the hero assures that no matter how smart the criminal is, he always leaves a trace behind his crime. The role of evidence is of paramount significance in any crime fiction narrative. With increasing complexities in the nature of crime, the detective in a post Darwinian world looks for a more rational and concrete evidence. In this regard the detective has been benefitted by the development of forensic science. Lately the detective’s investigation has become more complicated and more reliable due to his scientific diagnosis. In fiction this trend is reflected in the presence of various important protagonists like the physician Ezra Jennings in Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone*, Patricia Cornwell’s forensic specialist cum detective Kay Scarpetta, Kathy Reichs’ forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan and the most famous in the lot is Arthur Conan Doyle’s invention Dr. Watson, a physician cum assistant of Holmes.

Another factor that has imparted an equally important influence on the genre is the aspect of law that is too inherently associated with detective fiction. However, most narratives do not exhaustively deal with legal matters, but after all a detective exists to unmask a criminal who has committed a crime by defying the law of the state or society and thus the genre in its initial stages has drawn considerably from fictionalized accounts of legal personals like, *Confessions of an Attorney*, *The Experiences of a Barrister* or *Recollections of a Police Officer*. Infact, in many novels the writers incorporated court room procedures into the narrative. In our society it is the police who are entrusted with the job of maintaining law and order but in a detective fiction narrative the detective is
the hero who almost replaces the police and unmask the criminal. In most cases the stories end after the revelation of the criminal without any subsequent trial or punishment. At times the detective and the police are also shown to be working in alliance. So law is an integral part of any detective fiction narrative and such stories often provide a platform to study the prevalent law and order system of a given society in a particular context of time.

Finally, the figure of the ideal detective evolved in the nineteenth century fiction by drawing influences from early models like the thief-turned-thief taker model, the police-turned-investigator model, the professional anecdote model of doctors and legal personals et.al. Amidst this wide range of proto-detective figures, the genre made a steady progress and until the arrival of Sherlock Holmes, the image of a professional private detective hung in precarious balance. Sherlock Holmes epitomizes the genre’s classic décor and his arrival marked a new dawn in the history of the genre. Created by Scottish doctor-turned-author Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes is the best ever fictional detective that the genre has received. Amidst a wide range of quasi-detective figures, nineteenth century witnessed the arrival of Holmes- a detective who was intellectual, celebrated for his logical reasoning, smart disguises, charisma, eccentricity and highly scientific skills of detection. Holmes is the apotheosis of modern detectives, since the Holmes-model as conceived and created by Doyle has inspired almost every detective fiction writer in the following years and still continues to do so. Prior to Holmes, the police detectives were seen as somewhat incompetent in checking the acts of crime. They relied either on circumstantial evidence or arrived at obvious conclusions to
solve the mystery. But Holmes was different as he relied more on scientific methods of
deduction. In Crime Fiction since 1800 Stephen Knight describes Holmes as:

…the figure that had slowly emerged through the nineteenth century: a
detective who is highly intelligent, essentially moral, somewhat elitist, all-
knowing, disciplinary in knowledge and skills, energetic, eccentric, yet
also in touch with the ordinary people who populate the stories. (Knight
2010:55)

Sherlock Holmes solved each case with his extraordinary intellect and above-
average common sense. Though his style created an aura and left the readers awestruck,
but his real appeal lies in his utterly normal and human approach as he knows to make the
best use of his potentials and capabilities. Infact, he is presented as a detective with
whom the readers can relate. The fictional hero made his first public appearance in “The
Study in Scarlet” published in Beeton’s Christmas Annual in 1887. The work failed to
draw much attention, though it led Doyle to his first novella, “The Sign of the Four”
(1890) published by the Lippioncott’s Monthly Magazine. This work marks the
considerable growth of Doyle as an author and later in 1891 he contributed the first few
stories featuring the detective to publish The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes in the
Strand Magazine which was launched by George Newnes. In 1893, Newnes published
the second series of Holmes Stories titled as The Memoir of Sherlock Holmes. In “The
Final Problem” Holmes was apparently killed in a duel with Professor Moriarty, which
killed both the detective and his famous opponent. This was an intentional move on part
of the author but owing to the large scale demand from the readers; Doyle brought the
detective back in action in 1903. The novella The Hound of the Baskervilles, subtitled
‘Another Adventure of Sherlock Holmes’ was serialized in the *Strand magazine*. The magazine published the third series of Holmes stories in 1903 as *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*. More stories continued to appear at regular intervals and later in 1927-28 came the last collections of the Holmes-stories, *Case Book of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Complete Sherlock Holmes Short Stories* published by John Murray. Over a period of forty years Doyle has created four novels and fifty six short stories describing the adventurous exploits of Holmes.

Ever since the arrival of Sherlock Holmes, he has proved to be a cult figure who received unprecedented popularity. But Holmes was not a revolutionary invention. Doyle’s creation owes a lot to his predecessors, most notably Emile Gaboriau’s Lecoq or Pere Tabaret and Edgar Allan Poe’s C. Auguste Dupin. Gaboriau was a nineteenth century French writer, widely regarded as the pioneer of detective fiction. Many of his writings were works of crime and sensation. But the one which brought him fame is *L’Affaire Lerouge* (1866) translated as The Lerouge Case. In this novel Gaboriau introduced an amateur detective Tabaret, much in the fashion of Dupin. His narratives were impregnated with dramatic twists and turns, giving the detective narrow chances of detection until the final revelation becomes apparent. In the same novel he introduced another character, a young police officer Monsieur Lecoq, who was later recreated as the hero of his future novels like *Le Crime d’ Orcival* (1867) and *Le Dossier o. 113m* (1867) and the two volume *Monsieur Lecoq* (1868). In Lecoq, Gaboriau created a detective who was capable of brilliant rational deduction. In tracing the development of the genre his novels often get neglected, but the stories adorned with a typical style of clue-based
detection, interesting twists followed by dramatic denouements became a staple for future writers of the genre.

But prior to Gaboriau, Edgar Allan Poe conceived the idea of a fictional detective in the 1840s and laid the basic conventions of the genre. C. Auguste Dupin arrived at a time when the term ‘detective’ was yet to be coined and popularized. Still Poe’s Dupin immortalized the concept of the future gentleman detective who was intelligent, empirical and analytical. This brand image was extensively adapted and imitated in later generations as Dupin defined the characteristics of a typified detective. Poe featured Dupin in three stories: “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841), “The Mystery of Marie Roget” (1842-3) and “The Purloined Letter” (1845) and the 1841 story is widely considered to be the first detective fiction story. But the real feat of Dupin lies in his methods of investigation. In the first story, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”, Edgar Allan Poe stresses at the observations and inferences that the investigator makes. And in all his appearances Dupin highlights the intellectual process that goes into the process of solving the mystery. Infact, his narratives are famously described as ‘tales of ratiocination’ (Knight 2010:26). Dupin is a brilliant observer, without missing the slightest change in the gestures and manners of the characters. And most importantly he makes empirical observations and thus uses his practical knowledge effectively. But what sets him apart is his ability to read the minds of other persons, be it the criminal or his friend, the unnamed narrator. In solving the crime he tries to read the mind of the criminal by putting himself in the criminal’s space. In other words Dupin’s genius lies in his ability to amalgamate his brilliant observation, practical knowledge and superior intellect. Patricia D. Maida conveys that Poe popularized the main components of the
detective story, “…the character and method of amateur sleuth, the concept of sleuth’s companion, the puzzle and the specific devices and motifs which were to become conventions of the genre” (Maida 1982:36-37). Interestingly in his autobiographical work *Memories and Adventure* (1924), Arthur Conan Doyle also acknowledges the influence of Dupin and Gaboriau but mentions the name of Dr. Joseph Bell as someone who influenced his creation:

> I felt now that I was capable of something fresher and crisper and more workmanlike. Gaboriau had rather attracted me by the neat dovetailing of his plots, and Poe’s masterful detective, M. Dupin, had from boyhood been one of my heroes. But could I bring an addition of my own? I thought of my old teacher Joe Bell, of his eagle face, of his curious ways, of his eerie trick of spotting details. (Doyle 2007:62-63)

Despite of such influences, Holmes breathed in fresh air in the realm of detective fiction writing. Unlike the preceding generations of detectives, Holmes was a perfect blend of scientific detection and professionalism. He was a professional-private detective who did his job and earned a living out of this. In his maiden appearance in “A Study in Scarlet” (1887), Holmes has been described as ‘an enthusiast in some branches of science’, ‘a first class chemist’ whose studies are ‘very desultory and eccentric’ (Doyle 2003:5). But apart from his proficiency in science Holmes was also different from the police detectives of the nineteenth century. Though police did make an appearance in the Holmes-stories but they were mostly portrayed as inefficient in controlling crime. Besides, he is a detective who is highly literary and intellectual and knows where to look at and for what. He makes use of his practical knowledge and employs common sense to
simplify the inferences he draws. He is an expert in making references and maintains a
good record of the criminals and their history of crimes. Moreover, Doyle presented
Holmes as a professional detective and in “A Study in Scarlet” (1887) he declares:

…I have a trade of my own… I’m a consulting detective… Here in London
we have lots of Government detectives and lot of private ones. When these
fellows are at fault they come to me, and I manage to put them on the right
scent. They lay all the evidence before me and I am generally able, by the
help of my knowledge of the history of crime, to set them straight. (Doyle
2003:17)

Arthur Conan Doyle is a well-read writer. He had an in-depth knowledge of the
genre and its prevalent conventions. What became more beneficiary for him is the fact
that he himself was a doctor. In his autobiographical work Doyle acknowledges the
impact that Poe and Gaboriau had on him and even refers to ‘Mr. Sharps and Mr.
Ferrets’, the characters of Confessions of an Attorney and The Experiences of a Barrister
(fictionalized accounts of legal professionals). But surprisingly his fictional detective is
somewhat skeptical of their skills and on being compared with Poe’s Dupin, Holmes
degrades him as ‘a inferior fellow’ (Doyle 2003:18) and clarifies that Dupin was not
intellectual enough as Poe might have imagined him. In a similar tone he expresses his
disgust over Gaboriau’s Lecoq whom he calls ‘a miserable bungler’ (Doyle 2003:19).
Though at times Holmes sounds over confident about his intellectual prowess but Doyle
is careful enough not to present him as infallible. At times he even did something unusual
only if it was in the interests of the case undertaken. But such minute flaws (if they can
be termed so) seem to get overshadowed by his expertise in detection and charismatic
personality. In Holmes, Doyle made an assemblage of all the essential features which framed the conventions for the future detective. An intelligent eccentric man, physically fit and able to topple any opponent in hand to hand fight but also uses a pistol, bohemian in nature, habitual use of pipe or cigar, an expert in taking disguise - all these became a refraining phenomenon. The task of narration being taken up by the detective’s close acquaintance often his close friend, the detective’s knowledge in forensic science taking note of each minute detail (shoe prints or finger prints), analyzing handwritings, acknowledging the commercial aspect of the profession, all these aspects attracted the imagination of the readers and became very popular. Sherlock Holmes was thus established as the first professional private detective in the history of the genre. The character received unparalleled popularity and has influenced many writers who have readily adapted the tradition laid down by Doyle.

Apart from professional detectives works of fiction also presented such detectives who were driven into investigation either by accidental circumstances or out of curiosity or interest. Such detectives are described as amateur detectives. The earliest figure of an amateur detective can be found in William Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* (1794). In this novel, situation required the eponymous hero Caleb to carry out the investigation and is therefore not paid. In nineteenth century the number of amateur detectives (both male and female) proliferated alongside the development of the professional private detective. Anne Rodway in Wilkie Collins’ short story “The Diary of Anne Rodway” (1856), Robert Audley in Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862), Dorothy L. Sayers’ Lord Peter Wimsey, Margery Allingham’s Albert Campion, G. K. Chesterton’s Father Brown, Agatha Christie’s Jane Marple (famously known as
Miss Marple) et.al. are some of the noteworthy names who were not paid detectives but carried out the work of detection quite efficiently. It is generally believed that the figure of the amateur detective multiplied mainly in the years between the two world wars. In this period women proved to be a strong force in this field of fiction both as readers as well as writers. And this can be taken as a major factor which helped in the fruitful expansion of the genre.

But in pre-existing times the genre did not provide proper space to women either as authors or as protagonists. In some narratives the women were made to act as a mere foil to the male investigator. While in some other stories, women were partly allowed to carry out the task of investigation albeit the final curtain was pulled down by some other male protagonist who was not necessarily always a detective. This custom was an outcome of the dominant masculine order prevalent in those times which denied women an equal opportunity in all fields. However, the trend underwent a whirlwind change in early twentieth century when British writer Agatha Christie wrote to become the second bestselling British writer. In the history of detective fiction, nineteenth century belonged to Doyle while twentieth century belonged to Christie. One of the eminent writers of the ‘Golden Age’, hailed as the pioneer of the ‘clue-puzzle’ narrative, Christie is one of the best-selling novelist of all times.

The first half of the twentieth century is customarily referred to as the ‘Golden Age’ of detective fiction which stands to represent the particular style of murder-mystery novels. Although the exact dates of the ‘Golden Age’ are highly debatable but such narratives primarily appeared in the 1920s and 1930s. Most of the works which appeared in this era followed some ruling clichés. In this age authors composed longer narratives in
the form of novels. The narratives were structured as an intricate puzzle with the English country house at its background, where the least expected figure turned out to be the criminal often indulging himself in a murder. Apart from these, another noticeable facet of the ‘Golden Age’ was that the reader was given access to certain details of the plot. These motifs were also significant in shaping the clue-puzzle model, popularized by Christie during the Golden-Age. Indeed, some notable writers even listed the major rules for writing detective stories. British writer Ronald Knox gave ten rules in his ‘Ten Commandments’ or ‘Decalogue’(1929), and in America S. S. Van Dine produced a similar but more detailed and elongated list in an article published in The American Magazine, titled as ‘Twenty rules for writing detective stories’ (1928). However, in spite of these rules the influence of the preceding authors and of their works cannot be ruled out. Sherlock Holmes stories laid down some deep rooted conventions which inspired crime narratives in all ages and in the Golden Age too Doyle’s stories provided some of the basic protocols like the narrator friend of the detective, an emphasis on the detective et.al. Some of the famous writers of the Golden Age include Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Margery Allingham, Anthony Berkeley Cox, Gladys Mitchell, Georgette Heyer, Freeman Wills Crofts, Nicholas Blake. The Golden Age was not just a British phenomenon, infact, it witnessed an equally important development in America too.

In Britain one of the most distinguished writers of the Golden Age is Agatha Christie. Like Doyle, Christie too developed her detectives by drawing inspiration from the preceding generations of the detective. Infact, in her autobiographical work Christie has spoken about the various likes she enjoys reading as a reader of detective fiction herself. Patricia D. Maida writes:
By 1915 when she began writing The Mysterious Affair at Styles, Christie has consumed scores of detective stories. Impressions gleaned from her voracious reading were eventually to coalesce into the famed Christie concept and method of detective fiction. It was from these early writers of the genre that Christie was to derive her greatest inspiration: Poe, Gaboriau, Dickens, Collins, Green, Rinehart, Doyle, Leroux and Chesterton. (Maida 1982:36)

But one can notice a considerable difference between Doyle’s and Christie’s creations. Christie conceived not one but two radically different types of detectives. In her first detective novel The Mysterious Affair at Styles (1920) she introduced M. Hercule Poirot who at times reminds of Doyle’s Holmes but the former is substantially different from the English hero. Poirot is a former Belgian police officer who comes to England as a war refugee and later becomes a private detective. His association with Captain Arthur Hastings brings back to mind the exemplary pairing of Holmes-Watson. In his first appearance, The Mysterious Affair at Styles Hastings praises Poirot as a man who is ‘wonder fully clever’ and who believed that ‘all good detective work was a mere matter of method.’(Christie 1920: 10) In terms of physical appearance Poirot seems to have inverted the figure of Holmes, although some critics find it to be a conscious move by the author; since she wanted her detective to be like any other normal man who was unforeseeable. But Poirot’s somewhat average looks does not come in the line of his brains since he has the ‘little grey cells’ (Worthington 2011:26) of mind and his intellect is evident in his rational and psychological take on investigation. Hastings describes Poirot as ‘funny little man’ (Christie 1920:10) who was not more than five feet four
inches. Dressed in neat attire, his personality was dignified with an egg-shaped head and moustaches. However, the oddity of his features is overshadowed by his competence in detection and Christie makes her brain child stand out for the values that he seems to represent. But at times his skill and knowledge seems to be feminized in nature. Heather Worthington finds him ‘strongly masculine’ but adds on:

…he is actually feminized in his characterisation and in his detective methods, relying on intuition, collecting- and enjoying- gossip, and employing his extensive knowledge of domestic matters…in tracking down a criminal. (Worthington 2011:29)

But Poirot is no less popular than Holmes and has appeared in thirty three novels and fifty four short stories. Infact, he is the only fictional character who has been given an obituary after he made his last appearance in Curtain (1975). Following the legacy of Holmes, Christie creates a top-notch private-professional detective who does not discuss monetary issues openly but admits to be concerned about it, besides the presence of Inspector Japp is again in the line of the Holmesian-model where one finds a similar presence of police in the figure of Inspector Lestrade. All these interrelations do not necessarily make her writings mere acts of duplications. Christie pulled together different strings and produced one of the most popularly read version of the genre- the clue-puzzle narratives. Most writers of the Golden Age presented ‘murder’ as the most common crime in society and Christie was no different. The very titles of her works are quite suggestive: Murder on the Orient Express (1974), Death on the Nile (1978), Appointment with Death (1988) et.al. A typical story by Agatha Christie is set against a rural background where a murder takes place and the detective is left to find out the criminal
from a host of multiple suspects which makes the narrative appear like a puzzle. However, the detective disentangles the knots of the mystery by analyzing the twists and clues provided by the author. In a trade mark style the detective gathers all the concerned parties at the end and provides a much sought after explanation to expose the culprit. The reader also gets a chance to actively participate in finding a solution since the reader has access to the vital clues in the narrative. But the key to her success did not rest in her formulaic conventions. At one point of time Christie too got tired of Poirot but unlike Arthur Conan Doyle she refrained from killing Poirot, who is probably the most idolised hero for detective fiction lovers after Holmes. Christie’s narratives are more realistic and therefore close to the reader’s imagination. In a rapidly changing world people are artfully deceptive and often adorn a mask to conceal their deep-seated meanness, grudge and avarice. In today’s world one can trust none but himself and Christie brings forth this aspect in her narratives and mirrors the uncertainty that is lurking beneath the societal ambience.

Another phenomenal creation by the British author is the amateur detective Jane Marple popularly known as Miss Marple. Jane Marple was an aged lady whose passive life comes to motion by the very smell of crime, notably murder at her vicinity. She made her first appearance in the short story ‘The Tuesday Night Club’ in 1926, in the Sketch Magazine. The character received instant success and Christie gave her a full-length novel debut in The Murder at the Vicarage (1930). Christie developed the character from her many childhood memories of Auntie- Grannie and Grannie B, but while creating her she also had the figure of Caroline Sheppard (who appeared in The Murder of Roger Ackroyd) at the back of her mind. But unlike any other granny who would spend her days
knitting and gardening, she would keep herself busy unraveling incidents of crime in and around the village of St. Mary Mead. But Miss Marple too is shown knitting wool which is quite metaphoric since she is equally accomplished in knitting narratives of crime from the information she gathers from her friends and neighbours. She sits back at home in her arm-chair and solves the mysteries taking deep insights into the nature of crime and that of the criminal. Though frail in outer appearance, Miss Marple was mentally strong and had a natural inclination towards justice. Very much in the fashion of Poirot she finds her practical knowledge advantageous in dealing with crime. None of Christie’s fictional detectives represent the glamorous figure of the detective popularized by Holmes. Infact, Miss Marple does not look like a detective at all, yet she is one of the most famous female detectives created in the history of the genre and has appeared in twelve novels and twenty short stories. In the figure of Miss Marple Christie made the ‘woman detective’ a popular concept as Miss Marple received unprecedented popularity and became a house-hold name. Infact, ‘Golden Age’ was an important phase in the development of the women detective. As more women authors took up writing detective fiction the genre witnessed some significant changes. These women authors actualized their fictional detective as a woman who was no less efficient than their popular male counterparts. In 1926-27 Agatha Christie made her first moves in this direction, almost at the same time came British writer Patricia Wentworth, who introduced Miss Maud Silver, a retired governess who worked as a professional private investigator. She made her first appearance in *The Grey Veil* (1928) and has featured in thirty two novels by the author.

In the history of the genre, the significance of the ‘Golden Age’ does not rest on the popularity of ‘clue-puzzle’ form alone. The period also witnessed the rise of another
women writer Dorothy L. Sayers; a member of the London based ‘Detection Club’. She created the amateur English sleuth Lord Peter Wimsey who appeared in twelve novels and three short stories. Although Sayers is considered as one of the major writers of detective fiction, her works do not strongly adhere to the norms of a typical detective fiction narrative. The high point of her works is that they are multidimensional in their approach which often appears to be digressive. Lord Peter Wimsey is an intellectual but somewhat feminized detective who solves mysteries for his personal amusement and is assisted by Miss Climpson. Another significant name is that of Margery Allingham who is remembered for a series of mystery novels and short stories featuring the English gentleman detective Albert Campion. Despite the large scale popularity of female authors, the genre is considered to be essentially conservative for adhering patriarchal orientation that dismisses women, both as authors as well as protagonists. The genre has always been strongly masculine by embracing some basic conventions which valourise the socially constructed notions of male ideology. In other words the genre presents a microcosmic image of the patriarchal macrocosmic society. Early narratives of crime portrayed women either as passive victims of crime or as catalysts inciting men into criminal activities or even as mere helping hands to male detectives. Even as victims, women were depicted as being responsible for their fate having deviated from the notions of ideal femineity as laid down by the society. At times female characters are shown to be drawn towards crime either out of revenge or vengeance which ultimately resulted in their insaneness.

However, things gradually changed and slowly women started venturing into the genre both as authors as well as protagonists. In The Adventures of Susan Hopley or,
Circumstantial Evidence (1841) Catherine Crowe presented one of the earliest examples of female proto-investigators in the figure of the maid servant Susan Hopley. Wilkie Collins’ female investigator Anne Rodway presented in The Diary of Anne Rodway (1856), later recreated as Marian Halcombe in The Woman in the White (1859-60), Mary E. Braddon’s Lady Audley’s Secret (1862) are some of the early women investigators to feature in detective fiction. But most of these works depicted women as a weaker sex who belonged to the lower class and accidently took up investigation. None of them were able to leave an impact and propel the advent of an archetypal female detective. In 1864 there came two more female investigators, one is Andrew Forrester’s The Female Detective - Mrs. G while the other is Stephen Hayward’s Mrs. Paschal. But as Heather Worthington coveys, “These male authored texts insert a conventional, implicitly sexually unthreatening female figure into an essentially masculine narrative decorated with domestic discourse.” (Worthington 2011:112). Although some writers showed women’s competency in detection but in most cases they were made the second fiddle to the male detectives and the final solution was delivered through male hands. But some authors deviated from such practice and developed their own versions of female detectives. At a time when women could hardly join the police department, women detectives arrived as a variation from the dominating model of the male detective. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century the female detective came a long way from her early models. More writers (both male and female) followed the line seeking variation and portrayed their female detectives as professional as well as amateur detectives.
Catharine Louisa Pirkis' *The Experiences of Loveday Brooke* (1894), George Sim’s *Dorcas Dene, Detective: Her Adventures* (1897), M. McDonnell Bodkin’s *Dora Myrl, The Lady Detective* (1900), Grant Allen’s *Miss Cayley’s Adventures* (1899) and *Hilda Wade* (1900), Emmuska Orczy’s *Lady Molly of Scotland Yard* (1910) et.al. are some of the notable works featuring female detectives. However, Agatha Christie’s Miss Marple is apparently the most famous name in the realm of female detectives. But the female detective was still an amateur investigator who either encounters mysteries accidentally or is compelled to undertake the task under demanding situations. Later in the wake of the feminist movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century, female detectives cast off their amateur status and were portrayed to be no less than their male counterparts. P. D. James replaced her male detective Adam Dalgleish in the 1972 novel *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*. In this ironically titled work she introduced a female professional private detective in Cordelia Gray. In America Sara Paretsky’s V. I. Warshawski, Marcia Muller’s Sharon McCon presents a more refined picture of female detectives in a ‘female phase’. However, the efforts of all these writers were not just to invert the male dominance in the genre but to convey “…that crime can both threaten and be explained by a woman as much as a man.” (Knight 2010:79). Women as detectives are now successful investigators and they have also utilized the genre as a platform to question the politics of male patriarchy.

Outside Europe the genre was rapidly growing in America. As English tradesmen sailed across seas to extend their claws of governance, they also propagated their culture along with their literary traditions as a part of their ‘civilizing’ mission. Following the English tradition of early crime narratives like Broadsides or the Ordinaries’ Accounts
America witnessed a similar trend in the seventeenth century. The earliest form of crime narratives dealing with any form of crime were primarily about the rouge’s, thief’s or murderer’s accounts in the form of criminal biographies, execution sermons, final words and confessions or melancholy ballads. These crime narratives became very popular as they often generated sympathy for the victim in the mind of the reader. Although America adapted the pre-existing English style of crime narratives, but from eighteenth century onwards, the new nation (post American Revolution) drew elements from its native culture and domesticated the genre to cater American tastes and culture. In this period one significant move was the fusing of gothic elements into crime narratives. One of the early notable contributors to the American crime fiction is Charles Brockden but it was Edgar Allan Poe who established the foremost conventions of the genre. He introduced C. Auguste Dupin, whose style of investigation paved the way for psychological reading of detective stories. In *The Purloined Letter* (1845) Dupin decoded the mystery of a missing letter relying entirely on his sharp analytical abilities which enabled him to see through human psyche. Although he made no further appearances, yet Dupin left behind a legacy that was later adapted and advanced by Emile Gaboriau in France and Arthur Conan Doyle in Britain. In the nineteenth century American writers were influenced by the English clue-puzzle trend and they followed an almost similar pattern with slight variations. Unlike the English versions, American clue puzzle narratives were mostly based in urban locations where the criminal’s acts showcase the unpredictable dangers that lay beneath the civilized society. S. S Van Dine, Ellery Queen, Rex Stout are some of the chief writers who contributed to the American clue puzzle novels. S. S. Van Dine is the pseudonym of American writer Willard Huntington
Wright, who composed some of the most popular clue-puzzle novels in the twentieth century. In Philo Vance, Van Dine created the perfect detective whose skills got him linked with some of the big names of the genre like Dorothy L. Sayers’ Peter Wimsey and even Doyle’s Holmes. The next important name that deserves mention is that of Ellery Queen. Infact, the name stands for the writer-duo Frederic Dannay and Manfred B. Lee (cousin brothers) who composed the most typical clue puzzle novels in the American history featuring their detective, also called Ellery Queen. The writer-duo not only produced numerous novels but also contributed to the development of the clue-puzzle form in America. Other important names who contributed to the sub-genre in America include Rex Stout, C. Daly King, Craig Rice et.al

American crime fiction definitely bears influences of the English clue puzzles, but twentieth century saw American writers creating their own version of the genre. Today the fame of American crime fiction rests mainly on the exclusive sub-genre which appeared in the 1920-30s and is denoted as hard-boiled, tough-guy or private-eye detective fiction. The skeletal model of such narratives is typically English, but American authors consciously deviated from the English predecessors to appropriate the genre in terms of American tastes and ideology. The hard-boiled narrative tradition mainly evolved in response to the prevalent socio-economic trends in America. The sub-genre ushered a new age for the private-detective who was tough, realistic and characteristically American. In post-war times, America witnessed an era of dismay as there was a lurking sense of disillusionment following the age of Prohibition and the great Economic Depression. Law and order hung in precarious balance and the political and corporate sector was ravaged by corruption. Against this backdrop American crime fiction writers
created the iconic figure of the tough guy also referred to as the hard-boiled hero. As the very phrase suggests, the new American hero is a man who is mentally tough and physically as well as mentally strong. He is a prototype of the traditional American hero represented by the frontiersman or the cowboy; a common man hero exhibiting heroics on the frontier settings of the Wild West. But in the twentieth century this common man hero is a city dweller, up against the vicious and atrocious genteel of urban American cities. In his famous essay, “The Simple Art of Murder” Raymond Chandler gives a grim picture of the then American society where law and order was totally jeopardized. In those times American writers came up with a new style of detective fiction that gave a realistic picture of America. Right from its early years, pulp magazines had a close association with hardboiled fiction and *Black Mask*, a popular pulp-fiction magazine encouraged and helped to popularize this new kind of realistic detective fiction. From 1920s writers like Dashiell Hammett, Carroll John Daly used to contribute to the magazine, but from 1926 onwards its name almost got conjoined with this new type of fiction writing. Under the editorship of Captain Joseph T. Shaw, the magazine made large scale publication of hardboiled crime fiction. Other contributors to the magazine are Paul Cain, Raymond Chandler, Horace McCoy. Following the craze for *Black Mask*, more magazines like *Dime Detective, Detective Fiction Weekly, Black Aces* et.al. also started publishing hardboiled crime fiction.

But crime writing in America was not a twentieth century phenomena. Back in the nineteenth century fictional detectives of popular dime novels exhibited similar traits like that of the hardboiled detective. In the 1860’s there was a trend of yellow backs printed on the cheapest newsprint, some of which went for ten or twelve printings. These
fictional accounts exhibited the daring exploits of a fearless hero and came to be known as dime novels. These novels were extremely popular and paved the way for the hard-boiled tradition in America. Dime novels exemplified the image of a lone hero capable to face the adversities of a dangerously violent world of the rustic West. The basic theme of the hard-boiled tradition, which shows the detective as a moralistic hero filtering the corrupt society, owes back to dime novels. The twentieth century hard-boiled detective is somewhat similar to the pre-existing heroes of dime novels. Nick Carter, Jem Brampton, Allan Pinkerton (real-life investigator turned writer) are some of the iconic fictional detectives of the hard-boiled tradition. But in the hard-boiled tradition there are two different types of heroes: one was an essentially moralistic figure; while the other was a compromising figure who often got his hands meddled into dirt to get rid of it. The hard-boiled detective is a common man who is lonely and relatively poor but he is a man of honourable character, who is aware of the disgusting absurdities of his age. Stephen Knight finds the hard-boiled protagonist distinctly different from the early versions of both English and American detectives. According to him, the private-eye detective is ‘I rather than eye’ and it is this ‘sense of isolation’ or the ‘individualistic nature’ (Knight 2010:112) of the protagonist which makes him different from his predecessors.

Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler are the two pillars of the hard-boiled school of detective fiction in America. While the former laid out the basic conventions of the new sub-genre, the latter refined it to perfection while conforming to the notions of American ideology. In his short career Dashiell Hammett produced plentiful short-stories and five novels between 1922 and 1934. Before turning to crime writing, Hammett worked as an investigator for the Pinkerton Detective Agency. As a result many of his
works bear influences from his personal experience. Like Christie, Hammett too produced more than one fictional detective. His two most famous creations are Continental Op and Sam Spade. While his third and not so popular creation is the detective couple Nick and Nora Charles. Continental Op appeared in Hammett’s first crime novel *Red Harvest* (1929). Apart from being a classic hard-boiled crime story, the novel also offers a sharp critique of the deep seated corruption prevalent in American society. Hammett repeated him in his second novel *The Dain Curse* (1929) and both these novels were serialized in the *Black Mask* magazine. Hammett’s another fictional creation Sam Spade left his mark in his third novel *The Maltese Falcon* (1930). Although Spade appeared in only one novel, yet he turned out to be more captivating than Continental Op and since the novel was successfully adapted to the silver screen, Spade became more popular. Later, in 1932 Spade appeared in three more short stories; “A Man Called Spade”, “Too Many Have Lived” and “They Can Only Hang You Once”. All his works are set in the Western coast of America, and later this went on to become one of the essential features of the hard-boiled crime fiction. Infact, his works have formulated the basic convention of the new sub-genre which posits the noble investigator against violent gangsters and corrupt power structure. Another important aspect of the sub-genre is the presence of a female character with criminal undertones. In *The Dain Curse* and *The Maltese Falcon* both Op and Spade get themselves carried away due to personal attachments. In this regard, *The Maltese Falcon* is famous for its portrayal of the female character Brigid O’Shaughnessy. Some other important works by the author includes, *The Glass Key* (1931) which does not feature any detective, and *The Thin Man* (1934) featuring the detective-couple Nick and Nora. Hammett remains one of the most
important writers in the history of the hard-boiled crime fiction. Apart from the thematic bearing of his plots, it is his presentation that makes his works more readable.

After Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler is the next eminent name credited for shaping the hard-boiled genre of crime fiction. Although Hammett formulated the basics of the form, Chandler shaped them to perfection. Deviating from the traditional format of a classic detective story Chandler ‘Americanised’ the genre by deliberately setting his novels against the backdrop of a highly crooked and incorrigible American society of the 1930s-40s. Chandler’s detective Philip Marlowe is not just an intellectual who indulges in brain racking clue-puzzlers rather he is the twentieth century knight who undertakes the task of rescuing the society and its people from utter mess and moral wreckage. Philip Marlowe is a witty, sensitive crusader who fights against the slyness of the modern world of Los Angeles. Chandler’s impact in the history of American crime fiction is of paramount importance. He not only followed the line of Hammett, but also left his own mark in the history of the sub-genre. Infact, in popularity he seems to have surpassed Hammett, given the successful cinematic adaptations of his novels. But before landing in the domain of films, Chandler too started his career in the popular pulp magazines. In his career he has composed around twenty short stories and five novels. Most of his short stories were published in *Black Mask* and later in *Dime Detective Magazine* between 1933 and 1959. Philip Marlowe also features in his novels of which *The Big Sleep* (1939), *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940), *The Lady in the Lake* (1943), *The Little Sister* (1949) are noteworthy. His last novel *Poodle Springs* (1959) was left unfinished at the time of his death and was later completed by another writer of the hard-boiled tradition Robert B. Parker. Chandler’s narratives are set in first person narrative
which aids the detective to be more candid and communicative to the reader. Although Chandler stresses on corruption and gangsters as the major source of crime, in most cases the final climax in his narratives develops due the personal quests of the villains against Marlowe. Another recurrent theme in his narratives is the presence of the female character in a negative role. Heather Worthington calls her the ‘femme fatale’ and explains that “The real criminal or source of criminality is always a woman in Chandler’s texts, responding to contemporary masculine anxieties about female-and male-sexuality.” (Worthington 2011:127). However, Chandler successfully initiated a change which added a different dimension (in the name of realism) to the genre of detective fiction.

Apart from Hammett and Chandler there are some other writers who glorified the hard-boiled tradition of fiction writing. Other important writers of the age are Carroll John Daly, James M.Cain, Horace McCoy, W.R. Burnett, Paul Cain, Ross Macdonald et.al. In the wake of the feminist movement America was also a suitable breeding ground for female writers in hard-boiled crime fiction. The best known names in this typical masculine format are Sara Paretsky, Sue Grafton and Marcia Muller. Among them Muller was the first writer who ventured into this new sub-genre with her female professional-private investigator, Sharon McCone. However, Sara Paretsky is the most notable author among them. Her female detective V.I. Warshawski first introduced in Indemnity Only (1982) not only operates as a professional detective but also addresses the prevalent racial and sexual issues of the times. These writers not only introduced a female detective in the hard-boiled sub-genre, they also played a key role in revolutionizing the role of women in a male oriented domain as well as in the history of the genre.
Another noticeable norm of the genre is seen in the presentation of the policeman. Crime fiction authors have always presented the policeman as a possible foil to the detective hero. The policemen have always been undervalued and were usually accorded a marginal status in the narrative. Charles Dickens’ Inspector Bucket in Bleak House (1852-3), Wilkie Collins’ police detective Sergeant Cuff in The Moonstone (1868), are some of the early police protagonists in the genre. Arthur Conan Doyle too deploys Inspector Lestrade in a supporting role in Holmes narratives. However, Emile Gaboriau’s fictional creation Monsieur Lecoq was a police detective widely regarded for his pioneering investigative skills. Although the period of Golden Age was dominated by the brilliance of the private detective (both professional and amateur), yet writers like Dorothy L. Sayers presented the police (Inspector Charles Parker) in a more affirmative role. Margery Allingham’s detective Albert Campion also enjoys the companionship of an efficient police detective - Inspector Charlie Luke. Unlike the early style of narratives which presented the policeman as unskilled, some writers in the Golden Age conceptualized them as an essential and integral part of the narrative. Twentieth century brought significant changes in the political, social and cultural fronts of the mechanical world. Growing industrialization and urbanization was in tandem with increasing tensions of a rapidly changing world. In the wake of such circumstances, increased rates of crime made the role of the police more vital. These turn of events were influential in shaping up the genre and by 1940s evolved a new sub-genre- the ‘police procedural’ which envisioned the police protagonist as the skilled personnel. Few American crime writers’s creations like John B. Williams’ Jem Brampton and Anna Katherine Green’s Mr. Gryce present the policeman in a redefined role. However, it is American writer
Lawrence Treat who is usually considered to have initiated this new sub-genre in 1945 with his novel *V as in Victim*, featuring the police detective Mitch Taylor. In Britain, Maurice Procter’s *The Chief Inspector’s Statement* (1951) marks the arrival of the police procedural. Procter composed a series of novels featuring Inspector Harry Martineau. Some more writers and their creations in this tradition are John Creasey’s Scotland Yard officer George Gideon, P.D. James’ Adam Dalgleish, Colin Dexter’s Inspector Morse, John Harvey’s Charlie Resnick, Ruth Rendell’s Inspector Wexford et.al. But it was American author Ed McBain’s *87th Precinct* series which made the sub-genre an important branch of crime fiction. Gradually the cop became a mainstream lead in crime fiction and in the twentieth century the police officer is presented as the new age knight who is well equipped, intelligent, smart and strong enough to curb the problems of the society.

Detective fiction is one of the most popular and widely read genres of literature and it has undergone a considerable change from its early formats. Owing to the popularity of the genre many detective stories have been adapted to the audio-visual medium catering audiences of both motion pictures as well as cartoon series. Detective fiction as a genre has always been flexible and with changing times it has developed while addressing various contemporary issues. The arrival of psycho-thrillers with serial killers draws our attention to modern concerns. The genre also provides scope to explore issues of gender inequality and eventually there arrived lesbian detective fiction or gay crime fiction. Some stories also focused on racial issues. Pauline Hopkin’s *Hagar’s Daughter* (1901-02) is regarded as the earliest example of black crime fiction. Though for a major period the genre was thought to be a western phenomenon, but owing to
widespread popularity the genre slowly spread its wings to other countries where writers produced their own versions of crime narratives. In many former British colonies the genre found a suitable place to mutate. Writers used the genre as a platform to address diverse but significant issues concerning particular cultures of various nations. Australia has its own tradition of crime narratives which explores Australian issues like the tension between the white colonisers and the indigenous Aborigines. Slowly writers in Russia, Spain, France, Japan, China, South Africa, India et.al have come up with their style of detective stories that focuses on the notions of that particular nation and its culture.

India has always fascinated British authors and writers like Wilkie Collins and Arthur Conan Doyle have made references to the subcontinent in their works *The Moonstone* (1869) and *The Sign of Four* (1890). Later in twentieth century British authors H.R.F Keating and Leslie Forbes based their crime stories in Bombay (present day Mumbai) and Keating’s detective Inspector Ghote turned out to be so popular that he produced around twenty novels featuring him. However, in India the emergence of the genre is marked by the early works of translation from the English originals to other Indian languages. Francesca Orsini in her essay, “Detective Novels: A Commercial Genre in Nineteenth Century North India”, made a very comprehensible study of the evolution of the genre in India. She says:

> The Detective novel was introduced first when translated from English into Bengali and from Bengali into other Indian languages at the end of the nineteenth century…Detective novel was brought into India ‘readymade’ without the intellectual and historical substratum that had generated it in Europe…(Dalmia, Blackburn 2004:436)
In the 1890’s, fiction writing in India was flourishing and various monthly magazines in Hindi and Urdu were published. Detective novels or Jasusi Upanyas perhaps contributed the most to such magazines and constituted the most significant subgenre of Indian fiction writing. Many Indian writers drew inspiration from English crime fiction writings or those which were translated from English into Bengali. *Jasus* or Detective (1900) and *Hindi Daroga Daftar* or Hindi Constabulary (1910) were two monthly magazines devoted solely to detective novels. Devkinandan Khatri wrote many short mystery novels and was inspired by the English novelist W.G. Reynolds. He wrote the adventure novel *Chandrakanta* which came in installments in 1892 and other short mystery novels like *Virendravir athva Katora Bhara Khun* (1895) and *Kajar Ki Kothri* (1902). He even launched a monthly fiction magazine *Upanyas Lahri* and published sequels of his novels to huge popular acclaim. *Jasus*, the first Hindi monthly devoted to detective fiction in 1900 published about hundred and seven detective stories including originals, adaptations and translations.

But such stories created between 1890 and 1930 failed to create an indigenous tradition of Indian detective fiction as most of the works published were either translations or adaptations of western detective fiction. However, from 1940s writers in the subcontinent took a serious approach and the genre experienced a gradual and steady proliferation in cheaply produced prints of pulp magazines. The pulp tradition of early Indian crime fiction is somewhat akin to the American style of hard-boiled crime fiction of early nineteenth century. With the development of printing press the genre found a favorable ground to proliferate in cheap paper-back newsprint material popularized as pulp magazines. Bengal, which with its rich and almost inexhaustible tradition of
detective fiction helped to create an indigenous tradition of Indian detective novel. From early nineteenth century Bengali authors tried their hands at crime tales which got published in local magazines. In this regard the role of Bat-tala publications has been exemplary. Bat-tala is a name of a place localized near present day Chitpur of today’s Kolkata. The pulp status of the Bat-tala publications is due to the cheap quality of paper and ink used for printing. With glossy prints that were often blunt or broken, these publications were targeted at the lower classes of the society. These cheap prints got popular after the name of the place to generate a literary phenomenon which boosted the Bengali tradition of pulp literature. The Bat-tala publications were not just confined to tales of crime, rather covered a wide range including prints of the great Indian epics (Ramayana and Mahabharata), old texts on Puranas, almanacs or Panjika, indigenous texts on Gods and Goddesses like Vratakatha or Panchali, verses written by Bharatchandra, Dasharathi Ray et.al, social satires (Naksha), books for the avid Bengali reader like tales from Arabian Nights , crime thrillers or the Guptakatha series, books on homeopathy or simple solutions for health problems (Kabiraji), books on black magic or witch craft (Tantric Guptabidya), on successful erotic life (Kamasutra, Sambhog) et.al. Amidst this wide range of Bat-tala amalgam one of the most widely read section is the sub-genre of thrillers popularly known as Guptakatha. The Guptakatha series often dealt with various crimes like robbery, murder, abductions and at the same time focused on the moral codes of conduct by highlighting on the aspect of sin. Many narratives even presented the scandalized side of the so-called elite class indulging in illicit relationships and ended up being criticized by the upper classes of the society. Some important anthologies of the time which published collection of crime tales include Goenda Aar.
Goenda, Bibhav and Sakha O Sathi. Slowly the pulp culture paved the way for mainstream publication of crime tales often in the form of short stories and even full-length novels.

From this early start, Bengal went on to have a galaxy of popular detectives. Some of them are Satyajit Ray’s Feluda, Saradindu Bandopadhyay’s Byomkesh Bakshi, Hemendra Kumar Roy’s Jayanta, Nihar Ranjan Gupta’s Kiriti Roy, Kaka Babu of Sunil Gangopadhyay, Parasar Barma and Ghanada of Premendra Mitra et.al. However, Satyajit Ray’s sleuth Feluda and Saradindu Bandopadhyay’s Byomkesh Bakshi are the most celebrated fictional detectives in the nineteenth century and they continue to cater to readers till date. Both Bandopadhayay and Ray pioneered the image of a symbolic Bengali private detective. Although they too were influenced by British big names like Holmes and Poirot but their creations were purely Indian and they shaped their detectives as the typified Bengali gentleman who is intelligent as well as eccentric. Byomkesh Bakshi made his first appearance in *Pather Kanta* in 1932. The influence of the English tradition is evident in the pairing of Byomkesh and Ajit Bandyopadhyay, the narrator cum assistant of Byomkesh. In his career Saradindu Bandopadhyay composed about thirty three stories, many of which were serialized in the magazine *Basumati* while some were also published as full length novels.

Satyajit Ray is another big name in the domain of Bengali detective fiction. The first story featuring Feluda and Tapesh was published in *Sandesh*, a children’s magazine started by his grandfather Upendra Kishore Ray Choudhury in 1913. Originally written in Bengali, Feluda stories met with huge success after their launch in 1965 and were later translated into other languages. The stories were first translated into English in 1988. In
conducting the research, the researcher has dealt with Gopa Majumdar’s translations of the original Bengali stories. In an introduction to her work Majumdar has the following to say about Feluda’s tremendous impact upon the readers:

After all, it wasn’t as though there had never been other detectives in children’s fiction in Bengal…Feluda did not emerge as a larger than life superman whom one would venerate and admire from afar, but never get close to. On the contrary, Topshe’s charming narration described him as so utterly normal and human that it was not difficult at all to see him almost as a member of one’s own family. (Majumdar 2004:xi)

Pradosh Chandra Mitter, popularly known as Feluda, is a twenty-six year old ordinary Bengali youth who is accompanied by his fourteen year old cousin Tapesh or Topshe as he affectionately calls him and later by Lal Mohan Ganguli, a popular writer of crime thrillers. Based on Feluda stories, Ray even made two films in Bengali, *Sonar Kella* (1974) and *Joy Baba Felunath* (1979). Later other stories were also made into movies by Sandip Ray and even serialized as *Kissa Kathmandu Ka* for television.

Although the genre has become popular, yet it is regarded as non-serious and therefore less literary by the critics of ‘high’ literature. But detective stories deserve a serious approach since such stories including Feluda stories can be analyzed on the basis of certain premises that help to explore the complexities of the genre. In this regard the researcher tries to highlight that inspite of its intricate structuring and planning the genre has always been neglected from the literary canon and is usually labeled as popular literature. To understand the intricacies, the reader should look beyond the entertainment quotient and do more than just a passive reading of the stories by involving their own
reasoning faculties. This perspective brings a fresh approach towards detective fiction and helps to contest the notion of its alleged ‘non-seriousness’. The research argues that due to the intricacies of narrative composition and the intellectual involvement of the reader that it necessitates, the genre deserves serious recognition. Considering this, the research tries to reinstate detective fiction to a position of academic respectability.

Besides this the researcher also gets an opportunity to work on Satyajit Ray’s popular Feluda stories which are only considered to be popular and entertaining.

In this dissertation the main emphasis has been to show that detective stories are much more than a narrative of crime and suspense and the genre provides an ample scope for a full-fledged research. In this research, the researcher is trying to undertake the following strategies:

- To theorize on such stories from various theoretical perspectives.
- To situate the genre in an alternative canon as it requires serious reading and interpretation.
- To work on Satyajit Ray’s Feluda stories which deserve full-fledged research by virtue of their merit.
- To investigate how linguistic as well as inter-semiotic translation operating in such stories helps in transmitting cultural nuances across cultures and texts.

The researcher primarily tries to show that detective fiction offers great scope for intellectual expertise and is therefore no less literary than any other genre of mainstream literature. In order to understand and evaluate detective fiction narratives, scholars have always made attempts to analyze the stories from various theoretical perspectives. Any research work in this regard would require carrying out a detailed textual analysis of
detective stories. So to start with, it is important to consider the multilayered implications of the term text. A typical detective story is a product of the author’s skill of narrative structuring. An understanding of the various narrative strategies that a detective fiction author usually incorporates helps in arguing that detective stories are not artistically inferior. In this regard, selective sections of Gerard Genette’s theoretical postulations would help to study how authors create the right pitch of narrative suspense in detective stories. Besides this, the research would also focus on Kenneth Burke’s pentadic scheme to understand how the narrative operates. Twentieth century readings of the genre have linked the process of criminal detection to psychoanalysis, arguing that the detective solves the crime by taking a psychological insight into the criminal’s mind. So, the theoretical framework that the researcher tries to formulate to study detective stories would also take resort to the various notions of Freud’s psychoanalytical theory to suggest that the detective is the alter-ego of the criminal. Detective stories also engage the reader in an active and participative process of reading as decoding vindicating Louise Rosenblatt’s theoretical postulation of reading as a live circuit, a process in continuum. Moreover, the text offers a scope to the reader to actively participate in resolving the mystery from outside the text. So, the reader’s role is very crucial in order to understand how the narrative is structured as an intricate puzzle; that he can resolve as a reader-detective. In this regard, the theoretical notions of Louis Rosenblatt and Wolfgang Iser would help to conceptualize the dynamics of the text-reader interaction that a typical detective fiction narrative initiates. Besides detective stories also offer an insight into the times and culture that forms the background of its creation.
The primary aim of this dissertation is to look into the politics of the literary canon that has always neglected the genre which contributes to the huge corpus of literature generally referred to as popular literature. In order to this the research would entail a detailed textual analysis of Gopa Majumdar’s English translations of Feluda stories, as well as the available critical material on those stories and also on Ray in general. Feluda stories provide a pivotal area for theoretical interpretation of detective fiction. In his stories Ray presents Feluda not just as a sleuth but as a Bengali icon who exhibits the finest traits of a brilliant detective. Moreover, a detailed study of Ray’s narratives reveals various unexplored aspects about the stories. This research proposes to take into account various theoretical postulations on detective fiction, therefore textual analysis and close reading of theoretical texts is a part of the methodological apparatus. The proposed research also considers the post-modern multilayered implications of the term ‘text’, hence, textual analysis would also involve visual interpretation and semiotic decoding of textual samples, particularly in the form of films. Any other methodological device would also be explored during the course of research on grounds of necessity and compatibility to the research design. In view of the research plan, the chapters included in the dissertation helps to validate the hypothesis proposed by the researcher.

Chapter 2 tries to formulate a suitable theoretical framework to study detective fiction. This chapter also focuses on Ray’s portrayal of Feluda as a quintessential Bengali detective who exhibits the finest traits of a Bengali gentleman and the western model of a detective. Besides, this chapter also attempts to trace the presence of ‘detective fiction elements’ in many non-detective fiction writings.
In view of the various theories discussed in Chapter 2, the next chapter entails a detailed textual analysis of the sixteen stories included in the first volume of Gopa Majumdar’s *The Complete Adventures of Feluda*. Apart from the theoretical conceptualization of the stories it is interesting to note how Feluda evolved as a professional detective. Ray developed his hero from an avid lover of detective stories to present him as an alternative agent who is an efficient twentieth century sleuth.

In chapter 4, the nineteen stories collected in the second volume of Majumdar’s translations are studied and analyzed under the light of the various theories discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover, this chapter also makes an effort to study the complexities of the process of translation more specifically of inter-semiotic translation. In his stories Ray almost simulated Bengal and so it is interesting to study how the source text gets translated into the target text without losing its original appeal. Moreover, analyzing the cinematic adaptations of two Feluda stories also helps to study how Ray adapts the stories from one medium to another.

In the final chapter, the researcher attempts to draw a conclusion by validating that the research conducted has substantiated the hypothesis formulated in the proposed plan of the research. In this chapter the researcher concludes that detective stories are in no way limited in artistic as well as aesthetic appeal and hence the genre deserves to be inculcated in an alternative canon on its own grounds.
WORKS CITED


