**Introduction**

The short story is the most recent of all literary forms in American Literature. The American writers were privileged to participate in this genre from the very beginning. Edgar Allan Poe, one of the most ingenious writers of America, was the first to use the term ‘short story’ to describe his collection of prose narratives which were usually known as tales. Short story is a story that can be easily read at a single sitting. To use the term ‘short story’ or ‘tale’ loosely, one may find stories in the Bible, in the *Gesta Romanorum* of the Middle Ages, in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. Panchatantra stories in Sanskrit belong to ancient times. Any writer of fiction in England was not distinctly appreciated at the turn of the nineteenth century. This was because the book publishers wanted to make money out of lengthy scripts which were in great demand. Moreover they wanted novels suitable for the sensibilities of novel-reading public whose appetite was voracious. The periodicals mostly encouraged only serialized fiction and overlooked short fiction.

The history of the short story begins in the nineteenth century, that helped the American writer to participate in its development from the beginning. Historically the earliest forms of stories, such as ‘gesta,’ were tales of action, and adventure. The word is from the same root as are the English words, ‘Jest’ and ‘Gesture.’ The Italian and German terms are ‘novella’ and ‘novelleu,’ respectively which like the word ‘gesta’ are used in the plural to suggest a collection. The word ‘tale’ in English suggests telling something or recounting. The modern word ‘story’ sees its roots in both French and Latin as “estorire” and “listaria.” Thus it can be seen that the modern view of prose narrative is a retelling of something which actually happened.
A short story can be defined as a narrative form of prose often established in a conversational method. This form of technique is shorter and crisper than longer works of fiction, such as novels. Poe’s essay “The Philosophy of Composition” (1846) classically defines a short story as a narrative prose that could be read in one sitting.

The early American writer Washington Irving saw his earlier narratives as pictorial representations of places and events and called them ‘sketches.’ Both the sketch and that which one calls tale can be absorbed into the modern concept as a short story. As observed by scholars of the nineteenth century, the modern short story has been described as a compact prose narrative designed to elicit a singular and unified emotional response. As such, critics have made formal distinctions between the short story and its generic predecessor, the tale, a short narrative sometimes of oral origin. Likewise, commentators have distinguished the short story from the lengthier novella and novel, which typically design a greater complexity of multiple themes, characters and intersecting lines of plot. The European and American writers firstly structured the formal qualities of a modern short story in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, which coincided with the rapid proliferation of periodical publication in the industrializing nations of the western world at that time, and thus it has been thought to have been vastly influenced by economic as well as literary stimuli. Earlier innovations of the short fictional prose genre appeared in the writings of Prosper Mérimée, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walter Scott and Nikolai Gogol. Following different but parallel lines of development in France, the United States, Britain, Russia and elsewhere, the short story in the late nineteenth century is reached the peak of maturity in continental Europe which can be witnessed in the naturalistic pieces of Guy de Maupassant and Anton Chekhov, and a generation later in the English language in the Anglo-American tradition.
Washington Irving, who is considered a seminal writer of short fiction in the United States, has written a collection of tales called the *Sketch Book (1820)* often described as a foundational text. In accordance with the outstanding pieces “Rip Van Winkle” and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, the Sketch Book foreshadowed the future of short fiction development in America with its blend of incisive wit, satire and narrative virtuosity. It is Edgar Allan Poe who attracts scholars as a crucial figure in the development of the short story. In his 1842 essay on Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “Twice-Told Tales” (1837), Poe framed the principal features of the genre, claiming that it should be readable in one sitting and that its effect, similar to that of lyric poetry should be singular and total, designed to evoke a primary emotional reaction in the reader. His evolving theories were supplemented with his contributions to detective fiction collected in *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840). Hawthorne’s stories like “Twice-Told Tales” and “Mosses from an Old Manse” (1846) offer an innovative blend of allegorical symbolism and internalized character study which were successful with the American readers and audiences and were proved immensely influential.

Apart from the psychological stories of Hawthorne and Poe, the pieces collected in Herman Melville’s *Piazza Tales* (1856), including the stories “Bartleby”, “the Scrivener” and “Benito Cereno”, defined a continual transition toward heightened realism, internalized delineation of character, and narrative distance in American prose fiction. Following the Civil War, the market for the short fiction writing in the United States became increasingly dominated by the regional tales of local colorists. Beginning with Bret Harte and his gritty sketches of mining camp life in California, the local colour movement emerged in the artistic favour of writers such as Harte, George Washington Cable, Thomas Nelson Page, Kate Chopin and many others to portray the everyday strife for existence of ordinary Americans in prose fiction. The depiction of the varied regional
settings of provincial America with near journalistic verisimilitude, the authors of the local color movement were broadly successful, particularly in the 1880s and 1890s, although the movement had largely run its course by the turn of the century. William Dean Howells expressed his feeling that American writers on the whole had taken the short story form nearest to perfection. During the nineteenth century, scholars have welcomed the new genre which as eminently suiting the tastes of the reading public of the United States.

The success of Victorian novels hindered the development of short narrative prose in that century. During this period, the most popular British short story writers were figures like Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, who favoured this lengthier and more expansive form. The creation of condensed narratives that was emerging with immediate emotional response, however, was not uncommon. Sir Walter Scott, the pioneering writer of fiction offered a significant precursor of the modern short story in Britain with “The Two Drovers.” Cited for rising above the level of mere anecdote to produce a simple yet totalizing thematic effect, the story emitted the characters of what critics would later view as the defining quality of the modern short story. By the 1830s, compact tales of Gothic horror by writers like Edward Bulwer-Lytton and the Anglo-Irish, Sheridan Le Fanu began to appear in British literary magazines and they rapidly started capturing the attention of the readers. Scholars, however, have observed that the nineteenth century highpoint of British short fiction would not arrive until the final decades of the century.

In France and in Russia, the rise of short fiction can generally be aligned with the gradual predominance of the Naturalist mode in prose fiction. In France, the compact and detached narratives of Prosper Mérimée restructured the short story in the late 1820s. Merimee's “Mateo Falcone” (1829) is a context which recounts a violent and tragic clash
of honour between father and son with lucid simplicity and economy, and is considered as a pivotal piece. Other significant short stories were composed by Honore de Balzac and Gustave Flaubert, whose stories reflect miniature artistic achievements which are frequently with their more well-known contributions to the realistic novel. Alfred du Musset, Alphonse Daudet and Theophile Gautier are the other notable French short story writers. Many writers and critics have reserved their highest esteem for the very famous realistic stories of Guy de Maupassant, who in the 1880s and early 1890s deciphered effectively the last vestiges of Romanticism to produce astonishing lyrical stories admired for their clarity, unity, and compression. In two of his most famous pieces, “Boule de suif” (Ball of Fat) and “La Parure” (The Necklace), Maupassant enhanced the view of penetrating character study and with them is thought to have perfected the realistic short story in the late nineteenth century. Further, in Russia, the rise of short fiction followed a similar pattern with the advent of mid-century innovators such as Nikolai Gogol, Ivan Turgenev and Aleksandre Pushkin who produced works of increasing realism and stylistic precision, and in so doing formed a tradition that was to culminate in the detailed, observant, and often ironic sketches of daily life found in the prose masterpieces of Anton Chekhov. In Europe and in all other parts of the world, the short story encountered comparable trends. It reflected in stylistic developments associated with the shift from Romanticism to Realism, and Naturalism which was united as a regionalist impulse inspired by the local colour writers.

The accomplishments of the three American writers, Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville, in the writing of short prose narrative were of most importance to the world of literature. Hawthorne, Poe and Melville called their productions as ‘tale’ as did Irving in his Tales of a Traveler. Hawthorne’s first published collection of stories was called Twice-Told-Tales. Poe called his book The Tales of Grotesque and Arabesque and Melville termed early collection The Piazza Tales.
Henry James in *Daisy Miller: A Study and Other Stories* (1883) used the term ‘story’ in the title itself. The word ‘story’ was then used exclusively in every part of literature. To evaluate the actual contributions of ‘Poe’ as a short story writer, one must critically evaluate the exalted statures of Melville and Hawthorne, and to deduce the beginning of the short story in America. The influence of indirect European literature shows that American short stories were neither isolated nor independent of alien impacts.

The development of periodicals and magazines helped the growth of short stories in America. There was a body of native material, which combined typical American attitudes determining the method or technique by which such material could be shaped into story form. Yet the history of the American short story during its brief existence traces the creative talent in the genius of American authors who struggle to subdue the intractable materials of life through the art and genius of media. Preceding the year 1765 the American colonist had created a body of writing which the modern literary historian finds by no means negligible.

The writers who were termed as American Classics were Irving, Cooper and Bryant. They observed that there was no conscious demand for a national literature. Literary fashions were fast drifting from Classicism to Romanticism, catapulting the writings of Benjamin Franklin to Boredon. America gave birth to original writers like Poe, Hawthorne, Whitman, James, Twain, Hemingway and Faulkner who would be valued by European writers and critics for their contributions to aesthetics.

The new world had no literary capital as London or Paris, as they faced the problems of art and literature to be tackled in a youthful way. Therefore it is not surprising that few of the nineteenth century writers, except Poe and James, had any clear and consistent conception of the literary art. James naturally enough gravitated to Paris and London where he could get acquainted with Flaubert, Turgenev and others. If Poe
and Whitman could have lived among their peers in London or Paris, they would have identified their ideals as narrower than the others. The Americans, however, had no literary tradition except that of England and this seemed unsuited to the needs of the New World. Therefore the themes always reflected the quest for motif in the American literature. There was as yet no American way of writing, no conception of an American literary language as distinguished from that of England.

It is to understand that America developed its literary interest from Europe. The extraordinary popularity of Scott’s novels set American young writers to explore the belief in American past. The readers awaited a great American writer to hit the ranks of the century. The American writers of the 1820’s were buzzing with numerous new works. They were Copper, Irving and Bryant as discussed earlier. The major writers of the mid-nineteenth century were Poe, Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau and Longfellow. As the American settler was pushed to West, his tales accompanied him and were enlarged and altered to meet the new circumstances of the American continent. By the nineteenth century these folklore tales had become the voice of popularity, press and media.

The writers selected permanent elements of society, and the characters into motion against them, and drew conclusions from the resulting action. This method had its boundaries in science as well as fiction. The beginning of the modern short story paralleled such a rise in interest to the psychological motives for action or in the psychological results of past events. The beginnings of the short tale had represented a way more than an objective of presenting a picaresque adventure. Some writers, by utilizing the Gothic style of writing a mystery, had explored even unconsciously suggesting that the supernatural world of medieval romance might represent a clue to the working of the mind.
It is noteworthy that the principal philosophical interest of the nineteenth century was nature. The most interested literary subject of the day was man’s relation with nature. In America both interests were particularly pertinent. Though Poe showed little interest in contemporary civics, the landscapes that he borrowed from his Gothic forebears were inhabited, not by vigor and energy, but by decay. He applied natural science in his fiction, to exemplify the trend of a fathoming mystery.

By the end of nineteenth century with the completed writings of Hawthorne, Poe, Melville, James, Twain and Harte, the first great period of the American short story had come to an end. Hawthorne had examined the effects of sin and innocence on the American character as they were to be discovered in his Puritan inspirations. Melville had glanced into the past as well as the present contrasting evil and innocence, discovery, monotony and sterility in modern life, injustice and wanton cruelty much from the past. James raised questions concerning the nature of reality and his stories revealed the true as well as the false of the realm which were expressed through social manners and in art. Twain and Harte had utilized their experiences in the American West to illustrate the advantages of innocence and common sense over social pretensions and romantic ideals.

First appearing over two hundred years ago, Mystery fiction has since become one of the most psychologically popular of the literary genres. Mystery fiction majorly proposes to focus on a character that solves a puzzle or a crime. It is also commonly referred to as crime fiction or detective fiction for this reason. Mystery fiction deals with capturing the interests of a special kind of audience, because people who are lured by mysteries expect the standard. The standard rules are: a realistic, yet suspenseful plot with a lot of twists; a shocking, yet realistic crime; foreshadowing evidence; false leads; a clear crime solver; the protagonist or detective; an unexpected villain, criminal, or culprit; the mystery remains a suspense until the very last concluding part of the story and things are revealed only in the closing scene.
Mystery fiction first made its mark in the 1800s, with Edgar Allan Poe and his character Le Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin from “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841), “The Mystery of Marie Roget” (1842) and “The Purloined Letter” (1845). They were considered as Locked Room mysteries. These works followed the intelligent amateur solving the most impossible crimes by getting into the psyche of the criminal. Poe was one of the first writers to move away from mystery’s supernatural and more towards the intellectual. His writing began to focus on the mind of the villain or culprit rather than rely on ‘strange’ and ‘spooky’. Thus the mystery genre was rooted in realism.

Every mystery fiction had five basic but important elements. These five components are: the characters, the setting, the plot, the problem, and the solution. These essential elements help in keeping up the essence in the story and allow the reader to search for the clues that unfurls in a logical way towards the end.

The characters in a mystery story are the individuals. The author introduces the characters in the story with detailed information so that the reader could emphasize each aspect. This kind of an effect is possible only through detailed descriptions of a character’s physical attributes and personality traits. Every story should have a main character. The main character determines the way the plot or mystery would develop and is usually the person who will be the mode of solving the mystery of the problem that the story relies upon. However, the supporting characters are also very important as they keep providing hints to solve the mystery or they may even try to exclude the main character off the track. All characters should stay true to the author’s description throughout the story so that the reader can understand and believe the action that is taking place and perhaps even predict which character may do what next.

The setting is the location of the action. The writer throws light on the environment or surroundings of the mystery in such detail that the one who reads starts to visualize
feel the total picture. Fantasy or anything unusual can be set in a way that it brings out the thrill out of the nothingness of everyday life.

The plot is the narration of story around which the entire concept is based. A plot should have clarity from the very beginning till the final scene with all necessary descriptions and gloom so that the reader could feel the suspense through the sense of action.

Every mystery story or novel has a problem to solve, usually about the character who is involved in the problem. The reader is subject to mazes and puzzles that finally lead them to find a way out to solution. A believable solution is necessary at the end of every story and authors must be sure to include interesting clues that keep the story moving.

The clues and the solution depend on a mysterious event. The event may be a death or a crime. The central characters and also the detectives must have a credible motive and suspense in the plot structure. The deduction of the mystery becomes factual and that is why the mystery stories are at times non-fictional. The emphasis is on the ‘whodunit’ that maintains a suspense element and seeks for a logical solution throughout. Mystery fiction can be contrasted with hardboiled detective stories, which focus on action and gritty realism. Mystery fiction may involve a supernatural or thriller mystery where the solution does not have to be logical. This kind of a thriller is common in the pulp fiction of the 1930s and 1940s where titles such as Dime Mystery, Thrilling Mystery and Spicy Mystery offered what at the time were described as ‘weird menace’ stories. This contrasted with parallel titles of the same names which contained conventional hardboiled crime fiction. In this context, the first use of ‘mystery’ was known as Dime Mystery, which started out as an ordinary crime fiction magazine but switched to weird menace during the latter part of 1933.
The rise of the mystery fiction was mainly due to the institutionalization of police forces before the industrial revolution. The people developed a respect for human nature and social consciousness. Night constables became the watch towers of the unsolved mystery and crimes in the town. As people began to crowd into cities, police forces became institutionalized and the need for detectives was realized giving rise to mystery novels.

An early work of modern mystery fiction “Das Fraulein von Scuderi” by E.T.A. Hoffmann (1819) was an influence on “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” by Poe. Epistolary novels *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* were published in 1860. The mystery genre in 1887 saw its upbringing in the stories of Arthur Conan Doyle. With the advent of pulp magazines and dime novels, writers emerged with books that were helpful in developing the mystery genre. An important contribution to mystery fiction in the 1920s was the development of the juvenile mystery by Edward Stratemeyer. Stratemeyer originally developed and wrote the *Hardy Boys*. The 1920s also gave rise to one of the most popular mystery authors of all time, Agatha Christie, whose works include *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), *Death on the Nile* (1937), and the world's best-selling mystery *And Then There Were None* (1939). Pulp magazines that saw their golden days in the 1930s and 1940s also saw a downfall after 1950. It was because of the invention of the television, that these magazines saw a major depletion in their sources.

Television channels started telecasting programmes that induced the interest of viewers to take a deep liking for mystery genre and consequently the mystery fiction. Mystery themes and many juvenile and adult novels sprang in this period to help re-popularizing the genre in modern times. Over the years, the mystery genre has been divided into a few sub-genres. Hardboiled mysteries are those that are gritty and violent. Soft-boiled mysteries are just as realistic as hardboiled, yet more optimistic and
humorous, and without the gory details. Cozy mysteries are light and less violent, with amateur crime solvers in small or tight-knit towns. Police procedural mysteries always follow a professional detective or police officer who solves crimes. Locked Room mysteries are those whose crimes seem impossible to have been committed. And the most recent addition to the genre are the thriller, or supernatural mysteries whose protagonist is an ordinary person put up against extraordinary villains with very high stakes.

The most prominent of all mysteries is the Traditional mystery. There can either be amateur or official investigators, and can be a little darker or sometimes funny. But these characters are certainly not cozy. In other words, an amateur sleuth who is not at all cozy will fall into traditional mystery. D.E. Johnson’s *The Detroit Electric Scheme*, a book that features an amateur sleuth, but has more action and suspense is never a cozy fiction. The events take place faster with blood spill and extra suspense, which is rather captivating.

The Legal thriller is a subgenre of thriller and crime fiction in which the protagonists are either lawyers or employees. One of the most important ordeals is the theme of “The system of justice” that runs through the veins of genre. Lawyers in such fiction are very revolutionary and sacrificing who strive for the proof of the accused being innocent, subsequently, they fall off their way losing their own interpersonal relationships and frequently their own lives.

Cozy mysteries, also referred to simply as cozies are a subgenre of crime fiction in which sex and violence are downplayed or treated humorously, and the crime and its detection take place in a very small community. Various writers together in the Twentieth century attempted to re-create the Golden Age of Detective Fiction and thus ended up inventing this genre. Hamish Macbeth is featured in a series of novels by M.C. Beaton whose stories are frequently about women. The detectives are laymen who might be well-educated, intuitive and they come into constant contact with other residents of their town
and the surrounding region. Similar to other amateur detectives, these men have contacts with the sheriff department, from where they get access to important information. These contacts might be either a spouse, or a lover, friend or family member rather than a former colleague. Dismissed by the authorities in general as nosy busybodies particularly if they are middle-aged or elderly women, the detectives in cozy mysteries are thus left free to eavesdrop, gather clues, and use their native intelligence and feel intuitively for the social dynamics that help them solve the crime. The criminals in these mysteries are typically neither psychopaths nor serial killers, and, once unmasked, are usually taken into custody without violence. They belong to the general public where they are able to hide their plan and their motives are usually greed, jealousy, revenge often rooted in events years, or even generations old. The murderers are typically rational and often highly articulate, enabling them to explain, or elaborate on their motives after their unmasking. The supporting characters in cozy mysteries are often used also as comic elements.

Cozy mysteries employ very mild profanity. The murders take place off stage, frequently involving relatively bloodless methods such as poisoning and falling from great heights. The wounds inflicted on the victim are never dwelt on, and seldom used as clues. The gentleness of language is seen dealing with the sexual of characters. Even the married characters imply sexual behaviour in a gentle manner and this subject is mostly avoided altogether.

The cozy mystery usually takes place in a town, village, or other community which has a technical characteristic of characters who are long-standing and living for each other. The amateur detective is usually a gregarious, well-liked individual who is able to get the community members to talk freely about each other. There is this knowledgeable and sensitive character that takes care of all the personal history and interrelationships of everyone in the town. This person’s ability to solve cases astonishes the intellect.
Cozy mystery series have a consistent thematic content which introduces one to the detective’s job or hobby. Diane Mott Davidson’s cozies, for example, revolve around cooking. Parnell Hall’s *Around Crossword Puzzles*, Monica Ferris’s *Around Needle World*, and Charlotte MacLeod’s *Sarah Kelling Series* and other series focus on topics ranging from fishing, golfing, and hiking to fashion, antiques, and interior decoration. Cat-lovers are well represented in the cozy-mystery detectives, notably in the character sketch of Rita Mac Brown and Lillian Jackson Brown who are also herbalists. De-emphasis on sex and violence, emphasis on puzzle-solving over suspense, the setting of a small town, and a focus on a hobby or occupation are the elements which characterize cozy mysteries. The boundaries of the subgenre remain vague with the works of authors like as Aaron Elkins and Philip R. Craig are considered borderline cases.

Hardboiled mysteries are literally dealing with the characters with the settings of crime fiction. Although deriving from romantic tradition which emphasized the emotions, apprehension, horror and terror and awe, the hardboiled fiction deviates from the cynicism of the detective towards a highly emotional vent. The attitude is described through the narrative of the writer, of how the character is doing or feeling. The genre's typical protagonist is a detective, who throws light on the violence and lack of order in the society, and also deals with the legal behaviour of the society. Rendered cynical by this cycle of violence, the detectives of hardboiled fiction are classic antiheroes. The term “hard boiled” comes from a process of hardening of an egg; to be hardboiled is to be comparatively tough. The hardboiled detective originated by Carroll John Daly’s “Terry Mack” and Race Williams was epitomized by Dashiell Hammett’s “Sam Spade” and Raymond Chandler’s “Philip Marlowe” which were not only softer counterparts but also tough enough to confront violence on a regular basis with a cynicism towards one’s own emotions. This style was pioneered by Carroll John Daly in the mid-1920s, and was
popularized by Dashiell Hammett in the course of the decade and was refined by Raymond Chandler beginning in the late 1930s. This kind of style brought a new kind of realism or naturalism to the field of detective fiction. Hard-boiled fiction used graphic sex and violence, vivid but often sordid urban backgrounds, and fast-paced, slangy dialogue. The first of Hammett’s detective novels was *Red Harvest* (1929). His masterpiece is generally believed to be *The Maltese Falcon* (1930), which introduced Sam Spade, his most famous sleuth. His most successful, *The Thin Man* (1934) is the last of an extraordinary quintet of novels.

Hammett’s innovative novels incorporated the hard-boiled melodramas of James M. Cain, particularly in such early works as *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934) and *Double Indemnity* (1936). Another successor was Raymond Chandler (1888–1959), whose novels, such as *The Big Sleep* (1939), *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940), and *The Little Sister* (1949), speak about corruption and racketeering in Southern California. Other important writers of the hard-boiled school are George Harmon Coxe (1901–84), author of thrillers like *Murder with Pictures* 1935 and *Eye Witness* 1950, and W.R. Burnett, who wrote *Little Caesar* (1929) and *The Asphalt Jungle* (1949). Hard-boiled fiction in later years degenerated into the extreme sensationalism and undisguised sadism of what Ellery Queen’s *Mystery Magazine* called the “guts-gore-and-gals-school”. The prominent works of the hard-boiled school have been retentively through translated films often versions that were readymade to different generations of moviegoers.

From its earliest days, hardboiled fiction was published and closely associated with so-called pulp magazines, with pulp magazines especially *Black Mark* edited by Joseph T Shaw. In the late 1920s hardboiled referred to long cynical attitude due to violence rather than a type of crime fiction.
According to Robert Sampson a pulp historian the land boiled detective stories were expected by the instrumental, gun-toting clubber gamble. Robert Sampson argues that Gordon Young’s Don Ever hard stories (which appeared in Adventure Magazine from 1917 onwards) about an extremely tough, unsentimental, and lethal gun-toting urban gambler, anticipated the hardboiled detective stories. The gamblers were extremely tough as seen in Gordon young Don’s, ever hard stories seen in Adventure Magazine film from 1917. With limited precision it may be stated that publishing of detective stories by Black Mask and Pulp’s reference to crime fiction almost happen at the same period. Pulp Magazine of 1930s carried hardboiled crime stories especially in Dime Detective and Detective Fiction weekly. In successive years many hardboiled novels were published in Pulp’s which were called paperback originals. As the days went on pulp fiction was synonymous of hard boiled crime fiction or even gangster fiction. The hardboiled style was even adopted by many writers from U.S.A viz; Sue-Grafton, Chester Himes, Paul Levine, John D. Macdonald, Ross Mac Donald, Jim Butcher, Walter Mosley, Sara Paretsky, Robert B. Parker and Mickey Spillane.

Giallo is a term used in Italy to denote thrillers with special reference to crime fiction and mystery sub-genres, irrespective of the country of origin. But in other English speaking countries it refers to particular style of Italian produced murder films mixed with elements of horror fiction and eroticism. The genre arose in 1960s and reached its peak in 1970s and decline in the subsequent years. Further it was also considered as a prelude to American slashed film genre. The crime mystery pulp novels named IlGiallo Mondadori from 1929 derived the term from the yellow cover background of Italian translations of mystery novels of British and American writers like Agatha Christie, Ellery Queen, Edgar Wallace, Ed McBain, Rex Stout, and Raymond Chandler. The success of the Giallo novels established the word ‘giallo’. The word is synonym of
mystery novel in common and media language especially for a mysterious or unsolved affair.

Detective fiction is a subgenre of Crime fiction and usually employs a professional or amateur investigator or a detective. Investigation is done by them on a crime, especially a murder. This genre has an ancient descent. For example, the Old Testament story is told in the play *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles in which the title character discovers the truth about his origins after questioning various witnesses. Nevertheless Oedipus’ enquiry is based on pre-rational and supernatural, a method which was a norm in many narratives of crime until the development of enlightenment thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It included all the elements of the detective story. The story was written around a murder, a closed circle of suspects and gradual uncovering of the hidden past.

Fiction started in the English-speaking world with Poe's “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” in which Poe devised a plot formula which was the center point in Poe’s The Mystery of Marie Rogêt and The Purloined Letter. Ratiocination was how Poe referred to the stories which contain stories in which the main concern of the plot was ascertaining truth by intuitive logic, astute observation, and perspicacious inference coupled with an investigating protagonist from the beginning to the end.

Another early example of a ‘whodunit’ is a subplot in the novel *Bleak House* (1853) by Charles Dickens in which a lawyer Tulkinghorn is killed in his office late night, and the crime is investigated by Inspector Bucket penetrating all the characters that appeared in the staircase to the lawyer’s office to identify the murder. Another novel that revolves around the whodunit is *Mystery of Edwin Drood* which was unfinished by Charles Dickens due to his death. Wilkie Collins (1824–1889) sometimes referred to as the grandfather of English detective fiction is credited with the first great mystery novel.
Collins's novel *The Moonstone* (1868) was called the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels. *The Moonstone* contains a number of ideas that have established several classic features of the twentieth century detective story.

Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19, 1809, in Boston, Massachusetts. His mother, Elizabeth Arnold Poe, was a talented actress from an English theatrical family. Because Poe’s father, David Poe, Jr., a traveling actor of Irish descent, was neither talented nor responsible, the family suffered financially. After apparently separating from David Poe, Elizabeth died in Richmond, Virginia, in 1811. The young Edgar, though not legally adopted, was taken in by a wealthy Scottish tobacco exporter, John Allan, from whom Poe took his middle name.

For most of his early life, Poe lived in Richmond with the Allans, with the exception of a five-year period between 1815 and 1820 which he spent in England, where he attended Manor House School, near London. Back in America, he attended an academy until 1826, when he entered the University of Virginia. He withdrew less than a year later, however, because of various debts, many of them from gambling; Poe did not have the money to pay, and his foster-father refused to help. After quarreling with Allan about these debts, Poe left for Boston in the spring of 1827; shortly thereafter, perhaps because he was short of money, he enrolled in the United States Army under the name Edgar A. Perry.

In the summer of 1827, Poe’s first book, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, published under the anonym A Bostonian, appeared, but it was little noticed by the reading public or by the critics. In January, 1829, he was promoted to the rank of sergeant major and was honourably discharged at his own request three months later. In December, 1829, Poe’s second book, *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane*, and *Minor Poems*, were published, and it was well received by the critics. Shortly thereafter, Poe entered West Point Military Academy, possibly as a way to get into his foster-father’s good graces.
After less than a year in school, Poe was discharged from West Point by court-martial for neglecting his military duties. Most biographers agree that Poe deliberately provoked his discharge because he was tired of West Point. Others suggest that he could not stay because John Allan refused to pay Poe’s bills any longer, although he would not permit Poe to resign. After West Point, Poe went to New York, where, with the help of some money raised by his West Point friends, he published Poems by Edgar A. Poe, Second Edition. After moving to Baltimore, where he lived at the home of his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, Poe entered five short stories in a contest sponsored by the Philadelphia Saturday Courier. Although he did not win the prize, the newspaper published all five of his pieces. In June, 1833, he entered another contest sponsored by the Baltimore Saturday Visiter and this time won the prize of fifty dollars for his story “Ms. Found in a Bottle.” From this point until his death in 1849, Poe was very much involved in the world of American magazine publishing.

During the next two years, Poe continued writing stories and trying to get them published. Even with the help of a new and influential friend, John Pendleton Kennedy, a lawyer and writer, he was mostly unsuccessful. Poe’s financial situation became even more desperate when, in 1834, John Allan died and left Poe out of his will. Kennedy finally persuaded the Southern Literary Messenger to publish several of Poe’s stories and to offer Poe the job of editor, a position which he kept from 1835 to 1837. During this time, Poe published stories and poems in the Messenger, but it was with his extensive publication of criticism that he began to make his mark in American letters.

Although much of Poe’s early criticism is routine review work, he began to consider the basic nature of poetry and short fiction and to develop theoretical analyses of these two genres, drawing upon the criticism of A. W. Schlegel in Germany, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in England. Poe’s most important contribution to criticism is his
discussion of the distinctive generic characteristics of short fiction, and in a famous review of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales* (1837). Poe makes such a convincing case for the organic unity of short fiction, argues so strongly for its dependence on a unified effect, and so clearly shows how the form is more closely allied to the poem than to the novel that his ideas have influenced literary critics ever since. Poe had created situations of horror and mystery where his macabre effects tested the stability of human mind or he posed mental problems that suggested the mind’s infinite possibilities.

There are many reasons why Poe was attracted towards short fiction. No doubt, his great ability lay in this direction. Short stories were in great demand in America of his days. The reverse was the case in England which lacked good short stories. Poe as a journalist knew the pulse of America which was in too much of hunger to stay with three volume novels. Through the magazine under his charge Poe gave to the public what it demanded. He wrote sixty eight tales in seventeen years. Poe’s tales can be conveniently classified according to the ‘effect’, Poe sought to create. Such a classification will help us to bring to surface the undercurrent of meaning. In a letter to T.W. White, Poe defines four categories of his short stories:

……the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque: the fearful coloured into the horrible: the witty exaggerated into the burlesque: the singular wrought out in to the strange and mystical. (Ostrom 57)

Richard Wilber, one of the most sympathetic and understanding critics of Poe, groups the tales as soliloquy, the dramatic monologue, and the posthumous tales, the dialogue in heaven and the dream journey. This distinction is not based on the definitions, which Poe himself spoke. Poe here made a distinction between the Grotesque and the Burlesque, both belonging to the comic art. Hence from the above quoted letter, we can derive three types of narratives:
1. The Gothic or horror tales, representing the fearful coloured into the horrible.

2. The comic tales, including the ludicrous heightened into the Grotesque and the witty exaggerated into the Burlesque, and

3. The mystical pieces, detective fictions, wherein the ‘singular’ is wrought out into the strange and mystical.

A.H. Quinn puts the tales of Poe into four categories: the Arabesque, the Grotesque, the Ratiocinative and the Descriptive. Quinn keeps up the distinctions which Poe himself made. W. H. Auden divides Poe’s tales as major and minor. In the major group he makes two divisions. The tales describing the state of willful being: the aggressive ego. The minor tales of Poe are divided into two groups, the tales of the humorous and satiric pieces. Auden’s classification is unsatisfying because it stands in no realistic relationship with Poe’s artistic intentions. Darrel Abel classifies Poe’s tales as analytic and synthetic. He calls the analytic tales as the stories of realistic terror and divides these into two groups: the tales that analyze sensations and the ratiocinative tales that analyse a complex problem. The synthetic tales are of romantic terror. His putting together of the Arabesque and Grotesque tales seems unconvincing. The epithets of Grotesque and Arabesque will be found to indicate with sufficient precision the prevalent tenor of the tales. This statement clearly shows that the contemporaries understood the terms very well and recognized Poe’s tales. W. L. Howarth categorizes Poe’s works into three parts: the Grotesque, the Arabesque and the Ratiocinative, corresponding roughly to the early, middle and later periods of Poe’s literary career. He does not take into consideration what A.H. Quinn calls the descriptive pieces.

Poe was not clear in his definition of the story. He attempted, for instance, to divide the story into two types: tales of ratiocination and tales of atmospheric effect. The first type is characterized by the ingeniously plotted story as “The Gold-Bug” or “The
Purloined Letter” where the effect is made primarily as the result of an interest aroused by a close following of the details of complicated action and a final comprehension of its infallible logic. The second depended less upon action than it did upon the multiplication of atmospheric details, as in “The Fall of the House of Usher.”

Poe’s concept of the ratiocinative tale developed into a more or less empty form of the detective story. At its best, it produced an O. Henry and at its second bests a Jack London. The atmospheric tale, in the sense that it came to be known as such, produced little more than Poe’s own tales of horror, most of which seem to be forced and sentimental and perhaps the same applies to the so called local colour stories of a writer like Bret Harte who seems to have falsely exploited atmospheric effects at the expense of psychological and moral truth.

The real fact seems that Poe was more concerned with the preconceived structure than he was with grounding his art in the life around him. His was a dilettante’s interest, focused more on the mechanics of form than on form of expression. Poe is seen now as having the principal concerns of his time centrally located in his work. This remoteness is not one of subject matter but of technique. He might write a story about a love affair between the exotic daughter of an Italian sorcerer and her student lover, set in a remote place and time and embracing events are clearly impossible; yet the underlying theme is embodied in the tale and is a part of human experience.

Poe and Harte had given the ‘short tale’ eminence in America. In tracing the advance of belief that the short story has its own aesthetics, it is once again America that provides a starting point. As far back as 1842 Poe had formulated basic principles for the composition of short prose narratives, relating the writer’s aim directly to the brevity of the form. By a brilliant stroke, Poe applied to prose writing what he had found to be an invariable rule of poetic production. In poetry, he maintained, that the ‘unity of effect’ was only attainable in works which could be read at one sitting.
The words “unique”, “single” and “wrought” remain key terms in the discussions of short story. So too does Poe’s insistence that only when the desired effect is clear in the writer’s mind should he go on to invent incidents and arrange them in the order best calculated to establish this effect. Poe’s account of the deliberate artistry by which the writer must seize and maintain control gives the short story the status of an exacting and powerful form.

In Poe’s view the short story is compared favorably with poetry as well as with novel, because of the vast variety of modes and inflections of thought and expression available to the writer. It is precisely the same appealing range and diversity which excited James in the 1890s. James said, “By doing short things I can do so many, touch so many subjects, break out in so many places, handle so many of the threads of life” (The Short Story: A Critical Introduction 10). Like Poe, James’s great achievement came with his experiments in the form of the novel, but his interest in short fiction was in no way diminished by that. He observed that the short story and its organic unity had been anticipated by Poe. He gave entirely new force to a theory which had been dormant for fifty years, by incorporating it into his characteristically modern view of the artist.

Short stories of one sort or another have been part of literature from its earlier expression; writers were just beginning to theorize about the possibilities of the short story at the start of nineteenth century. Poe makes character subsidiary to action. Like Aristotle, he sees each element of the story as subsidiary to the action. The Literary Artist, Poe says, “conceives a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out and then invents such incidents and combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect…” (11). However, Poe wrote five kinds of stories: Mystery or Detective, Science fiction, Gothic Humor, Gothic Romance, and Gothic horror stories that emphasize atmosphere and the supernatural. He contributed sophisticated analyses of the psychological process into insight.
The detective stories are masterpieces in a minor vein. Poe portrays the prototype for Sherlock Holmes. These stories are called tales of ratiocination, because of Poe’s meticulous attention to the rational process by which mysteries are unraveled. His science-fiction stories are developed with the same careful regard for rational credibility. Poe was unconsciously rebelling against the 19th century excessive faith in the private sensibility and inspiration of the artist and the accidental nature of art. Poe’s first detective story “The Murder in the Rue Morgue” pioneered the sub-genre of the ‘locked room’ mystery by presenting a seemingly impossible crime. The second story “The Mystery of Marie Roget” is interesting both historically and structurally, because the story is based on the real New York murder case of Mary Rogers; structurally because the narrative’s use of newspaper reports and textual sources anticipates the kind of fragmentary structure that would be used by Wilkie Collins in “The Woman in White.” “The Purloined Letter” has become significant in terms of psychoanalytic theory following Jacques Lacan’s analyses of the story and Jacques Derrida’s reading of Lacan. But in a wider sense the stories are significant for introducing to us the figure of the detective in Dupin. Dupin would be a template for many of the detectives to appear in the late nineteenth century. This earliest work of detective fiction as understood today was that detective Dupin became the model for those who solve crimes by deduction from a series of clues.

There is a psychological intensity that is characteristic of Poe’s writings, especially the tales of horror that comprise his best-known works. These stories which include “The Black Cat,” “The Cask of Amontillado” and “The Tell-Tale Heart” are often told by a first person narrator, and through this voice Poe probes the workings of a character’s psyche. This technique foreshadows the psychological realism. In his Gothic tales, Poe employs an essentially symbolic, almost allegorical method which gives such works as
“The Fall of the House of Usher”, “The Mask of the Red Death” and “Legeia”, an enigmatic quality that accounts for their enduring interest and also links them with the symbolical works of Hawthorne and Melville. The influence of Poe’s tales may be seen in the work of later writers, including Ambrose Bierce and H. P. Lovecraft who belong to a distinct tradition of horror literature. Just as Poe influenced many succeeding authors and is regarded as an ancestor of such major literary movements as Symbolism and Surrealism, he was also influenced by earlier literary figures and movements. In his use of the demonic and the grotesque, Poe evidences the impact of the stories by E.T.A. Hoffman and the Gothic novels of Ann Radcliff, while the despair and melancholy in much of his writing reflects an affinity with the Romantic movement of the early nineteenth century. It is Poe’s particular genius that in his work he gives consummate artistic form both to his personal obsessions and those of previous literary generations, at the same time creating new forms which provide a means of expression for future artists. A tale of sickness, madness, incest and the danger of unrestrained creativity, “The Fall of the House of Usher” is among Poe’s most popular and critically examined horror stories.

The ancient decaying House of Usher fills with tattered furniture and tapestries and sets in a gloomy, desolate locale which is a rich symbolic representation of its sickly twin inhabitants, Roderick and Madeline Usher. Besides its use of classical Gothic imagery and gruesome events including escape from live burial the story has a psychological element and ambiguous symbolism that have given rise to many critical readings. Poe uses the term arabesque to describe the ornate, descriptive prose in this and other stories. “The Fall of the House of Usher” is considered representative of Poe’s idea of art for art’s sake, whereby the mood of the narrative, created through skillful use of language, overpowers any social, political or moral teaching. The story is also one of several of Poe’s which utilizes the decadent aristocrat, a central character. This mad often artistic
noble heir takes the place of the traditional Gothic villain in tales portraying the sublime
hostility of existence itself rather than the evil embodied by individuals. In addition to
“The Fall of the House of Usher”, such characters appear in his stories “Metzengerstein”
(1840), “Berenice, Legeia”, “The Oval Portrait” and “Masque of the Red Death.” Central
to the setting in many of these stories is a large, ominous castle, likened by critic Maurice
Levy to the medieval fortress that appears in the writing of Radcliff, Maturin and
Walpole. Interior architectural elements, such as the moving tapestry in
“Metzengerstein,” serve almost as character in these tales.

A second group of Poe’s tales has obsessive detail of the horror and misery veiled in
by a guilty conscience. These include “The Black Cat”, “The Tell-Tale Heart,” and the
doppelganger story William Wilson. “The Black Cat” is narrated by a once kind man who
has fallen for alcoholism. One day, in a rage, he hangs his cat and is forever haunted by
the image.

Upon attempting to kill the cat’s replacement, he kills his wife. It appears his deeds
will go unpunished until he is given away by the screaming narrator. While not widely
acclaimed during his lifetime, “The Black Cat” has become one of Poe’s most famous
stories. While stories like “Hop Frog,” “The Pit and the Pendulum” and “The Cask of
Amontillado” do not take a guilty conscience as their starting point, they share the same
paranoid intensity. Poe first gained widespread acclaim for his poem “The Raven,” which
exhibits elements of the tales in both groups identified above. Set at the stroke of
midnight in an otherwise empty chamber, the narrator hears a tapping at his door. The
narrator, tormented by the ominous raven revealed to be the source of the noise, is not
wracked with guilt. Rather, he mourns the loss of his love, Lenore, while the Raven
serves as a despicable and terrifying reminder of her death. Poe completed only one
novel, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym in Gothic tradition. It is his only complete
novel. It is at once a mock non-fictional exploration, narrative adventure, hoax, largely plagiarized travelogue and spiritual allegory.

The journey is about establishing a national American identity as well as discovering a personal identity. The plot both soars to new heights of fictional ingenuity and descends to silliness and absurdity. In order to present the tale as an authentic exploration, Poe uses a number of the travel journals that proliferate at the time he was writing. Poe’s most significant source was the explorer Jeremiah N. Reynolds whose work addresses the subject of a surveying and exploring expedition to the Pacific Ocean and the South Seas. This is reviewed favorably by Poe in January 1837. It is one of the most elusive major texts of American literature.

Critics have differed widely concerning Poe’s humor. Generally, his laughter is dismissed as hysterical. His tales invoking not the comic muse but the macabre. Arthur Ransom says: “His attempts to be funny are like hangman’s jokes.” In the opinion of Constance Rourke, “Poe’s laughter is of a singular order. It was inhuman, and mixed with hysteria.” Rourke relates Poe to the more callous aspects of the south western comic mode. Brom Weber however thinks that Poe is “one of our major humorists.” In the eyes of the common man Poe was a writer of Gothic and ratiocinative tales. In the life time of Poe his humor was ignored. John Pendleton Kennedy’s American Humor: A Study of the National Character as early as February 1836 said,

Some of your bizeereries have been mistaken for satire and admired too in that character. They deserve it, but you did not intend them so. I like your grotesque it is of the very best stamp; and I mean the serious tragic-comic.

(178)

In Poe’s life time these humorous tales were given many epithets: bizarreness, satire, grotesque, serious tragic comic, banter, extravagancies, joke, humour, quiz, and
grin. From this, it is evident that all of his comic writing should not be taken as ‘grotesque.’ Poe obviously intends some gradation in his humorous writing. Then in his letter “American Fiction and the Metaphysics of the Grotesque” to Thomas W. White, he refers to “the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque” and “the witty exaggerated into burlesque.” However, it will be more appropriate to classify the comic tales under the sub-divisions Grotesque, Burlesque and Parody, hoax and social comedy. He wrote so many Grotesque tales like “King Pest,” “The Thousand and Second Tale of Scheherazade”, “The Angel of Odd, Bon” “The Balloon hoax” and many more. Poe wrote tales of satires. Poe published only two other prose pieces: “Siope -- A Fable” and “The Psyche Zenobia,” both Gothic styled satires. Supporting evidence for this theory included the implication that “Ligeia” is from Germany. The narrator describes their expression, which he admits is a word of no meaning. The story also suggested that ‘Ligeia’ is a transcendentalist, a group of people Poe often criticized.

Poe profoundly influenced the development of early science fiction author Jules Verne. The stories, which are set in the future or in which contemporary setting is disrupted by an imaginary device such as a new invention or the introduction of an alien being. They were first labeled as science fiction in American magazines of the 1920s; a term previously used in Britain for scientific romance. But many contemporary writers and critics preferred the term speculative fiction. They respect the limits of scientific possibility and that the innovations are plausible extrapolations from modern theory and technology though relatively few examples are genuinely conscientious. Although elements of science fiction appear in many stories of imaginary voyages it was not until the ninetieth century that the advancement of science began to inspire a good deal of work. The science fictional themes play a significant part in Poe’s stories.
Renowned science fiction author Ray Bradbury has professed an admiration for Poe. He draws upon Poe in his stories and mentions Poe by name. His anti-censorship story “Usher II” set in a dystopian future in which the works of Poe have been censored, features an eccentric who constructs a house based on Poe’s “The Fall of the House of Usher”.

Poe is celebrated as science fiction pioneer for being the first to base his stories firmly on a rational kind of extrapolation avoiding the supernatural extrapolation. He is also called the father of science fiction. Poe is significant in that he is one of the first writers to make use of the burgeoning possibilities of science and to give these possibilities literary expression in the form of fiction. His life coincided with a plethora of scientific and technical developments in which he displayed a keen interest: the balloon, automata, the electric telegraph, the Daguerre type, the steamship, and so on. Many of these developments he eulogized in his satirical story “The Thousand and Second Tale of Scheherazade.”

Poe has nothing but scorn for human perfectibility. But his C. Auguste Dupin is a heir to the great French tradition. He is Poe’s spokesman in praise of the theory of probabilities that theory to which the most glorious objects of human research are indebted for the most glorious of illusion. In “The Mystery of Marie Roget” he expounds and refines its technique. Poe’s Sonnet to Science” written when he was only twenty begins thus:

Science! True daughter of old time thou act
Who at least all the things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet’s heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities? (Edgar Allan Poe: Complete Tales and Poems 890)
Poe adheres to science. In “The Colloquy of Monos” and “Una, Monos” denounces the harsh mathematical reason of the schools, sweeping aside the rectangular obscenities with which technology has our globe. Poe used speculative theory from the start to frustrate technological methods and aims. Industrialization led only to regimentation to that ultimate disease of the ‘poetic intellect’, the expropriation of the imagination. And one critical fight he was intent on waging was as Griswold puts it in his Poe’s Works:

The mistake… of the old dogma that the calculating faculty was with the ideal; while in fact, it may be demonstrated that the two divisions of mental power are never to be found in perfection apart. The highest order of the imaginative intellect is always pre-eminently mathematical and the converse. (148)

Poe’s fascination with lunar investigation’s sound and colour, the cosmology of Newton, Von Humboldt and Laplace is a cult of homage to pure science. It is said that “Poe was opening up a way,’ wrote Paul Valery, ‘teaching a very strict and deeply allowing doctrine in which a mathematics and kind of mysticism became one…the beauty of number was that point that configuration where mathematics and mysticism met” (qtd. Harold Beaver 253).

Something of this ambivalence ever since has haunted science fiction. The new genre is to evoke a horror both of the future and of the science which could bring that future about by identifying with the collapse of technology. Yet its only appeal is to science. It has now here to turn but to science for its salvation. The fiction then is that somehow science must learn to control its own disastrous career. Poe too quite self-consciously works in this Gothic vein. But what Poe contrived is the inversion of romantic fiction from the antiquarian hoax into a futuristic hoax. It proves a brilliant
reveal of time scale makes possible by the widespread willingness of an ever proliferating
journal reading stack investing news-addicted male and female public to be duped. “His
purpose in the hoaxes,” Constance Rourke remarks in *American Humour, A Study of the
National Character*:

…was to make his readers absurd to reduce them to an involuntary
imbecility. His objective was triumph or in Poe’s own caustic words:
Twenty years ago credulity was the characteristic trait of the mob,
incredulity the distinctive feature of the philosophic; now the case is
exactly conversed. (148)

Hans Pfaall stands in a direct line of descent from the pseudo-scientific memories
of Martinus Scriblerus, the literary hoax from the start that was bound up with literary
burlesque. Compared to Queen Anne’s England, Jacksonian America presented even
more fertile ground. As the tall tale came into its great prime in the early 1830’s sudden
contagion was created. A series of newspaper hoaxes sprang into life in the east. The
scale was Western, the tone that of calm scientific exposition of wanderers often belonged
to western comic legend. Baudelaire commented in a note to ‘Hans Pfaall’ adding that
fooling people is Poe’s main ‘dada’ or ‘hobbyhorse.’ The American hoax or tall story was
indeed a kind of pioneer ‘dada,’ a violent endlessly protracted game with the absurd.
Poe, the southerner, initiated Mark Twain from the Southwest to perfect and William
Faulkner with reckless rhetoric to explore a twenty century topology of the South.

*The Conversation of Eiron and Charmion* is an apocalyptic science fiction. The
story follows two people who have been renamed Eiros and Charmion after death,
discuss the manner in which the world ended. Eiros who died in the apocalypse explains
the circumstances to Charmion who died ten years previously. A new comet is detected in
the solar system and as it approaches the earth, people experience in turn exhilaration,
then pain and delirium. The cause is discovered to be the loss of nitrogen from the atmosphere leaving pure oxygen which finally bursts into flame when the comet nucleus hits. In this story the two characters take in the disembodied shades of ‘Aidenn.’ Charmion informs Eiros that the allotted days of stupor are over and Charmion will induct her in the full joys and wonders. Then the story of the disappearance of the earth ensues, how a comet, coming in close proximity of earth and passing over it, extracts the nitrogen out of the earth’s atmosphere. The result is “a combustion irresistible, all devouring, omni prevalent, immediate; the entire fulfillment, in all their minute and terrible details, of the fiery and horror inspiring denunciations of the prophecies of the holy book” (Saxena 152). “The Power of Words” is a fable in which the angelic imagination is pushed beyond the limits of the angelic intelligence to the point at which man considers the possibility of creative power through verbal magic. The physical power of words brings into being a star. The story is told in interstellar space after the world has come to an end. And this is the final knowledge Poe has gained.

“The Facts in the Case of Valdemar” is a scientific report. It is the best example of a tale of suspense and horror. In this story the narrator tells what should be the object of a mesmeric trance. As a subject for his experimentation he chooses M. Valdemar whom his physicians had declared to be in a confirmed physicist. M. Valdemar agrees to subject of the narrator and promises that he would send for Mr. P., as he calls him, twenty-four hours before the period announced by his physician as that of his decease. When the hour of M. Valdemar’s death approaches, Mr. P. arrives on the scene and hypnotizes him. Under the influence of the hypnotic trance M. Valdemar forgets his pain. M. Valdemar dies, yet lives.

A closer examination of the tale reveals that Poe uses mesmerism to achieve his effect by means of verisimilitude or to use his own coinage ‘life likeliness.’ His coinages
of the synonyms show the importance of the concept and the artistic method. In his letter to P.P. Cooke, Poe refers to Miss Elizabeth Barrett’s opinion regarding the tale:

Then there is a tale of his…. About mesmerism (The Valdemar Case) throwing us all into most admired disorder or dreadful doubts as to whether it can be true as the children say of ghost stories. The certain thing in the tale in question is the power of the writer and the faculty he has of making horrible improbabilities seem near and familiar. (Poe 87)

In his letter to Evert Duyckinck Poe makes clear his own conception of verisimilitude. Referring to “Valdemar Case” he says:

In my “Valdemar case” (which was credited by many) I had not the slightest idea that any person should credit it as anything more than a “Magazine Paper” but the whole strength is laid out in verisimilitude. (115)

The incident of the arrest of death by the extraordinary power of mesmerism is in itself highly incredible but Poe’s art lies in rendering it serious and credible by a skilful marshalling of plausible details. Arthur H. Quinn says in his The Home of the Father of the Lies Chronicles:

The frame of the story is realistic, the actions of the characters with the exception of Valdemar, are possible. The result is impossible. But the critical faculties have been dulled by the influence of plausible details, and the story was taken seriously. (Quinn 43)

Poe’s central object is to create a sense of horror, and in doing this he has carefully established the circumstances and prepared our minds by means of several significant methods. The narrative is given a historical authenticity. In the opening paragraph the case would have been taken for a miracle; but the narrator gives a convincing account of
it and makes an impossible thing seem entirely plausible under the circumstances of the case. This tale is different from tales like “The Balloon Hoax” in that it contains the semblance of emotional excitement. There is an attempt at gradual intensification of horror through the indistinct replies of Valdemar and the description of his changing aspect. “The Duc de l’Omelette” is a short story written by Poe, where the young man Duc has died from eating an Ortolan. An Ortolan is a small European bird that is approximately the size of a finch. Despite the fact that it is only a mouthful it is rumoured to be very good. The bird’s legs are wrapped in paper in order to prevent soiling the hands while indulging and it is then fried, cooking in its own fat. After dying he finds himself in Satan’s apartment.

The Duc is unwilling to accept the fact that he is dead at first. He is even more unwilling to strip as the devil has instructed him, so he can be cooked in the fires of hell. There is a direct correlation between the ways the Ortolan is cooked and how the Duc is to be cooked. The Duc views his surroundings, after having become satisfied with his identity. Satan’s apartment was exquisitely decorated with every beautiful thing. In an attempt he suffers two fold in Hell, if he wins he saves his soul. Satan is always unable to refuse a card game. Miraculously the Duc beats the Devil. Another story “The Island of the Fay” reflects his background and interests as one of the world’s foremost semioticians. He pursues theoretical and practical problems of signs and signification through the labyrinths of nature and society, and through verbal mazes of his own making.

The overarching theme of the story might be expressed in the following lines: how perception and experience alter each other in a never ceasing dance. Perception is conditioned by experience, but also rhetorical training. Robertto de la Grive and his contemporaries view the world through their complex, antithetical wordplay. Roberto
becomes so enmeshed in the letters he writes and the fiction he imagined that ultimately
he can no longer separate external reality from the reality inherent in his words.
Dreadfully short, bleak and seemingly disorganized, “Shadow, a Parable” is another of
Poe’s masterfully created stories.

Poe’s best known fiction works are Gothic fiction, a genre he followed to appease
the public taste. His most recurring themes deal with questions of death, including its
physical signs, the effects of decomposition, concerns of premature burial, the
reanimation of the dead, and mourning. Many of his works are generally considered part
of the Dark romanticism genre, a literary reaction to Transcendentalism, which Poe
strongly disliked. He refers to the followers of the latter movement as Frog-Pondians,
after the pond on Boston Common, and ridicules their writings as Metaphor run mad,
lapping into obscurity for obscurity's sake or mysticism for mysticism's sake. Poe once
wrote in a letter to Thomas Holley Chivers that he did not dislike Transcendentalists,
“only the pretenders and Sophism among them” (Poe 119).

Besides horror stories, Poe also write satires, humour tales, and hoax. For comic
effect, he uses irony and ludicrous extravagance, often in an attempt to liberate the reader
from cultural conformity. Metzengerstein, the first story that Poe is known to have
published, and his first foray into horror, is originally intended as a burlesque satirizing
the popular genre. Poe also reinvented science fiction, responding to emerging
technologies such as hot air balloon in “The Balloon-Hoax.”

Poe writes much of his work using themes aimed specifically at mass-market tastes.
Poe's writing reflects his literary theories, which he presents in his criticism and also in
essays such as “The Poetic Principle.” He dislikes Didacticism and Allegory, though he
believes that meaning in literature should be an undercurrent just beneath the surface.
Works with obvious meanings, he says, cease to be art. He believes that work of quality
should be brief and focus on a specific single effect. He believes that the writer should carefully calculate every sentiment and idea.

In “The Philosophy of Composition,” an essay in which Poe describes his method in writing “The Raven,” he claims to have strictly followed this method. It has been questioned if he really follows this system. As Poe says in his “The Philosophy of Composition:”

> It is difficult for us to read that essay without reflecting that if Poe plotted out his poem with such calculation, he might have taken a little more pains over it: the result hardly does credit to the method. (14)

Some of Poe’s most recurring themes that can be found in the stories are: death and its physical signs, the effects and nature of decomposition, concerns of premature burial, the coming back to life of the dead, and the process of mourning. Poe’s stories are remarkable for their inventiveness, their fine construction, their vivid descriptions and their psychological insight. Since their first publication, Poe’s powerful stories have captured the imagination of generations of readers. Many of the stories have been made into films or television dramas or they have been the source of inspiration for countless adaptations. Poe’s fame nowadays rests more on his macabre tales of mystery and horror than on his poetry or literary essays.

In the Gothic elements of his stories, Poe taps into an existing tradition. However he can be credited with creating the world’s first fictional detective in the figure of C Auguste Dupin. A number of aspects of Dupin’s character has all served as a model for many if not most detective story writers. One idea that obviously interested Poe is the power of the imagination and how it can possess or haunt a person. This theme is developed in a number of stories, particularly “William Wilson,” The Fall of the House of Usher” and “Metzengerstein.” Poe is also interested in analysing how a person (often a
(lonely figure) reacts in moments of extreme terror or despair facing death or torment. This is seen in “The Pit and the Pendulum,” “The Fall of the House of Usher” and “The Whirlpool.” Poe examines the themes of revenge and punishment in “The Barrel of Amontillado,” “The Red Death and Metzengerstein” while in the detective stories his underlying theme is the power of deductive reasoning to solve a seemingly insurmountable problem.

Ratiocinative tales present a mysterious event of crime, usually but not necessary murder, at first concealing the solution from the reader but finally revealing it through the successful investigation. The historians of the form have tried to trace its origin to the puzzle tales of the enlightenment or the Bible but there is a general agreement that its real history starts in the nineteenth century. Poe brings all the basic ingredients of it together in his ‘tales of ratiocination’ of the 1840s. His detective, the brilliant and eccentric Mr. Dupin, is accompanied by an obligingly imperceptive friend who narrates the story.

A ratiocinative or detective tale can be defined as a story characterized by a process of reasoning. A. E. Murch explains the detective story as a tale in which the primary interest lies in the methodical discovery by rational means of the exact circumstances of a mysterious event or series of events. The elements of curiosity are the focal point in a ratiocinative tale. Poe criticizes Eugene Sue for the lack of this very element. Poe says in his Complete Collection of Edgar Allen Poe that Sue exhibits:

… total want of arscelare artem. In effect the writer is always saying to the reader. Now in one moment- you shall see what you shall see. I am about to produce on you a remarkable impression. Prepare to have your imagination or your pity greatly excited. The wires are not only not concealed, but displayed as things to be admired, equally with the puppets they set in motion. (17)
In a ratiocinative tale, Poe thinks every point is so arranged as to perplex the reader and to whet his desire for elucidation. Once the design of mystery has been determined, it becomes imperative.

… first that no undue or in artistical means be employed to conceal the secret of the plot; and secondly that the secret be well kept…A failure to preserve it until the proper moment of denouement throws all into confusion. If the mystery leaks out, against the author’s will his purposes are immediately at odds and ends: for he proceeds upon the supposition that certain impressions do exist which do not exist in the minds of his readers. (Complete Collection of Edgar Allen Poe 18)

However there can be little doubt that the Gothic narrative has flourished more in America than in England. Prof. Leslie Fielder thinks that “The European Gothic reaches the level of important art only in poetry or drama, not in fiction; in America quite the opposite is the case” (Complete Collection of Edgar Allen Poe 19).

Serious American novels started with the Gothic. There are many reasons for the appeal of the Gothic to the American imagination. There is of course the factor which Fielder so aptly describes. Poe says, “The death of love left a vaccum at the effective heart of the American novel into which there rushed the love of death” (Complete Collection of Edgar Allen Poe 20).

The origin of American ‘Gothic’ is linked with the efforts of the European Protestantism where the sins of Europe will not be visited. This remains only in ideal. Guilt and sin are brought to America and a sensitive author portrays all these in his writings. The Gothic provides the writer a new world to explore and a new method by which this exploration might be communicated.
When Poe appears on the American literary scene more than seventy-year old tradition in Gothic writing existed. In his more memorable tales Poe capitalizes on the contemporary interest in the Gothic. It should be remembered that there are no Gothic ruins in America. Poe’s own knowledge of Gothic architecture must have come from secondary sources because his sojourn in England was only of five years and that also in childhood. However Poe makes reference to the school where he studied in England in ‘William Wilson’ and refers to the Gothic steeple of the school building. Gothic architecture, nevertheless, abounds in his tales. There are no concrete descriptions of Gothic buildings in his tales and the significance of such building lies in their dilapidation and ruin. In Poe’s tales the most conspicuous aspect of Gothic building is its age and its dilapidated condition. Other Gothic devices like supernatural occurrences, ghosts and specters are there.

The literary composition of Poe, especially his short stories of terror based on supernatural or psychological manifestations, continues to be highly praised by a secret group of readers who relish the dark, nightmarish worlds of human existence with their roots firmly established in the ancient past. In tales like “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Pit and the Pendulum,” “The Black Cat,” “The Premature Burial” and “The Fall of the House of Usher,” the strange unnerving familiarity with the characters and situations can be sensed which allows the reader to subconsciously relate to the macabre experiences and thoughts of the main protagonists.

It is Poe whose name is the first that clicks the mind whenever there is a mention of detective fiction because “Poe brought all the basic ingredients of it together in his ‘tales of ratiocination’ of the 1840s” (Zhao 120). If Poe gives birth to detective fiction, then it is the latter that further gives birth to the concept of ratiocination. As mentioned earlier, Poe calls his three aforementioned tales as his tales of ratiocination. Hence, the two concepts,
one of detective fiction and the other of ratiocination, run concomitantly. In very simple words, “A ratiocinative or detective tale can be defined as a story characterized by the process of reasoning” (121). ‘Ratiocination’ is a process that involves the essential element of logic and reasoning. This is, nevertheless, a very basic idea, but its limits extend to far greater meanings. Poe has also created an unforgettable and diligent detective/sleuth/polymath named Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin who features only in these three stories and becomes a benchmark for future writers to create their detective characters on. In 1928, S.S. Van Dine has laid down the twenty rules in his *The Benson Murder Case* that distinguish detective fiction,

Supporting the idea that detective fiction follows a visible, though not always identical pattern… stressing the importance of three main agents: a detective, a murderer and at least one victim… Apart from the identity of the murderer, the motive of the crime also plays a central part. (71)

The ratiocination elements inherent in Poe’s *Classic Review: The works of Edgar Allen Poe* lay emphasis on. i). The Reader, ii).Plot, iii). Detective, iv). Clues and Evidences, v). Crime-Solving Process, vi). Culprit, vii). Corpse and viii). Motive. Poe invents the term ‘Tales of Ratiocination.’ The Ratiocination, however, is not just for the detective. He does not allow the reader to sit back and merely observe the process of ratiocination which he sets up is intended for the reader, as well as for the detective (Zhao 125-26).

Mystery is a genre that presents and solves a crime. The main character (the detective) works to find clues, examine motives, identify suspects, and eventually find a solution to the crime. The mystery story begins with presenting the crime and then follows the detective as he/she solves the crime. The author may hide clues and motives through hidden evidence, suspense, foreshadowing, and red herrings. By the end of the
novel, the detective pieces together the puzzle and finds the guilty party. Later each type of mystery fiction is further defined and elaborated. The main plot of a mystery novel or short story focuses on the crime that needs solution. The central character is the detective, and the rest of the characters are usually the suspects. The plot of a mystery begins with an inciting action and uses suspense to draw the reader into the story. The protagonist (detective) works to solve the mystery and often finds him/herself in danger. Each suspect and his/her motives are examined in the story. Dramatic tension is heightened with foreshadowing, plot twists and different motives are offered. The detective will examine all clues, motives, and alibis to find the guilty person.

Poe’s nature and subtle short stories, poems and critical theories established him as a major author in world literature. He is the architect of the modern short story. He is one of the pioneers of the ‘art for art sake’ in nineteenth century European literature. His stories greatly influence the French symbolists Poe’s first short stories appeared in the Philadelphia Saturday Courier and his “Ms Found in a Bottle” won a case prize for best story in the Baltimore Saturday visitor. The tales of Poe highly influenced many writers like Ambrose Bierce and H.P. Lovecraft, who manifested the tradition of horror literature initiated by Poe. Poe is also initiated two more genres such as science fiction and the detective story. He used fascination for science and technology in his stories as “The Unparalleled Adventure” of “Hans Pfaall” and “Von Kempelen” and “His Discovery.” Poe influenced many authors and he was called as the ancestor of both symbolism and surrealism movements. Poe’s impact can be seen in the stories of E.T.A. Hoffman and the Gothic novels of Ann Radcliffe. Their writings reflect the despair and melancholy which suit with the Romantic movement of the early nineteenth century. Poe’s friend and literary executor R.W. Griswold in his libelous obituary notice in The New York Tribune names Poe as “Ludwig” and says the depravity and psychological aberrations of many of
the characters in Poe’s fiction to Poe himself. Poe’s biographer A.H. Quinn made a balanced new of Poe and his work, and the relationship between the author’s life and his imagination. Marie Bonaparte and Joseph Wood Krutch did their psychoanalytical studies with the identification of Poe’s murderers and madmen characters. Paul Elmer More called him as “The poet of unripe boys and unsound men.” Henry James, Aldous Huxley and T.S. Eliot dismissed Poe’s works as juvenile, vulgar and artistically debased. But such writers like, Bernard Shaw and William Carlos Williams consider that Poe’s works have the highest literary merit and they complement Poe’s reputation among English and American critics. Charles Baudelaire gave his estimate in 1850’s as Poe’s works were received with amazing honour by French writers particularly by the movement of symbolism.

Paul Valery in the twentieth century movement of surrealism found that Poe’s bizarre and apparently unruly imagination have the thought and idea of supreme rationalism. Poe’s works have been enjoyed in many countries like Russia, Japan, Scandinavia and Latin America. Poe is the forerunner of both defective and horror fiction. Yvor Winters tries to remove Poe from literary history because he is more detached artist, who shows his virtuosity than with showing his ‘soul’ and he mainly uses an ironic rather than an autobiographical relationship to his writing. In an essay titled “Edgar Poe’s Tradition, Herbert Marshall and McLuhan write: “While the New England dons primly turned the pages of Plato and Buddha beside a tea – cozy, and while Browning and Tennyson were creating parochial fog for the English mind to relax in” (97). Thus Poe’s works and its credits influenced the present Thesis writer to choose to work on his selected short stories. The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, edited by John H. Ingram, The Work of Edgar Allan Poe by Edmund C. Stedman and The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, The Collected Writings of Edgar Allen Poe, edited by Burton R. Pollin give additional inspiration for writing the present Thesis.
The aim of the present study is to analyse the mystery factor in the works of Edgar Allan Poe. A mystery is a story that has five basic but important elements. These five components are: the characters, the setting, the plot, the problem, and the solution. These essential elements keep the story running smoothly and allow the clues to the solution of the mystery to be revealed in a logical way that the reader can follow. Poe is the writer of interest in this study, because of his unique treatment of characters, crime and mystery, which require more probing for a deeper understanding.

The present thesis makes a slight departure from the earlier attempts in that for the first time short stories of Poe have been analysed with a theoretical framework, namely psychoanalysis. Also, an attempt has been made to probe the stylistics of Poe’s writing, so as to make it a comprehensive study trying to unveil and understand the mystery elements in the selected works.

The first chapter “Introduction” traces the history of short fiction in American Literature and its subsequent growth. The chapter also examines the various genres of short fiction, exclusively focusing on mystery fiction and its subgenres. The chapter seeks to understand the impact of mystery fiction on various other forms of arts and media in general and tries to examine the prowess of Poe as a successful mystery writer and his contribution to the world of fiction. The chapter further analyses Poe’s three Dupin Stories, to understand him better as a mystery fiction writer, who conceals and unveils the elements of mystery through his famous character named Dupin. The chapter provides a complete overview of mystery fiction and Poe’s success in handling the genre in his unique style.

The second chapter entitled, “The Theory of Psychoanalysis” analyses the psyche of all the important characters in Poe’s stories. Jacques Lacan wrote the nature of psychoanalytic discourse which is a commonsensical fact that relies solely upon words.
In other words, it is not only possible to perform psychoanalysis on the written text, it is imperative for the analyst, or, in this case, the interpreter of a work of art, to rely chiefly upon the written discourse. It is exactly the written word which stands at the centre of the road to objectivity. When performing an analysis of a work written by Poe, one must establish a firm standpoint concerning the presence of obvious supernatural elements in his stories. An interpreter of Poe’s work assumes the position of one who takes the preternatural elements for granted, on one who attempts to deconstruct them in accordance with an interpretive model of one’s own choosing. Adopting Psychoanalysis as an interpretive model of Poe’s fiction offers a truly remarkable analytical viewpoint, because it delves into the depth of the characters psyche and has the power to completely transform the general ambience of the story, giving it a new prism of fictional reality as experienced by the protagonists of Poe’s stories. Because the focus of Psychoanalytical interpretation is put on the main character’s perception of reality and Poe’s stories are narrated predominantly in the first person, it is to perceive the events of the narrative strictly through the lens of the protagonist’s psyche. However macabre and supernatural Poe’s stories may seem, there is always a great deal of reason embodied within their scheme. Everything that happens in the narratives is explainable and is bound by the casual chain of events.

The third chapter entitled, “Trajectory of Fear through Mystery” discusses the various methods through which Poe instills fear through mystery in his short fiction. The stories discussed are “Ligeia,” “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” “The Masque of the Red Death” and “The Mystery of Marie Roget.” These stories are filled with terror and mystery relating to some purposes. These purposes evolve with an action of mystery which in turn develops a kind of anxiety in the reader to learn the hidden in the reader. So, it is necessary to probe this adventurous journey of reading and revealing. The
chapter elucidates the story-line of the mentioned short-stories of Poe. Further the stories are analysed for their density and uniqueness with which Poe has derived the concept of mystery. Thus, step by step unveiling the mystery in the stories of Poe would be made clear by making the research more comprehensive with the use of enough alternate readings and critical views.

The fourth chapter entitled, “Mystery through Death, Horror and Madness” analyses the various psychological imbalances in the characters, whose perverse nature leads to murder or death. The chapter brings out the psyche of various characters in the selected short stories of Poe, namely “The Tell- Tale Heart,” “The Black Cat,” “The Cask of Amantillado” and “The Purloined Letter.” The study seeks to find out the intensive madness in the characters through horror and death. Death and horror play a pivotal role in Poe’s fiction in order to keep up the element of suspense and thereby concealing the truth. In due course, the madness in the criminal is estimated through the clues of the narrative, which unfolds the mystery. The above said stories are filled with so much horror and death that they require special focus and the chapter identifies all the psychological and other reasons that perturb the flow of mystery in some cases.

Chapter five entitled, “Psychological Instability and Mystery” investigates the stories through psycho-analytical framework. The stories are dealt with in an intensive manner exploiting the psyche of the characters elaborately. The chapter also examines the theme of sex, gender and taboo related to the psyche of the characters. The narrative offers various symbols and motifs which readily clarify the mysterious elements. These symbols and motifs form the criteria for a disturbing event that has been caused in unnatural circumstances or due to the unimaginable psyche of the characters. Poe has established the notion of shaken psyche in almost all of the stories taken for study. In this respect, all the stories taken for study have been analysed, applying theoretical backdrops
to draw a clear picture of the above discussed elements of death, horror and fear in the trajectory of mystery.

The Chapter VI “Conclusion” is a summing up of the arguments critically analysed in the earlier chapters to prove how Poe conceals the elements of mystery through his unique fictional mode of writing and how it can be unveiled. The solution of the mystery can be brought about by the identification of the reasons intellect with that of his opponent. The solution of the mystery depends on the exact admeasurements of the other man’s mental processes. This measurement is to be made in terms of analysis. The mystery is not to be solved by the powers of intuition. In intuition, one can put forward no criteria which can lead to the final unraveling of the mystery.