

THE GOLDEN AGE TRADITION OF DETECTIVE NOVEL IN THE LITERATURE OF ENGLAND

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ABSTRACT

The article provides a theoretical basis for the study of detective fiction can be classified under two headings: the short story and the full length novel. The detective story has become one of the most popular forms of all genres. The writers of detective novels portrayed various types of detective figures with their strange habits. The crime is investigated by an amateur person, the private detective or police department.

KEYWORDS: *Detective, Subgenres, Portrayed, Curiosity, Engaging Stories, Sustain, Humour.*

INTRODUCTION

The detective story also has various subgenres. The novelists Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Margery Allingha The detective fiction can be classified under two headings: the short story and the full length novel. They belong to the 'Golden Age' tradition of detective fiction. It is important to note that in the Golden Age novels, the scenes of crimes were in England, especially in the capital city, London. The term 'Golden Age of Detective Fiction' refers to a period of detective fiction between 1920 and 1939 in England. According to some critics, it began in 1913. The novels of Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Margery Allingham, and Nicholas Blake appeared in this period. The important aspect of detective fiction in the 'Golden Age' was the refinement of the murder mystery. It transformed into a puzzle with the mingling of light humour. It is in testing to note that Edmund Clerihew Bentley invented the comical verse form namely, 'Clerihew' which is named after him. Agatha Christie is one of the significant detective fiction writers of the "Golden Age" of Detective novels. She has produced her first detective novel, "The Mysterious Affair at Styles" in 1920. The character of the Belgian detective, Hercule Poirot has been featured in this novel. He also appears in many of Agatha Christie's novels. The character of the elderly spinster, Miss Marple, a detective adds interest to her novels. Agatha Christie's novels are famous for their engaging stories which sustain the interest and curiosity of the reader till the end of her novels. She also misdirects her readers in the course of her novels. In this way, the novelist manages to keep suspense of the story of the novel.

Detective fiction is a subgenre of crime fiction and mystery fiction in which an investigator or a detective—either professional, amateur or retired—investigates a crime, often murder. The detective genre began around the same time as speculative fiction and other genre fiction in the mid-nineteenth century and has remained extremely popular, particularly in novels. Some of the most famous heroes of detective fiction include C. Auguste Dupin, Sherlock Holmes,

and Hercule Poirot. Juvenile stories featuring The Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, and The Boxcar Children have also remained in print for several decades.

Agatha Christie is the most famous Golden Age writer, but also considered one of the most famous authors of all genres of all time. At the time of her death in 1976, “she was the best-selling novelist in history. Many of the most popular books of the Golden Age were written by Agatha Christie. She produced long series of books featuring detective characters like Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, amongst others. Her use of basing her stories on complex puzzles, “combined with her stereotyped characters and picturesque middle-class settings”, is credited for her success. Christie's works include *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), *Death on the Nile* (1937), Three Blind Mice (1950) and *And Then There Were None* (1939).

Agatha Christie is the best-selling author of all time. She wrote 66 crime novels and story collections, fourteen plays, and six novels under a pseudonym in Romance. Her books have sold over a billion copies in the English language and a billion in translation. According to Index Translation, she remains the most-translated individual author, having been translated into at least 103 languages. She is the creator of two of the most enduring figures in crime literature-Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple-and author of *The Mousetrap*, the longest-running play in the history of modern theatre.

For too long standard interwar histories have portrayed the interwar years as a period marked by failure, instability, depression, and volatility. Instead, rising living standards, the narrowing of socioeconomic disparities, expanded avenues of social welfare, increased leisure time, and mass consumerism resulted in an altogether peaceful, healthier, stable, and increasingly affluent England. Out of these rising economic improvements emerged forms of mass entertainment, including popular fiction. Cheaper paper and printing methods, rising literacy, faster distribution methods, new forms of advertising, and the expansion of public libraries led to the creation of a mass readership across England. For the first time, publishers truly had to give the people what they wanted. As such, the proliferation and popularization of genres, both new and old, occurred. Most notably, the detective genre matured and blossomed during this period, which marked its golden Age. I as its authors' sales depended on popular approval and because of the genres realistic, conservative nature, detective fiction offers historians an inside look into the conventional morals, attitudes, beliefs, and values of the English interwar public. It was Dame Agatha Christie's fiction that dominated sales both in the detective genre and in popular fiction in general. Throughout her astonishingly successful career, from 1920 until 1976, she always attempted to be as realistic, current, and up-to-date as possible. As such, she left behind a record of the times that she experienced firsthand. As a highly conventional middle-class woman, she mainly wrote for and about the class that guided England's social and cultural life. Her works affirm the reality that interwar England was a nation that still followed and believed in late Victorian and Edwardian morals and values, accepted the existence of hierarchy and class distinctions based primarily on birth, and condoned Britains' role as an imperial nation.

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