Conclusion

Crime/detective fiction has become the genre in which major political themes are played out. The ideological representation of crime and detection of crime in popular discourses is a multifaceted and complex process that involves different stages of meaning making, historicizing and political contextualizing. To sort out the texts and contexts in which they are represented in an academic project is a complex process. There is no type of story that is more universally popular than the detective story and there is no other literary genre that attracts the attention of both academic and lay readers alike. For the genre critics, the crime/detective fiction’s structure lends itself to the exploration of social “realities” social, cultural, legal and moral norms of the societies in which they are contextualized. From the analysis of detective narratives by Edgar Allen Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, G.K. Chesterton and Agatha Christie, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The emergence of crime genre is inextricably linked to urban development, industrialization, the creation of police and detective force in Europe and United States and the transition from the old/obsolete legal and penal mechanism to new practices of criminal justice and punishment. The subsequent development of criminal investigation apparatus, emergence of criminology and forensic science as important new disciplines in the investigation of crime made the police force technically and professionally advanced. The industry of popular literature also developed in the same milieu in which crime narratives was a part. Detective fiction as a popular genre emerged as part of the post Enlightenment rational and hermeneutic tradition. Its
immense popularity coincided with the epistemological and ontological transformation within the public sphere. The post-Enlightenment period witnessed a systematic and systemic change in the penal and legal mechanism as the European penal reformers favoured the humanization and rationalization of trial and punishment of criminals by making its exercise, equal, consistent and beneficial to the whole society.

This study led to the inference that professionalization and scientization of bureaucracy, criminal investigation, trial, the law, justice system and penal mechanism in the modern state replaced providential justice and the crude and violent forms of penal practices in the pre-modern states. Detective fiction plays an important role in the way bureaucratic procedures of crime detection, surveillance and punishment and functional purposes of moral policing by the social and religious institutions and dogmas are experienced and understood. These representations tend to naturalise and legitimise the use of surveillance by authority, encouraging the citizen to consent to state-sanctioned systems of law, detection, and punishment. In popular crime narratives, crime and criminals are represented as an all-pervasive threat or an intrusion into the stable order. The police and criminal justice system are portrayed in a positive light in popular detective fiction as the successful protectors of victims against violence. The investigating professionals are portrayed as defenders and avengers of victims with whose suffering the audience/readers are invited to identify. Detective fiction thus gives popular credence to such hegemonic discourses of law, myths of fear, insecurity, threats, terrorism and some neologisms like “Islamophobia”.
The canonical texts, *Oedipus Rex*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Scarlet Letter* and *The Trial* on the other hand “defamiliarize” (Porter 245) the dominant myths, morals, religious confinements and bureaucratic culture. These texts deal with the social and bureaucratic mechanism of constructing criminal subjectivities and the process of exterminating them. Detective fiction exemplifies the patterns of cultural and political domination through “perceptual refamiliarization” of bureaucratic culture, surveillance and penal practices. (Porter 245).

The detectives like Auguste Dupin, Sherlock Holmes and many others combined analytical power and reasoning for crime detection. Precision and logical rigour of the new hero, detective, attracted the mass audience. For a criminal investigation to be successful, the investigator must identify the perpetrator and bring him/her before the society for social contempt and court of justice for legal punishment. In the same way, for a successful detective story, a criminal is an inevitable object as the detective is obsessed with this object or objective—the criminal body as well as the traumatic truth behind the crime and the criminal. When reading detective stories, the reader focuses on the question of whodunit and how the perpetrator will be caught. Therefore, for a perfect closure of a detective narrative, an individual must be identified as murderer, because, the reader who was also in search for a criminal in the text has an intense interest in seeing someone else convicted by the detective. The crime novel describes a struggle between criminals and detectives conducted through concealing and revealing the clues. The detective’s investigation is a discourse that constructs a truth regime in which the criminal is depicted as a “human monster” (Foucault, *Abnormal* 55) and a threat to social order. Although order is restored through detection, the constant threat of
other potential criminals remains – that makes the detective an essential social figure. The enjoyment of detective fiction lies in this restoration of order and the narration of this adventurous mission framed in suspenseful structure. The narrative structure of detective fiction evokes suspense, fear and pleasure as it defers its ultimate objective, the deciphering of the mystery of crime and this suspenseful narrative structure is the reason for its enduring popularity across the world.

After answering the question “whodunit”, it is the choice of the detective/reader to identify or ascribe criminality to either victim or his/her avenger. This turns out to be an ethical or moral question, because, the detective’s investigation gradually unfolds the evil qualities of the victim also. Martin Swales argues that detective story addresses the inborn sense of guilt: “The inroads of criminality merely confirm what we have always known that we are sinful creatures, prone to choose the darkness rather than the light… the detective story holds out the promise of solace and uplift… it washes the world clean” (qtd. in Chernaik xii). In the social contexts of Europe, especially Britain, this collective guilt is constructed by the Christian model of sin and fall. The detective story textualizes the process of elimination of both the victim and the criminal from the social body and the purification of the collective guilt of society. Thus detective fiction of British tradition validates the Christian status quo ultimately as a “proof against the depredations of chaos and carnage… victory of order over mayhem” (Chernaik xii). The British detective narratives that endorse the rational culture of the post-Enlightenment public sphere at the same time reaffirm the ethics and metaphysics that are based upon a belief in implacable justice, eternal and immutable law, so that it works as a religious philosophy of a secular world.
This thesis also draws another conclusion that the detective narratives that emerged and proliferated in the eighteenth century reflected the change in the public perception of domestic criminal justice and imperial expansion. The employment of different scientific methods and criminological practices of racial and national identification in the Western discourses made the detective story a Eurocentric text. Detective narratives of the classical tradition and contemporary popular culture produce the discursive constructions of the anxieties, insecurities and paranoia around the criminal class that in turn identify with the subjects from the non-British/American nations. These Western Orientalist discourses symbolise its own identity and justify its rational self-image in relation to an allegedly inferior non-Western “other”.

The inference and deductions drawn from this thesis make it clear that various forms of knowledge such as criminology, anthropology and medical science combine with popular literature to produce the idea of the “other”, the strange, criminal and alien as degenerate subhuman form not worthy of humane treatment. Detective narratives, rather than searching for the alternatives for controlling the evils of modernity, endorse the predatory bureaucratic and legal systems and mechanics of individualisation and surveillance. Crime fiction and its many heterogeneous forms including spy fiction, police procedurals, court room, dramas and detective fiction are parts of legal and bureaucratic culture – a master narrative in which surveillance, discursive knowledge and disciplinary power produce docile subjects.

Crime fiction has long been dominated by British and American writers. One of the remarkable changes in this field, therefore, has been the growing number of
new writers of various ethnicities and nationalities. Detective fiction that once considered as stereotypical and mechanical, now has been upgraded to the status of superior literature that deserves the critic’s measured attention. Detective fiction has influenced writers all over the world and persuaded them to incorporate the techniques and narrative patterns of detective fiction into their writings. The Argentinean writer Borges employed detective narrative as the frame work for his short stories. His stories such as “Garden of Forking Paths” and “Death and the Compass” employ the narrative structure of detective fiction and feature detectives in major roles. The latter was reviewed as a rewriting of Chesterton’s story “The Wrong Shape” which features a detective, Erik Lonnrot, trying to unlock the keys of a sequence of murders. He considers himself a rational detective hero in the tradition of Auguste Dupin. Laura Marcus identifies many of the stories by Borges as being inscribed with “the topoi and tropes that become central to post-modern detective fiction – the labyrinth and library, the book within book, the mirrors and doubles – exploit the puzzle element of detective story genre” (254).

Umberto Eco used the tools of detective fiction, semiotics and medieval philosophy in his debut masterpiece Name of the Rose published in 1980. The novel continues to attract diverse audience and critical attention for its use of multilayered structure in narrating a historical murder mystery set in an Italian monastery in the medieval period. The name of the hero in the novel William of Baskerville echoes the Sherlock Holmes adventure The Hound of the Baskervilles. Eco also imitates the classic detective fiction convention-- a foil narrating the investigator’s adventures. In Eco’s novel, Adso of Melk plays the role that Dr. Watson played to Holmes. Nobel Laureate, Orhan Pamuk, in his novel My Name is Red, employs mystery and
detective fiction as the framework. Paul Auster is one of the major figures of post-modern American literary figures who won worldwide fame with his meta-fictional detective fiction *The New York Trilogy*. The most popular of contemporary novelists Dan Brown has many mystery fictions including *The Da Vinci Code* to his credit.

The works of new writers show that the genre has changed and grown, especially in characterization and complex narratives, cultural and historical settings. Despite these significant changes, the classic conventions and formulas of detective fiction endure because the new authors are just reinvigorating the genres old conventions in new settings. Hercules Poirot in the novel, *ABC Murders* provides the perfect recipe for an enticing detective story:

> It must be murder – red-blooded murder . . . the victim shall be a man, some bigwig . . . scene of crime -- well what’s wrong with the good old library? . . . As for the weapon -- well it must be a curiously twisted dagger. Then there must be a beautiful girl or two . . . must be unjustly suspected . . . And then, of course, there must be some other suspects—an older woman, dangerous type . . . and a damn fool of a detective rather like [Inspector] Japp . . . *(Christie *ABC*, 21)*

Thus detective narratives with this repetitive and formulaic structure cross boundaries and frontiers to settle in different places and migrate to other spaces of literature and preserves its ability to entertain and bewitch public imagination. This lineage of the adventures of an intellectual detective hunting down the insidious criminal will hold its place as long as human instinct to pursue crime and its mystery exists.