CHAPTER ONE
The Cambridge Encyclopaedia avers that the detective story is

A story turning on the commission of a crime (usually murder) and the discovery by a detective of the culprit. It is this element of mystery which makes it distinct from the crime novel.3

Dennis Porter talks about the wide range in the genre. In the mystery story, the crime story, the problem story, the detective story, the police novel, the thriller or the spy thriller, we find a significant overlapping. In spy thrillers, he says, the identity of the criminal adversary is known early. The spy's problem is to find him and destroy him. The detective story, on the other hand, proceeds from mystery to solution, crime to punishment, or at least arrest. Dorothy L. Sayers feels it has a beginning, a middle and an end - like the Aristotelean conception of tragic drama. The 'detective novel' Porter opines, is

the generic term for all novels whose principal action concerns the attempt by a specialist investigator to solve a crime and to bring a criminal to justice whether the crime involved be a single murder or the endeavour to destroy a civilization.4

Detective stories follow a certain general sequence, discovery, investigation, identification, escape, pursuit, unmasking.


and finally arrest. In spite of this common agenda, detective fiction has been variously described. The Hutchinson's Encyclopaedia defines detective fiction as

a novel or short story in which a mystery is solved mainly by the action of a professional or amateur detective.5

To Eric Routley, a detective story is

A story involving crime, a police force, a detective (who may or may not be a member of that force) and a solution ... without these properties any story that appears to be 'detection' is so called only by analogy.6

Thomas M. Leitch feels that the detective story is resolutely end-oriented with its persistent emphasis on one correct solution of crime. He further states that,

Structural analysis has shown that detective stories, long and short, employ a common narrative pattern; a crime, usually a murder, is committed by some person unidentified to the reader; a detective, amateur or professional, becomes interested in the crime; he examines the evidence, interviews the suspects and finally announces his conclusions, his explanation forming the climax of the narrative.7


It is primarily a "whodunnit" with the following formula:

a murder occurs; many are suspected; all but one suspect, who is the murderer are eliminated; the murderer is arrested or dies.\(^8\)

What we expect in a detective story, according to P.D. James is,

a central mysterious death, a closed circle of suspects each with motives, means and opportunity for the crime; a detective, either amateur or professional, who comes in rather like an avenging deity to solve it, and by the end of the book, a solution to the mystery which the reader should be able to arrive at himself by logical deduction from the clues inserted in the book with deceptive cunning but essential fairness.\(^9\)

Lisanne Radice defines the classical detective story as follows:

There will be a violent death; a limited circle of suspects all with motives, means and opportunity; false clues; and a tenable ending with a solution to the mystery which both author and reader hope will be a satisfying consummation of suspense and excitement but which the reader could himself arrive at by a process of logical deduction from revealed facts with the aid of no more luck or intuition than it is reasonable to permit to the detective himself.\(^10\)


A detective story is a form in which a mystery often involving a murder is solved by a detective. The traditional elements are apparently insoluble crime, non-co-operative or dim witted police, the detective's confidant who helps to clarify the problems, a variety of suspects who appear guilty from circumstantial evidence, and a resolution often startling, unexpected, in which the detective reveals how he has found out the culprit. A good detective story displays impeccable logic and reasoning in its unravelling.11

All the definitions of Detective Fiction point to a common agenda, the commission of a crime and the punishment of the criminal. As early as in the sixteenth century novel we come across a moral frame-work in which the cony-catchers criminals come to a bad end. In the sixteenth century Robert Greene's cony-catchers pamphlets narrated how smart criminals tricked innocent conies or gulls out of money and property. But these criminals ultimately come to grief. The criminals of Greene's pamphlets and their ultimate failure to thrive have certain moralizing functions in their frame-work. It is this moral frame-work that had developed in twentieth-century and the Golden Ages of Detective Fiction punishment of the bad and the reward of the good is shown as a religious ritual in which the evil is sacrificed to restore peace and security to the people. The

scapegoat villain is sacrificed for society's good and the detective like a Priest helps in the restoration of peace. C. Day Lewis considers the detective story pattern "as highly formalized as that of a religious ritual."\(^{12}\)

The detective is more than a hero, becoming an archetypal figure in ritual. Northrop Frye considers ritual as not only a recurrent act but an act expressive of a dialectic of desire and repugnance; desire for fertility or victory, repugnance to drought or enemies. We have rituals of expulsion, execution and punishment.\(^{13}\)

Man started offering to God the produce of his labour from the days of Abel and Cain.

And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat.\(^{14}\)

This is the first ritualistic religious sacrifice of the first creation of God. This sacrifice was offered always in peaceful circumstances to thank God for His blessings. At the time of adversity through this sacrifice man pleaded for His

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\(^{14}\) Genesis 4, 3 and 4 (The New King James version).
blessings. Primitive tribes offered sacrifices when things went wrong because they believed that any calamity was due to God's anger; they also felt that the gods punished presumption and established moral and natural law as an end in itself. They even offered human sacrifices since they felt that such sacrifices helped them to get rid of evil and be blessed by God. In detective fiction the religious sacrifice consists of

exorcizing the guilt of the individual or the group through ritual and symbolic sacrifice. 15

In human tribal sacrifice it is believed that before death the human features are replaced by that of the devil to be expelled. Julian Symons states that in detective fiction the operation is reversed, the criminal to be sacrificed appears to be a respectable member of society and his real personality is shown at the end of the book.

P.D. James believes that

A ritual is a sign of harmony between the aesthetic and the ethical in which body and mind, individual will and general laws are not in conflict. 16

When a crime is committed there is disharmony, conflict and crisis; we have a number of suspects until finally the


villain is caught and punished. With the murder or the crime
we move towards a ritual drama around a
corpse in which a wavering finger of social
condemnation passes over a group of"suspects" and finally settles on one.17

Frye says that a man-hunter locates the "pharmakos" and
gets rid of him. The 'pharmakos' is the scoundrel in the
Aristophanic sense of the term. According to Julian Symons he
is an

appropriate villain, but he is also
society's permanent scapegoat.18

He is evil personified; society can be free of any evil
only after his death. His death is a symbolic transformation
of communal guilt i.e. "a ritual", in other words. It is very
difficult to locate this villain in detective fiction as he
appears innocent and is a respectable member of society; on the
other hand the person who is innocent appears guilty. So we
have a double reversal. In W.H.Auden's words,

As in the Aristotelian description of tragedy,
there is Concealment (the innocent seem
guilty and the guilty seem innocent) and
Manifestation (the real guilt is brought to
consciousness). There is also peripeteia
in this case not a reversal of fortune but
a double reversal from apparent guilt to
innocence and from apparent innocence to guilt.19

17Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, (New Jersey:
18Julian Symons, Bloody Murder, From the Detective Story to
The concept of a sacrifice ritual in religion as well as in detective fiction is symbolic. C. Day Lewis in his introduction to Murder for Pleasure (1941) by Howard Haycraft suggests that the sacrificial aspect in religion is the confirmation of primitive man's transference of communal guilt to the scapegoat. In religion the animal that is sacrificed is innocent while in detective fiction the scapegoat villain is not. The detective story takes on the properties of mystery and of ritual. The detective, like the Priest in religious ritual, moves to the status of a hero, a person of special powers and even a saviour. In other words, he becomes a ritual hero.

Life, with its present conditions, is the source of the subject matter of detective fiction. Hence the world of detective fiction is not a pleasant world, but the world we live in with all its evils. It is always a closed community in which the crime is committed. It is in fact a microcosm of the wider outside world. W. H. Auden opines that the detective story writer is wise to choose such a small society with an elaborate ritual to describe the crime and the unravelling of it.

"Crime" either in real life or in detective fiction is an anti-social act. In literature amusing and interesting patterns are made out of real incidents. Life is harmonious and peaceful when led according to the natural and ethical code. It is a state of bliss where everyone is happy, secure and
peaceful. With the violation of the code of conduct unpleasantness, misery and all evils enter into society as evils from Pandora's box. Crime always occurs in society as a lone individual cannot commit any criminal act against himself. Crime in other words is a disorder as it upsets routine, normal life; but this is only a temporary discontinuance to society and normal can be restored once the crime is detected and the culprit punished.

Detective fiction deals with crime and punishment. It reflects the society where both the criminal and the innocent live together. It projects an image of a given order. When this order is upset, society finds a solace in an infallible person like a detective who finds out the "guilty" and causes the expulsion of the sinner from the community in a ritualistic way.

Analysts and historians of detective fiction are divided in their opinions of its origin. While some trace its roots to recorded history, some say that it came into existence following the establishment of organised police and detective forces. Those who take a broad view, cite the Mystery stories in The Bible, the verses on Bel and the Dragon, the story of Susanna from the Apocryphal Scripture, Virgil's Aeneid, Herodotus, Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and Robert Greene's cony-catching
pamphlets as examples of the early beginnings of the detective story, though they bear little family likeness to its modern counterpart.

The earliest example in Britain of a novel dealing with crime and violence is Smollett's *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) written in a mock heroic style which in many ways anticipates the later Gothic novels that presented a terrifying and mysterious situation. Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Ann Radcliff's novels set the trend for Gothic novels.

*The Annals of Newgate* or *The Malefactor's Register* (1776) published by John Villette is an approximation to the modern detective novel. This is an account of the author's interview with a variety of criminals. The work running to four volumes was expensive. It was, however, popularised through the weekly issues.

While the crucial development in the genre were being made by Poe in America and Gaboriau in France, the sale of crime stories in the weekly serials known as Penny Bloods was on the increase in Britain. Most of these writers, except a few are forgotten now. Significant practitioners of this genre are George W.M. Reynolds (1814-1879), Thomas Prest (1810-1879), and Edward Ellis (1814-1880). Apart from these Penny Bloods, more
substantial contributions were made to the developing detective story genre in the middle of the nineteenth century; they were works based on 'true collections' of former police officers. The first one was about the life of a Bow Street Runner published in 1827 by the author known only as "Richmond".

The establishment of the Detective Department in London in 1842 provided a background for the detective story. Fictional reminiscences of the Department were published as 'yellow books' - the most significant of them being William Russell's Recollections of a Detective Police Officer (1856) written under the pseudonym "Waters".

More mainstream writers like Charles Dickens (1812-1870) and Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) tried their hands at writing the detective novel. In fact, through a series of articles Dickens helped to dispel the popular misconception that policemen are dishonest by making them ideal bureaucrats. While his articles in Household Words (1850-59) praised the work done by the department, he created the lovable detective Inspector Bucket in Bleak House (1853). As Ousley writes

Given his delight in complicated mysteries and startling denouements, his fascination with all forms of crime and punishment, and his love of novelty in an age when police detectives were still an innovation, it was inevitable that Dickens should have played an important role in shaping the development of the detective story in England.20

20 Crime and Mystery Writers of the Twentieth Century, p.1122.
Sergeant Cuff of Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) is as important as Inspector Bucket in the evolution of the Fictional Detective in Britain. His *Moonstone* (1868) enjoys unmitigated popularity to this day. Of this novel Dennis Porter observes,

No novel illustrates better the notion that tales of crime are read at least as much for their free motifs as for their bound ones than Wilkie Collins's *Moonstone*. It has an appropriate quota of crimes - apart from the all-important theft of the gem itself, there are a suicide and a murder and its principal action concerns the investigation of crime. 21

Collins showed himself a master craftsman in weaving a complex plot and in "inventing suspense devices to maintain reader interest". 22

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) is hailed as the Father of detective fiction in America. He is considered to be the inventor of the first fictional detective Auguste Dupin and his stories are the prototypes of the detective story as we know it today. It is surprising that Poe himself did not acknowledge that he was writing detective stories. To him, they were only tales of ratiocination. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) employs the systematic process of, natural inquiry and the elements of suspense "vital to detective fiction.


22 Crime and Mystery Writers of the Twentieth Century, p.1121.
Dupin is a rare blend of commonsense and intellectualism - the prototype of the twentieth-century detective. The various methods of detection employed by him have been advantageously adopted by later writers. For instance the locked-room mystery found its origin in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and it was followed by many writers, the most important one being John Dickson Carr (1905- ). Also reconstructing an actual crime by means of a newspaper report was followed by Collins in *The Moonstone* and Dorothy L. Sayers in *Documents in the Case* (1930). The "Commonplace solution likely to be over looked" was adopted by Chesterton in various stories while Agatha Christie in *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) used the technique of using misleading clues derived from Poe.

Poe wrote only six short stories that belong to the genre of detective fiction, but he evolved the generic features which have influenced countless later writers. Peter Haining confirms the important part played by Poe in the field of detective fiction.

It would be churlish to deny that with these six tales Poe has provided the elements on which nine tenths of all subsequent detective stories have been based.23

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In France, the development of detective fiction was more of a classical type of intellectual puzzle with the accomplished writer Emile Gaboriau (1835-1873). He is remembered for his creation of Lecoq, a reasoning phenomenon who anticipated Sherlock Holmes by two decades. Lecoq first appeared in the *Le rouge* case (1885) as a pupil of Pierre Tabaret, formerly a pawn-broker's clerk. He was inspired by Dupin and Vidocq; he used the logical method, a revolutionary one in detective fiction, later adopted by Sherlock Holmes.

The first woman writer in the field was Anna Katherine Green (1846-1935). She was familiar with legal and criminal matters. Mrs. Anna Rolf wrote as Anna Katherine and her first novel *The Leavenworth Case, a Lawyer's Story* (1878) is remarkable for its skilled unfolding of a crime. Her detective Ebenezer Gryce is a credible character. The prolific Anna Katherine wrote forty more novels. She invented the form and prototypes of characters which were to become standard in detective fiction for many years to come.

The era of great fictional detectives begins with Sherlock Holmes. Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) has the delightful distinction of having been overshadowed by his fictional hero, Sherlock Holmes. Doyle's work was for a long time the most influential model in this genre. Sherlock Holmes with his incredible mental faculties and idiosyncrasies is known to
thousands of readers all over the English-speaking world. He made his first appearance in *A Study in Scarlet* (1887). The invention of Holmes and Dr. Watson created a cult and legend which finds no equal.

Though Sherlock Holmes was modelled on Dr. Joseph Bell, a physician in Edinburgh, he was the product of Doyle's own imagination. Doyle learnt from Poe the art of narration apart from creating a heroic detective. Holmes has retained his popularity for almost ninety years. He is probably the greatest of all fictional detectives. Doyle has created the definitive popular image of a detective.

After the sensational triumph of Sherlock Holmes in the late 1880s and early 1890s England experienced a veritable avalanche of detective stories. The majority of them were cheap imitations long forgotten. A few, however, deserve commendation. Arthur Morrison's (1863-1945) detective Martin Hewit is very close to Sherlock Holmes in practising the same methods, sharing the same magazine and illustrator, *The Strand* and Sidney Paget, but his sometimes common and private detective Horace Dorrington is original. However, none of these imitators of Holmes have the same ability to write interesting short stories like Doyle. Though Julian Symons names this age as the First Golden Age of
Detective Fiction, the materials of the stories according to him were

nine carat quality where the best of the Holmes stories are almost pure gold.24

William Godwin, Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Dickens, Emile Gaboriau, Anna Katherine Green and Arthur Conan Doyle laid the foundations of crime and mystery fiction. The techniques and conventions invented by them have become accepted ones and followed by other detective story writers. The period from Sherlock Holmes to the outbreak of the First World War has been described by Howard Haycraft as 'The Romantic Era', while the period 1918 to 1930 he calls the 'Golden Age'. According to Julian Symons, the rivals of Holmes appeared in the First Golden Age and a Second Golden Age embraces the 'twenties and the thirties. In the twenties crime fiction was almost completely traditional.

J. Austin Freeman's (1863-1943) Dr. Thorndyke is a convincing scientific investigator in detective fiction. Discussing Dr. Thorndyke, Eric Routley says that he

has survived fifty years, to appear as a reprint in a very popular paperback series so he must be counted one of the major figures in the literature.... Dr. Thorndyke is a respectable pioneer in the field of the strictly utility detective.25


G.K. Chesterton's (1874-1936) Father Brown is the best known Priest-detective in English fiction whose unravelling of mysteries is almost uncanny in its recognition of the obvious that had eluded the observation of many including the reader. Father Brown had an original in real life, Chesterton's friend Father John O'Connor of Bedford. There was however, no one-to-one correspondence between the original and the copy. Father Brown, a gentle and courteous Roman Catholic Priest solves crimes almost effortlessly but always expects the criminal to repent rather than be punished.

E.C. Bentley's (1875-1956) first novel *Trent's Last Case* (1912) is one of the best mystery novels of all time. Philip Trent, unlike Dupin or Holmes, is fallible. He falls in love with the victim's widow, who is the chief suspect in the course of his investigation. Towards the end he realises his ingenious solution is completely wrong. Bentley says:

> It should be possible, I thought to write a detective story in which the detective was recognisable as a human being and was not quite so much the 'heavy' sleuth .... It was not until I had gone a long way with the plot that the most pleasing notion of all came to me: the notion of making the hero's hard won and obviously correct solution of the mystery turn out to be completely wrong. Why not show up the fallibility of the Holmsian method? .... In the result, it does not seem to have been generally noticed that Trent's last case is not so much a detective story as an exposure of detective stories.26

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He felt Holmes's success in every case a little wearying so he introduced a reliable detective for a change.

Earnest Bramah Smith (1869-1942) has been unique in making his detective Max Carrados blind. However, it is not quite credible when the blind man can immediately recognize acquaintances before they speak and can easily solve the case by discovering important clues. Bramah defended himself against the charge that his detective had exaggerated abilities, by quoting examples of the power of the sightless to develop their other faculties to extraordinary lengths.

H.C. Bailey (1878-1961) who belongs to this Golden Age gained popularity by his style and characterization. His fictional detective Reggie Fortune is facetious and whimsical.

Freeman Wills Crofts (1879-1957) was scrupulously fair in his laying of clues. His murderers never deserve any sympathy and he ruthlessly disposes them off. He is considered to be the most railway-minded of detective writers since he specialised in the unbreakable alibi, often based upon railway timetables.

Josephine Tey's (1897-1952) crime novels have been very popular. Her novels are often categorised with those of Dorothy L. Sayers and Ngaio Marsh. She, like them, belongs to the Golden Age. She has a good style, her characters and plots are carefully drawn; she adheres to the classical tradition. Her
novels are compelling and she is unquestionably the most significant author in the genre. Her detective Inspector Allan Grant is credible.

Nicholas Blake's (a.k.a. Cecil Day Lewis, 1904-1972) detective Nigel Strangeways, an urbane, cultivated amateur, is an Oxford graduate of many skills and no profession. In his novels we find literary references from Shakespeare to Blake, Keats, Arthur Hugh Clough and A.E. Housman. He brought to the Golden Age a distinctly literary tone.

The New Zealand novelist Ngaio Marsh (1895-) often viewed the social scene with a gently ironic eye. She is chiefly known for her detective Roderick Alleyn.

Anybody knowledgeable and enthusiastic about detective novels today, asked to name British authors whose work has survived since the Golden Age would probably, after Conan Doyle, mention Christie, Sayers, Marsh, and Allingham.27

says Jessica Mann. However, exaggerated this claim may be it is nevertheless true that this feminine quarter continues to appeal to generations of readers to the present day.

Agatha Christie (1890-1976) always baffles her readers with her ingenuity and sleight of hand. No one has sustained a comparably high standard of the conjurer's art throughout for

more than fifty years. After reading several of her novels we feel that she has used up all her tricks and has nothing more to add until we start her next one. Hercule Poirot is the best known fictional sleuth after Sherlock Holmes. He uses his 'little grey cells' to solve his mysteries. He plays the role of an onlooker, never involving himself personally. He is detached and is in the tradition of Sherlock Holmes and the Old Man in the Corner than with Christie's British contemporaries Lord Peter Wimsey and Albert Campion who love, court and marry over several books. They have mothers, brothers and sisters with a high place in the social hierarchy. But the Plebeian Belgian in spite of his long service with the Belgian police force has never had a vital personal life in the past. He exists only in the present. Throughout her prolific literary career, Christie adhered to the conventions of the classic British detective story; she always offered her readers a cryptic murder mystery and a surprising but logical solution to the crime. Commenting on her skill Julian Symons asserted,

The very best Christies are like a magician's tricks, not only in the breathtaking sleights of phrase that deceive us but also in the way that, looking back afterward, we find the tricks to have been handled so that our deceit is partly self-induced.28

She is among the top best-selling writers in English in twentieth century.

No one can dispute Dorothy L. Sayers's prominence as one of the most brilliant artists the genre has yet produced. Discussing Dorothy L. Sayers, A.E. Murch says:

Dorothy Leigh Sayers .... scholarly and meticulously, with her sparkling imagination and her love of literature, has exercised a remarkable influence upon the detective fiction of recent decades. 29

Her plots are sound and fair to the reader. Her work can be called novels of manners; murder and manners resulting in a unique combination. Her detective Lord Peter Wimsey is an aristocratic amateur. He has a consistent family and social history. Sayers is conventional in the sense that her detective fiction is a celebration of the triumph of law and order; the preservation of the status quo. Though Sayers did not enjoy uniform admiration from readers as Agatha Christie did, she is considered to be her peer in the field.

Margery Allingham (1904-1966) is different from Christie and Sayers as a writer by being trained for the vocation by her father who taught her the tricks of the trade with technical advice. She says that her father wrote, her mother wrote and all her week-end visitors wrote and so she also wrote. She wrote when she was seven and her first publication appeared in her grand-father's Christian Globe. Her detective Albert Campion, though not a fullfledged

Peer like Peter Wimsey, had an aristocratic background which was never fully explained or elaborated.

All detective story writers use a certain methodology in the detection of crime. It is the detective who plays a major role in detection. In the Newgate Calendar, crime is a temporary disorder in a coherent and integrated society. So the detective played little or no part. Poe's detective was the first to rely on psychology and intuition to solve mysteries and find out the criminal. Gaboriau's Lecoq stressed the examination of physical evidence. From Sherlock Holmes onwards the cult of heroic male action becomes an important quality of the detective. But the detectives of Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers and Margery Allingham do not indulge in disguise conventions and direct methods. They are never daring and violent except in Christie's The Big Four (1927), Sayers Murder Must Advert (1933) and Allingham's The Crime at Black Dudley (1929). They avoid violence and action as far as possible.

Poirot is orderly and methodical in his method of investigation. He carefully examines the place, arranges the facts neatly each in its proper place. The important facts he remembers and the unimportant he rejects. To begin with he suspects everyone present in the house in which the murder has been committed. His careful observation of character, helps him not to omit anything as unnecessary. He relies more on his
"little grey cells", than on anything else. He eliminates the suspects of course, like other detectives one by one after carefully analysing the motive, means and opportunity of the criminal in murdering the victim. His assistant Hastings interviews people, and gathers the necessary information. Poirot doesn't parade his knowledge as it is wise to keep everything in his grey cells until the last minute. Poirot is an empirical observer, solving crime by scrutiny and reflection.

Lord Peter Wimsey is an aristocratic detective. He pursues moral action in his very sleuthing, not merely in its final effects of punishment for the criminal and retribution for society. His detective method typifies this creative synthesis by incorporating different aspects of a rich experience and knowledge of an assortment of subjects like poetry, science, history, psychology, haberdashery and weather reports. He remembers not just one thing, nor another nor even a logical succession of things, but everything, the whole thing, perfect and complete ... as if he stood outside the world and saw it suspended in space. He is helped by Inspector Parker, Miss Climpson, (a delightful creation), and his manservant Bunter in his investigation. He discusses his case with Inspector Parker as Hercule Poirot does with Hastings. He too is methodical in eliminating the suspects, finally exposing the criminal.

Margery Allingham's Albert Campion has some aristocratic connections though they are not revealed to the readers. He
appears as a clownish figure in her first novel *The Crime at Black Dudley* (1929) and doesn't solve the problem. Later he becomes a recognisable sleuth. He is not always the central figure like Wimsey in the cases he is involved; he seems to adopt the role of a bystander, the mystery being viewed through others' eyes. Like Lord Peter Wimsey he has his manservant Magersfontein Lugg to help him. The clumsy clown proves to be a better observer than those around him and collects information, analyses it and finally solves the mystery. He eliminates the suspects and finally settles on the criminal.

The novels of Agatha Christie discussed in the present study deal with murder and the detective who solves those cases is Hercule Poirot. All the criminals have motives, means and the opportunity to commit the crime. But it is the 'whodunit' element that predominates. Hercule Poirot's 'grey cells' are always ready to help him. He soon realises that greed for money, possessiveness, jealousy, and blackmail are strong motives for murder.

The novels of Dorothy L. Sayers that are discussed feature Lord Peter Wimsey as her detective while Margery Allingham's Albert Campion appears in the novels that are studied here.

In the novels of Agatha Christie the villain always appears to be an innocent and respectable member of society. Poirot has to expose him. From ancient times society is purged
of its evils by the ritualistic sacrifice offered by the Priest. In the same manner Poirot cleanses society by finding out the criminal and expelling him from society, making it peaceful and happy through his investigation. The process of investigation parallels the cleansing ritual in religion.

In the novels of Dorothy L. Sayers death is not always caused by murder. It is murder, suicide, murder by accident and the disturbance caused in society by the wickedness of the criminal. Here the identity of the criminal is partly revealed to the reader and Peter Wimsey only shows us how the crime (whatever may be its nature) is committed. Normalcy is brought back after the murderer is arrested and the criminal is punished.

Margery Allingham's novels deal with theft and gang robbery, adventure and murder. For example, Death of a Ghost (1934) is partly a 'whodunit' and partly serves to expose the murderer's mind and personality. With the punishment of the criminal, order, peace and security are restored to society. All these detectives locate the 'pharmakos' and punish him.

In cases where legal punishment fails, punishment is inflicted by Providence. Whether it is legal or moral the criminal is brought to justice.

The methods adopted by these detectives differ. With Poirot it is 'grey cells', order and method. With Wimsey it is observation and knowledge in various fields and with Campion
it is a detached onlooker's work. Whatever method is adopted these three detectives ultimately bring peace to society by expelling the criminal. After the sacrifice ritual, people feel happy with the restoration of peace and prosperity with which they are blessed. So with the ritual in detective fiction society is cleansed of its evils and the temporary disturbance is gone and in the town or village, life is as pleasant and happy as it was at the beginning. Ultimately good triumphs over evil.

The novels examined in the present study are reviewed to trace the religious ritualistic archetypal patterns in these three writers; how the 'pharmokos' is located and punished. To give an example in Agatha Christie's *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* the criminal is easily recognised. He insists that he should be arrested. Poirot who is to avenge the death of the lady of the house does not want him to be arrested then since he knows the motive behind the insistence. According to British law if a criminal is acquitted of a crime he cannot be arrested again for the same crime. Since the criminal had a perfect alibi he can easily escape punishment. Poirot knows the dangerous nature of the criminal and postpones his arrest then by revealing the alibi which he refuses to give. But he has arrested him later with such incriminating proof that the criminal cannot escape punishment.

The accomplice is an apparently innocent person. But she is the master brain behind the whole plan. Both are dangerous
to society, hence they have to be punished to show that wickedness is always defeated and goodness succeeds. A detailed account is given in a separate chapter to show how this pattern varies in her other novels under study.

In Dorothy L. Sayers's first novel *Whose Body* (1923) the 'pharmakos' appears to be a very good man. He is a skillful surgeon who is highly respected by the society. Wimsey has to expose his real nature since everyone believes him to be good. As a manhunter has to search for his 'pharmakos' he probes the hidden qualities of the criminal and proves his guilt.

To save the rest of the society he must be punished. He is dangerous to society as he believes that everyone who opposes him in one way or another has no right to live.

In Margery Allingham's first novel *The Crime at Black Dudley* (1929) we find a different type of archetypal pattern. The criminal is not dangerous to society but the victim. He is the master brain behind so many unlawful activities and robberies and creation of criminals. He brainwashes innocent people so that the criminals continue to commit crimes without knowing that they are committing sins. They are trained to be a perfect product of a diabolical scheme and they constitute a society which is a highly organised criminal concern. Here the detective doesn't expose or punish the criminal. It is Dr. George Abbershaw whose opinion is respected at the Yard, who finds out
the criminal. The 'pharmakos' here is the victim and with his removal society is cleansed of its evils. Thus all these three novelists have one common pattern the ritualistic cleansing of society by the Priest-detective that works for the victory of good and punishment of evil to create a happy blessed society.

The modus operandi of each writer and her fictional sleuth are analysed in terms of the variations on the ritualistic pattern. In the process, the present study adventitiously examines the different narrative devices adopted by each writer.