Chapter Three

The Social Order and Sacred Order: Dialectic of Detective Fiction

Those Marked with the seal of the beast are subject to eternal torment.

- John. Rev. 14:19

Every person be subordinate to the higher authorities . . . it is the servant of God to inflict wrath on evil doer.

-Rom. 13:1-8

Post–Enlightenment European societies are often referred to as secular societies. In Britain, the academia, political leadership and legislators favoured the establishment of secularism as the official political position of the country. Kenneth Thompson, a scholar in the philosophy of modernity, argues that in a secular society as explained by religious or other absolute moral values and set of beliefs and practices relating to the sacred no longer play a central role as cultural bonds uniting and disuniting social relationship. He says that “secularization is the reduction of the space occupied by religion in social life” (401). The different social theories and dogmas like Communism, Marxism, Darwin’s theory of evolution and the philosophy of Enlightenment questioned the authority of Christianity and religious forbearance, and myths of morality; but, the ideology of Christianity encapsulated in various institutions survived the counter discourses. This, in fact, problematises the theoretical moorings of Enlightenment and modernity because modernity is considered to be a movement against religion and conventions.
The Victorian period was an age of social change and intellectual questioning. There were challenges to faith from science, philosophy and biblical criticism. The theory of evolution propounded through Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 and the denunciation of Christianity and beliefs by philosophers including Friedrich Nietzsche who posted the famous statement –“God is Dead”, - in his philosophical works had tempestuous influence on the intellectual realms of the period. The decline of Christianity as a powerful institution in European societies coincided with the emergence of secularism as a mighty substitute. This did not in any way prevent the European societies and culture from continuing their nexus with the Hebraic/Christian culture and affirming that solidarity. Many political thinkers share the opinion that Christianity and Christian/Judeo texts played a decisive role in the formation of Western political subjects and the modern nation states. The European states, especially Britain, followed the Christian traditions of legality. In Europe, the modern secular subject, political systems, legal and penal mechanisms are deeply Christian in their modes of governmentality. This does not mean that the state and the civil society blindly follow the conceptions and superstitions of the sectarian order of the pre-Enlightenment period. Rather, the power relation between the state and its subjects, legal system and penal mechanism are in some way announcing its Christian roots and legacy. Kenneth Thompson observes:

Some of the heirs of the Enlightenment, whether in the social sciences or in liberal, reformist, and socialist political movements, believed that science, and the reorganization of society along more rational lines, would supply adequate foundation for the new social order. At the same time, there were occasional suggestions that some
elements of the sacred basis of social order might persist, even though the process of secularization in the public sphere would mean that religion and other pre-modern or irrational philosophies would be increasingly confined to the private sphere (397).

For Post-Structuralists and Neo-Marxists, the dominant discourses and institutions of power are not purely secular, but instead, they bear the vestiges of religious or sacred philosophy, which produce a sense of morality and guilt. Despite modernity, religious beliefs and practices continued to govern the European subjects. Religion had not, as was expected, withered away with the secularization of the public sphere. Kenneth Thompson observes: “There are traces of sacred elements on three levels of culture: belief in God and certain traditional and modern values; discourses and discursive practices that regulate behaviour; and ideological or imagined communities such as nation” (398). The Enlightenment rejected the idea of obedience to rules promulgated by Christian theology and Christian churches. Nevertheless, the political systems, cultural sphere and new institutions of power have internalized Christian philosophy.

However, the moral conceptions of the post-Enlightenment period, Victorian moral dilemmas, and social fear factors regarding man-made laws are actually disguised reassertions of the Christian idea of morality. Foucault considers the Christian notion of morality as a form of subjugation that was introduced in Western philosophy and culture by Christianity. Covenants and commandments influenced the civil legislation in Britain. The Semitic legal code dealing with human relationship with God and with each other constituted the basic requirements of a law-abiding and moral society. The British Empire and nobility had a nexus
with the official church, the church leadership exerting enormous influence on legislation procedures and legal framework. From the perspective of Foucault, there is an essential kinship between subjectivity, criminality and truth with pre-modern Christian experience. He says the discourse of Europe drew on the earliest discourse of Christendom altering or translating its meaning. Foucault argues:

Christianity has been involved in the construction of the individual’s relationship to his body and institutions which engage in the ordering, self control and surveillance of that body. Religion always exists as a system of power, meaning that it orders life as a set of force relations, not through a violence, which forces people to do things, but through the shaping of individual subjects to carry out a particular way of life. Christianity is an imminent political experience which attempts to govern human life, body, and sexuality (qtd. in Carette 144).

Crime is a multi-hued construct-- if at one level it can be understood as transgressions of existing codes of law, at another level it is also a concern of moral and religious institutions which means that some aspects of human life is complicated by moral and religious constraints. Detecting crimes and displacing the criminals are essential features of Christian/Hebraic communities. As Althusser says, religion is an ideological state apparatus or more specifically religious ISA, which was predominant in the pre-capitalist period, and which continues to maintain its hegemony in the moral and ethical superstructure of the capitalist period (96). In modern states too, policies and legal programs are implemented on the basis of religious beliefs.
The Biblical texts assert that the governmental institutions are agents of God to bring punishment to wrongdoers. In short, the medieval Christian framework for culpability survives into modern criminal law, theory and practice. Law and Christian notions of morality, sin, and fall are inseparably united. Habermas also acknowledges the role that religion has played in the identity of the West. He says that religion also provides societies with a common language that they can use to address hope and discontent, and that religious statements made in the public sphere must be transformed into a general language. Habermas notices the influence of Semitic covenants and law in the rule of civil law in Christian and post-Christian Western societies so that he calls them “post secular” societies (qtd. in Furseth 100).

The popular hero stories of detection and espionage are systematic representations of bourgeois thinking and capitalism, sustaining the social order as intended by the ruling ideology. Biblical detectives and spies are God’s agents in the procedures of the restoration of divine order. These stories declare God’s will that was designed to regulate and shape the moral, ethical and spiritual direction of humanity. Biblical literature is a record of the sovereign work of God in accordance with his covenants. All kinds of popular artefacts are produced as part of the culture industry for the construction of subjectivities. Detectives or other law enforcers become the apparatus of the state in this process. Individuals become the objects of surveillance and enforcement of law, leading to subjugation to the extreme, of the self by hegemonic forces of power. Biblical stories have substantial impact on the Semitic society and later European communities. As illustrated in the previous chapter the Bible as a legal text and a religious text creates some basic concepts about good/evil, crime/punishment, and law and justice. The attempts at establishing
a social and moral order create a dualism of order and disorder. The prevailing social/divine order always produces its anomalies. Therefore, crime and criminals are dirt; a misfit which is out of place and for the same reason something to be exterminated. Mary Douglas says, “Presence of order makes disorder possible.”

When things get out of place, the normative and legal order is challenged and threatened. Society re-establishes that order by taking legal/ethical actions.

The dialectic of detective fiction is that, despite being a popular literary genre that employs the principles of rationalism and empiricism of European Enlightenment, reiterates the dominant principles of British morality and its Christian legacy. The social and cultural heritage of Britain that adheres to the Christian practices of retributive justice in order to sustain the social and moral order. It focuses on the textual analysis of the fictions of Conan Doyle, G. K. Chesterton and Agatha Christie to illustrate their reconstruction of the sentimental attachment of the British with the Christian faith in the enduring battle between good and evil and the triumph of the former. The detectives share these sentiments and they are determined to retain the moral and sacred order of the secular British society. Gianni Vattimo argues:

> The secularization of the European spirit of the modern age does not consist solely in the exposure and demystification of the errors of religion, but also in the survival of these errors in different, and in some sense degraded, forms. A secularized culture is not one that has simply left the religious elements of its tradition behind, but one that continues to live them as traces, as hidden and distorted models that are nonetheless profoundly present (qtd. in Coupe 195).
Detective fiction of the British tradition reveals that Christian ethics continued to dominate the English attitude towards codes of public and private behaviour, morality and ethics. Arthur Conan Doyle, himself a medical student, concurred with scientific and philosophical opinions that promoted the naturalistic world view. He recalls his loss of faith during his years as a medical student in the 1870’s in his *Memories and Adventures*: “Both from my reading and from my studies, I found that the foundations not only of Roman Catholicism but of the whole Christian faith, as presented to me in nineteenth century theology were so weak that my mind could not build upon them” (qtd. in Lawrence 134). But as a member of the Victorian society that followed scriptural laws and codes of conduct, he incorporated in his fiction the historical context that echoed the moral and religious sentiments of his time. Victorian England was notorious for its oppressive social restrictions and moral anxieties.

In addition to the images of technological advances and vast global empire, the term “Victorian” also reminds one of the traditional values of Victorian society, in which the upper and middle class dictated the moral canon of the time. Patriarchal forces imposed strict and repressive moral codes that were expected to be followed by the members of the society. Despite the fact that England’s monarch was a Queen, Victorian society was essentially patriarchal, and the cultural standards allowed only men to decree moral rules. Adorno and Horkheimer see this as the dialectic of the Enlightenment. They say: “the ruled have taken the morality dispensed to them by the rulers more seriously than the rulers themselves” (106). The Victorian moral codes have their lineage in the Christian conceptualizations of sin and fall as “Christianity took the step which made it capable of organization
when it began to participate in social reality and to construct unified theoretical system” (Adorno, Horkheimer 176). The values of traditions and the Christian spirit continued to rule over the English aristocracy. Kitson Clark observes:

Christianity was . . . at that moment not only unavoidable and all-intrusive, it was also dynamic. At the stage of cultural and emotional development which many people were passing through in the nineteenth century, the Christian religion in one form or other could present itself in such a way as to present an almost irresistible appeal to the heart (284).

As a popular realistic genre that emerged in the post-Enlightenment cultural sphere, detective fiction naturally internalized this dialectic. Detective fiction reaffirmed the values of mainstream society and demonized the outlaws. In the stories and novels of Conan Doyle, Holmes sympathizes with the aristocracy in their clash with outlaws and criminals which illustrate the moral and ethical appeal of the detective story. Doyle’s novella *A Study in Scarlet* endorses the superiority of Christian modernism over pagan primitivism. The story of crime unravelled in the story of investigation is set in an exotic landscape which has been invaded and inhibited by Mormons. Mormonism is a pagan religion founded by Joseph Smith in the early nineteenth century. The novel begins with the murder of Enoch Drebber from Cleveland, Ohio, USA. Scotland Yard officials cannot find either the motive of the crime or its perpetrator. Then Sherlock Holmes starts his investigation and with the available clues from the scene of the crime.

The narrative unfolds the story of crime in the second part of the novella “The Country of Saints”. It is a story of vengeance taken by Jefferson Hope from the
Nevada region of U.S.A. The title “The Country of Saints” refers to the official name of the Mormon Church. It is an exotic land of ill-omened forms and solemn buzzards. John Ferrier and his daughter are two castaways on the “Great Alkali Plane” (Doyle, Vol. 1: 67). Little Lucy once asks John Ferrier: “Say did God make this country?” (Doyle, Vol. 1:71). When they come close to death from thirst and hunger, a group of Mormons come their way and rescue them.

Ferrier and his daughter then reside with the Mormons, though he ensures that he maintains a calculated distance from them. Being a Christian, a member of the mainstream European community, he repels from kinship of any sort with the “other” community and remains a celibate. Doyle writes: “He offends the susceptibilities of his co-religionists. No argument or persuasion could ever induce him to set up a female establishment after the manner of his companions” (Doyle, Vol.1:78). He resolves that he would never allow his daughter to wed a Mormon since he thinks that “such marriage is not at all a marriage, but a shame and disgrace” (Doyle, Vol1:84). He is happy to know that Lucy is courting an eligible man, Jefferson Hope. The most pertinent feature Ferrier finds in him is that “he is a Christian, which is more than these folks [Mormons] here” (87). From the novel, readers can infer that Mormons entertain polygamy. The Victorian British society strongly believed that polygamy was a form of adultery and a violation of the seventh commandment. The Mormon leader Brigham Young accuses Ferrier for his celibacy and insists that Lucy must accept a Mormon husband within one month. The Mormons cannot tolerate John Ferrier’s decision to marry his daughter off to a man outside the pagan community.
Doyle portrays Mormonism as profane, pagan and primitive. The dualism between the pagan Mormonic and the civilized Christian orders is established by locating the Mormons in an exotic, fantastic geography and demonizing them as a sinister secret society populated by icons of lawlessness, chaos and sexual promiscuity. All kind of animal instincts and wilderness are attributed to this non-mainstream community. Conan Doyle accentuates and fuels fear and panic in the Victorian British society about this non-Christian community. He gives substance and shape to the rumours and tales about the Mormons in the novella:

Its invisibility and the mystery which was attached to it made this organization double terrible. It appeared to be omniscient and omnipotent, and yet was neither seen nor heard . . . In the lonely ranches of the West, the name of the Danite Band, or the Avenging angels, is a sinister and an ill-omened one. Fuller knowledge of the organization which produced such terrible result served to increase rather than to lessen the horror which it inspired in the minds of men. No one knew who belonged to the ruthless community . . . hence every man feared his neighbour, and none spoke of the things which were nearest his heart (Doyle, Vol. 1:85).

Conan Doyle depicts the Danites as a quasi-military body associated with the Mormon migration to Utah. The historical context of the novel reveals that these fears were not illogical. Mormonism was a distinctly American religion. But the media and the society expressed their anxiety about the possibilities of religious conversion of the British. The media reported the “inextinguishable horrors that the belated wanderers upon the mountains spoke of gangs of armed men, masked,
stealthy, and noiseless, who flitted by them in darkness” (Doyle, Vol.1: 85). Doyle asserts the need of an intelligent detective who could prevent a pagan religion invading into British Christian society.

*A Study in Scarlet* is the perfect advertisement for the Christian concepts of good and evil, sin and fall. The novel illustrates who a genuine Christian is and who is not. The pagan practices of the Danites are demonized thereby establishing the moral supremacy of the values and codes of Christianity. The extent to which the Mormons are dehumanised becomes clear as the story of investigation draws to its conclusion. Jefferson Hope, it turns out, cannot be considered as a murderer. He becomes fatally ill in his long chase of his adversaries, Drebber and Stangerson. He offers them both a choice: He has pills of South American arrow poison and harmless ones. He would give one to each victim and eat the other himself, and fate could decide the survivor. Drebber, when drunk, accepts the offer and is poisoned. When Stangerson refuses this gamble and springs at Hope, Hope stabs him. Both Homes and his companion sympathise with Hope, finding Hope’s crimes are in defiance of perverse and immoral Mormon provisions.

Stangerson and Drebber appear to be a replica of the lecherous elders in the Biblical story of Suzanna. The two influential men of the Mormon sect kill the father of Lucy Ferrier, the lady love of Jefferson Hope and when the former makes her one of his wives, she dies broken hearted. Drebber forcibly marrying Lucy and Lucy’s subsequent death out of heartbreak drive Hope to his vengeance. The determined Hope pursues the criminals who leave for Europe fearing the wrath of their adversary. Both escape the criminal punishment, because the Mormon law permitted such acts. Under Mormon law, Doyle says: “victims of persecution turn
persecutors on their own account and the persecutors of most terrible description” (Doyle, Vol. 1:84). Therefore, Hope’s vengeance is justified and he is spared the humiliation of trial and punishment as he dies shortly after arrest. Here, Hope who is a Christian appears to be a good fellow, while the pagans -- Stangerson and Drebber -- are embodiments of evil. Their subjection to private retributive justice is conceded by Sherlock Holmes. Hope argues that he is not a murderer and as a Christian he is practicing the judgemental Christian concept of private justice: “You may consider me as a murderer; but I hold that I am just as much an officer of justice as you are” (Doyle, Vol. 1:116). Watson and Holmes, professionals at detection, appear keenly interested in what he has to say and are impressed by his narrative.

Sherlock Holmes, the consulting detective of the Victorian society, appears devoted to the scriptural authority and values and reproves the depraved nature of the Mormons. He is an Enlightenment hero, a rational super mind: an embodiment of scientific skills who at the same time admits the superiority of Christianity. This exposes the dialectical structure of detective fiction, which turns out to be a story of the ethical confrontation of good and evil. Conan Doyle interweaves the historical, pseudo historical elements and myths to make it a text of cultural dualism of British superiority and the inferiorised non-British.

The traits of a Christian ideologue that can be seen in Doyle and in his characters can be traced back from other stories also. In *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Mrs. Barrymore confesses to Watson that her brother, Selden, an escaped convict is hiding in the moor. She swears: “That is the whole truth, as I am an honest Christian woman, and you will see that if there is blame in the matter it
does not lie with my husband but with me” (Doyle, Vol. 2: 95). To Watson, her confession appears to have come out with an “intense earnestness which carried conviction with them” (Doyle, Vol. 2: 95). In another story “The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge” Watson describes John Scot Eccles as “conservative, a churchman, a good citizen, orthodox and conventional to the last degree” (Doyle, Vol. 2: 327-8). This illustrates Watson’s strong sympathy and respect for the men of the elite class and the Christian community.

On certain other occasions, Sherlock Holmes saves criminals from legal punishment and justifies their crime. His sympathies are with the British law, but in certain cases he also sympathises with the murderers, as he does in “The Adventure of Charles Augustan Milverton”, “The Adventure of the Abbey Garage” and “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” where he propounds the validity of private retribution. He risks actions which are technically criminal but morally justifiable. The stories “The Adventure of the Second Stain” and “The Adventure of Charles Augustan Milverton” are more or less a duplication of Poe’s “Purloined Letter”. In the former, the drama in Poe’s story of purloining a letter of erotic content, and replacing it with a letter of political importance by a lady of higher quarter is replicated.

Conan Doyle’s character in the story of Charles Milverton was based on a real life blackmailer, Charles Augustus Howell. These stories illustrate that sexual blackmailing was a thriving criminal business in Victorian British society. If a woman engages in any kind of premarital/extra-marital relationship, it would be termed as adultery – a moral transgression in Victorian patriarchy. Augustus Milverton is a professional blackmailer. Blackmailing is a crime not easily brought
to justice since the victims are inevitably unwilling to make the matter public. Holmes says: “His victims dare not hit back” (Doyle, Vol.1: 887). Lady Eva Blackwell, a young debutante hires Holmes to negotiate the terms of the blackmail with Milverton. She is to be married in a fortnight to the Earl of Dovercourt and Milverton possesses some “imprudent” letters that Eva has written to a young squire. In these stories women were portrayed as weak and therefore natural blackmail victims.

Holmes trespasses the boundaries of law to steal the documents from Milverton’s house in order to save his lady client’s honour. He says: “since it is justifiable, I have only to consider the question of personal risk. Surely a gentleman should not lay much stress upon this when a lady is in most desperate need of his hell?” (Doyle, Vol. 1: 892). Catherine Belsey argues that the story proposes for reader’s consideration that in such a case the illegal may be ethical (110). Holmes burglary in Milverton’s residence turns out to be a legal action in two different aspects: the mission of the burglary is to rescue his client from a blackmailer, thereby tackling the obstacles to her marriage and secondly Holmes could put the crooked Milverton to the hands of law. As Holmes and Watson break into the study to collect the documents from Milverton’s safe, Milverton unexpectedly enters. They hide behind a curtain while Milverton has a meeting with a maid servant. Then a woman who was actually one of his former victims comes in and shoots him to avenge her ruined life. Holmes and Watson do not attempt to catch her, but, they narrowly escape being caught. Later the Police head Lestrade approaches Holmes seeking counsel. Holmes refuses to take over the case asserting that certain crimes justify private retribution. He says: “I considered Milverton one of the most
dangerous men in London, and there are certain crimes which the law cannot touch, and which therefore, to some extent, justify private revenge . . . my sympathies are with the criminals rather than with the victim” (Doyle, Vol. 1: 901). In “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” Holmes lets the thief escape safely since it is the culprit’s first offense, giving him a chance to repent and take remorse. Holmes says: “I am committing a felony, but it is just possible that I am saving a soul” (Doyle, Vol 1: 391). Here Holmes stands for the scientific insistence upon the inevitable operation of cause and effect and implacable justice at the same time.

In Milverton’s case and “The Adventure of the Final Problem”, Holmes entertains the duel between himself and dangerous criminals. Conan Doyle portrays these as a duel between good and evil in which the morally and intellectually superior Holmes wins over criminals. In the final adventure he makes himself a scapegoat for the redemption of the people of London. He encounters the organizer of the evil forces in London -- Professor Moriarty at the Rosenlauai Falls: the Golgotha of Sherlock Holmes. It is the Day of Judgement where the perpetrator of crimes in London is banished to his inevitable fate—death. The dualism of good/evil implicit in these stories is the apparently Christian symbolism of the battle between vices and virtues. Holmes is portrayed as an embodiment of the four cardinal virtues -- prudence, justice, restraint or temperance and courage or fortitude -- while on the other hand the criminal is a personification of the seven cardinal vices namely pride, avarice or greed, envy, wrath or anger, lust, gluttony and sloth. Holmes, who sacrifices himself for the salvation of the city, is resurrected by his creator as the people insists on his revival.
Holmes and Watson are dedicated to a moral discipline, loyal to the moral order of British society. The term immoral designate those “irrational agents who violate a species of rationally – dictated -- imperatives that direct people as to how to achieve peace or cooperation or impartial behaviour” (Hampton 11). The dominant patriarchal discourses interpellate women as deviant if they disobey the authoritative commands on sexuality. Holmes and Watson concur with this patriarchal structure that polices the sexual behaviour of women and impose strict rules on sexual austerity and behaviour.

In *The Valley of Fear* Watson asserts that it is indecent behaviour, a sign of frailty from a woman’s side to have an assertive and open acquaintance with another man after the recent murder of her husband. He says: “She [Mrs. Douglas, the widower of the murdered John Douglas] must be a heartless creature to sit laughing at some jest within a few hours of her husband’s murder” (Doyle, Vol. 2: 220). Watson reports to Holmes that the grief Mrs. Douglas expressed during the interrogation session is pretentious and that she was beaming with joy while she was together with Mr. Barker in the garden. Holmes agrees with his foil’s observation which unveils the veins of Christian patriarchal authoritarianism in him. In his letters, St. Paul prescribes the rules and regulations that ask of a “woman to submit to her husband” (Col. 3:18) and “a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives” (Rom. 7:2-3). Holmes is an ardent advocate of the norms of ideal femininity that resonate in the patriarchal ideology of Christian scriptures, especially in St. Paul’s letters. Holmes Says:

She [Mrs. Douglas] does not shine as a wife even in her own account of what occurred. I am not a whole –souled admirer of womankind,
as you are aware, Watson, but my experience of life has taught me that there are few wives having any regard for their husbands, who would let any man’s spoken word stand between them and that husband’s dead body. Should I ever marry, Watson, I should hope to inspire my wife with some feeling which would prevent her from being walked off by a housekeeper when my corpse lying within a few yards of her. It was baldly stage managed; for even the rawest investigators must be struck by the absence of the usual feminine ululation” (Doyle, Vol.2: 221).

Watson also thinks that Mrs. Douglas and James Barker together killed Mr. Douglas and conspired to conceal the truth by giving stories corroborating each other. He asserts that they are guilty of being involved in an illegitimate relationship without any remorse and repentance and expresses his strong repugnance and revulsion. Holmes imagines and constructs different stories about the murder based on his suppositions that James Barker and Mrs. Douglas are united by the bonds of guilty love and that they determined to get rid of the man who stood between them. In his attitude to family, marriage and, relationships Holmes sticks to a system of social structures, practices and power relations which are hierarchical and unequal where men repress, suppress and regulate female subjectivities in terms of sexuality, morality, public behaviour and appearance. Even though Holmes is a hero of the Enlightenment and modernity, he supports natural law in many of his investigative practices. Despite the fact that its emergence is directly connected to the social advancement facilitated by urbanisation and scientific revolution, Doyle’s detective narratives illustrate that conventional superstitions like natural justice/providential
justice persisted in Victorian British society and that in turn underlines its dialectic disposition.

W. H. Auden, analysing classic British detective fiction with Aristotelian paradigms on theatre, observes that detective story asserts the truth of the doctrine of original sin. He defines detective story as a whodunit and the reason for its popular appeal is the “dialectic of innocence and guilt [encapsulated in it]” (2). He says that detective fiction offers an escape into a world of innocence where guilt is found and expelled:

I suspect that the typical reader of detective stories is like myself, a person who suffers from a sense of sin. From the point of view of ethics, desires and acts are good or bad, and I must choose the good and reject the bad, and the I which makes this choice is ethically neutral; it only becomes good or bad in its choice. To have a sense of sin means to feel guilty at there being an ethical choice to make a guilt, which however “good” I may become remain unchanged. As St Paul says: “Except I had known law, I had not known sin” (16).

Auden divides crime into three types: offenses against God and one’s neighbour or neighbours, offenses against God and society and offenses against God alone. He places murder in the second category. He says murder is unique and it annihilates the party it injures. In the first category it is possible at least theoretically, either that restitution can be made to the injured party like stolen things can be returned if the case is a theft or the injured party can forgive the criminal as in the case of a rape. Suicide is a crime belonging to the third category,
many detective stories begin with a death that appears to be a suicide and later discovered to be a murder. In the case of murder, “society has to take the place of the victim and on his behalf demand restitution or grand forgiveness; it is the one crime in which society has a direct interest” (4). The investigation into the mystery of a murder discloses the guilt of the fallen individual that allows the society to regain innocence. Auden links the restoration of order through a murder investigation to the Biblical story of Original Sin and that primordial ritual of regaining the innocence is the primary factor for the addictive drive of detective fiction. He says:

The phantasy then, which the detective story addict indulges, is the phantasy of being restored to the Garden of Eden, to a state of innocence, where he may know love as love and not as law. The driving force behind this dream is the feeling of guilt, the cause of which is unknown to the dreamer. The phantasy of escape is the same, whether one explains the guilt in Christian, Freudian or any other terms. One’s way of trying to face reality, on the other hand will, of course, depend very much on one’s creed (17).

Sherlock Holmes stories of Arthur Conan Doyle features the deductive powers of an eccentric amateur detective who solves the mystery behind the crime with the aid of superior logical reasoning. He demonstrates the power of reasoning as well as the overwhelming faith in the ability of science to solve social problems that brought about by the Enlightenment in the intellectual realms. At the same time he has to stick on to the moral as well as religious temperament and values of the society in which he lives.
G.K. Chesterton is another Victorian detective writer who articulated and defended the Christian dichotomy of good and evil, and the sacred retribution in his famous Father Brown series. Father Brown, a Catholic priest, incorporates the theological insights to his art of investigation. His methods of detection like his contemporary Sherlock Holmes are based on the observation of details overlooked by others. But his insights into human evil make his methods intuitive rather than deductive. If Sherlock Holmes is a secular substitute for God, Father Brown is a secular priest-detective. He solves crime through a strict reasoning process more concerned with spiritual and philosophical truths rather than scientific details; therefore, Howard Haycraft describes his detective narrative as a “metaphysical detective story” (162).

In the Innocence of Father Brown series, Chesterton introduces a character, Flambeau, who would play an important role in many stories. It is interesting to see that Flambeau starts as a criminal and later becomes Father Brown’s sidekick. In “The Secret of Father Brown” Chesterton writes: “Flambeau, once the most famous criminal in France and later a very private detective in England . . . some say a career of crime had left him with too many scruples for a career of detection” (7). This is a transformation of a repented sinner to a disciplined man or the return of the prodigal Flambeau to God’s/priest’s (Brown) ways. Both Flambeau and the Police Inspector Valentine salute Father Brown’s skills in analysing the criminal follies. Martin Priestman says:

The image of two geniuses acknowledging their intellectual master is cleverly merged with the traditional gesture of reverence before God; in neither joining in this gesture nor acknowledging that it is directed
at him, Father Brown fulfils his sacramental role as a kind of unscathable lightning-conductor for the praise of man owes his maker (127-8).

As a Catholic priest Father Brown prefers the remorse of the criminal to retributive justice. In none of his stories does he take the culprits to the police or the law, but leaves him to the divine discipline. For him crime is a manifestation of sin: the criminal must be caught, but he or she must be saved. The Bible insists that remorse and repentance are the only response to sin. Beyond renouncing self and sin, repentance is foremost a return to God. As in the parable of the Prodigal Son, sinners must come home to one with whom they are estranged. Brown rejoices over “one sinner who repents over ninety nine righteous people who have no need of repentance” (Luke 15: 7). In the story “The Blue Cross” Flambeau disguises himself as a priest and snatches the silver cross from Brown’s possession. Brown skilfully confirms the suspicion about the disguised criminal during their debate on theology as Flambeau attacks reason which shows his shortcomings in the knowledge of theology. Brown says: “You attacked reason . . . it’s a bad theology (Brown 412). He underpins the relationship between reason/faith crime/order in his intuitive analysis of human psyche. W. H. Auden observes:

Father Brown, like Holmes is an amateur; yet, like French, not an individual genius. His activities as a detective are an incidental part of his activities as a priest who cares for souls. His prime motive is for compassion, of which the guilty are in greater need than the innocent, and he investigates murders, not for his own sake, nor even for the sake of innocent, but for the sake of the murderer who can
save his soul if he will confess and repent. He solves his cases, not by
approaching them objectively like a scientist or a policeman, but by
subjectively imagining himself to be the murderer a process which is
good not only for murderer but for Father Brown himself (14).

Chesterton’s detective is concerned with the greatest of all problems -- the
vagaries of the human heart, motives, emotions, choices, innocence and guilt. In
the story “The Duel of Dr. Hirsch”, Brown says: “I can always grasp moral evidence
more easily than other sorts. I go by a man’s eyes and voice, and whether his family
seems happy and by what subjects he chooses -- and avoids” (Brown 290). Brown’s
Catholic proclivity for moral reasoning is the mechanism of his intuitions and
inferences about a crime. In “The Divine Detective”, he argues that in the modern
state there are two detective agencies. The first one is the official detective, the state,
an agency of punishment; the second is the private detective, the church, an
authority of pardon:

The goal of the official detective is the physical safety of the
members of the society, the goal of the spiritual detective is the
spiritual cleansing of the society. While the state condemns the evil,
the divine detective is the only institution that ever attempted to
create a machinery of pardon . . . the only thing that ever attempted
by a system to pursue and discover crimes not in order to avenge but
in order to forgive ” (qtd. in Knight, Chesterton and Evil 130).

Chesterton emphasises on the scriptural authority of the church and his
detective stories are a testimonial to the continuing influence of Christian ideologues
and doctrines in Victorian British society. Brown recommends a sacramental confession as a means of truth production, which is actually a process through which the church perpetuates its power by keeping them under surveillance and disciplining their behaviour. In the story “The Wrong Shape” Father Brown comes to the murder scene where the famous poet Leonard Quinton has been killed. Brown encourages Dr. Harris, who loved the writer’s wife, to confess the crime: “I want you to write a report of this case for my private use. I sometimes think that you know some details of this matter. Mine is a confidential trade like yours, and I will treat anything you write for me in strict confidence” (Chesterton, *Brown* 485). In stories like “The Chief Mourner of Marne” and “The Hammer of God” Brown makes use of confession as a method for conviction. Chesterton glorifies the confidentiality of Catholic confession and the subsequent remorse. In “The Hammer of God” he convinces the man who murdered his sibling about the confidentiality of the Christian confession: “You let God’s thunderbolt fall . . . I say I know all this. I seal it with the seal of confession” (Chesterton, *Brown* 515).

It should be noted that Chesterton, as a converted Catholic during the *Fin de Siècle* movement incorporates the Catholic theology, Christian allegories and imageries throughout his detective stories. The formative shift from a period of decadence and depravity, moral dilemma, and animosity with religious restrictions to a structure of liberated philosophy of optimism and prudence, a characteristic feature of Fin de Siècle, is reflected in the stories. Writer Jorge Luis Borges, a great fan of Chesterton’s detective stories, identifies that “he sought to extract a moral thus reducing them into parables” (qtd. in Marcus 253). He justifies the Christian dichotomy of good and evil as he places the detective and the criminal on either side
of the divide between barbarism and civilization. He says: “The criminals are children of chaos and detective is the original and poetic figure” (Defence 3-4).

Christian model of retributive justice as well as the restoration of moral and sacred order continued to gain a space in the crime narratives of the interwar period too. The period between two World Wars is known as the Golden Age of crime fiction. The history of Europe in this period is marked by the return of the British society to the traditions of morality, ethics and spirituality. The debacle of humanist values and the disillusionment that surfaced from violence in the war created a dilemma in the subjects and they urged to recapitalize on Christian values, mores and ethos that they once rebuffed because of the intellectual advancement and rational thought that burgeoned with Enlightenment philosophy. This reversal of the intellectual realms confirmed the stability and virility of Christianity. Charles J. Rzepka notes that the brutal reality of the war tended to “alienate the public from civilian life, leaving the post-war governance of the nation in the hands of conservative old guard” (152). The Golden Age detective stories helped the people to figure out the consequences of moral deviance and that the restoration of moral order would calm violent social anarchy. The formation of the Oxford movement and the Prayer Book controversy in the early twentieth century testifies to the return of British society to a sacred/religious order from a secular social-political system.

This shift in the moral sentiments of British people was reflected in the popular fiction of the period. The reason for the enormous popularity of the clue puzzles of Agatha Christie and her christening as the Queen of Crime is that Christie recreated the moral and religious alarms of the upper/middle class of the interwar period. Her novels are unsurpassed specimens for the historical analysis of moral
concerns, values, beliefs and attitude of the inter-war English society. In her clue-puzzles she epitomizes the fears of the society of bloodshed and the disregard to immoral life and transgression from traditional mores. Stephen Knight observes: “Murder is essential as the central crime, as is confirmed in the titles: by the 1920s the words ‘murder’ ‘death’ and ‘blood’, rarely seen before, seem compulsory [and] euphemic English titles became more sanguinary” (Crime Fiction 77). Her political positions regarding femininity and female sexuality appear to be in compliance with the dominant patriarchal notions which ascribed an inferior status to the female gender. She never risks offending the rigid and fixed ideas on sexual morality of the Victorian/Edwardian British society. Her novels featuring both Poirot and Marple envisage the ensuing peril to the moral deviants and sexual transgressors suggesting the restoration of both moral and sacred order. Societal norms perpetuate a rule of conduct regarding public behaviour and sexuality which subjugate the people to constant moral policing and surveillance. Foucault in his History of Sexuality Volume 2 weighs up the practices and methodologies of morality. He says:

Morality refers to the real behaviour of individuals in relation to the rules and values that are recommended to them: the word thus designates the manner in which they comply more or less fully with a standard of conduct, the manner in which they obey or resist interdiction or a prescription; the manner in which they respect or disregard a set of values. In studying this aspect of morality, one must determine how and what margins of variation or transgression individuals or group conduct themselves in reference to a prescriptive system that is explicitly or implicitly operative in their culture, and of
which they are more or less aware. We call this level of phenomena “morality of behaviours (25).

Susan Rowland remarks that the Golden Age detective writers comprising Agatha Christie, Sayers, Allingham, Marsh and P.D. James democratized the genre by participating readers in narratives and promoting a self-critical social class. She says that these writers suggested “crime as an aberrant outburst of antisocial desire”(39). She observes: “Along with these orthodoxies, the Golden Age writers have particular occult influences in their works, reflecting the twentieth century fascination with spiritualism, Theosophy, and more folklorish manifestations such as witchcraft” (11-12).

The Christian sexist stereotypes like Eve as a temptress/transgressor more or less slipped into Agatha Christie’s detective narratives. The morality explored in detective fiction of the Golden Age, especially in the novels of Agatha Christie, is obviously connected with female sexuality, the body, and illegitimacy of relationships, public behaviour and appearance. Elaine Showalter remarks: “the nineteenth century had a cherished belief in the separate spheres of femininity and masculinity that amounted almost to religious faith” (8). The women as observed by Poirot and Ms. Marple are female villains -- a character type who is marked as femme fatale, a threat to the civilized environment. From Poe’s inaugural adventure “Murders in the Rue Morgue” females are portrayed as victims, their bodies and dead bodies become the focus of the privileged male gaze, inquest and scrutiny. Female characters appear to be bad tempered, troublesome, striving, demanding, and sexually aggressive. Their sexuality is hystericised or ertoticised. As such they
veered fatally away from the socially-coded manner in which women were meant to be submissive both sexually and domestically.

Christie’s novel, *Evil under the Sun*, textualizes the female duality of victim and villain. Arlena Stuart, one among those who celebrate holiday at Leathercombe Bay Seaside is murdered and the other guests take it as a punishment for her immoral life. The moral gaze of the omniscient detective and the other inmates of the mansion observe that she has been punished for walking in dark places alone at night, for having sex with a multiple number of men and for being too beautiful to resist. Rosamund, one of the inmates of the seaside mansion says:

[Arelena] is world’s first gold digger. And a man eater as well! If anything personable in trousers comes within a hundred yards of her, it’s a fresh sport for Arlena! She is that kind”

Poirot nodded his head slowly in complete agreement.

. . . ‘That is true what you say… Her eyes look for one thing only -- men (37).

Christie reiterates the Christian norm as dictated by St. Paul that immoral behaviour comes out of a certain part of the human body and psyche. Women are more likely to commit crimes because “sin has a lodging in them” (Rom. 7:14-20). Christie portrays her female characters as they are vulnerable to fight against reason and God’s commands and therefore they are subject to moral culpability. The female victims and criminals in Christie’s works are depicted as naturally inferior to men in areas such as intelligence, morality and self-control. In the novel cited above, her detective hero Hercules Poirot and the other inhabitants of the hotel think that
Arelena Stuart’s murder is a natural end of her sexual transgressions and moral deviance. She is viewed as ridiculous or evil anomaly of nature.

*Murder on the Oriental Express* illustrates how the female body, behaviour and appearance are gazed upon by the panoptic male detective figure Poirot in public spaces like railway stations and trains. Poirot is an omniscient detective and he casts sceptical suspicions on every “body” searching for a criminal identity in them. Louise Leidner in the novel *Murder in Mesopotamia* is another striking example of the sexist stereotype portrayed by Christie. Mrs. Leidner is murdered for having an illegitimate relationship and her death compensates honour of the house she violated. The murdered woman is introduced to Poirot as “a woman whose main preoccupation was to attract the opposite sex” (163). The murderer kills her because he “cold-bloodedly determined . . . she shall belong to no other man” (318).

Christie problematises certain concepts of morality and justice in *Murder on the Oriental Express*. She raises the question whether the legal system of the state is sufficient to do justice to the people and tries to sermonise on private justice and ethics of revenge. Her detective, Hercules Poirot, seems to be a pilot figure of moral truth, because, he shares the values of upper middle class defending providential judgments and compromising the ethics of humanism. In this novel the Murder of Ratchett on the train is declared as ethically right and morally justified in the end. With Poirot having found a paper with the name “Armstrong” inscribed on it from the scene of murder, the narrative shifts to a flashback story narrating the atrocities of Ratchett. Poirot figures out that Ratchett is a notorious fugitive from US by the name of Casetti.
Five years before, Casetti kidnaps a three year old girl, Daisy Armstrong. He collects a huge ransom from the Armstrong family, but kills the little girl. This shocking incident crumpled the whole family as the grief of the child’s survivors ends in series of deaths and suicides. Casetti is arrested and tried by the police, but his monetary power absolves him of the crime. He flies to the United States to escape from further prosecution as well as punishment. Here Ratchett is the victim and the criminal at the same time and his twelve co-passengers who murdered him are spared by the detective of lawful punishment. The twelve passengers have a common motif for extracting personal vengeance on Ratchett. The twelve murderers express their vigorous grudge towards Ratchett who caused the death of their beloveds and escaped punishments. They have a strong disgust for the judicial system. Personal justice wins over official justice and Poirot convinces the reader why he spared the twelve assassins by justifying their murder of Ratchett. Poirot detects that Ratchett’s murder was a joint venture by the twelve members of the Armstrong family (Christie, *Express* 200-201).

In effect, Ratchett is the criminal in this novel and the three year old Daisy Armstrong is the victim. The twelve apostles of justice deliver their “duty” of vengeance on Ratchett. The tragic story of their family is the alibi that convinces the detective to exonerate them from lawful punishment. The readers and the detective condemn the murdered man Ratchett for his cold bloodedness and find that it is a justifiable action on the part of Poirot to refuse to take up the case and the offers of Ratchett.

Poirot’s conclusion on investigation makes it clear that all the twelve persons stabbed Ratchett, and that it is difficult to make out who actually dealt the fatal stab.
Instead of taking them to the law, Poirot confirms the verdict of the self-appointed twelve member jury. He defends the formation of the private jury and compromises with the offenders’ disrespect to the official jury. Poirot creates a different story to acquit the twelve avengers. By analyzing the evidences he convenes the twelve suspects and suggests two possible solutions of the crime and leaves the case to Mr. Bouc and Dr. Constantine, “to judge which solution is the right one” (Christie, *Express* 194). The first explanation is that some stranger, probably an enemy of Ratchett entered the coach from certain station, stabbed him and escaped without being seen by anybody. Poirot also gives a rational explanation for the implausibility of this solution and delivers his second solution of the murder which is the real truth. He reveals that all the twelve suspects have a connection with the Armstrong family and the whole drama was “a very cleverly planned jigsaw puzzle” (Christie 201). Understanding that Poirot arrived at the correct inference, Mrs. Hubbard confesses that his second solution is the correct one and appeals Poirot to spare them:

> You know everything now, Mr. Poirot. What are you going to do all about it? If it must all come out, can’t you lay the blame upon me and me only? I would have stabbed that man twelve times willingly. It wasn’t only that he was responsible for my daughter’s death her child’s and that of the other child who might have been alive and happy now. It was more than that: there had been other children kidnapped before Daisy, and there might be others in the future. Society had condemned him -- we are only carrying out the sentence. But it is unnecessary to bring all these others into it. All these faithful
souls-- and poor Michel and Mary and Colonel Arbuthnot -- they love each other (Christie, *Express* 205-206).

M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine sympathise with the Armstrong family and express their disgust for Ratchett and register the murder as an ethical action. They decide to offer Poirot’s first story about the murder on the Oriental Express to the Jugo- Slavian police as the official version of truth of “fantastic suggestions” in which the murderers could turn their back on the forensic, medical and physical evidence. Thus his story absolves the twelve assassins. Susan Rowland argues that Christie has personal faith in the canon of Christianity and that she sustains them in her fiction. Poirot here justifies the murder and suggests “divine retribution instead of social justice to the assassins” (Rowland 139). The victim is demonised as an animal; Poirot grants the murderers the right to extract vengeance on their nemesis because here murderers are victims of a far more sinister act of atrocity of their victim. Rowland argues: “Agatha Christie’s detectives’ intimacy with divine authority allows a unique play with the boundaries of a supposedly detective genre . . . they contain within themselves the role of divine instrument” (142). Poirot appears to be guided by middle class morality and Christian humanism and at the same time he is biased with truth law. In the novel *Cards on the Table* he admits: “It is true that I have a thoroughly bourgeois attitude to murder” (Christie 6). The incredible popularity of Christie’s novels depends on the successful inclusion of such themes and the detective’s conservative attitude to towards morality and justice.
Agatha Christie’s fiction illustrates the quintessentially British country village, the moral and religious obligations of the rural subjects, their curiosity in other’s affairs and the tittle-tattle comments on it. The novels featuring the old spinster Miss Marple as the detective were set in the fictional village, St. Mary Mead. Marple is introduced in her first adventure, *The Murder at the Vicarage* as “a White haired old lady with a gentle, appealing manner” (Christie 22). Her neighbour and the vicar of the country side, describes her as “dangerous” (22) and at the same time admires her “sense of humour” (9). But his wife discloses her discontent to the gossipy old lady in her reply: “She’s the worst cat in the village . . . , “And she always knows every single thing that happens -- and draws the worst inferences from it” (8). Marple, on the other hand, glorifies her interferences in the neighbours’ activities and her “ill natured” gossip. She explains to the Vicar: “I’m afraid that observing human nature for as long as I have done, one gets not to expect very much from it. I dare say the idle tittle-tattle is very damn and unkind, but it’s so often true, isn’t it?” (Christie, *Vicarage* 32).

Agatha Christie describes in her autobiography that Marple “was born at the age of sixty-five to seventy” (Christie 44) and was born from the character, Caroline Sheppard from the famous Poirot novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*. Christie paints her as an acidulated spinster full of curiosity, knowing everything and, hearing everything. Reverend Leonard Clement, the narrator of the novel, *The Murder at the Vicarage* claims that “There is no detective in England equal to the spinster lady with plenty of time on her hand” (55). Marple uses her hobbies of gardening and bird watching to mask her identity as a sleuth. The binocular she carries for bird- watching symbolizes the omniscient gaze and she uses it to peep
into the hide-outs of deviants. This instrument for surveillance actually marks the electronic transformation of the English country sphere. Being right there and seeing everything is the key to her success in deciphering crimes. Her method of solving the puzzle is a psychological intrusion into human nature, and her experience helps her to infer from logical intuitions rather than from methods of scientific analysis like Dupin, Holmes and Poirot.

In villages, there are prowling eyes everywhere as depicted in Agatha Christie’s *Murder at the Vicarage* in which all the villagers in some way have something to say about the murder at the Vicar’s house. The narrator of the novel Reverend Leonard Clement says: “[never] underestimate the detective instinct of village life. In St. Mary Mead everyone knows your intimate affairs” (Christie 55). The women appear to be in solidarity with patriarchal notions of femininity and female sexuality. They are “busy looking for immorality in other people’s [lives]” (Christie, *Vicarage* 36). The Vicar’s wife Griselda says: “An attractive young woman with an elderly husband is a kind of gift from heaven to a young man.” (Christie 35-36). Many roulmours spread in St. Mary Mead after Colonel Protheroe has been found shot dead in the library of the vicar’s house. The Vicar sees Mrs. Protheroe having a relationship with Lawrence Redding, an artist residing in the village. He comments: “I had never dreamed of considering Mrs. Protheroe in the matter. There has always been rather a suggestion of Caesar’s wife about Mrs. Protheroe-- a quiet, self contained woman whom one would not suspect of any great depths of feeling” (Christie, *Vicarage* 45).

The Colonel’s resentful daughter is also rumoured to be having a relationship with the painter. The whole village disdains the illegitimacy of her relationship with
the artist and, many middle aged women in the village who are suspected of having such a relationship with the artist, eventually become suspects in the course of the investigation. Miss Marple has an intense disregard for the ways of the women of the new generation. She comments: “The young women nowadays are not ashamed to show exactly how the creator made them. She [Mrs Protheroe] hadn’t so much as a handkerchief in the top of her stocking” (143). Marple is the shrewdest lady of the congregation of St. Mary Mead. She sees and hears everything that goes on and draws amazingly neat and apposite deductions from the facts that come under her notice. Clement says: “If I were at any time to set out on a career of deceit, it would be of Miss Marple that I should be afraid” (461).

Sexual illegitimacy is charged on every man-woman relationship and elderly spinsters gossip on the relationship between Mrs Lestrange, and Dr. Haydock around their table talks. The Victorian patriarchal society wants the women to never deviate from the prescribed role and to exhibit absolute forbearance from passionate and impetuous behaviour. The social authority insists people to practice strict and symmetrical conjugal fidelity as well as austerity. Obviously passionate behaviour connotes sexuality, and Agatha Christie’s detectives acknowledge phallic superiority. Female subjectivity is defined and determined in terms of conventional paradigms of sanctity and purity, and chastity and virginity. Miss Marple identifies with these mores and ignores the female push for emancipation and freedom with a strong revulsion and apprehension. Her poignant scorn of the pastoral women in *Murder at the Vicarage* illustrates her old fashioned Victorian sensibility about female sexuality which reminds the Christian conceptualization of the same theme. She suspects some of the country women in connection with the murder for their
loose moral character. She says: “Mary has been walking out with Archer a long
time, and she’s a queer tempered girl . . . There was Lettice -- wanting freedom and
to do as she liked. I have known many other cases where the most beautiful and
ethereal girls have shown next to no moral scruple” (Christie 511).

Margery Hourihan analyses the human inclination to crime and sin with
respect to medieval Christian concepts of human nature that asserted reason as the
highest human faculty and which placed the task on reason to control other senses
and instincts that commit crime and sin. Drawing on this quintessentially theological
conceptualisation and its insinuation in literature, she says:

In [Christian] tradition it was reason that separated human beings
from the beasts and allied them to God and angels. “O God. A beast
that wants discourses of reason/ would have mourned longer”.

Hamlet says when he wishes to condemn his mother’s hasty
remarriage as a matter of mere appetite. Because of their association
with copulation and reproduction, women were consistently
associated by Christian thinkers with the senses and body, and hence
the nature, rather than with the higher faculty of reason (20).

Christie’s novels illustrate that the village people in Edwardian society
follow a Christian order of life -- devoted and churchgoing. The vicar Clement, the
narrator of the novel Murder at the Vicarage, notes that the members of his parish
were adamant on attending Evensongs of Sundays. In the climax of the novel, he
delivers his sermon before “a sea of upturned faces” (Christie 456) and moved and
overwhelmed by his “devoted subjects”:
The congregation in that church was in a state of pent-up emotion, ripe to be played upon. I played upon them. I exhorted sinners to repentance. I lashed myself into a kind of emotional frenzy. Again and again I threw out a denouncing hand and reiterated the phrase . . . I finished up with those beautiful and poignant words -- perhaps the most poignant words in the Bible: “This night thy soul shall be required of thee” (Christie 457).

*The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* is also set in a country village, Kings Abbot, where people are entrenched in Christian routines of life. Christie portrays her female characters in a typical fashion as those with an innate fondness for gossip. The narrator gives an exact picture of the village: “We are rich in unmarried ladies and retired military officers. Our hobbies and recreation can be summed up in one word, “gossip” (7). Flora Ackroyd the nephew of Roger Ackroyd is a representative of young brigade of the Kings Abbot, but follows the traditions of English rural life. She describes herself: “I love *The Mill on the Floss*. I shall take a great interest in parish affairs and attend the entire Mothers’ meeting” (32).

Agatha Christie’s novels testify to a conservative, stable world where religiosity and morality and class distinction remained central to the social and cultural history of Britain during the Victorian/Edwardian period. They expose the fact that Christian ethics continued to rule over proper public and private behaviour, morality and law. People remained dedicated to the preservation of moral codes and Christianity guided them in distinguishing between good and evil, right and wrong. Callum Brown employs the concept of discursive Christianity to explain the social
significance of religion in shaping British attitude and ethics in his book *The Death of Christian Britain*. He argues:

Christian religiosity of the industrial era is defined as people’s subscription to protocols of personal identity which they derive from Christian codes or discourses evident in their own time and place. Protocols are rituals or customs of behaviour, economic activity or dress, speech and so on which are collectively promulgated as necessary for Christian identity. The protocols are prescribed or implied in the discourses of Christian behaviour. The discourses may be official ones for churches or clergy, public ones from media or private ones developed by men and women themselves. The discourses will manifest in protocols of behaviour such as going to church on Sundays or saying grace before meals. This is a personal process of subscription to often very public discourses that creates a compelling religious to the construction of religiosity in the society at large (12-13).

Christie’s fiction is realistic; she creates a living environment that was true to the texture of everyday life in the most impressive and readable fashions. Her novels also reveal the historical fact that the changes in the public’s attitude to conventionality and Christian ethics brought about by the dogmas of modernity and rationality did not properly work in British society. The society and detectives portrayed in her novels are fetishes about science and rationality at one end, but on the other, their ethics were guided by Christian theological paradigms and, their faith in providential justice and righteousness never withered away. There is never an
indication of clash between the postulates of tradition and modernity, but a compromise between the both. Detective fiction of a conservative woman like Agatha Christie manages to fasten together tradition and modernity, science and providence in the most convincing form of what Alison Light calls “conservative modernity”, which characterises interwar British society and politics (64). In a striking paradigm shift from the precursors to her fiction, the criminals or offenders in her stories of crime do not belong to the proletariat, but to the upper/middle class. Dr. James Shepherd, close to the family of the murdered man and a respected personality in the whole village, becomes Poirot’s assistant and the narrator of the story. Being a doctor he is acquainted with each and every individual of the county. So he is able to obtain every subtle detail about their family matters. Mrs. Ferrars in the village commits suicide and Dr. Sheppard confirms it. Her husband, an alcoholic, had died of gastritis, and Caroline believes that she had poisoned her husband. In remorse, she commits suicide. One night Roger Ackroyd confides to Dr. Sheppard that Mrs. Ferrars murdered her husband in order to marry him. She also tells him before she dies that she was subjected to blackmail -- the reason why she took her life. Before committing suicide she had sent Mr. Ackroyd a letter informing him of the man who blackmailed her. The letter comes when Dr. Sheppard was with him, but Ackroyd refuses to read the letter then. Dr. Sheppard leaves and he later receives a phone call from the servant of Ackroyd that Ackroyd has been found murdered in his room with a knife in his throat.

Poirot detects that all the suspects have a definite monetary motif if each one is assumed to have committed the murder except for the butler, Parker. Roger’s sister-in-law has accumulated heavy debts through her luxurious life style and
Ralph Paton Ackroyd’s stepson too has huge financial liabilities because of his expensive modern lifestyle. The illegitimate son of Ursula Bourne, the parlour maid of Roger is a drug addict returned from America. Poirot confirms his identity as an American not only because of his accent but also because of the particular style of his doping: “[A] taker of drugs – and one who had acquired the habit on the other side of the Atlantic where sniffing ‘snow’ is more common than in this country. The man whom Dr. Sheppard met [at the night of the murder of Roger Ackroyd] had an American accent” (Christie, Roger 335).

In the post script of the novel the reader comes to know that narrator himself committed the murder. And it is Dr. Sheppard, the most respected man in the country village and the family doctor of Roger Ackroyd. Christie depicts the internecine struggle among respectable people for property and money which is exemplified through the character of Sheppard. The two victims in this novel, Mrs. Ferras and Roger Ackroyd are persons of property and position and the murderer also have more or less reverence among the subjects. Stephen Knight observes:

The victim owns property because property-owning is the personalised wish and self knowledge of the bourgeois man and woman; the enemies to life and property -- conscious existence -- are already within the family or the trusted circle. The individualized nature of bourgeois life explains the consistent persistence of murder as a crime, and the direction of this threat towards property owners enacts the reader’s own fear for his or her own property. . . . The pervasive individualism of bourgeois feeling and epistemology is
crucial to the whole edifice of clue-puzzle in crime, detection and literary structure (Form and Ideology 128).

In terms of Marxist criminology crime is a result of the strengthening economic differences and a human protest against poverty and inequality that is bred by capitalism. In the heyday of capitalism, especially in America, capitalist mode of production and distribution of wealth created social injustices and moral decay, animosity within the corporate powers and capitalist entrepreneurs. The moral decay affected the whole of society that resulted in rapidly increasing criminality, gangster crimes and individual aberrance and greed. The Marxist criminologist David F. Greenberg argues:

Intractable problems continue to plague the advanced capitalist democracies: “despoliation of natural environment, urban decay, poverty and unemployment, crime and corruption, drug addiction, a failing educational system, unaffordable medical care, racial and sexual oppression” (xii).

Agatha Christie’s fiction resonates with tones of this moral decay and, drug addiction, economic motives that lead to heinous crimes including murder, child abduction and blackmailing. She depicts the non-British Europe and America as fertile spaces for these criminal offenses. Her novels textualize these threats trespassing into British society and it would have negative effect on the British social system. In Murder on the Oriental Express, the murderer/victim Ratchett is an American child abductor and blackmailer. The country setting of her novels implies
the ruthless opposition to corporate capitalism and the fragmenting and destabilizing
effect of consumer capitalism on the social stability of Edwardian British rural society.

Thus it can be concluded that detective fiction emerged in the post-
Enlightenment, post-Darwinian period when human rationality clashed with
religiosity. In the duel, religious beliefs tended towards obliteration from the social
structure, but social sentiments of Europe shows a return of the religion to
hegemonise the human mores and ethics. British detective narratives that discussed
in this chapter can be described as a modern version of morality play since they
recreate the Christian myth that deviant and criminal are depraver from the God’s
ways, and the detective truly a Christian hero restores the moral and sacred order
once upset by the criminals and moral transgressors.

Thus as a popular genre of the post-Enlightenment cultural domain, detective
fiction entertained the logical reasoning and scientific knowledge and superior
intellect of a detective hero, while simultaneously shielding moral and religious
superstitions and superiority which all together highlights the genre’s dialectic
structure. The return and reaffirmation of Christian ethics in political, legal and
popular discourses in the heydays of imperialism can be viewed as a part of the
colonial agenda to implant and disseminate Christianity, laws and values of West to
every inhabitable region and culture worldwide. The way in which the detective
narratives reify and legitimize colonial/ imperial violence and legal-judicial
practices will be discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter Four

The Empire Threatens Back: The Ape, Tonga and Some “Others”

In Detective Narratives

You say the world is full of base and worthless criminals?

-Orhan Pamuk (*My Name Is Red* 6)

The colonized man is an envious man. And the settler knows very well; when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, “They want to take our place.” It is true, for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day settling himself upon the settler’s place.

-Frantz Fanon (*The Wretched of Earth* 30)

Crime detection and criminal jurisprudence, in accordance with the British law and order system and the new legislation of repressive laws and regulations to suppress upsurges and agitations from the subjects, are strategies devised by the British government in the colonial conurbations, especially in India. The postcolonial and post-modern theoretical discourses explain the multiplicity of the colonial motives of different periods. Post-colonialism as an academic project revisits, reminds and discloses the “reciprocal antagonism between colonizer and colonized” (Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory* 60). The theoretical insights of Edward W. Said, Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, Homi K. Bhabha and Jean-Paul Sartre provide academic room for understanding the enticing as well as coercive tactics of the colonizers and how the same tactics continue to work upon the “third world” nations in neo-colonial paradigms. Their insights unveil the inseparable nexus between colonialism and Enlightenment Modernity.
British colonial expeditions were motivated and accelerated by the Enlightenment, and the scientific, technological and geographical discoveries that marked it. In addition to these scientific milestones, political and cultural changes of critical significance were taking place in Europe as a result of various explorations and navigations and the subsequent expansion of the overseas empire. The hegemonic impulse of colonial powers in the past and the neo-colonial capitalist domination of the contemporary, globalized world order demonstrate the ongoing historic “dialectic of enlightenment” as envisaged by Adorno and Horkheimer. According to them, the anti-authoritarian nature of enlightenment turns into its opposite, another form of great domination (29). The colonial rule as experienced by the colonizers is not mere a political structure but a political process of creating a totally dehumanised or subjugated human subjectivity.

Criminalising the colonial subject is one of the strategies of the colonial/imperial state in exercising economic, political, military and legal power. High end bureaucracy and policing which had been the typical features of British society were more fervently implanted in the colonial societies in Asia and Africa. The shift in Europe from sovereign to administrative surveillance is implemented in the Indian subcontinent. The colonial government passed laws, executed collective punishments and encouraged disunity between races, communities, castes, and political ideologies and movements. This has been the policy and practice of all totalitarian, imperial regimes of the past and the present. Racial discrimination is part of the oppressive, inhuman and destructive practices implemented by colonialism or imperialism. Apartheid, the most dehumanizing practice in the imperial history implemented in South Africa, and the “divide and rule” policy in
India were some among those policies designed to create enmity between the natives.

The Orientalist construction of the East and of Africa has strong roots in societies of both the East and the West, which has been “a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orients” (Said, Orientalism 3). The Orientalist perception generated the idea that the Western man is at the pinnacle stage of civilization and he is intellectually and morally, superior to the colonial subject. The eighteenth century discourses in different disciplines underlined the same perception which enhanced the modes of colonial subjugation through various repressive and ideological apparatuses. Edward W. Said says:

Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarships, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles (Orientalism 2).

The Orientalist discourses reiterate the dichotomies such as traditional/modern, literate/illiterate, savage/civilized that enhanced the advancement of Western society over the Oriental. These dichotomies manifested themselves in imperial architecture, city planning, sartorial prescriptions, and other cultural constructions by which difference was made visible. The criminalizing/dehumanizing process masked under the ideology of civilizing the “savage” was put in to discourse and practice as a mission which can be exemplified from the British Raj history in India. Leela Gandhi observes that, “as modern rationality has often
attributed a dangerous otherness to the figure(s) of the deviant, it has also
deavourd violently to repress all symptoms of cultural alterity . . . Procedures of
the colonial civilizing mission are motivated by same anxieties” (40). The colonial
government in India successfully guided and shaped the conduct and attitude of the
colonial subjects through both repressive and ideological apparatuses. The
Educational ISA of the British government, as envisaged by Lord Macaulay for
creating “Indians in blood and British in taste,” produced docile and loyal civil
servants, military, police and bureaucracy. The British policy was to set an
undisputable, legal, juridical framework in India. The colonial government ensured
the participation of natives in the entire scenario of jurisprudence so that
intellectuals of the native land could not question the authenticity of its
governmentality and legality. The colonial agenda was to create and monitor a
bureaucracy, police and military, and manipulating these forces, and bending the
rule of law to suit their hegemonic interests. So a colonial subjectivity was created
through structures of law, education, language and literature. As pointed out by
Gaury Viswanathan, the British had conquered India with ships and cannons; they
were however, “to rule it with Shakespeare” (17).

Ranajit Guha in his book *Dominance without Hegemony* recognizes how the
British idealized the superiority of the English legal system and its ideological and
coercive functioning as needed in the colonies. The lineage of the rule of law put
into discourse and practice in colonial countries was purely British. Guha says:

The British bureaucracy and rule of law derives from the older
standing of the British legal system and its proven superiority to all
other historically evolved systems of the same order up to the age of
capital. . . Liberalism, democracy liberty and rule of law can survive the inexorable urge of capital to expand and reproduce itself by means of the politics of extra-territorial, colonial dominance (67).

All legal institutions were structured by Macaulay who is credited as “the true law-giver of modern India” to educate the natives (qtd. in Sen 3). Colonial law was explicitly related to a new political order and a new vision of the relationship between state and society. Macaulay insisted on “the use of a new penal code to raise and encourage a manly spirit among the people” (qtd. in Sen 4). In order to reify the authority of colonial law, to have meaning, the victims of crime must display their confidence in colonial state by approaching the state. So legality or the rule of law, which confined and regulated all human society, was the powerful tool in strengthening imperial hold over Indian subjects.

Elizabeth Kolsky, in her book *Colonial justice in British India*, argues that the growth of the British Empire expanded the reach of British law, grounding and legitimizing colonialism in the power of legal practices and ideology (12). In India, colonial administrators claimed that the promise of British justice was a cornerstone of its government, a guarantor of its liberty, and a key agent in its civilizing mission. British officials not only used law to create the colonial state (the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793, for example, provided the early colonial state with a legal mechanism to collect land revenues), they also used the language of law to legitimize their rule. The view that India had long been enslaved by the tyranny of Oriental despotism made law a critical instrument by which the British simultaneously established their authority and differentiated colonial law and order from the anarchy of previous regimes. The juridical, disciplinary power of the
colonial government in British India subjectivised the colonial people through the tactics of rule by consent. Robert Fulton comments that “the foundation of our empire in India rests on the principle of justice, and England retains its supremacy in India mainly by justice. Without justice we could not hold India for a moment” (qtd. in Kolsky i). So law and its enforcement were ideological as well as repressive mechanisms for the British which they used to both mollify the upsurges from the colonial subjects as well as to threaten them.

The repressive and tyrannical rigours of imperial law could be traced from the history of the Indian freedom struggle. Uprisings against the colonial state and norms were considered as criminal actions; violent suppression of any such act was the only remedial step put into praxis by the state. The Rowlatt Act was one such repressive legal measure passed by British authorities that gave the government the power to arrest and detain people without any trial if suspected of criminal actions. The Rowlatt Act was named after the recommendation made to the Imperial Legislative Council by the Justice Rowlatt Commission. It was a legal mechanism to facilitate surveillance by the state and criminalization/dehumanization of the colonial subject.

M. K. Gandhi was totally disturbed and startled by this purposefully coercive act and he argued that everyone cannot be penalized for isolated political crimes. He also argued that the colonialists and their native collaborators, for the purpose of colonial exploitation, were engaging in an act of crime using law. Gandhi writes in his autobiography:
If even a handful of men can be found to sign the pledge of resistance, and the proposed measure is passed into law in defiance of it, we ought to offer *Satyagraha* at once. If I was not laid up like this (he was in bed rest after the operation for fissures) I should give battle against it all alone, and expect others to follow suit (421).

Gandhi described the Rowlatt Act as a “law designed to rob people of all freedom” (qtd. in Guha 70). He raised the question contemplating the legislation of the Act: “one could disobey it only if the government gave one opportunity for it. Failing that could we civilly disobey the other laws?” (Gandhi, *My Experiments* 422). Gandhiji later denounced the legal norms of the colonial government “law itself in this country as used to serve the foreign exploiter and as prostituted consciously or unconsciously for the benefit of the exploiter” (qtd. in Guha 70).

The British rulers successfully created a loyal and obedient bureaucracy and police. The first war of Indian Independence of 1857 persuaded the colonial authorities to take immediate remedies to reorganize and modernize the entire administrative mechanism in the country. A military commission and police commission were formed and on the recommendation of the police commission, the new legislation, the Indian Police Act was passed in 1861. The preamble of this Police Act announces the mission of the new legislation as “to reorganize the police and make it a more efficient instrument for the prevention and detection of crime” (Dhillon 41). The legal rationality of colonial justice, its administration and its implementation sabotaged the concept of justice as a process of protection of the individual against the arbitrary power of state. The colonial bureaucracy in India standardized its objective to protect the interests of the Imperial.
was designed to protect and defend the rule against all threats to their power and authority. Kirpal Dhillon, the former police director in Punjab, unveils police history in India as he argues that unlike in Britain, Indian policemen functioned only as state servants and not public servants. Therefore, “the colonial administration exploited such a situation to the maximum advantage and bestowed special favours on the superior and middle rank officials, who administered their charge with military like discipline and control” (Dhillon 42).

The process of penalization, its residues in the prisons of the colonial period especially in the Andaman Islands which was engineered as the penal colony in India, reveal how this colonial difference was manipulated and how the colonial “other” subjectivities were created and subjected to acts of torture. Noted historian Sumit Guha observes that “the methods and meaning of punishment derived from political systems, characterized by the instability of the state, and the arbitrary use of violence by the state to defend itself from internal and external challenges and punishment, stressed deterrence and coercion” (qtd. in Sen 3). Elizabeth Kolsky observes that violence was not an exceptional but an ordinary part of British rule in the subcontinent. She says: “Despite the pledge of equality, colonial legislation and the practices of white judges, juries and police placed most Europeans above the law, literally allowing them to get away with murder” (Codification 641).

The public execution and torturing of criminals in the pre-Benthamite period were outlawed and conceived obsolete by Bentham. Macaulay followed Bentham in executing punishment as correctional exercises. Bentham and Macaulay were in conformity regarding the view that “correcting a criminal means maintaining good relationship between individual, government and society” (Sen 5). Michael Foucault
in *Discipline and Punish* identifies the dialectic of humanism in the penal reformation suggested by Bentham. The penal system implemented in India was not as refined as the British common law reformed by legal experts like Beccaria and Bentham, but resembled the old and “primitive”, “savage”, “barbaric” and whatever terms were used in Orientalist discourses to describe colonial subjects.

Satadru Sen, in his book *Disciplining the Punishment: Colonialism and Convict Society in the Andaman Island*, gives a profound and pictorial account of the perverted penal practices inflicted upon colonial subjects irrespective of the nature of the crime. Surveillance mechanism was exercised potentially by the colonial state in taming natives. After the trauma of 1857 this surveillance became more severe and any organized demonstration against the state, or freedom movements, became a deviant activity in the eyes of the state. Immediate measures were taken to grease the wheels of the state bureaucracy. Sen notes:

> The efforts included the Cantonment Act of 1864, Disease Act of 1968, and the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. The 1864 and 1868 Acts sought to subject Indian prostitutes to registration, medical examination, and prolonged supervision, the Criminal Tribe Act approached the elusive by compelling substantial segment of Indian society either to support the state’s surveillance measures, or to be classified as criminals themselves (168).

These regulations were supported by bureaucratic machinery to be implemented in various areas of the native land. Surveillance measures were put into practice in penal colonies like the Andaman Islands and other prisons. The penal
ghettos were small confinements fenced by sea and jungle where release was out of
question, escape difficult and political power easy to deploy. These mechanisms
comprised of construction of the spatial and social maps of crime and criminals,
identifying and locating the criminals, and categorizing them in accordance with
various parameters like geography, caste, law and social order. This also involved
the state’s efforts to detect defiance as well as deviance, to intervene in the subjects’
political, social and moral lives and even as it punished, to watch and control its
instruments of punishment.

This brief examination the colonial violence in India by British Rulers
demonstrates the rigorous texture and temperament of the institutional as well as the
ideological power of legal and judicial discourses constructed by the British. The
British authorities realized the power of these discourses and the possibilities of
criminalizing and dehumanising the natives on the basis of the ethnic and racial
features. Gayatri Spivak argues that “othering” is a Western colonial practice
constituting the ideology of imperialism and the motivations to civilize the East. Her
concept, “axiomatics of imperialism” refers to Kant’s argument that only cultivated
and educated European men have access to sublime, while non European subjects
are stripped of culture and humanity and relegated to the place of an unrepresentable
irrational other (19). In the process of “othering”, the self is centred and glorified
while the other is vilified and silenced. The strategies of “othering” include the use
of binary oppositions, unvoicing and dehumanizing.

The fundamental element of this project of “othering” is the provision of
positive features to the occident and negative ones to the orient. These discourses
were reproduced in the western detective narratives of the period so that it
standardized the logics of power—the fear about the colonial people and ethnic culture. Detective narratives of Victorian period deliberately exploited the fears and anxieties of the public about the non-British, non-white, non-Christian “other” subjectivities constructed through these discursive practices. The different scientific discourses that emerged in the heyday of imperialism benefitted the procedures of investigation of crimes and racialization of criminals; that also were reproduced in the detective fiction. The White, Christian, British detectives in these narratives are credited with the positive features while the criminals are always non-white, non-Christian and non-British.

Detective narratives that emerged in the nineteenth century are implicated in the process of colonialism and imperialism. They underpinned the Orientalist dualisms of rational/irrational, civilized/savage, reason/emotion and man/animal, thereby asserting the superior terms of these dualisms and providing a logical rationale for the imperial project. Dehumanising or animalising the criminal is another enduring generic tradition of detective fiction, the credit for which can be ascribed to Poe’s inaugural adventure. Detective stories functioned as a discursive practice that construct truth regimes about the Orient by as told by Said “dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it” (Said, Orientalism 3).

The first detective story by Edgar Allan Poe provided not only the conventions for the narrative framework of the whole detective genre, but also articulated ideological constructions of cultural differences and identifications — gender, race or class, that can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social and national antagonism. This antagonism is constructed by the
denunciation of the non-white subjectivities which were central to the insidious power of the colonial discursive practices. The discursive address that functions in the name of race and nation in these narratives “disseminates” certain cultural and national identities. (Bhabha, *Nation*: 292). Detective fiction can be treated as a colonial discourse of stereotyping and an apparatus of colonial power, systems and sciences of governmentality which provide justification for colonial projects. In his seminal work *Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha defines colonial discourse as follows:

It is an apparatus that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences. Its predominant strategic function is the creation of a space for a ‘subject people’ through the production of knowledges in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited. It seeks authorization for its strategies by the production of knowledges of colonizer and colonized which are stereotypical but antithetically evaluated. The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction (LC: 70).

The colonial discourses underlined the white man’s belief that he was more rational, evolved or civilised than the non-Western communities. The evolutionary theory approved that man can exist in different stages of civilisation and that in the process of civilisation: the African-Asian subjectivities occupy a far retarded position in comparison to the advanced stages of the occident. The logics of
evolutionary theory facilitated the perpetuation of the cultural dualisms of modern/primitive, civilised/savage and these dichotomies became inseparable from the discursive practice of Western subjects to articulate their superiority. These discourses backed the advancement of Western countries on to the “uncanny ethnic” subjects.

Poe’s first tale of ratiocination can be considered as an allegory of the colonial/imperial project of demonising the “other” identities and ape’s double homicide as the revenge or reverse threat from the colonial subject. In “Murders in Rue Morgue,” for example, the murderer is an animal and the savage irrationality of the crime baffles the police. They cannot envisage the motiveless crime and detect the extra-ordinary force involved in the murder. Dupin uses his analytical abilities to determine that the brutal butcheries could not have been committed by a human being. Poe in his many other stories also uses animal imageries to describe criminals. In “Tell-tale Heart”, the murderer dehumanizes himself by comparing the self to animals. He attempts to justify his crime implicitly by comparing himself to a helpless creature threatened by a hideous scavenger. Poe’s stories suggest that criminals are animals, the act of murder requires animal instinct, and therefore the orangutan in “Murders in the Rue Morgue” signifies the same: the absence of human reason and morality, and that, criminals are less rational than their beastly counterparts.

In the story, the orangutan is sentenced to life imprisonment in the Paris zoo, a human way of normalisation and disciplinary mechanism which indicates that criminals have prisons, and that rampaging brutes have zoos as the spectacles of punishment. For Dupin, science, logic and reason are all marks of civilization, while
nature is allied with disorder, barbarity and animal urges. From the Dupin triad itself, the criminal is depicted as abnormal, irrational and inhuman and criminal offenses arise from animal instincts getting out of rational control. Here the murders are traced back to an escaped savage ape. Man’s evolution from the ape is allegorised here implying a reverse evolution from that of a criminal to an orangutan. Here the detective identifies a criminal in an ape: an ape transgressing into human territory eventually becomes a criminal and is subjected to disciplinary practice. The suspect who is a white man is released from custody and is acquitted from the charges of the double homicide. The criminal is an abnormal creature because of the crime and his abnormality is revealed and affirmed through his/ her crime. The detective is a law-abiding, civilised, rational human being and the restorer of order. This asserts the police and public view that a criminal or a murderer has brutal characteristics, or is devoid of human features. Ronald Thomas describes detective fiction invented by Poe as a “narrative of identity” because the forensic as well as the scientific (anatomical/ physiological) details collected by the detective from the body of the criminal explain his human/ national /racial /ethnic identity (Forensic 10). In “Murders in the Rue Morgue” the criminal is without a human subjectivity and a nationality because he (it) is a beast. Thomas observes:

[The] orangutan that Dupin theorises as the criminal responsible for the brutal murders in the case is a foreigner not only because it came from another country, but because it comes to represent the foreignness itself. Dupin determines that the criminal is not even to be regarded as a character at all, but an identity defined entirely by traces of its physiology — a hand print, a tuft of hair, extraordinary
strength and so on. These characteristics are given an identity by the detective only when he matches them with a description of a certain almost-human beast he read about in a scientific text. With that text and the physical evidence from the crime scene, the detective effectively invents the criminal identity and that defines him as a

*foreigner* (*Forensic* 11-12).

The detective’s identification of the non-human body hair, voice and bizarre gestures from the scene of crime symbolises the Western intellectual power to detect and decipher aliens, and the casting out of the ape to a zoo symbolises their mechanisms to suppress such threats and send those criminal beasts to a Western means of training and taming. Dupin, with the help of Cuvier’s passage, identifies the butcher as a “large frivolous orangutan of the East Indian Islands. The gigantic stature, the prodigious strength and activity, the wild ferocity and the imitative propensities of the mammalian are sufficiently well known to all. I understood the full horrors of the murder at once” (*Poe, Stories* 129).

Charles Rzepka compiles different critical readings on Poe’s stories and drawing on them, argues that Poe’s story is a Western discourse of demonised African subjectivities. Focusing on Lindon Barrett, he observes that Poe’s racist sympathies are signified in his identification that the voice of the orangutan could have been that of an African as well as his reference to Cuvier, a notorious racist, as a means of identifying the ape. The period of Poe’s writing oeuvre rejoiced in the analogies between Blacks/Africans and apes especially chimpanzees/orangutans. Another temporal significance of the story is that it was published in a Philadelphia periodical of which Poe was the editor just three years after the abolition of slavery
and a massive riot which was inspired by fears against mixed marriage and hybridity. Drawing on Elise Lemire, Rzepka writes:

Poe had moved to Philadelphia with his young wife and her mother only months before he published his story, to find the worst caricatures of sexually-predatory African-American males appeared in the daily press. The orangutan’s invasion of the mother’s and daughter’s boudoir, just as they are preparing for bed, not to mention the particular mode of the daughter’s death – stuffed vaginal chimney – symbolically represent black on white rape and is calculated to incite and exploit these racist fears (82).

Lemire further observes that the orangutan’s attempts to shave itself and Madame L’Espanaye, are originally inspired by the common practice that white man’s hair and beards were typically shaved by African-Americans, “for whom such labour was considered natural” (qtd. in Rzepka 82). She observes: “At the time Poe’s tale was published in Philadelphia, the city’s own Peale’s Museum displayed stuffed monkeys dressed and arranged so as to depict the life of a barbershop, an obvious parody of black barbers” (qtd. in Rzepka 82). The orangutan in the story is described as a fugitive seeking a hiding place after it has escaped from the hands of a sailor who planned to keep it as a slave. While he tries to recapture the brute, the ape enters the Rue Morgue house and kills the two noble ladies. Dupin acquits the innocent Frenchman who was detained for the murders and convicts the irrational foreign/African beast for the atrocities in the Rue Morgue. Poe gives a detailed description of the violence through the confession of the sailor who was an eye witness to the atrocities.
Furthermore, the sketch of the violent actions of the beast generates fear in the readers so that the fear of the wilderness ascribed to the Africans/ non-Westerns grows in intensity. Poe’s story bears the ideology of depicting the European identity as superior to the non-European subjectivities. His detective hero, in every aspect, embodies the superior features of rationality, intellect, knowledge and morality, and the wild beast he identifies as the culprit behind the brutal murders is portrayed as the representation of inferior culture. The detective’s analysing and observing faculties are meant to keep the foreign wilderness under constant surveillance and to make them culpable on grounds of their dangerous assault on native Europeans. The detective heroes of the British tradition in the Victorian period monitored the city of London to sort out foreign threats to the British Empire.

Victorian literature goes through the political and cultural ambiguities of the period. On the one side, society progressed on the wheels of scientific and technological development, urbanization, imperial conquest and the accumulation of capital. On the other side, fears about the dehumanising effects of industry, the decline of morality, the widening gap between the rich and poor, hike in the number of discontented and oppressed masses, anxieties about diseases and social dangers, reached a pinnacle. M. H. Abrams says, “Victorian literature whether imaginative or didactic, in verse or in prose, dealt with or reflected social, economic, religious and intellectual problems” (153).

This political, economic, cultural and intellectual turmoil of the Victorian period paved the way for the emergence of different literary genres including gothic fiction, fantastic and mystery stories, science fiction and various crime narratives. Gothic fiction is preoccupied with supernatural elements, psychological traumas,
violence, imprisonment and persecution. They are usually set in archaic, mysterious and exotic landscapes and mansions. Victorian literature, with crime and supernatural forming the core of its content, painted the moral panic and cultural anxiety of society. The principal aim of such texts is “to evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery and various horrors” (Abrams 78). Herbert Marcuse argues that Bourgeois literature of the nineteenth century affirmed a power structure dominated by business and industry. At the same time it haunted by potentially antagonistic elements, by such disruptive characters as the prostitute, the adulteresses, the great criminal and outcast. He observes:

These characters have not been banished from literature, but have been transformed into the vamp, the national hero, the beatnik, the tycoon and so on, and thus they become no longer images of another way of life but rather freaks or types of the same life, serving an affirmation rather than negation of the order (59).

The Victorian period in British history marks the heyday of British imperialism. The discourse of imperialism and Orientalism reigned supreme in the cultural/literary constructions of the period. The literary works of the Victorian age were inextricably tied to the imperialist project. The tremendous upsurges from colonial subjects flourished and the fear of a decline of the empire prompted the cultural mechanism to take up the role of safeguarding imperial supremacy over the empire. As British imperialism gathered steam, the empire and the related subjects of race and slavery became increasingly visible in the novel because of the growing significance of Britain’s geopolitical power in the lives of ordinary Victorian people.
and the formal commitment of novel to social realism. Deidre David, a scholar in Victorian literature observes:

The middle class families who read newspaper accounts of successful conquests and travel, and missionary narratives sent home from imperial outposts, also read novels; they frequently had sons serving in civil and military outposts of the empire, and daughters whose marriage to colonial officials and missionaries took them to Africa, India and the West Indies. Quite simply, Victorian fiction began to register this enlarged awareness of imperialism (86).

The colonial ideology and the anxieties of an anticipated decline of the Empire, and urges to sustain hegemony, influenced and shaped British literature in the nineteenth century. Writers like Joseph Conrad and Rudyard Kipling set their fictional work in distant and fantastic lands in Africa and Asia. They constructed exotic and savage imagery for the native people. In their narratives, the white/British heroes indulge in adventures to fight against these natives--portrayed as creatures with demonic features. The British fantasies of the Orient excited new sensibility for adventures stories and children’s fiction.

Furthermore, these novels thus directly or indirectly participate in the construction and perpetuation of colonial ideology by providing implicit justification for colonial missions like civilizing the Orient and bringing them under the British ways of legal, moral, sacred discipline and order. The novel, as a form of literature, became prevalent in Britain as a colonial project propounding imperial aesthetics. Edward W. Said argues that “the empire became a principal subject of attention in
different writers as well as in emerging discourses in ethnography, colonial administration, theory and economy, the historiography of non-European regions, and specialized subjects like Orientalism, exoticism and mass psychology” (Culture 74). Furthermore, these texts “can not only create knowledge, but also the reality they appear to describe” (Said, Orientalism 94). This was a case with the gothic and detective stories about the threats from other nations.

Bram Stroker’s Dracula is one of the most popular literary texts ever written in English. It underwent incredible reception and got countless stage, film adaptations and imitations. It also derived the academic interest because of the political and cultural significance of the textual codes. The story of the mysterious and powerful vampire who comes to London and preys on women for blood has inspired the intellect and imagination beyond academic disciplines and geographical boundaries. Like most other Victorian prose fiction Dracula is set in a gothic atmosphere and builds a shocking suspense, evoking fear and therefore destabilising emotional equilibrium in the readers. The novel follows the narrative structure of a travelogue and an epistolary novel. Jonathan Harker, the English lawyer, reports his mysterious and often scaring experiences in Transylvania, an Eastern European province. The mysterious and exotic geography of Eastern Europe metonymically portrayed through Carpathian Mountains, textualizes the imperial strategies of demonisation/dehumanisation of the non-British, the Dracula.

The text also signifies the British anxiety of an anticipated political setback. The blood sucking Dracula frightens the Empire and creates panic in British society. Dracula embodies the challenges to British superiority and national identity in Europe and in the colonies. The novel constructs a cultural and social relativism, an
antagonism between good/evil, male/female and British/foreign. These binary constructions always endorse the superiority of the former, thereby establishing a cultural, gender related and political hegemony. By the end of the nineteenth century the British Empire anticipated, of course, feared and often realized the perishing of British political hegemony. *Dracula* expresses this fear of a reverse colonisation as Count Dracula attempts to colonise Britain through his diabolic and sinister methods. Lyn Pykett argues: “Count Dracula with his insatiable blood lust is represented as both primitive and ultra-civilised. He is the foreign, Eastern and “other” which threatens to invade the west” (208). Finally, Dracula is exorcised and killed. He is displaced from the material and celestial bodies he colonised. He is no longer free for his nocturnal rides. The order he distorted is restored, clearly idealising the European/Christian concept of the triumph of good over evil. The text urges for a return to the Christian values once lost or distorted. The novel affirms the Christian model of retributive justice and destruction of evil spirits as Van Helsing pledges “we are ministers of God’s own wish: that the world, and men for whom his son die, will not be given over to monsters whose very existence would defame him” (Stoker 287).

Stoker uses animal images to describe the “other” creatures in his novels. The name Dracula itself becomes synonymous with all the embodiments of cruelty. His diabolic activities and satanic appearance suggest the same. Gary Day says: “It was through the alliance of law and medicine that state intervention in the civil society was most evident. In *Dracula* two major discourses are those of law and medicine, represented by Harker and Seward respectively” (84).
The appropriation of the sacred/Christian justice and order implies the colonial mission of Christianizing the subjects through various practices of education and sermons. Callum G. Brown and Michael Snape, the authors of the book on secularization in the Christian world argue that “the British colonial administrators envisaged the colony being Christianised and civilised (the two words often interchangeable) through the creation of model villages supervised by ministers and school teachers and united by universal application of rules and sacraments” (50). Stoker concretizes the Christian temperament of secular British society and the colonial mission to tackle the threats from the empire through the re-application of European Christendom.

In the second chapter of this thesis, I argued that detective fiction employs realism as its narrative form. Homi K. Bhabha connects realism and colonial discourse — connections that he brings into play in the context of the narrative strategies of nation “the reified forms of realism and stereotype” (Location of Culture 71). Colonial discourse is always a form of realism, a representation of colonial reality and therefore British detective fiction as nineteenth century realistic narratives have connections with colonialism. As Bhabha says, “the colonial discourse resembles a form of narrative whereby productivity and circulation of subjects and signs are bound in a reformed and recognizable totality. It employs a system of representation, a regime of truth that is structurally similar to realism” (LC 71).

The evils and criminality in Victorian literature are attributed to foreigners and they are portrayed as cultural “other” to the English aristocrats. The detective genre that emerged and flourished in Victorian Britain carries this ideology as it tells
in the most exhilarating manner, the heroic adventure of the secular Christian British detective hunting down dangerous offenders. The criminals, both domestic and foreign, are treated as threats to the British Empire and social serenity. As the most superior and influential literary product of the period, the writings of Arthur Conan Doyle interpolate the discourses of Orientalism and imperialism. The incredible popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories testifies to the Victorian urge for social and epistemological order. Holmes functions as the supreme intellectual figure to detect such threats that upset the social order. Holmes embodies the British aggressiveness to state its intellectual and moral superiority to the colonized, in a period where the British Empire faced both internal and external threats. The literary detective hero, like Sherlock Holmes, embodies and idealises the English determination, heroism, courage, toughness, good physique and temperament.

Sherlock Holmes explores and uses criminology of the period to disentangle the criminal act and identify the criminal. The criminologists like Cesare Lombroso promoted physiognomic and phrenological analysis of delinquent types to an absurd degree, categorizing them, by race and nationality, which Foucault describes as “a zoology of social sub-species and ethnography of the civilization of malefactors” (*D&P* 253). Conan Doyle’s imperialistic imagery seems analogous with the criminological discourses that construct criminal subjectivities in terms of their biological, racial, national and ethnic features. Thus detective fiction of the Victorian period re-imagined criminal investigation and exercise of disciplinary power as modern and distinctively English methodology, promising a solution to the problem of excessive violence threatening British authority, at home and abroad.
The criminals, whom Holmes hunts down, are in all aspects “others” with distinguishing features that makes them stand out from normality. He describes criminals in animal images and demonises them because of their nationality, class and other social positions. From the inaugural adventure itself, Holmes fights against the foreign and domestic threats that upset British society. The stories of crime in the four novellas featuring Sherlock Holmes are set off exotic landscapes and they criminalise the non-Western/ non-Christian subjectivities. Holmes is a man of knowledge, which in turn becomes his source of power by systematic study and well-organised filing. Holmes’ mechanism of investigation is a mechanism of subjection to control bodies – “the political technology of body” (Foucault, D & P 26). He refers to the Encyclopaedia and other databases for vital information, to trace the biological and racial features of his subjects. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, first published in 1768, is then and now a British canon of general knowledge. Edward W. Said in his Culture and Imperialism observes:

The union of power and knowledge is contemporary with Doyle’s invention of Sherlock Holmes (whose faithful scribe, Dr. Watson is a veteran of the Northwest Frontier), also a man whose approach to life includes a healthy respect for, and protection of, the law allied with a superior, specialized intellect inclining to science . . . Doyle represent for their readers men whose unorthodox style of operation is rationalized by new fields of experience turned into quasi-academic specialties. Colonial rule and crime detection almost gained a respectability and order of the classics and chemistry (Culture 152).
The Holmes canon was a Victorian conception of the metropolitan centre, monitored by Sherlock Holmes, and also an imperial fiction as an exotic rendering of colonial periphery. Margery Hourihan observes that Doyle follows the usual structure and pattern of a Western popular hero story as she says, “the hero is white, male British, American or European. He may be accompanied by a single male companion or he may be the leader of a group of adventurers” (9). Then the hero leaves the civilized order of home to venture into the wilderness in pursuit of his goal. There is a colonial undertext even if the stories plainly narrates the intellectual deciphering of a criminal act that raises questions such as who a criminal is, how and what makes him a criminal more than the very act of crime, making the Sherlock Holmes story an ideological construct. The Detective story textualizes the heroic detective’s attempts and his triumph, in keeping the imperial state free from foreign threats and natives to preserve the social order. Then he encounters a series of difficulties and is threatened by dangerous opponents including wild animals, witches, giants, savages, pirates, criminals, spies and aliens. Finally, he overcomes these hurdles because he is strong, brave, rational, resourceful and determined to succeed.

From the first novella itself, Doyle’s fiction perceives crime as an uncivilized act or an invasion on civilization by barbaric forces. All the four novellas have a sub-text of crime, which is narrated in the form of either a story of investigation set in exotic, mysterious geographies and social premises, or of secret societies. *A Study in Scarlet, Sign of Four* and *The Valley of Fear* have sub-plots of crime in distanced and dreadful spaces, in colonies or former colonies, under primitive conditions of settlement. These adventures in the “primitive” worlds of India and America
emphasize the equivalent heroism of the modern and urban world Holmes dwells in and Watson narrates from.

The violent criminals in the domestic land are also described in animal imagery because of their reversal of the moral and sacred order in British society. Holmes describes his nemesis Dr. Moriarty, and other criminals whom he considers as his intellectual equals such as Sebastian Moran in “The Adventure of the Empty House” and August Milverton, in animal imagery with extreme disgust. He says Milverton impresses him as “the serpents in the zoo . . . the slithery, gliding, venomous creatures with their deadly eyes and wicked, flattened faces” (Doyle, Vol. 2: 886). Holmes’s direct encounter with Professor Moriarty is narrated in “The Adventure of the Final Problem”. Moriarty’s intellectual brilliance impresses Holmes so much that he considers him as his worthy opponent and at the same time he disparages his criminal instincts. Holmes says: “Moriarty has a brain of first order. He sits motionless, like a spider in the center of its web, but the web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them” (Doyle, Vol. 1: 724).

In the story, “The Adventure of the Empty House”, Holmes has a sporting duel with Colonel Sebastian Moran, another intellectual criminal belonging to the league of Moriarty. Martin Priestman observes that Moran is a kind of half resurrection of Moriarty in the person and name. (96) Moran was a potential and intellectual antagonist for the resurrected Sherlock Holmes. Holmes introduces Moran to Watson and Lestrade as the best officer of Her Majesty’s Indian Army, and a sharpshooter. Watson notes “natures’ plainest danger signals” in his
countenance and “his savage eyes and bristling moustache he was wonderfully like a tiger” (Doyle, Vol. 1: 757).

In A Study in Scarlet Doyle narrates the perception of criminal acts by media of the period as different newspapers analyze the murders in Brixton Street as barbaric assaults by strangers and criticize the liberal government’s failure to handle such foreign threats. The London newspapers criticize the authorities and cook up many exaggerated stories about the “Brixton Mystery.” The Daily Telegraph says: “In the history of crime there had seldom been a tragedy which presented stranger features” (Doyle, Vol.1: 49). The Standard criticizes that the lawless outrages of the sort usually occurs under a Liberal administration: “They arose from the unsettling of the minds of the masses and consequent weakening of all authority” (Doyle, Vol. 1: 50). Dr. Watson complains that the increasing overflow of immigrants to London from exotic lands is making the centre of the empire a “great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained (Doyle, Vol. 1: 6).

In Doyle’s stories the wilderness may be an exotic or even fantasy land, Africa, or some other non-European land which lacks the order and safety of home. A study in Scarlet is a demonising discourse as it represents the Mormon community as a phobic enemy. In this novel Holmes detects eventually that the real threats and chaos are instigated by the exotic and mysterious Mormon community from the foreign land, Utah, and the innocent British Christians are only taking action against the barbarous Mormons for their brutal crimes. Holmes and Watson feel great disgust towards the murdered men and sympathize with the murderers. Even though he is a doctor, Watson never felt any sympathy for the murdered Enoch J. Drebber and ridicules his dead body in a most heinous way. He says:
Every time that I closed my eyes I saw before me the distorted, baboon-like countenance of the murdered man. So sinister was the impressions which that face had produced upon me that I found it difficult to feel anything but gratitude for him who had removed its owner from the world. If ever human features bespoke vice of the, most malignant type, they were certainly those of Enoch J. Drebber” (Doyle, Vol.1: 43).

The colonial context in A Study in Scarlet can be identified in the self-introduction of Dr. Watson. The setting of the novella is the last quarter of nineteenth century England. Holmes identifies him as a military doctor from Afghanistan and Watson’s body becomes a political map, an information guide about the ferocities of his life and career in India. His imperial mission gives him no achievements but only a distressed future. The wounded Watson, as he introduces himself, is a symbol of the sufferings of a loyal Englishman and the white man’s imperial burden to civilize and safeguard its subjects. The novella starts with Watson’s report on his imperial mission in which he explains the troubles of the British military and describes the Afghan Muslims as spiteful murderers. This biographical prelude underlines an opposition between the patriotic feeling about English military forces and the uncivilized races in India. He says:

The campaign [Afghan] brought honours and promotions to many, but for me it had misfortune and disaster. I was removed from my brigade and attached to the Berkshires, with whom I served at the fatal battle of Maiwand. There I was struck on the shoulder by a jezail bullet, which shattered the bone and grazed the subclavian
artery. I should have fallen into the hands of murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly (Doyle, Vol. 1: 9).

After returning to London he meets Sherlock Holmes and assists his investigation to efface such threats to the British social and moral order. Martin Kayman observes:

Himself a professional man, Watson lets us know that we are not supposed to feel challenged by Holmes intelligence, but to trust it. Embodying the sturdy middle class virtues that Holmes affects to despise just as he protects them, the good doctor strikes us an eminently reliable narrator—a matter of equal importance to our belief in the detective’s genius and it is in our identification with the narrator’s moral assessment of his friend (Kayman 49).

Watson has multiple subjectivities as a fan boy, an assistant in investigation and the narrator of the heroic actions. He slots into the fan boy identity among the readers also through the most truthful and realistic recollections of his hero’s most exciting adventures so that the readers around the world too would naturally become ardent fans of Sherlock Homes. Dr. Watson is taking the colonial project of introducing a British intellectual giant to the world by chronicling his adventurous missions to efface all kinds of threats to the hegemony of British values and political supremacy. As a constant companion of Holmes in his life and missions, Watson mediates the readers’ attitudes to the hero. He also upholds the patriotic and nationalist values that have a wide emotional appeal among the British people and
which lead to the elevation of those Englishmen, who took part in strategic military and scientific projects in the colonies, into national heroes and icons. Edward W. Said in *Culture and Imperialism* observes that it was a period when the imperial ideology was equated with morality and patriotism. Ronald R. Thomas argues that the injured Watson’s return to England and his need for shelter and security signifies that the British imperial policy needed “rehabilitation by Holmes’s self-proclaimed science of deduction” (*Fingerprint*, 656-657).

In *The Valley of Fear* Doyle replicates the story of the investigation in a “one within other” structure. Through the investigation story by Holmes about the murder of John Douglas, the mystery behind the death of Douglas is unravelled. It also narrates the story of the investigation, trial, and punishment of the Freemen criminal gang members. Birdy Edwards, the detective under cover of John Mcmurdo, was assigned to trap the Freemen gang. Doyle here exploits the genre within a narrative frame — the novella has two detective heroes, one is Holmes and the other is Birdy Edwards. In the course of the investigation, the Freeman community is depicted as a criminal group in America, a real threat to the British social order. The tale marks a distinction between American capitalist society and its criminal outbreaks, which is motivated only by the theories of business, and the innocent British society that longs for a moral/sacred order. It is a lurid attack on the Mollie Maguires, Irish labour groups in U.S.A., and the story promotes anti-workers’ campaign of the corporate companies in America. In the novella, Watson gives a detailed picture of the atrocities of a secret society called Scowrers of Vermissa Valley – members of the Eminent Order of Freeman who are exactly based on a group of Pennsylvanian-Irish coal miners called the Molly Maguires, believed to have been the strike
enforcing terrorist wing of the Ancient order of Hibernians. The secret society story of the first novella is repeated here too as the investigation unravels the violence and evils of the Freeman community.

Birdy Edwards is in actually a detective from the Pinkerton Detective Agency and he infiltrates the workers union as a faithful brother, while trying to bring down its disciplined but criminal activities. The detective agency is guided and monitored by the “five big corporations and two rail roads” and Edwards is supported by “millions of capitalists” (310). As a detective he keeps all the members under surveillance and successfully completes his espionage mission. It was anti-Mormonism – the discrimination, persecution, hostility and prejudice directed at the Mormon community – that steered the first novella. In the second novella he textualizes anti-trade unionism. Doyle evokes fear in the readers about the gloomy, tortuous valley — “hell, a place of terror” and paints a negative shade on the labour union workers as threats to humanity and as most dreadful evils — “dead level of mean ugliness and squalor” (Doyle, Vol.1: 249). It is the detective from the Pinkerton who saves a community from the “enemy of God and man in the Valley of fear” (Doyle, Vol.2: 320).

In The Hound of the Baskervilles, the story of crime is set in the scary landscape of Dartmoor, which mirrors the danger and impenetrability of domestic threats. Holmes fights against the supposed supernatural forces and unveils the natural forces behind the demonic hound and its atrocities. He masters the moor by studying maps and by hiding there without Watson’s knowledge, to investigate the mystery secretly.
Doyle replicates Wilkie Collins' *Moonstone* in his second novel *The Sign of Four*. Both novels have an Indian subtext as a significant part of the plot. In Collins’ novel the investigation revolves around the mystical gem Koh-I-Noor that was stolen from the Indian city Seringapatam by English soldiers belonging to British Empire. The novel is structured on the advent of the oriental jewel, seized by an imperialist plunder, and brought into an apparently calm, stable world of the English upper-middle class-country house precipitating widespread anxiety and a disruption of social and sexual relationships within the family. The novel starts with this past mystery about the theft of the Moonstone by Colonel Herncastle. In an iniquitous conspiracy he deceives his co-soldiers, snatches the stone and returns to his ancestral house in London where he keeps it as his property. The stone is just a treasure for the Englishmen as they disregard and ridicule its religious significance. Though Herncastle dishonestly and disgracefully steals the stone from its original possessors, his character projects the Englishness of a real fighting soldier. The mysterious gem is stolen again from the house and Sergeant Cuff comes onto the scene to unravel the mystery behind the tragedies.

Collins introduces three revenge-spirited Brahmans whom Collins describes as “three Mahogany-coloured Indians” (38) who are played out as red herrings in the plot. The irrational exoticism and wilderness are ascribed to the Indian Brahmans who visit Yorkshire to restore the yellow stone to India. Their method to envision the future and locate the stone using leaf and ink, and the ancient deity that controls and commands them, is an Orientalist stereotypical image in nineteenth century British fiction. Their irrational methods are depicted as antagonistic as opposed to the logical and rational inquiry by Sergeant Cuff. Collins uses physical/ intellectual
otherness to highlight the British/Indian dichotomy. They are mysterious outsiders who work outside the British law and logic, real threats from within the Empire. Their purpose is to return the precious and prestigious stone that the English man brought from the colony to the mother land. For the British, the stone is a “devilish Indian diamond” that distorted peaceful, English life and created disorder and chaos in the home land (46).

Doyle’s *The Sign of Four* also revolves around a box of Indian gems that was once stolen by Captain Morstan who was part of a collective looting. In both novels the thieves are British military officials in India. Major Sholto, another member of the gang, kills Morstan to have the treasure for himself alone thereby betraying others members of his gang. Holmes and Watson finds Bartholomew Sholto a beast that betrayed and stole the treasure from the British soldier, but remains indifferent to the initial crime of the British soldier Morstan looting the Indian jewel box. Doyle appropriates the notions of Orientalism and imperialism in this novella. He gives a very negative shade to the colonial uprising in India and the Indian mutiny in 1857 and portrays demonized figures of Indian subjects. He confirms the British colonial practice to exoticize diverse geographies and dehumanize pluralistic religious subjectivities in India. The imperial programme to exploit the communal animosity within different religious sects and caste/ethnic groups is depicted as forms of internal violence and masks the colonial propaganda. The story of the crime is revealed with the arrest of Jonathan Small and his slave Tonga of the tribe from the Andaman Islands. After his capture by Holmes, Small confesses that he also was a member of the Indo-British gang that looted the Indian treasure.
Here Small is narrating his adventurous life in India — the story of the loot and travel back to his homeland – both to readers and the detectives. Small’s story has the structure of a travelogue/adventurous fiction which was also a nineteenth century literary innovation. Benedict Anderson in his seminal work, *The Imagined Communities* argues that Western travel books construct a discourse of difference in order for the white man to construct the self, distinguished from the negative other in Oriental geographies. Drawing on *The Travels of Marco Polo* he says that the great European travel books evoke the spirit of nationalism which has its roots in fear and hatred of “others” and its affinities with racism. Anderson observes:

> Awed description of Kublai Khan by good Venetian Christian Marco Polo at the end of thirteenth century… in the unselconscious use of “our” and the description of the faith of the Christians as truest … [he] detects the seeds of territorialization of faiths which foreshadow the language of many nationalists…which by now is utterly self conscious and political in intent. (16-17)

Small, in his confessional statement delivered to Holmes and Watson, tells how he came apart from a “chapel-going Worcestershire folk” and joined the “Third Buffs” in India to earn the “Queen’s shilling”, how he became a crippled soldier, later an overseer of the indigo planter, Able White and all the details of the stolen Agra treasure and the long story of revenge against Major Sholto. All these negative images of the Indian subjects and contexts are exposed in this confession. The criminal’s confession becomes an Oriental discourse. He narrates that under British rule, India was a calm, peaceful state and later when the freedom struggle and agitations started it became an abode of utter violence and ruthless atrocities. His
story depicts the penal settlement in the Andaman Islands and the Orientalist perception of the Indian mutiny as an opium-fuelled outbreak of superstitions, violence and inhuman circumstances in India. Small confesses the details with a preoccupied perception that his explanation was truths that perpetuated in the Orientalist texts and media in Britain known to the intellectual detective and police officials. He says:

Without a note of warning, the great mutiny [had] broken upon us.
One month India is still and peaceful, to all appearance as Surrey and Kent; the next there were two hundred thousand black devils let loose, and the country was a perfect hell. Of course you know all about it, gentlemen – a deal more than I do, very like, since reading is not in my line (Doyle, Vol.1: 214).

Jonathan Small, in his most exaggerated and hyperbolic imagery, narrates the story of the Indian freedom struggle. He describes the first war of Indian Independence in 1857 as a threat and menace from the colonial subjects, a violent setback from an ungrateful community whom the white man civilized, strengthened, trained educated and uplifted from the darkness of savagery and ignorance. The whole country is described as an insecure, hazardous place where the Englishmen became helpless fugitives at “their” gun’s command. He says:

It was a fight of the millions against the hundreds; and the cruellest part of it was that these men that we fought against, foot, horse and gunners, were our own picked up troops, whom we had taught and
trained, handling our own weapons and blowing our own bugle-calls
(Doyle, vol.1: 215).

In Watson’s recollection of Small’s autobiographical statements delivered to
the detective, India is an exotic presence throughout and Indians are conceived as
fanatic demons. Small’s narrative thus produces a discourse of difference — he
develops an Orientalist way of identifying himself as an Englishmen, as opposed to
the brutal Indian “other”. The city of Agra, where the looters located the treasure is
described as a place “with swarming fierce devil-worshippers of all sorts [and at]
every point of compass there was nothing but torture and murder and outrage”
(Doyle, Vol.1: 216). He is preoccupied with nationalist, patriotic, racial feelings
while describing the story. He expresses extreme disgust about the two “fierce-
looking” Sikh troopers, “who had home arms against us at Chilian Wallah” (Doyle,
Vol.1: 217). In his recollection, the looting of the Agra treasure and the violence
associated with it were planned and processed by his Indian counterparts. He says he
was just obeying them to escape from death. His discourse also textualizes the
imperial campaign that Indians were divided communally amongst themselves. He
narrates how the natives planned the looting and leagued him into the treasure hunt:

Listen to me Sahib, said the taller and fiercer of the pair, the one
whom they called Abdullah Khan. You must either be with us now,
or you must be silenced forever. The thing is too great a one for us to
hesitate. Either you are heart and soul with us on your oath on the
cross of the Christians, or your body this night shall be thrown into
the ditch and we shall pass over to our brothers in the rebel army.
There is no middle way, which is to be – death or life? . . .
How can I decide? Said I [Small] you have not told me what you want from me. But I tell you now that if it is anything against the safety of the fort, I will have no truck with it, so you can drive home your knife and welcome.

It is nothing against the foil, Said he. We only ask you to do that which your country men come to this land for. We ask you to be rich. If you will be one of us this night, we will swear to you upon the naked knife, and by the threefold oath which no Sikh was ever known to break, that you shall have your fair share of the loot. A quarter of the treasure shall be yours.

But what is the treasure then? I asked I was ready to be rich as you can be if you will but show me how it can be done.

You will swear then, said he, by the bones of your father, by the honour of your mother, by the cross of your faith, to raise no hand and speak no word against us, either now or afterwards? . . . had you been a lying Hindoo, though you had sworn by all gods in their false temples, your blood would have been upon the knife and your body in the water. But the Sikh knows the Englishman and the Englishman knows the Sikh (Doyle, Vol.1: 218-219).

The theme of British colonialism as a paradigm of civilizing, rescuing and enslaving the subjects can be exemplified in the relation between Jonathan Small and Tonga. In *The Sign of Four* Doyle repeats the construct of master/slave relationship—as seen in Prospero/Caliban in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and many
other British literary texts. *The Tempest* is considered a primary text in which postcolonial criticism identified the relationship between imperial ideology and literature. Prospero appears to be an all-knowing patriarch and artistic creator whose magic has a benevolent effect and Caliban is presented as a lackluster savage creature. The play textualizes an Orientalist perception of European colonialism in which Prospero is seen as a European master and Caliban the oppressive native. Caliban is an anagrammatic christening after cannibal who signifies the cruel, irrational, savage and violent characteristics ascribed to the natives in order to assert the superiority of the civilized Europeans. In the same way Jonathan Small enslaves Tonga the native of the Andaman Islands and makes him his “mysterious ally” (Doyle Vol.1: 216). Tonga accompanies Small from India to London and facilitates his endeavour to rediscover the Agra treasure and take revenge against Sholto. Small meets Tonga while he was being held captive in the Andaman. Tonga was sick and about to die, but Small cures him and brings him back to life eventually making him his slave. He narrates:

He [Tonga] was venomous as a young snake, and after a couple of months I got him all right and able to walk. He took a kind of fancy to me then and hardly go back to his woods, but always hanging about my hut. I learned a little of his lingo from him, and this made him all the fond of me . . . When I found that he was devoted to me and would do anything to serve me, I saw my chances to escape . . . He was staunch and true, no man had a more faithful mate (Doyle vol. I: 230-31).
Tonga becomes the Englishman’s slave, weapon, means for getting earnings and a thug for his mission in London. Small narrates: “We earned our living at this time by exhibiting my poor Tonga at fairs and other such places as a black cannibal. He would eat raw meat and dance his war-dance so we had a handful of pennies after a day’s work” (Doyle 232). It was Tonga’s native weapon — the poisoned arrow, that kills Sholto. In effect Sholto is killed by a savage foreigner and not by the British man Jonathan Small.

Holmes starts his investigation on the case of the disappearance of Captain Morston under suspicious circumstances as informed by his daughter Miss. Morston. In his investigation he detects the involvement of a super human creature, “mysterious ally” in the murder and that “lifts the case from common place” (Doyle Vol.1: 160). Inspecting the dead body he infers that death resulted from some powerful vegetable alkaloid – some “strychnine-like substance which would produce tetanus and that was certainly not an English thorn” (Doyle 163). Holmes connects the mystery to the aboriginals of India after analyzing the evidences such as “diminutive foot marks, toe never fettered by boots, naked feet, stone-headed wooden mace, great agility, small poisoned dart” (186). Watson uses the categories such as race, colour, origin, and religious features to identify the savage pygmy. He observes:

Some of the inhabitants of the Indian Peninsula are small men, but none could have left such marks as that. The Hindoo proper has long and thin feet. The sandal-wearing Mohemmedan has the great toe well separated from the others because the thorn is commonly passed between. These little darts, too, could only be shot in one way. They
are from a blown pipe. Now then, where are we to find our savage?

(Doyle, Vol.1: 186).

Holmes refers to a gazetteer, an authority of knowledge and information which was in currency at that time and confirms the murderer was really a pigmy from the Indian Island. The gazetteer is a demonising discourse as it gives an Orientalist examination about Indian aboriginals and natives. The entire data ascribes bestiality and savagery to the Indian subjects which in turn asserts the colonial strategies to train and enslave them. The gazetteer, as a canonical Western text containing information on various intellectual disciplines, indicates that Western epistemology distinguished, discriminated and dehumanized the Orients based on their race, ethnicity and physiological features. This information underlines the physical, intellectual and moral superiority of the Europeans, as Edward W. Said observes that “racial theory was stimulated by rising nationalism and spreading imperialism” (Orientalism 232). The gazetteer says:

Andaman Islands, situated 340 miles to the north of Sumatra, in the Bay of Bengal . . . Moist climate, coral reefs, sharks, Port Blair, convict barracks, Rutland Island, cottonwoods. The aborigines of the Andaman Islands may perhaps claim the distinction of being the smallest race upon the earth, though some anthropologists prefer the Bushmen of Africa, the Digger Indians of America, and the terra Del Fuegians. The average height is rather below four feet, although many full grown, adults may be found who are very much smaller than this. They are fierce, morose, and intractable people, though capable of forming most devoted friendships when their confidence
has once been gained . . . They are naturally hideous, having large, misshapen heads, small, fierce eyes, and distorted features . . . British people have failed to win them over in any degree. They have always been a terror to shipwrecked crews, braining survivors with their stone-headed clubs or shooting them with their poisoned arrows. These massacres are invariably concluded by a cannibal feast (Doyle, Vol.1: 187).

Tonga, from the Andaman Islands, as described in Watson’s narrative, capitalizes the imperial discourse that ascribes criminality to the non-British subjectivities. The wilderness and criminality are interchangeably put down to the colonized subjects and their threats to the English social/ moral/ sacred order are deemed as deviant/ transgressive /criminal acts which eventually subjected to British jurisprudence and penal mechanism in the Empire. Doyle portrays the Orients as savages — the imperial monsters and their “otherness” is defined in binary opposition to European norms of physicality, intellect, behaviour and ethnicity. The description of Tonga in a most disgusting manner using animal imagery illustrates how the Holmes canon endorses the assumptions of white cultural superiority. Tonga is reduced to the status of a slave, physically ill-treated as a foreign threat from the Indian island like Poe’s orangutan that instills fear in Englishmen. They are embodiments of savage “crimes of Empire coming home to roost in the respectable heart land” (Priestman 80). As an Orientalist literary text, Holmes canon perpetuates “the Aryan myth that dominated the cultural anthropology at the expense of these less important people” (Said, Orientalism 99). Watson narrates:
A little black man — the smallest I have ever seen — with a great, misshapen head and shocks of tangled disheveled hair. Holmes had already drawn his revolver, and I whipped out mine at the sight of this savage, distorted creature. He was wrapped in some sort of dark blanket, which left only his face exposed, but that face was enough to give a man a sleepless night. Never have I seen features so deeply marked with all bestiality and cruelty. His small eyes glowed and burned with a somber light, and his thick lips were writhed back from his teeth, which grinned and chattered at us with half-animal fury (Doyle, Vol.1: 204).

It is Watson, the ex-service man who kills the islander: he performs it as his privilege and a duty as a military man who was enlisted to repress, oppress and suppress threats from colonial subjects. Watson in this novella is the retaliator authenticated by Holmes and the British state. Holmes identifies Tonga as the murderer of the Englishmen by his intellectual observation and scientific deduction and Watson completes that legal process of punishing the criminal. Watson thus becomes a “cult of military personality [which] was prominent usually because such personalities had managed to bash a few dark heads” (Said, Culture 81).

Holmes, in almost every tale, interchangeably uses criminality and bestiality as he describes his criminal “others” in animal images. He refers to criminal anthropology -- a scientific discipline popularised in the nineteenth century by Havelock Ellis. Criminal anthropology is such a discipline that it makes the human body itself a discourse to produce certain truths. In criminal investigation anthropological features and biological and physiological specialties are used to
identify the criminals and stigmatize these races and ethnic communities by
ascribing criminality and bestiality on them. The investigating hero imagines and
constructs truth based on his assumptions regarding anthropological features.
Ronald R. Thomas argues that like scientific writing on criminology that flourished
in England in the late nineteenth century, detective fiction links questions of national
identity and security in ways that redefine the relation of an individual’s body with
the body politic. The psychological, anthropological and biological explanation of
the crime and the criminal body produces a convincing discourse which is
eventually disseminated as the truth behind a particular crime and governmental/
bureaucratic actions against it. Criminality is attributed to a particular body, say
suspect’s, because of its physiological features and racial subordination and
foreignness. From a Foucauldian perspective these techniques of identifying and
interpreting a criminal body demonstrate the shift in the art of investigation and
production of truth in the nineteenth century. Drawing on Ellis’ anthropological
studies Ronald R. Thomas argues that “[he] offers us a system by which we can read
the criminal body, recognizing the physiology of the hand, the cranium, the ear and
the hair . . . as characteristic of a criminal type” (*Forensic* 660). Holmes rejoices in
his talent at identifying atavistic features of a criminal type and he compares his
talent to Dr. Mortimer’s atavistic formula to distinguish a Negro from an Esquimau
based on the “supra-orbital crest, the facial angle, the maxillary curve” (*Doyle*, Vol.
2: 37). Doyle uses Dr. Mortimer as his mouth piece to eulogize his hero for his
physiological features that identifies his racial, intellectual superiority. He says:

> I had hardly expected so dolicocephalic a skull or such well-marked
> supra orbital development. Would you have any objection to my
running my finger along your parietal fissures? A cast of your skull, sir, until the original is available, would be an ornament to any anthropological museum. It is not my intention to be fulsome, but I confess that I covet your skull (Doyle, Vol.2: 38).

Doyle’s practice of Orientalism can be traced in the short story “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”. Holmes’ knowledge about Oriental spaces facilitates his power of investigation and identification of the criminal’s ways of crime. His client Helen Stoner is an unprotected Victorian woman who was detained and tortured by her step father Dr. Grimesby Roylott. He was “the last survivor of one of the oldest Saxon families in England, the Roylotts of Stoke Moran” (Doyle, Vol.1: 391). His ancestral fortunes and property were gambled away which made him an “aristocratic pauper” and to overcome the huge debts he becomes a medical practitioner in Calcutta, where through his professional skill and force of character he established a large practice. He suffered a long term imprisonment for beating his butler to death.

Watson’s narrative explains that Roylott’s residence in tropics, experiences in India and his acquaintance with gypsies, and the English amalgamation with Orient culture worsened his “violence of temper approaching to mania and after his service in India he returned to England as a morose and disappointed man” (Doyle, Vol.1: 395). He has a passion for Indian animals and tames a cheetah and a baboon, both were sent over to him by a correspondent and his neighbours feared these creatures “almost as much as their master” (Doyle, Vol.1: 396). He kills the twin sister of Helen Stoner and marks Helen for his next murder because when she marries he stands to lose a substantial sum of two hundred and fifty pounds per
annum. Watsons’ portrayal of Dr. Roylott illustrates his past life in the tropical climate in India and he describes him in animal imageries. “A large face seared with a thousand wrinkles, burned yellow with the sun and marked with every evil passion . . . gave him somewhat the resemblance to a fierce old bird of prey” (Doyle, Vol.1: 402). Holmes identifies Roylott’s incestuous crime was backed by his knowledge of Oriental practices. Roylott sends an Indian swamp adder to his step daughter’s bedroom through a hole which signifies the incestuous male and a financial violence. This story reminds Poe’s first tale of ratiocination as in both cases an animal from an Oriental land murders two unprotected ladies. Here Roylott is an insane, irrational, mad man and his violent temperament is said to be intensified by his association with Indian subjects: “the idea of using a form of poison which could not possibly be discovered by any chemical test was just such a one as would occur to a clever and ruthless man who had had an Eastern training” (Doyle, Vol.1: 416).

Holmes cannot tolerate an aristocratic Englishman, especially a doctor – a profession of imperial science – becoming a monster of degeneracy, wickedness and subhuman ferocity. In his attempts to bring Oriental threats to England, Roylott makes an Englishwoman’s bedroom a chaotic space for Oriental violence. Holmes argues that Roylott accentuates Oriental knowledge and culture in English circles which is an unpardonable crime against the imperial centre. So he says: “When a doctor goes wrong he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge” (Doyle, Vol.1: 414). The English woman’s bedroom becoming the scene of crime is a metonymical representation of the whole of England being jeopardized by Oriental threats. Holmes’ investigation becomes an imperial remedy, an antidote for polluted England as he eradicates Roylott who was poisoned by his mingling with Oriental
culture and practices. Roylott was killed by his “dangerous pet” as Holmes arouses its “snakish temper” by giving some blows with his cane. Holmes says: “I am no doubt responsible for Dr. Grimsby Roylott’s death, and I cannot say that it is likely to weigh very heavily upon my conscience” (Doyle, Vol.1: 416-17).

In many short stories also Doyle encourages the colonial ideology of identification of a criminal type based on racial, national and ethnic features. In “The Adventure of the Dancing Men” criminality is identified with American nationals, and non-British European threats in “The Adventure of the Six Napoleons”. His nemesis, the intellectual criminal Moriarty, is referred to as the “Napoleon of Crime” (Doyle, Vol.1: 722) which signifies the animosity that prevailed between Britain and France in the early nineteenth century. In the story “The Adventure of Black Peter” the antagonist is an American navigator, an ex-criminal who came to London, rugged and battered in bestial image — “seal” (Doyle, Vol.1: 866). He is christened so because of his swarthy behaviour and colour and bestiality is fit onto him because of his racial “otherness” and foreignness. Holmes identifies him as a threat to the British social order and bourgeois morality since he “was an intermittent drunkard . . . a perfect fiend . . . he has been known to drive his wife and daughter out of doors in the middle of the night [and] he was summoned once for a savage assault upon [an] old vicar” (Doyle, Vol.1: 867).

Doyle’s fiction inscribes the domination of British power over the globe and his hero is elevated into a British cultural icon in the heydays of imperialism. The stories epitomize the Western hero hunting down uncivilized creatures from other lands. By ascribing wilderness to people of other nations, religious communities and political ideology, by depicting the empire as places of disorder and chaos, it
justifies the imperial oppression, regulation, the implementation of British legal and judicial practices, and surveillance of colonial subjects. Said observes:

For nineteenth century Europe an imposing edifice of learning and culture was built, so to speak, in the face of actual outsiders (the colonies, the poor, the delinquent) whose role in culture was to give definitions to what they were constitutionally unsuited for (Orientalism 228).

Through distorted, stereotypical images, the Holmes canon affirms the Orientalist discourses and imperial ideology of criminalising/demonising the orient subjects. Holmes and the chronicles of his investigation nurture the national, colonial needs and interests. Doyle’s investigation becomes a political and historical process that illustrates the ties between the imperial ideology and its contemporary culture and literary canon.

Detective fiction in the Golden Age, especially that of Agatha Christie, also followed the Holmes canon as constructs of an imperial ideology of identifying criminality and savagery in non-British subjects and representing them in distorted imageries. Agatha Christie textualizes the Orientalist perception of the West especially with regards to West Asian nationals. The project and propaganda for British imperialism was publicized and commercialized for domestic consumption in the most popular detective narratives of Agatha Christie. It was a period when Britain faced nationalist struggles from subjects in West Asian and Gulf countries such as Iraq, Palestine and Egypt. British imperialism got a massive set back in Asia and Africa with the freedom movements there and new “threats” originated from the
Zionist and Arab regions of the globe. Christie’s novels such as *Murder in Mesopotamia*, *Death on the Nile*, *Appointment with Death* and *Murder in the Oriental Express*, are anchored on the design of reinforcing British moral and political hegemony over the rest of the world by demonizing and criminalizing non-British subjects.

In *Murder on the Oriental Express* the murder takes place on the train where “there are people, of all classes, all nationalities, of all ages” (Christie 26). Christie holds together all these national and international connections by the notions of crime, justice and order. The non-British nationals are stereotyped in such a way that they are more likely to involve in criminal activities than the innocent British passengers. The train manager Bouchars or the Italian Antonio Franscarelli are seen as Ratchett’s possible killers. The Italians are referred to as people involved in criminal business and gang wars. Poirot asserts that the crime is committed by an Italian because “Italians use knife! And they are great liars! I do not like Italians.” (Christie 177). Poirot agrees with his observation about the temperament and psychology of Italians to commit crime “especially in the heat of a quarrel” (177). The Americans are also presented as stereotypes of criminals as the victim Ratchett is a vicious child kidnapper from America and his original name Casetti sounds Italian. The testimonies of the characters of other nationalities express an attitude of disdain towards the American.

In her novels Christie constructs stereotypical notions about Islam and West Asian nationalities. As Edward W. Said noted, the Arabs were outsiders and aliens in European texts and Christie’s novels that are set in West Asian geographies mark the shift in the “European awareness of Islam from textual to administrative and
Military” (Said Orientalism 210). British society, since the First World War experiences an enduring fear of Islam and West Asian nationals. The literary discourses textualize this fear as a threat to the imperial order. Christie’s characters are predominantly negative in their description and attitude to the Orients. Susan Rowland notes: “The Golden Age writers lived and wrote in a racist society and within their work are unchallenged racist comments” (66).

The novels of Agatha Christie at times seem to be travelogues giving vivid and fantastic pictures of Oriental subjects as they are set in West Asian lands. They show Muslims as bereft of education and less adaptive to the modern world. Like the sensational stereotypes, the description of Arabs in Christie’s novels appears provocative and attractive to the readers who are ignorant about those landscapes and culture. These novels perpetuate the myths of exotic cultural and religious rituals that reinforce a myopic vision of reality.

The stereotypical images of Muslim subjectivity constructed in these discourses which takes shape in the minds of a Western/ Christian/ non-Muslim subjects are that of an illiterate people, ignorant of the significance of English as a global language, rejoicing in polygamy, involved in cruel atrocities and colluding with terrorists; a community that disregard the independence of women folk and keeps a very strict sectarian/ fundamentalist social order.

In Appointment with Death Christie’s characters expresses a disgust towards Oriental subjects which is disguised as sympathy. Racial inferiority and savagery are identified in them as British people comment: “They’re not educated, poor creatures” (Christie 375). Christie’s novels and her autobiography depict the travel
experiences of the English aristocrats in West Asia and they imagine a community through their opinion, observation and beliefs, which draws stereotypical, distorted images about West Asia. In their imagination and preconceptions they exoticize the indigenous subjects, their physical appearance, attitude, rituals, land and culture. In Appointment with Death, Poirot asks his fellow passenger in Palestine, Miss Pierce, to describe a suspect and she comments: “All these Arabs look alike to me”. (Christie 140). Another woman, Lady Westholme, observes: “He was a man of more than average height . . . and wore a usual native headdress. He had one pair of torn and patched breeches — really disgraceful they were — and his puttees were wound most untidily – all anyhow! These men need discipline!” (Christie, Appointment 140). In the novel, the murderer is Lady Westholme — she disguises in the clothing of an Arab woman that leads to suspicion that she is vulnerable to commit a murder. While interrogating the servant, Poirot asks with which servant boy the murdered lady was angry with. He is answered: “None of the boys admit it for a moment . . . Abdul tell it Mohammed, and Mohammed say it Aziz and Aziz say it Aissa and so on. They are all very stupid Bedouin — understanding nothing” (Christie Appointment 176). Sarah Kings observes that Arabs bear a fundamentalist and heathenish position regarding the dress code of women. As a civilized, modern British Christian woman she cannot tolerate those inhibitions. “Sarah sighed. ‘They turned me out of one place today because I had on a sleeveless dress,’ she said ruefully. Apparently the Almighty doesn’t like my arms in spite of having made them” (Christie, Appointment 7).

In Murder in Mesopotamia, Dr. Leidner identifies the reason for his wife’s paranoia and delusion, which is her fear of the natives and coloured people. The
conversation between Dr. Leidner and Dr. Reilly unveils the British people’s racial prejudices. “Facts, facts? Lies told by an Indian cook ad a couple of Arab house boys. You know these fellows as well as I do, Reilly; so do you Maitland. Truth as truth means nothing to them” (Christie 101). The hospital nurse Amy Leatheran writes a letter to her sister Curshaw in London in which she paints a negative shade of the Iraqi people. The letter reflects the Orientalist perception of a British lady about Mesopotamian culture and people as she writes:

The dirt and mess in Baghdad you wouldn’t believe — and not romantic at all like you’d think from the Arabian Nights! . . . [the] town itself is just awful — and no proper shops at all. Major Kelsey took me to bazaars, and of course there no denying they’re quaint — but just a lot of rubbish and hammering away at copper pans till they make your head ache. (Christie, Mesopotamia 3-4).

Christie uses animal imagery in describing the servants — “little black figures moving about . . . like ants” (Christie, Mesopotamia 28) – that explain her disgust and repugnance for Oriental races. In her autobiography and the novel Death in the Nile she exoticizes the Oriental land when explaining elementary and primitive lodging facilities and technical incapability in Egypt to overcome hurdles in transportation and hazardous climatic conditions that reinforce the technical and scientific superiority of Western society over Oriental subjects.

Franz Fanon asserts in his Black Skin, White Masks that colonialism was able to produce a sense of inferiority in colonial subjects; of the psychopathology by which the colonized individual was led to “experience him or herself at one remove
as an object” (114). The image of the Orient in British detective fiction is a fantasy filtered through Western fears and desires. Detective narratives represent colonial subjects as reduced to an object; he or she is unable to be fully human at an individual level. It testifies to the fact that colonial oppression works at the level of psychology as well as in material level. Poe, Doyle and Agatha Christie endorse the Western demonising discourses that represent other religions and ethnic groups as phobic threats. The fear of African, Asian and Muslim subjects is intensified by demonising both religion and ethnicity and a double-edged privilege or superiority is credited with white European Christian subjects.

The racialization of the Muslim looking and Muslim sounding profiles may demoralize them to criminal by state and popular discourses endorse these practices. Edward W. Said says: “crime is no longer an objective act, governed by recognized, publicly codified procedures of evidence, trial, punishment, and appeal; it has become the prerogative of the state entirely to define and punish it at will” (Roadmap 82). Generating a fear in global community of Islam is very severe after 9/11. Islamophobia is defined by Peter Gottschalk as “social anxiety about Islam and Muslims” (Wikipedia). This pejorative description of the Orient is always an imperialist paradigm from the colonial heritage. As Edward W. Said notes, “the perfidious Chinese, half-naked Indians, and passive Muslims are described as vultures for “our” largesse and are damned when “we lose them” to communism” (Orientalism 108). Like the colonial discourses the new imperial discourses favouring American political strategies are always attempting to criminalize the Asian and Arab nations and especially Islamic countries after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001.
After 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre US enabled governments in Unites States and elsewhere to exploit the popular concerns and fears about national security. A fear of Muslim identity is globally inflicted even on the Muslim population through various, bureaucratic as well as cultural mechanism. This normalization creates docile subjects and the police/military surveillance maximizes the state’s knowledge about the citizens of different nationalities which is a part of the hunt for “terrorists” in the “war on terror”.

Like modern prose fiction, film industry and television have become much more sophisticated and complex in their treatment of crime and investigation. These visual texts feature tough guy cops, undercover detectives and charismatic spies engaging in thrilling actions. The detective narratives from Hollywood -- Richard Mealand christens them “Hollywoodunits” (298) — are predicated on the professed ability of police, and panoptic mechanism to bring security and born out of fear of the “other”. During the period of Cold war and with the ascendance of China to the economic top and the elevation of Communist Korea to a powerful military force, Hollywood thrillers stage an ideological battle with Communism. The culture and people of these nations are often demonised and misrepresented in the language of film that perpetuate the myth of insecurity – these “irregular countries” and forces are construed as threats to international security and peace and as a political threat to the hegemony of capitalist order. The dominant discourses enrich the political as well as cultural language that dehumanizes the non-Western subjectivities and elicit a fear factor in the subjects through the development of certain neologisms, expressions, derivatives and terms. These lexical choices include fundamentalism, radical, militant, extremist, terrorist, anti-West, security, enemy. The crime
narratives in global media, film and fiction especially those show their affinity to the capitalist economic order, functions as demonisation discourses of representation through rich and varied use of images and stereotypes.

James Bond fiction and its adaptation in Hollywood reflect this change in the world order and the production, distribution and the mass sensibility that it construct have been driven by Anglo-American global capitalism. These spy stories narrate a covert action which is self-evidently sensational since “it involves national rivalries and constantly veers towards a paranoid vision of violence by outside agencies and violation of individual autonomy by internal agencies” (Seed 115). The cultural stereotypes in Bond narratives include norms, values, nation and religion. Bond’s acts of espionage overtly seek knowledge for power and are justified in the name of state security. James Bond evolved as a “representative of civilization, reason, order and freedom”, intense patriotic attitude and social commitment (Hourihan 21). He adapts and changes according the developments of society, popular and modern artefacts and most importantly commoditizing the popular narratives while at the same time preserving its successful recipes.

Long before the event of 11 September 2001, terrorism has been a subject of popular narratives, political dialogue and public scrutiny. Hollywood functions as the cultural space for the discursive construction of terrorism and the intensification of a wider culture of surveillance and control of other subjects by Anglo-American bureaucracies. Demonisation and criminalization of the Arabs and Muslims gained momentum at both political and cultural level and the Hollywood products singled out Arabs as objects of hatred, contempt and derision. This media campaign fosters numerous misconceptions about Arabs and Islam as symbols of violence and
savagery and spreads “Islamophobia” among the people. They often depict Arabs as religious bigots, lacking any tolerance for the religious sensibilities of others. Jack G. Shaheen in his book *The TV Arab* says that “villains of choice today are Arabs” (11) and “films are political attack in the guise of entertainment” (82). He explains:

Television [and Hollywood] tends to perpetuate four basic myths about Arabs: they are wealthy; they are barbaric and uncultured; they are sex maniacs with a penchant for white slavery; and they revel in act of terrorism. Yet, just a little surface probing reveals that these notions are as false as the assertions that blacks are lazy, Hispanics are dirty, Jews are greedy and Italians are criminals (4). The present day Arab stereotype parallels the image of Jews in pre Nazi Germany, where Jews were painted as dark, shifty eyed, venal threateningly different people (12).

The Hollywood films such as *True Lies*, (1994) *The Siege*, (1998), and *Traitor* (2008) and many others have the narrative frame work of an investigative drama and anchor on the themes of violence, insecurity and Islamic terrorism eventually containing negative stereotypes of Islam and Muslims. These films make a realistic construction of the American imagination of the fear of Islamic terrorist attacking the motherland, murdering US citizens around the world, inflicting chaos to the peaceful and systematic lives of Americans. Monolithic stereotypes of Muslim characters being violent and ready to be suicidal bombs, untrustworthy, dangerous foreign immigrants are reinforced in these dramas.
*True Lies* directed by James Cameron starring the Hollywood macho Arnold Schwarzenegger, in box office terms, is categorized as an action comedy. *True Lies* portrays Muslims in gruesome images and visuals as anti-American terrorists, religious fanatics, and sexists, screaming murderous terrorists killing innocents and planning to destroy the world. This negative portrayal of Muslims works from the ignorance of the Muslim culture and customs that only helps to perpetuate a myth in which Islam is simplified as a group fanatic individuals and a guilty community. The narrative informs the audience that Western capitalist interests are threatened by the Jihadi groups who are in hold of weapons of mass destruction. The film also reinforces that it is inevitable to sanction surveillance that monitor the Muslim subjects so as to protect the rest.

*The Siege* is directed by Edward Zwick starring the Hollywood popular super heroes, Denzel Washington and Bruce Willis. The film employs the technique of intercutting so that the visuals of Muslim rituals and terrorist acts overlap each other which are testimonials of the discursive practice of criminalizing Muslims and terrorism as an intrinsic practice of the Islamic customs.

*Traitor*, a post 9/11 drama repeats the Hollywood cinematic terrorism and reinforces the logics of power that construct a dystopia—the insecurity feeling in the subjects, fear and fantasies about a demonised, depraved Muslim others. It also depicts America that is heavily infiltrated by Muslims who are ready to carry out suicide bomb attacks. The film intercuts the visuals of Samir, the hero of the film offering prayers five times a day, his abstaining from alcohol, and other Muslim characters drinking wine, engaging in violence, in order to distinguish good Muslims from bad Muslims. In the final scene of the film, Clayton, the investigator
tells him that America owes him a debt of gratitude for his cooperation in wipe out the terrorist groups. Samir but still feels guilty of killing the innocents as he quotes from Quran that he who kills one kills whole mankind, but Clayton calms him down by quoting from the same text that he who saves one save whole mankind, praising him as a hero, a good Muslim.

Mahmood Mamdani in his seminal essay “Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism” cites Bush-Blair alliance calling for a renovation of Islam by distinguishing good Muslims from bad Muslims—“whether in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Palestine, Islam must be quarantined and the devil must be exorcized from it by a civil war between good Muslims and bad Muslims” (766). Mamdani observes:

Certainly we are now told to distinguish between good Muslims and bad Muslims. Mind you, not between good persons and bad persons nor between criminals and civic citizens, who both happens to be Muslims, but between good Muslims and bad Muslims. We are told that there is a fault line running through Islam, a line that separates moderate Islam, called genuine Islam from extremist political Islam. The terrorists of September 11, we are told, did not just hijack planes, they also high jacked Islam, meaning genuine Islam (767).

Detective narratives discussed in this thesis function as Eurocentric discourses in which detectives always identify the dangerous “others” in Oriental subjects so that they are described as threats to the hegemonic order of Western civilization. Nowadays the television dramas like CSI series, nonfiction
documentaries on HBO and other cable networks shift their focus to legal proceedings, dramatise subjects such as DNA analyses, autopsies, medical/forensic examinations. The culture and the cinematic language of Hollywood and these television dramas, therefore, can be viewed as a mode of political activity that both construct and reflect a violent society for the spectacle where pervasive feelings of fear, anxiety and paranoia are reproduced. These discourses are constructed and narrated within a system of thought by which dominant economic, social, cultural, and political power establishes spheres of knowledge and truth and it is through these discursive practices that religions, races, cultures, and classes are represented.