

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

**FROM WHODUNNIT TO WHYDUNNIT
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE TRADITIONAL
DETECTIVE STORY INTO A MODERN CRIME NOVEL**

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

by

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KIELTEN LAITOS

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The transformation of the traditional detective story into a modern crime novel

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Rikoskirjallisuus tuntuu viettävän uutta kultakauttaan. Niin myytyjen kuin lainattujenkin kirjojen määrästä huomattava osuus on rikoskirjallisuutta, tuttavallisemmin sanottuna dekkareita. Uudet dekkarit sekä dekkarikirjailijat saavat myös hyvin tilaa lehtien kirjallisuuspalstoilla. Uusia tulokkaita tähän genreen on alkanut löytyä yllättävistäkin maista, Afrikkaa myöten. Aiemmin roskakirjallisuutenakin pidetty rikoskirjallisuus on muuttunut hyväksyttäväksi harrastusmuodoksi: enää ei tarvitse häpeillen tunnustaa ahmivansa dekkareita työmatkoilla ja kesälomilla. Rikoskirjallisuus on otettu myös yliopistojen lukusuunnitelmiin muiden kirjallisuuden lajien rinnalle. Suomessa suosiosta kertoo myös perustetut dekkariseura ja –kirjasto ja aiheeseen liittyvät tapahtumat, kuten Dekkaripäivät. Yksi syy suureen suosioon lienee myös kirjojen pohjalta tehdyissä laadukkaissa tv-sarjoissa.

Niin sanottuna rikoskirjallisuuden kulta-aikana pidetään maailmansotien välistä aikaa, karkeasti ottaen 1920–30 –lukuja. Tuon ajan dekkareita luetaan yhä innokkaasti, mutta sen jälkeiset vuodet ovat tuoneet rikoskirjallisuuteen myös uusia piirteitä. Onkin mielenkiintoista tarkastella, onko kyse enää ollenkaan samasta asiasta, kun vertaillaan kulta-ajan dekkareita ja nykyaikaisia psykologisia rikosromaaneja. Julian Symons on laatinut kirjassaan *Bloody Murder* (1985) listan niistä ominaisuuksista, joiden avulla vertailua voidaan tehdä.

Tässä tutkielmassa käyn aluksi läpi miten rikoskirjallisuutta on yritetty hahmottaa ja luokitella ja mitkä ovat sen rakenne ja erityispiirteet. Sen jälkeen käsittelen rikoskirjallisuutta vastaan esitettyä kritiikkiä sekä puoltavia kannanottoja. Sitten hahmotan rikoskirjallisuuden alkutaivalta, näkemyksestä riippuen se alkaa joko raamatullisista kertomuksista tai sitten eurooppalaisen poliisitoiminnan perustamisen ajoilta. Seuraavana tarkastelen lähemmin Symonsin luokittelua ja analysoin sen pohjalta kaksi kirjaa: Agatha Christien *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* joka on kirjoitettu vuonna 1920 sekä Ruth Rendellin *The Lake of Darkness* vuodelta 1980. Lopuksi luon silmäyksen rikoskirjallisuuden tulevaisuudennäkymiin.

Asiasanat: crime fiction. crime genre. detective fiction. detective stories. history of literature. literary research. Agatha Christie. Ruth Rendell.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Many people love to read detective stories. But sometimes instead of detective story, we can see one of the following terms on the dust jacket: murder mystery, whodunnit, cosy, hard-boiled novel, police procedural, crime story, timetable mystery, locked-room mystery, inverted tale, puzzle story, psychological thriller, etc. Are these manifestations of just one genre or is there some difference behind these characterisations?

Detective fiction is one of the most popular genres in literature today. Some scholars have found examples of detection as far back as in the Bible or Greek dramas, but according to the most popular view, detective fiction could not exist before the founding of organised police force in Europe in the 19th century. The heyday of detective stories was roughly in the years of 1920 - 1930 and it was called the Golden Age. Stories from that period are still reprinted, bought, borrowed and read today. (Ousby 1997: 64).

The Second World War changed the world and crime literature underwent numerous changes, too. Many felt that the detective story had come to its end, but that was not the case. It simply generated into new subgenres alongside with the classical format. Now we are witnessing a new boom of the genre.

There are also many who do not love to read detective stories. Some critics have condemned detective fiction for its escapist nature, formulaic structure and popularism. We shall see later on that these aspects have served certain purposes within the genre.

1.1 Focus of this thesis

Various summaries have been written on detective fiction but the focus has mainly been on the history of crime genre. Author and essayist Julian Symons has gone further and analysed how the classical detective story differs from the modern crime novel. In his book *Bloody Murder. From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: a History*, he has pinpointed eight characteristics demonstrating these differences (1985: 162-164). In order to illustrate the disparities in a more concrete way, I will analyse in this thesis two books on the basis of Symons's classification and see if the distinction can be made. I

have chosen novels by two best-selling authors for this comparison: *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* written in 1920 by Agatha Christie representing the classical detective story of the so-called Golden Age and *The Lake of Darkness* by Ruth Rendell, published almost eighty years later in 1999, representing the modern crime novel.

But first, I will go through some of the characteristics of detective literature, such as formulaic structure and conventions, which often have been the key issues of the criticism. We shall also take a look at some possible reasons for the popularity of the genre. Then I will take a closer look at the origin and history of detective literature by following its development and presenting cultural and sociological effects on the genre. I will also briefly introduce authors who have had major influence on this literary form and lastly examine the present state.

After the analyses of the two novels I will present the conclusions and give suggestions for the future studies on the crime genre.

2. APPEAL AND CHARM OF DETECTIVE FICTION

From the very beginning detective fiction has fought to be taken seriously. Associated with leisure and distraction it has been principally ignored by the literary academics and instead been analyzed through sociology, psychology and popular culture (Cawelti 1976: 1).

There are at least two reasons why detective story has earned its place as a literary form: First of all, it is difficult to find another genre in literature that has gained such a wide readership, and secondly, the detective stories offer also an outlook into the manners and lifestyle of the era it was written in (Symons 1962: 7).

Timo Kukkola (1985: 10) points out that according to a Swedish study on libraries almost 30 percent of borrowed literature fall within the category of detective or suspense literature. As for the huge amount of published detective stories, Raymond Chandler (1984: 4-5) asserts that there is not much difference between an average novel and an average detective story, except that only the latter ones are printed and sold. The real challenge for the author is to be able to combine a logical plot and realistic and credible characters.

J.K. Van Dover (2005: 13) claims that in the 1980's it was easy to read everything that was written academically on detective genre, but in 2001 he noticed a huge expansion had taken place in this field.

According to Porter (1981: 1-2), there are three issues that have endorsed the academic interest in detective fiction: First of all, the studies of Russian Formalists brought new perspective to the study of literature by regarding the popular novels equal to highbrow literature. Secondly, in the times of mass literacy, the popular literature can be seen as a reflector of the society and its norms. And thirdly, both popular and highbrow literatures are now studied in the universities. He also adds that it cannot be ignored that along with romantic literature, detective fiction has a large readership.

The critics have claimed that the detective stories are always written in a predictable, standard form. But the studies of literature have shown that also folk tales, comedies and tragedies often take a formulaic structure (Porter 1981: 3). We shall take a closer look on the formulaic structure later on.

2.1 Why do people read detective novels?

Cawelti (1976: 1) reminds us how the children always want to hear the same fairytale over and over again. The same applies to adults, only that they do not necessarily want to read the same story for the second time, but still want to carry on with the same familiar formula, whether it is the detective story, romance, or something else.

According to Kukkola (1985: 12), the appeal of detective fiction lies in the balance of good and evil, life and death. In a collection of interviews by Diana Cooper-Clark, Detective novelist P.D. James (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1983: 18) says that detective fiction may be a modern equivalent of old morality plays, the detective representing light and the murderer the dark, both being sides of the human mind.

In Cawelti's (1976: 16) view, in all of us there are two opposite needs: on one hand we seek order and peace, on the other we look for excitement to relieve us from boredom. Both can be found in formulaic literature offering us escape and relaxation in a safe form because we know it is an imaginary world which is controlled by familiar structure.

Cawelti (1976: 43) also claims that the interest of the academic circles towards detective fiction can be explained by the similarity of methods of analysis employed by the detectives and the academics alike. They also, are trained to isolate things, make deductions, organise items to verify the format of cause and effect.

One further reason is that the reader gets pleasure when s/he is trying to solve the mystery before the final revelation. Reading detective novels has many times being compared to puzzles or playing chess (Symons 1962: 8). Rowland (2001: viii) suspects that people are not interested in who eventually turns out to be the criminal, but the process of getting to the solution.

Porter (1981: 3) states that detective fiction has been criticized for being read simply for escape and relaxation. He remarks that this allegation has not been properly studied. He thinks that the readers rather seek pleasure than escape. Watson (1977: 102) speculates where the middle class people wanted to escape from and concludes that instead of escape they yearned for comfort in the confused post-war world. According to G.C. Ramsey (1967: 7), the well-

ordered world of the detective novels may offer security for people living in a chaotic, unstable one. Raymond Chandler claims that there is no such thing as literature for escape. He says that all reading that is done for pleasure is also done for escaping from our daily routines (Chandler 1984: 13-14).

2.2 Reasons for popularity in the English speaking countries

According to Dorothy L. Sayers, the popularity of detective fiction in the Anglo-Saxon countries can be explained by the British nature: in the event of a brawl, the British take the side of the policemen, whereas in the Southern parts of Europe the distrust towards the law corresponds to the smaller number of detective stories. Also, in the British criminal law there is a tradition of sportsmanship and fair play, which gives a good breeding ground for detective novels. She also claims that the British are more enthusiastic about outer and material issues where as the German and French readers prefer psychological aspects. Therefore it was only natural that a genre, which is based on footprints and railway timetables at the expense of psychological characteristics, should flourish in the English-speaking world. (Sayers 1993: 112).

Also Symons (1962: 9) agrees that the detective stories reflect the need of the British middle and upper class for order in the society and effectiveness of the police force.

Ekholm (1985a: 17) states that *roman policier* was never as popular in France as the detective stories in Britain, because the French police force did not gain the trust and the respect of the British police. It has also been suggested that the reason why there are so few crime writers in the Catholic countries, is that the Catholics go to confession to get rid of the feeling of guilt, which is an essential part of a crime story. (Symons 1985: 237).

Cawelti (1976: 104-105) speculates that in the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the traditional moral and spiritual authorities, like the church, had degenerated. The middle-class society had latent tensions brought up by repressive family circles and the detective stories offered a way to ventilate these suppressed feelings in an acceptable way through the imaginary domestic murders. The stories also assured that the crimes were motivated merely by individual impulses and therefore the society remained in a state of stability and order.

According to Scaggs (2005: 3), other media, like television and movies, have also contributed to the recognition of the genre.

2.3 Sociology in detective fiction

The crime literature can tell a lot about our time (Symons 1985: 239). Kukkola (1985: 216) states that detective literature clearly reflects the social opinions that are typical to a certain era compared with the so-called better literature. Therefore it is not surprising that the pre-war books are filled with Jewish loan-sharks and the wartime novels are quite propagandistic. Woods (1990: 15) claims that it is always the respective society generating literature through the authors. Crime is a social issue as it takes place within a community. According to Paul (1991: 7), the reader has to accept the world of a detective story as a true one, with its moral values, principles and rationality.

Day (1990: 84-85) however, argues that the Golden Age detective stories ignored the urbanization and went on portraying village life. Ironically though, this model of a safe haven kept producing crime. For example, Agatha Christie's creation Miss Marple always found an exemplar of an offender from her own village.

Cawelti (1976: 31-32) warns not to underrate the judgment skills of the readers. He says that, for example, the reader of James Bond stories does not necessarily agree with the ideological views of the book, but can still enjoy the adventure.

The progress in the society was also mirrored in the book titles. The first detective stories were "adventures", but very soon authors borrowed the word "mystery" from the Gothic tales. The increasing appreciation of medical and legal professions was manifested in the term "case" and sociopolitical ambiance was reflected in "affair". (Roth 1995: 50).

3. THE DIFFICULTY OF DEFINING A DETECTIVE STORY

For decades, the academics have tried to outline a comprehensive definition for a detective story. And as the years have shown, it has not been an easy task. In this chapter we shall also take a brief look on the structure, conventions and characteristics of the detective story.

3.1 The formulaic structure

In short, a detective story consists of a crime (most commonly a murder), a motive and a criminal, the emphasis being on the mystery (Symons 1962: 7). Cawelti (1976: 82) offers a broader view and splits the structure into six components, which do not necessarily appear in this order and sometimes two elements may be merged as one:

- (a) introduction of the detective
- (b) crime and clues
- (c) investigation
- (d) announcement of the solution
- (e) explanation of the solution
- (f) denouement

There are many other definitions that elucidate in their own way what goes on in a detective story. Jerry Palmer (1984: 90) calls detective stories thrillers and summarizes three main dogmatic propositions of the formula as follows:

- (1) Thriller suspense consists of experiencing everything from the point of view of the hero.
- (2) The hero is distinguished from the other characters by his professionalism and his success.
- (3) The hero undertakes to solve a heinous, mysterious crime which is a major threat to the social order.

Palmer (1984: 86) adds that the hero never initiates the action, he reacts to prior aggression and that the hero always wins at the end.

These features are also familiar to the readers of the stories. They know the conventions, the basic structure, the opening techniques and plot development. Also many times the cover of the book, or even the series in which it is

published, support the knowledge of what type of genre is in question (Pyrhönen 1989: 11).

The existing formulas reflect the latest interests of the audience. The formulaic story is at its best when a new element is added to the conventional structure or when the author is able to add his/her personal touch successfully. The new element may even set off a new formula (Cawelti 1976: 12, 34). But if the new invention conflicts with the agreed code it will not have effect on the formula (Dove 1989:15).

Cawelti (1976: 16-19, 38) lists three devices that are used by formulaic writers: suspense, identification and creating of imaginary world. Suspense is achieved by creating a momentary sense of anxiety. However, due to familiar formula the reader is convinced that in the end there will be a safe resolution. Compared with mimetic literature in which the reader is challenged to project the motives and encounters of the characters of the book within himself, in formulaic literature the reader identifies with the heroic protagonist serving the principle of escapism. The imaginary world created by the writer is very close to the real world but still not quite realistic giving room to unlikely situations. It also represents a more thrilling and pleasing dream world than the one we are living in.

3.2 Conventions and formulaic conditioning

The familiar conventions of formula fiction facilitate the communication between the writer and the experienced reader. The formula also creates a feeling of security, assuring the reader that s/he can anticipate a rational conclusion to the story (Dove 1989: 6). Though the formula represents a sort of contract between the writer and the reader, there must always be a nominal change in the stories in addition to the familiar components; the reader demands contemporary updates in the stories (Roth 1995: 10).

Formulaic conditioning of the reader means that an interaction between the reader and the novel is developed when s/he reads various formulaic books and learns to recognize signs, patterns and conventions that make to anticipate following events. The experienced reader is able to use interpretive strategies and predict the likely function of the clues. S/he can also see the difference between an artificial and a real clue. The inexperienced reader sees the same

clues but does not know that they may signify something special (Dove 1990: 28-31). Dove (1989: 18) mentions two axioms of a Suspense Process: first of all, anything can be important in a formula story; secondly, it is guaranteed that there will be a solution at the end.

It is not only curiosity that makes the reader turn the pages. Because of the formulaic structure and the conventions, the reader has foreknowledge encoded in the messages and signals of the conventions, which makes the reader to continue. This combination of recognition and anticipation creates suspense (Dove 1989: 19). From the narrative point of view the classical detective story faces intricate challenges: how to find a balance between reasoning and mystification and on the other hand between inquiry and action. In its earlier form detective fiction was written in short stories and the cases were about thefts or strange incidents. There was no room for unnecessary mystification or large range of characters and the investigations focused on the clues. But when the authors moved into novel format there was more room for the characters and their motives but not on the expense of the plot, which was also getting more complicated. (Cawelti 1976: 107, 109-110). This can also be clearly seen in popular TV-series, as Henning Mankell's Kurt Wallander, or in the Inspector Lynley Mysteries by Elizabeth George where the main characters' face personal traumas due to divorce, relationships and class.

The process of interpretation is one of the conventions. The language of a detective story may seem easily understandable but presented without its extraverbal situation, it may have numerous interpretations, which finally only the Great Detective is able to figure out. (Thompson 1993: 127-128).

3.3 Self-referentiality

Even the characters in the detective stories are familiar with the conventions of a classical "whodunnit". Crime literature may be discussed in the novels and this emphasizes the pattern and characteristics of a detective story (Pyrhönen 1989: 60). For example, in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* by Agatha Christie (1920: 19), one of the characters says:

“‘Like a good detective story myself,’ remarked Miss Howard. ‘Lots of nonsense written, though. Criminal discovered in the last chapter. Every one dumbfounded. Real crime – you’d know at once.’”

Also Arthur Conan Doyle was familiar with his predecessors as we can see from this conversation between Watson and Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* (Doyle 1975: 15-16):

“It is simple enough as you explain it,” I said smiling. “You remind me of Edgar Allan Poe’s Dupin. I had no idea that such individuals did exist outside of stories.”

Sherlock Holmes rose and lit his pipe. “No doubt you think that you are complimenting me in comparing me to Dupin, “ he observed. “Now, in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow. That trick of his of breaking in on his friends’ thoughts with an apropos remark after a quarter of hour’s silence is really very showy and superficial. He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine.”

“Have you read Gabriou’s works?” I asked. “Does Lecoq come up to your idea of a detective?”

Sherlock Holmes sniffed sardonically. “Lecoq was a miserable bungler, “ he said (...).

3.4 Reader participation

According to Dove (1989:40), suspense requires that the reader is involved. The detective story poses a problem and the reader takes part in solving it by collecting evidence, combining it and discarding it. This is why the classical detective stories proceed in a logical order, giving the reader an opportunity to come to the conclusion her/himself (Pyrhönen 1989: 12). Often the detective stories are seen as games and according to Van Dover (2005: 36) this is done by eliminating passion from the detective’s chase for the culprit. Another issue that promotes the reader participation is that in modern crime stories the detectives are described as normal human beings which gives the reader a more equal chance to come up with the solution compared with the Super Sleuth of the Golden Age (Rowland 2001: 19).

The essence of a good detective story is not merely a good plot. The reader is aware of the structure of the narrative, but does not want the solution to be too predictable (Sweeney 1990: 4). One of the attractions is that the reader has to wait for the solution. The detective stories have progressive and digressive elements to produce suspense (Pyrhönen 1989: 13). According to Cawelti (1976: 114), there are six issues where the author can mislead the reader: the person, the motive, the method, the time, the place and whether the crime was crime at all.

Writing about the causality and sequence, Porter (1981: 29) observes, “(...) the detective fiction is preoccupied with the closing of the logico-temporal gap that separates the present of the discovery of crime from the past that prepared

it. It is a genre committed to an act of recovery, moving forward in order to move back". Scaggs (2005: 46-47) adds that this can also be applied to the ideological motivation to return to the state of stability and order.

3.5 Restrictions

Defining a detective story is not easy. Where to draw the lines? It seems that too precise categorisation is rather confusing than helpful. There is a strong agreement at least on two basic features: the story must have a problem and that an amateur or a professional sleuth solves the problem by means of detection. Cawelti (1976: 122) insists on three prerequisites: there must be a mystery, meaning that there is something that is concealed from the reader, the story must focus on investigation and the concealed facts have to be revealed in the end.

Symons (1985: 13) takes a more liberal view by suggesting that an all-inclusive definition of crime novel or suspense novel instead of detective fiction should be used to cover all variations from police novel to a thriller. Several other definitions have been proposed throughout the years. During the so-called Golden Age period, some restrictive rules were set to guarantee the authenticity, but the writers were not eager to obey them as we shall learn later. (Symons 1985: 15).

Perhaps it is not wise to categorise the novels too strictly into detective stories, spy novels etc. because in many cases the themes overlap (Porter 1981: 4). Ousby (1997: 155) speaks of the eclectic sphere of the genre: there are no clear boundaries for the beginnings or endings of the styles; to some extent they have blended and merged contemporaneously. In Mandel's (1984: 84) view, the mystery is not only in whodunnit, it is also whom, where, when, why and by what means and how. Thompson (1993: 3) suggests that more emphasis should be put on finding generic similarities than trying to pinpoint criteria on a certain subgenre.

To further explicate the definitions, structure and conventions, we shall take a brief look on the history of crime fiction. In the following chapter I shall present some views on how and when crime fiction began and how it gradually evolved into its modern manifestation.

4. AN OVERVIEW ON THE HISTORY OF CRIME GENRE

There are several approaches to the origin of the detective fiction. Symons (1985: 27) mentions two: The supporters of the first one claim that the initial examples of detection or crime fiction can be found as early as in the stories in the Bible, for example, in the story of Cain and Able; the followers of the latter school allege that detective stories could not be written before the foundation of police force in Europe.

It is obvious that all typical ingredients, such as mystery, cunning, adventure and horror can be found in all narratives of old cultures already before the 19th century and the breakthrough of Edgar Allan Poe, who has been regarded by many as the father of the first detective story. (Ekholm 1985a: 9).

In a collection of interviews by Diana Cooper-Clark, Detective novelist P.D. James (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1983: 22) uses two separate categories to show the difference: she says that the stories stemming from the biblical times can be categorized as crime stories and the latter, which were written after the organized society was formed, as detective stories. Benvenuti and Rizzoni (1979: 2) feel that even if the formation of the police force is seen as the beginning we should not ignore the historical literary sources as they gave influence and presented the fundamental parts to the new genre.

In this thesis I do not wish to exclude either of these views and therefore I start recapping the history from the very beginning. However, out of hundreds of crime authors space permits only few but hopefully the most significant ones to be mentioned here as examples of their era.

4.1 Early days

People have always been enthralled by horror and homicide, though the conception of crime has changed over the decades. Woeller and Cassiday (1988: 8) say that the first signs of crime and detection were presented in the Greek dramas. The reason for this is that in the fifth century B.C. man started taking responsibility for his actions and to feel guilt, and no longer believed that it was the mythical, supernatural forces that caused everything.

Symons (1985: 27) argues that the dramas were only stories of puzzles and riddles and not any real detection. Liisi Huhtala (1993: 51) points out,

nevertheless, that in her lecture 'Aristotle and The Art of Detective Fiction' (1936) Dorothy L. Sayers says that detective fiction is equivalent of the Greek tragedies: in both something significant has happened before the story begins and the characters only follow a predetermined destiny building up the momentum towards the end.

According to Woeller and Cassiday (1988: 13), there was a pause in crime fiction during the Middle Ages when illiteracy prevailed in Europe. The only ones able to read were the members of the clergy and nearly all literature was conserved in the monasteries. Among the common people storytelling replaced written texts and the tales were rather educative than entertaining.

The printing skills advanced in the mid-15th century and stories written for entertainment began to appear in the form of murder cases, narrations of legal cases, legends and folklore. Illustrated pamphlets featuring portraits of criminals became popular in the Continent. Though the aspect of detection did not seem to interest the public, crime itself maintained its interest in the tales and storytelling. In those days confessions were obtained by using various types of torture: burning at the stake, drowning, etc. These ordeals gave inspiration to folk tales and legends. Later such trials were replaced by inquisition, continuing well into the 17th century. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 13, 17-19).

At the same time in London things were different. The economic situation was getting better and the people were keen on bringing miscarriages of justice to the public. They used the same medium as in the ancient Greece: theatre. It was also suitable for those who could not read or afford to buy books. For example, in Shakespeare's work, such as *Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, legal matters play an important part. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 19-20).

Whereas the witch-hunts continued in the Continent in the 17th century, Habeas Corpus Act (1679) was implemented in England, meaning that a person could not be incarcerated only on suspicion. This was a time of amorous and heroic novels, tragedies dealing with the state affairs, prose pertaining to nobility and also drinking songs and pastoral novels. One phenomenon was the picaresque novel, tales of the adventurous lives of the witty rogues. (Woeller

and Cassiday 1988: 21). The villain was seen as a rebel resisting the injustice of the society (Symons 1985: 23).

As the societies began to move from confession and torture to trial by evidence the police administration started to emerge in the 17th century. In France the Haute Police was founded in 1667 and enhancements were made to improve the security of the citizens. These included street lighting and early closing times for the restaurants and bars (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 24).

French François Gayot de Pitaval published his *Causes Célèbres et Intéressantes* (Famous and Interesting Cases) in 1734. He collected the most remarkable criminal case histories and his collection in twenty volumes became popular within the law circles as well as the casual readers. François Richer edited the texts so that the verdict is not pronounced until at the end of the case and the reader will stay in suspense till the last pages. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 31-32).

The English equivalents for the Pitaval stories were the Newgate Calendars. Newgate was a prison in London and the cases were accounts of the criminals written down by the priests before the execution. These stories gave inspiration for the Newgate novels, where the criminal outsmarts his captors. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 46). Before the time of organised police force the stories from the gallows served as a warning to the public (Woods 1990: 16).

The Mémoires of Eugène François Vidocq (1775-1857) had a great effect on the future crime writers. Vidocq was a French criminal who turned into a police informer, then became the first chief of Sûreté and later on founded the first modern detective agency. At that time people were enthralled rather by the villains than the police and this ambiguity was embodied in Vidocq's own person. He was a master of disguising himself, a talent that was later widely exploited in the detective stories. (Symons 1985: 31, 33).

In England, at the wake of the Industrial Revolution in the mid-eighteenth century, people streamed into the cities in search for work and the gap between the poor and the rich widened. The crime flourished especially in the cities and the rogues were no longer seen as heroes (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 66). Symons (1962: 9) claims that people cannot enjoy stories about violence and murder before their own security has been guaranteed.

London was regarded a dangerous place and as the severe punishments seemed to have no effect, Henry Fielding founded a private police force in 1748, the Bow Street Police. Their efforts were not sufficient enough to reduce the widespread crime and therefore the Metropolitan Police was founded in 1829. Its detective section is known to this day as the Scotland Yard. (Leese 1979: 124-125). As people felt safer, the admiration shifted from the villain to the police and detectives that offered protection (Symons 1985: 45).

4.2 The dawn of detective fiction

The mid-nineteenth century marked a milestone to the beginning of detective fiction. In this chapter we shall see how Edgar Allan Poe's short stories were followed by crime novels of Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins in Britain. In France, Emile Gabriou paved the way for the *roman noir*. I will also present some ideas why detective fiction became increasingly popular at this period of time.

Many agree on Edgar Allan Poe being the father of the first detective story. Scholars have listed as many as 32 conventions introduced by him to detective fiction. Out of a number of listings I found the one made by Ari Haasio the most comprehensive and yet concise one (2004: 126-127):

- 1) Narrator
- 2) Eccentric detective
- 3) External detective
- 4) Armchair detective
- 5) Reader's participation to the mystery solving
- 6) Analytical deduction
- 7) Estimation of probabilities

Nearly all plot variations to be seen in the later detective stories can be found in his five short stories. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) presents the first locked-room mystery. *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (1841) is the first armchair detection (and a story based on a true crime). Codes and ciphering are introduced in *The Gold Bug* (1843). The 'apparently the most unlikely solution as the correct one' and 'hidden in plain sight' are the new features of *The Purloined Letter* (1844). In *Thou art the Man* (1850) the guilty person is the

least likely suspect. Also false clues were used in this story. (Symons 1985: 34, 37).

In *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) Poe also presented some other conventions: Narrative that proceeds from crime to clarification, rivalry between the detective and the police and also the introduction of a superhuman detective and his admiring narrator-friend (Sweeney 1990: 1). This forefather of all Sherlock Holmeses is Chevalier C. August Dupin, and Poe used notorious Eugène Vidocq as a model. For this reason the stories are set in Paris though Poe himself was American. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 56).

In *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841), the main focus was for the first time on detection, which Poe called Ratiocination, whereas the characters and settings were only described when they were seen important in unravelling the puzzle (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 56).

Charles Dickens was a great admirer of the police force, especially the detectives, and he made study tours to investigate the police work in London, Liverpool and New York (Symons 1985: 46). Dickens has not been seen as a detective novelist, though he wrote four works that deal with crime and criminals (Panek 1987: 33-34). In *Bleak House* (1853) Dickens introduces Inspector Bucket, the first of the British detectives in fiction (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 67).

Because the public attitude was still suspicious towards the police, Dickens wrote editorials praising their work and made the character of Inspector Bucket more benevolent. He also presented for the first time the later well-known convention of gathering suspects round to listen to the detective's final revelation. (Barnes 1975: 18-19).

Dickens was a close friend of Wilkie Collins. His works *Woman in White* (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1868) contribute to the history of crime fiction and not only because for the first time in detective genre Collins wanted the reader to be aware of all actions. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 68-70).

Woeller and Cassiday (1988: 70) consider *The Moonstone* "probably the very finest detective story ever written". The book has many features that were later on used in the detective stories: a country house, a family party, red herrings and scrupulous observations of the detective.

The narrative technique of *Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* is exceptional because the story is illustrated by a number of witnesses (Haasio 2003: 41). According to Symons (1962: 11), Collins can be regarded as the author of the first detective novel since Edgar Allan Poe only wrote short stories. There are not many books from the Victorian time that are still read as eagerly as Collins's detective novels (Haasio 2003: 41).

One of the popular authors of the mid-19th century was French Emile Gabriou with his talented detective, Monsieur Lecoq (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 76). These stories were first labelled as *roman judiciaire*, which later was formed into the type of *roman policier* (Ekholm 1985a: 17). Also Lecoq is a master in disguise. He was also the first detective to take plaster cast of a footprint in the detective literature, as well as the first to deduce the moment of crime based on the chimes of the clock (Symons 1985: 54).

Lecoq was the first in the long line of detectives to come to present the skill of logical deduction after examination of the clues and the custom of giving full account of what led him to these conclusions (Barnes 1975: 22).

As books had been too expensive for the common man at the beginning of the 19th century, sub-literature began to spread in the form of broadsheets and pamphlets. These weekly issued magazines got the name "penny dreadful" as they cost a penny and most often consisted of dreadful horror stories. The American equivalent was a "dime novel". In the mid-19th century "penny dreadfuls" were mainly read by youth as the elder citizens started to use the services of subscription and public libraries. Soon, however, their popularity started to pose a threat to the publishing companies and as a countermove they started to publish novels in cheaper serial form. Also increased rail travelling enhanced the book sales. (Symons 1985: 42-44).

According to Symons (1985: 59), there was an intermediate phase in detective fiction until Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* was published in 1887. The reason for this hiatus was that the public was not yet particularly interested in the police work and there were still quite few talented crime novelists.

In Britain the Education Act (1870) guaranteed collective schooling, which decreased illiteracy, and in 1919 the Public Libraries Act made literature easily available to all, regardless of social status (Watson 1988: 27-28). By the end of the nineteenth century, the development in the printing methods enabled the publication of periodicals. They were cheap and had wide circulation (Symons 1985: 62). At that time the amount of reading public increased. The middle class had already been keen readers and now also the working class started to show interest in literature. As they did not have as much leisure and money as the middle class people, they preferred short stories, where the plot became the essential part at the expense of detailed description of scenery and characters. (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 92).

Mandel (1984: 68-70) points out that in addition to all pleasant explanations about the sudden rise and interest in crime literature there is a less pleasant reason of people really wanting to enjoy and witness violence. But as violence was forbidden in an organised society the readers had to find another channel to experience it. Mandel (1984: 71) also claims that the depopulation of the countryside formed a new middle class who needed distractions from pollution, strenuous jobs, and long journeys from dormitories to work. Besides cigarettes, alcohol, cinemas and later television, detective stories offered 'opium' for the middle classes.

The telegraphs and railways brought all of a sudden the world closer even to the remotest villages, the enhanced law enforcement increased safety in towns and villages and giant steps were made in science. All this made the common man to admire the doctors, scientists and policemen instead of the heroes and adventurers of the past. (Sayers 1993: 112).

4.2.1 Arthur Conan Doyle: Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson

Arthur Conan Doyle was a doctor from a provincial city in Scotland and an author who would most widely influence the forthcoming crime writers. A *Study in Scarlet* had already been published as a book in 1887 before its appearance in a serial form in *The Strand Magazine* in 1891. It introduced the master detective Sherlock Holmes and his friend, Dr. Watson. Doyle got the innovation for the character of Holmes from Dr. Joseph Bell, Doyle's Professor

of Surgery at Edinburgh University, who had an uncanny ability to astonish his students by his logical deductions. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 90-91).

By the turn of the century the natural sciences were developing rapidly and, for example, forensic science and medicine became a crucial part in the detective stories. Also Doyle exploited the scientific approach in his novels. He presented the facts that would lead to conclusion. The reader, too, was now able to rack his brain and try to find the solution. Most often, though, in the end he (and Doctor Watson) would be intellectually beaten by the great detective. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 91). Ekholm (1985b: 111), however, argues that the inventions made just before and during the career of Holmes do not appear in the stories implying that actually the novels are mockery of scientific discoveries of the time.

Doyle portrays the police in a negative light in his books. Woeller and Cassiday (1988: 92) assume that his attitude towards the police force may have been due to the disappointment on the performance of the police: Jack the Ripper was operating at the time and was never caught.

Many have wondered why this extremely Victorian, straightforward, petty bourgeois author would choose an eccentric drug-addict as a hero. But the explanation can be found from that era which emphasized science and the importance of obtaining information. The thoughts of Nietzsche in philosophy were widespread and his idea of a superhuman matches with the personality of Sherlock Holmes, who lacked human weaknesses and passion. (Symons 1985: 65-66).

Arthur Conan Doyle's reputation and income for the rest of his life were guaranteed by a dozen of stories that were published under the title of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in *The Strand Magazine* from 1890 on. At a certain point, however, he felt that Holmes was prohibiting him from becoming a distinguished author of historical novels and decided to get rid of the famous sleuth for good (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 93). The reactions against the death of Holmes at the Reichenbach Falls were strong: Britain went into mourning, the business men wore black bands in their arms and Conan Doyle even received threatening letters from the readers (Haasio 2003: 50).

Eventually, after eight years of absence, Doyle had to yield in front of the requests of the public (and also for the nice reward he was paid), and Holmes

was revived in *The Hound of Baskerville* in 1902. The myth of this super sleuth is so strong even today that he still receives letters from people asking for help. (Symons 1985: 73).

4.3 The “first” Golden Age

Doyle might have seemed insuperable to his followers but the amount of talented crime novelists gives a good reason to call this era the First Golden Age (Symons 1985: 74). It was also the Golden Age in regard to the amount of books published. This genre accounted for one quarter of all books written in English of that period. Watson (1988: 96, 100) claims, however, that only one out of ten of those novels was of good quality.

What was different compared to the earlier crime stories was that the crime was converted to a game, a puzzle. The other new aspect was that the crime became family-centred, instead of being politically or socially motivated. (Cawelti 1976: 99).

In Symons’s view (1985: 74) detectives that followed Holmes in the first Golden Age can be divided in two categories: Either they were superhumans who are emotionally void and detached from ordinary life, or they were private investigators running agencies according to the fashion of the time and resembling policemen. Representatives of the first type are S.F.X. Van Dusen and Father Brown.

S.F.X. Van Dusen and his assistant, journalist Hutchinson Hatch, were the creations of Jacques Futrelle. After beating a chess master in one of the stories, Van Dusen is called the Thinking Machine (Symons 1985: 74-75). G.K. Chesterton wrote *The Innocence of Father Brown* in 1911. The main character is a humble Roman Catholic Priest, Farther Brown. The first impression of him is somewhat misleading as the readers soon discover the results of his sharp reasoning (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 109-110). When cracking crimes, Father Brown relies on his knowledge of human nature and psychological instinct (Kukkola 1985: 35).

Until the twenties a policeman had not been used as the problem solver in the detective stories. According to Binyon (1989) there were two reasons for this: First of all, Doyle and some other authors had made the police look fallible, thick-headed and laughable. The second reason was the social status of the policemen. It was easy to picture them solving crude but simple crimes of the common people, but impossible to imagine them cracking more complicated murder cases. Besides, despite their official standing as representatives of law and order, they could be easily intimidated and even ignored by the upper class. (Binyon 1989: 79). According to Pyrhönen (1989: 17), due to his background the Great Detective, unlike the police, is able to notice the social mistakes that give away the villain.

The first professional police detective in a detective story, Inspector Burnley, was introduced by Freeman Wills Crofts in 1920. Crofts also created a number of other detectives, of whom Inspector Joseph French became the prototype of many future detectives: they are of the same age, rank and social class, with a paternal attitude towards young suspects, witnesses or colleagues. (Binyon 1989: 82-83). In *The Cask* (1920) Crofts was also a pioneer in using railway timetables to establish unbreakable alibis (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 15).

In France Gaston Leroux followed in the footsteps of Gabriou in France and published *Le Mystère de la Chambre Jaune* (The Mystery of the Yellow Room) in 1908 in which detective Rouletabille solves a crime in a remote castle (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 102). It is one of the first locked-room and least-suspected-person mysteries (Ekholm 1985a: 22).

Scientific criminology and toxicology progressed significantly at the turn of the century affecting also crime literature (Panek 1987: 101). Mr. Thorndyke was a forensic scientist and a murder investigator created by Richard Austin Freeman. In his collection *The Singing Bone* (1912) he used for the first time the "inverted story", which means that the crime and the identity of the criminal are revealed at the beginning of the story and the rest of the narration is following the investigations till the arrest of the offender. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 110).

4.4 The genuine Golden Age: The twenties

As a rule the Golden Age of detective fiction means the era between the two World Wars (Ousby 1997: 62). After the First World War there was a steady rise in the number of published crime novels. According to Symons (1985: 86), there were three factors contributing to this: social, technical and economic changes. Panek (1987: 120-121) also gives some credit to the developed marketing techniques, for example, book clubs and contests.

Due to changes in domestic life, women had more leisure and time to read books. Also, circulating libraries were founded which gave people easy and affordable access to literature. At the same time the consumption of magazines decreased and novels increased. Furthermore, dormitory areas were built around the biggest cities. Lots of people used trains or buses to go to work and bought papers, magazines or books to make the time pass on their travel. (Watson 1988:38).

By the mid-20's crime literature had not been seriously considered as a genre of its own, but by the end of the decade certain boundaries were started being defined (Symons 1985: 93). Panek tells (1987: 123) that Sayers made the first attempts to define the history of the genre in her book *The Omnibus of Crime* (1928) meanwhile others tried to term the internal form of the genre.

The dilemma of the Golden Age writers was that they wanted to separate themselves from the second class stories of the newspaper serials and thrillers, on the other hand, they did not want to be part of the highbrow literature (Panek 1987: 125).

Whereas Holmes had also solved minor crimes, such as burglaries, blackmail and disappearances, in the detective stories of the Golden Age the crime had to be murder (Van Dover 2005: 35). According to Ousby (1997: 68-71), there was no other particular reason for this except that the writers of that era specialized in certain categories, such as timetable or locked room puzzles, and murder puzzles became popular at that time.

There is also another difference: While Holmes and Lecoq ran their investigations in foggy London or red-light districts of Paris and tackled the problems of bourgeois industrialists, the writers of the Golden Age moved to

the country manors of the upper class to solve domestic murders. (Mandel 1984: 26).

The most dramatic and also challenging change to the earlier period detective stories was the length: earlier the stories had been short stories, but in the Golden Age detective fiction was written in novels. This opened up new opportunities for the authors to work with plot, characters and theme. (Panek 1987: 131).

Ronald A. Knox devised ten rules for the crime writer to make sure that the reader is given a fair change to solve the problems (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 122). (See Appendix 1). The meaning of the rules was to shape the story to the level of an abstraction comparable to a puzzle or a game of chess (Scaggs 2005: 37). The Detection Club, consisting of carefully chosen authors, was founded to preserve high standards and to follow a set of rules defined by the club (Sanders and Lovallo 1985: 33).

The writers that became members of the Detection Club had to swear a solemn oath to promise a fair play for the reader (Symons 1962: 8). There was a great deal of lively interaction and collaboration between the authors of the Golden Age: communal novels were written, some authors worked in pairs, writers met in clubs, and so on (Panek 1987: 122).

What were the main special features then that separated the detective fiction from other forms of literature? First of all, there had to be clues that the sleuth could use in a rational way, coincidences or conclusions based on instinct were not allowed. Secondly, there had to be a detective who showed intellectual skills in his reasoning and he could not be a representative of professional detectives nor criminals. Thirdly, the crime had to be a murder. The fourth characteristic was that the culprit had to be introduced already in the early parts of the book and that s/he had to be from the same social class as the other suspects, servants and like were not eligible. The last point was that the motivation for the crime had to be personal, not political or theoretical. Also, the murderer must not be a lunatic. (Symons 1985: 93-95).

Panek (1987: 134-135) and Mandel (1984: 25) are convinced that the writers of the Golden Age were aware of Aristotle's concept of unity of place, time and action. This means that the events take place in a closed setting and

within a limited range of time in order not to lose the attention of the reader. Short time span also promotes the dramatic ending. Ousby (1997: 69, 72) adds, that the setting and the group of characters have to be middle or upper-middle class and they have to be stranded, for instance, on an island, or isolated by snow. The perpetrator is always one person, though he might have an accomplice (Mandel 1984: 25).

Also the maps of a certain area, plans of buildings, timetables, and so on, are typical for the detective novels of the Golden Age, to give the reader a fair chance to come up with a solution (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 124). (See illustration 1. and 2.) Ramsey (1967: 32) claims that later on these were no longer needed as the genre and the readers became more mature and the details could be depicted in text only.

Below there are two examples from the *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* by Agatha Christie. In chapter 5.3 I shall analyse the book as an example of a classical detective story in more detail.

Illustration 1. Plan of the first floor of Styles (Christie: *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, p. 43)

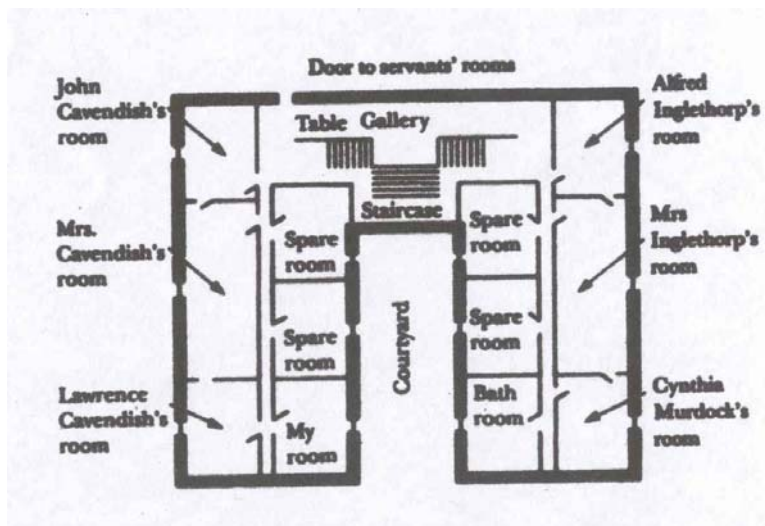
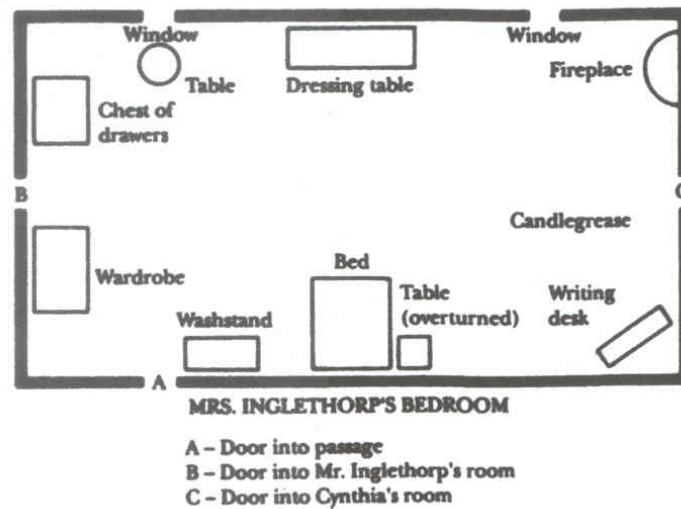


Illustration 2. Plan of Mrs Inglethorp's bedroom (Christie: *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, p. 62)



There were some issues that were excluded from the detective stories of the Golden Age: Sexuality, unemployment, trade unions, recession, war and dictatorships were ignored completely, though they existed in the society. This can be partly explained by the fact that most of the Golden Age authors were right-wing and conservative. (Symons 1985: 96). The attitude can be clearly seen in the novels: A working man can never pass for a gentleman, but Sherlock Holmes can easily turn into a working man by simply smearing his hands or switching into a dialect to bluff the lower classes (Gill 1990: 37).

Who, why and how still remained the focal issues of the detective stories, but the sets of rules that made the authors to exclude emotions and turned the stories into puzzles, evoked mutiny within the writers (Symons 1985: 96).

4.4.1 The queens of crime

There are four female authors who have been regarded by many, such as Symons (1985: 97), as the best representatives of the so-called Golden Age of detective literature and who had most influence on the English country-house murder as we know it today. For this reason we shall go briefly through the works by Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Ngaio Marsh and Marjorie Allingham. The first two of them began their career in the twenties, the latter two in the thirties. We shall take a closer look on Marsh and Allingham in chapter 4.5 when discussing the Golden Age in the thirties, but before moving

on in time we will discuss Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers in more detail.

The Queen of Crime or the Duchess of Death, as her contemporaries called her, Agatha Christie began her outstanding career as a crime writer with a novel called *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in 1920 (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 116). According to Symons (1985: 92), it is a noteworthy piece of literature as it showed the way to a detective story where only the puzzle element had importance and where the destiny of the characters was irrelevant.

The book that made her famous was *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926). Having worked as a nurse during the World War I, she had an excellent knowledge of medicine and also poison. The war also had some bearing on her choice of the detective: Hercule Poirot was a Belgian refugee. In several stories Poirot's sidekick is Captain Hastings. Agatha Christie had also a repertoire of other amateur detectives: for example, spinster Miss Marple (modelled on Christie's grandmother), author Ariadne Oliver (a caricature of Christie) and a dynamic couple Tommy and Tuppence. But Monsieur Hercule Poirot was to become the most famous of them all. (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 116-118). He featured in 53 novels and 33 short stories (Haasio 2003: 31).

The milieu of Christie is the merry old England: the imperial nation with manor houses in the country side and health resorts on the coast. The heroes are honourable upper class people, lower class members only appear as servants. (Haasio 2003: 33). The apparently peaceful rural setting, however, conceals all kinds of turmoil (Barnard 1980: 37). According to Barnard (1980: 122-123), Christie portrays the characters and settings only as sort of a draft, the reader can fill in the details. He claims that this is why Christie is internationally so popular: everyone can add their own familiar items to the stories.

Haasio (2003: 33-34) lists three features that make Christie's work so superior: one is the dialog, which is fluent but still rich in nuances, secondly, the plots are ingenious and lastly, the stories make the reader feel safe and comfortable, as the books portray a time and atmosphere to where it is nice to escape from the reality.

Christie is without a doubt one of the greatest also by sales figures: more than 200 million sold copies and she is also most translated after the Bible and the works of Shakespeare (Haasio 2003: 28).

Another remarkable female detective novelist was Dorothy L. Sayers with her detective Lord Peter Wimsey. She was not as productive in detective fiction as Christie and later moved on to different spheres of literature and wrote also theoretical studies on detective stories. Sayers was quite resourceful in creating murder weapons. They included, among other things, poisoned teeth fillings, rats infected with plague and a dagger made of ice. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 120-122).

Critics have said that the weaknesses in Sayer's production are varying style, tedious narrative, thin characters and uncritical and even racist attitude to the class society (Juva 1993: 85). On the other hand, Raymond Chandler sees the characters as her strongest asset and claims that the plots made her novels second-rate literature (Chandler 1984: 16).

4.5 The Golden Age: The thirties

In the thirties the style of the detectives changed: they no longer dressed themselves in disguise. They behaved more like everyone else and it became possible that the amateur detective could make mistakes. (Symons 1985: 113).

The founder of the RAF, Lord Trenchard was asked in 1931 to join the Metropolitan Police. He was the initiator of many reforms there, such as establishing of a police college and forensic laboratory in Hendon. The outcome was that the number of university graduates increased in the police force. This also meant that from that moment on, the police detective of the crime stories could also be young, handsome and educated. (Binyon 1989: 86).

Ngaio Marsh and Margery Allingham can be seen as the Queens of detective novels of the thirties. Their difference from Christie and Sayers is that their novels contain irony towards the society (Parkkinen 1985: 45). But many times this gentle social criticism was embedded clumsily to the actual crime story (Symons 1985: 113-114).

Ngaio Marsh was from New Zealand. The hero in her books is Chief Detective-Inspector Roderick Alleyn, a nobleman and a snob. Special flavour to the stories is added by the author's interest in theatre. Either the place of the murder is in a theatre or the victim is an actor or an artist. Marsh follows the traditions of the Golden Age Detective stories: the murder takes place in a remote place, suspects are interrogated, the murder is revealed and the murder is explained. (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 152-153).

Margery Allingham was a social historian. Her husband, an editor in Tatler, helped her with the writing work and also finished her last unfinished novel. At first her stories were adventurous, but later more description of character and social observation was included. (Kukkola 1997: 9-10).

Margery Allingham's sleuth was called Albert Campion and his "Watson" was Magersfontein Lugg. Compared with Christie Allingham is less significant with plot developments, but exceeds her with the detailed description of the characters (Barnes 1975: 53). After the war Albert Campion becomes a minor character and the quality of the books declined, except for *The Tiger in the Smoke* (1952) which is an elaborate psychological and moral portrayal of London underworld (Kukkola 1997: 10).

There are some themes that are repeated in many of her books. One of them is coming back from the dead, another is disasters following a meal in a restaurant and lastly, returning to memories of youth and school school days leading to horror. (website: A Guide to Classic Mystery and Detection, n.d.).

Anthony Berkeley Cox aka Anthony Berkeley aka Francis Iles started his career as a detective novelist in the thirties with *The Poisoned Letter* (1929) (Symons 1985: 98-99). He was the founder of the Detection Club in 1928 (Scaggs 2005: 27). Berkeley Cox made some alterations to the classical settings of detective story: The story does not have a mystery, the murderer is made known already in the beginning and his plans are revealed and what is left for the reader is to find out whether he succeeds or not (Symons 1985: 121).

John Dickinson Carr (alias Carter Dickson) specialized in the locked-room mysteries (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 125). Though Carr was extremely

clever with these variations, according to Symons (1985: 110), this also turned out to be his pitfall: the characters were left to a minor role at the expense of the locked room mystery theme.

4.5.1 The Golden Age in America

In the twenties and the thirties some American authors imitated the British tradition even to such extent that it was sometimes difficult to tell whether the writer was British or American (Paul 1991: 117). Though generally the classical whodunnit is seen British, there was a number of practitioners also in America (Scaggs 2005: 27).

S.S. Van Dine (aka Willard Huntington Wright) wrote about a detective called Philo Vance and he created another set of rules for the crime writers (see Appendix 2). There were so many that it was impossible for the writer to follow them all (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 125). Unlike other Golden Age authors, who were able to modify their detective stories according to the requirements of the contemporary society, sticking to his rules made Wright unable to change with the times and the popularity of his books went downhill quite rapidly (Symons 1985: 117).

In American novels there were some new trends. Rex Stout's detective Nero Wolfe solved crimes in New York instead of a quiet country village. Ellery Queen, created by cousins Frederic Dannay and Manfred B. Lee followed in the same line, cracking problems in city surroundings (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 126). Stout can be seen as a transitional author between the whodunnit and hard-boiled mode as he mixed the elements of both in his novels (Scaggs 2005: 29).

Because oriental characters were often described as suspicious and untrustworthy in the crime stories, Edgar Derr Biggers created as a countermove a police Inspector from Honolulu, Charlie Chan (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 126). Biggers can be seen as a spokesman for the ethnic minorities and representative of the first multicultural detective stories that have become quite popular nowadays (Haasio 2004: 20).

4.6 Wartime and the post-war years

One might have thought that during the war no one would be interested in the detective stories as there was violence all around. Surprisingly, however, the popularity of detective stories increased during the wartime. The sociologists have offered as an explanation that people craved for the feeling of cosiness and comfort which the books offered (Fremlin 1988: 118). Paul (1991: 86) conforms with this claiming that people were still longing after the pre-war society where social classes lived in harmony and everybody “knew their place”.

According to Watson (1977: 108), people needed something to turn their minds off from the cruelties of the war and all kinds games had become popular pastime. Detective stories served as puzzles to crack.

The Second World War acted as a watershed between the classical detective story and the modern crime novel. The milieu in which the stories had taken place started slowly to disappear and the “rules” made during the Golden Age became obsolete and the classical setting artificial. The mythical Great Detective started to look absurd alongside the development of forensic methods. The modern detective was seen as a normal human being with his weaknesses. (Symons 1985: 138).

In search for the ultimate mystery method, the writers of the Golden Age sacrificed almost everything else, which finally led to a dead-end (Symons 1985: 119). Criticism towards the Golden Age crime literature was harsh. It was blamed for the trivialisation of the battle between good and evil and also for insensitivity by treating tragedies lightly. The critics also claimed that it was a product of a puritan society to defend the rights of the upper class whereas the working class was described as stupid to give contrast to the excellence of the sleuth. (James 1993: 22-23).

The crime writers had to adjust themselves to a new society. Until now the basic assumption had been that a human being is lead by reason. The war presented another kind of world where violence prevailed over reason. (Symons 1985: 138).

A number of limitations disappeared with the Great Detective and as a new trend the authors started to study the psychological state of the characters and

their social background (Symons 1985: 143-144). As the genre called for renewal, the emphasis shifted from who and how to the question of why (Barnes 1975: 8).

Winks (1980: 8) claims that after the World War II the amount of violence increased in the literature at the cost of ratiocination and more detailed description of characters became more significant than the plot. The police procedure novel, the psychological thriller and spy stories replaced the classical detective story. In Mandel's view (1984: 83) the genre was not degenerating, but developing instead.

As already mentioned earlier, S.S. Van Dine was one of the authors who were not able to keep up with the changes in time. Dorothy L. Sayers had an intention not only to pose a puzzle, but also offer readers a description of the manners of the era. Unfortunately, she did not quite succeed in her attempt. The only author from the Golden Age, who managed to sustain the interest of the readers over the years, was Agatha Christie. Her books are of excellent quality until the end of Second World War, after that there is a gradual decline, though there are some books in the fifties and sixties where she is at her best. She is not especially significant as an author, but as a creator of puzzles she remains supreme. (Symons 1985: 117-118).

The achievements of the twenty years of the Golden Age must not be forgotten: a number of modifications were made, especially in the character of the Great Detective. The writers also attracted new readers from the middle class by creating a combination of wit, lifestyle and cunning. (Panek 1987: 142).

4.7 American development: Attempts to break the rules

While the development in European crime literature was rather straightforward, in the US the situation was different. Before discussing crime literature today, let us first take a brief look at the progress in America where an important expression of crime literature, namely hard-boiled school, began to take form.

When speaking of American crime literature, it is useful to remember that the Golden Age and American hard-boiled stories are not consecutive as it may

often seem when reading the history of detective genre, but they existed alongside (Ousby 1997: 92).

The American crime story broke away from the European tradition in the twenties. It manifested itself in the pulp-magazines, which got their name from the cheap paper they were printed on. These stories also reflected the rise of the gangsters in the American society during the prohibition, as well as the corruption of the police and civil servants. (Symons 1985: 123). Also the term *roman noir* has been used to describe the literature of the forties and fifties and it later developed into *roman policier* (Mandel 1984: 34). We shall take a closer look at *roman policier* in chapter 4.11.3.

Characteristics of a hard-boiled story are criticism towards the society, a loner private-eye with a strong feeling of justice and focus on cause and effect (Haasio 2003: 14). The stories describe the battle of the detective-hero against the rotten society. Compared with the classical detective story, suspense takes the place of mystery. The crimes are more entangled and this also reflects on the role of the reader: there is no clear problem to be solved as in the classical detective stories. Also the society is more violent, abuse and greed are integral parts of it. (Pyrhönen 1989: 19-20).

Instead of being rich amateurs, the detectives earn their living by detecting and they do it from their office, not their homes (Mandel 1984: 36). The sleuths are often heavy drinkers and frequently end up in fistfights, like Philip Marlow by Raymond Chandler, or Mike Hammer by Mickey Spillane. Also the setting became different: whereas the snobbish British detectives had a limited number of suspects in a fancy manor house in remote countryside, their American equivalent searched through a whole city, with a smaller fee and less recognition. (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 131-132).

In the British Golden Age detective stories everything was stereotyped. The good people were easily distinguished from the bad and those books could be used as a reference to the manners and lifestyle of that era. In American hard-boiled detective stories everything becomes more complex and blurred. The detective no longer is a hero or above the others. The murders are realistic compared with the sometimes exotic murder methods used in the Golden Age. Even the language reflects tough conditions and characters. (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 132).

The hard-boiled school survived the Second World War where as the Golden Age story did not. Scaggs (2005: 29-30) gives as one explanation the flexibility of the hard-boiled school: it was adopted by cultural, ethnic and gender groups. The four authors who most often are mentioned when discussing the glory days of the American hard-boiled School are Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Erle Stanley Gardner and Mickey Spillane.

Dashiell Hammett started writing in the early twenties and his short stories about crime were published in a magazine called *Black Mask*. He also wrote novels until 1934. Perhaps his most famous work is *The Maltese Falcon* (1930) featuring detective Sam Spade. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 133-134).

Hammett contributed to the reform of detective fiction by creating a new kind of viewpoint and characters for the hard-boiled story (Haasio 2003: 80). He was the first to use first person narrative to express the toughness of the private eye (Ousby 1997: 8, 103). Hammett's style is economical. The stories include the traditional mystery, but in addition to that, he also describes characters with delicacy (Symons 1985: 126). They live in a world of violence and commit murders for a reason and with weapons that are at hand, in contrast with the Golden age literature where corpses were produced by using rare poison just for detection's sake (Chandler 1984: 16).

Hammett's kindred spirit was Raymond Chandler, whose best-known novel *The Big Sleep* (1939) presented detective Philip Marlow. Chandler also wrote an essay "The Simple Art of Murder" in 1950 in which he criticised the classical British detective stories as shallow and the characters two-dimensional, though he later on yielded a bit and admitted that the Golden Age detective stories had lasted quite well in the course of time. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 135-137).

In his books Chandler portrays the unhappy life of the rich, corrupted by wealth and power and also the world of violence and crime where there is no happy ending for the poor (Kukkola 1985: 90). Chandler created the convention of the detective being a wretched character, even despised by the others, the rich and the police. Yet the private eye continues his gallant fight against the modern dragons in the urban, Californian setting. (Ousby 1997: 112).

Chandler demonstrates in his stories criticism towards the society. In addition to that, the masterful plot as well as the complex narrative promoted the esteem of detective genre and its rise to the same level with other serious literature (Haasio 2003: 17). Both Hammett and Chandler have been inspiring examples to many authors and have had a strong influence on the form of the hard-boiled detective story as we know it today (Haasio 2003: 15).

Also Erle Stanley Gardner started his career as a crime novelist by writing to *Black Mask*. His input to this genre was the change in the character of the detective. He namely abandoned the traditional private eye and introduced a lawyer-detective, Perry Mason. Just like Hammett's and Chandler's detectives, also Mason appeared in the movies and television series. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 137). Gardner wrote over 80 Perry Mason stories. He was very meticulous about details, especially in the field of law (Symons 1985: 200).

Whereas Hammett and Chandler had expressed some social criticism against the society, Mickey Spillane created a character that lives in a corrupt world, where you can trust no one and where violence is the only solution. Surprisingly, the books on Mike Hammer were huge best-sellers, a phenomenon that has been explained by the psychological state of the men returning from the Second World War. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 138-139).

Having now looked at the history of crime novels, I will make some observations on today's situation. I will first discuss some general characteristics and then look at crime literature in different countries.

4.8 Crime literature today

The Second World War had created a demand for entertainment. English and American crime literature was translated in many parts of Europe. Due to economic reasons, many of the novels were published in a short story form, which made the narrative quite compact, focusing on the actual events at the expense of details. Also the number of personae became limited, sometimes consisting only of the culprit and the hero. The changes, however, did not mean a downfall of crime literature. On the contrary, the genre became popular worldwide. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 148).

The wartime left its mark to literature as well. New themes were guilt and penitence. For example, Swiss writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt described the psychological development of the central character in his book *Verdacht* (Suspicion) (1952). In another well-known crime novel, *Versprechen* (Promise) (1958), he implies that in real life the crime plot can be interrupted by chance (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 147). His works hold a strong philosophical and moral undertone (Haasio 2004: 61).

In the following passages I shall introduce some of the characteristics of the latest trends in crime fiction. The list of authors is far from complete, but hopefully presentable enough to give a good outlook on the current status.

4.8.1 Police procedurals

In very loose terms police procedural can be described as a book with a police as a hero. Though already Gabriou depicted criminological routines and some of the main characters of the Golden Age detective stories were policemen, they behaved actually like their fellow private detectives. The proper police procedural did not appear until the Maigrét stories. (Panek 1987: 169-170). According to Van Dover (2005:46), the police procedural returns to the initial philosophy of Poe by emphasizing detection, not romantic figure of the detective. Cawelti (1976: 126-127) asserts that the mystery of classical detective story has been replaced by the process of investigations.

There are several differences between a traditional detective story and a police procedural novel. To begin with, the policemen are quite ordinary people and often from the lower middle class (Panek 1987: 174). Additionally, the emphasis is in the team work and routine. The problems are not solved by someone's mental power but by hard work and obstinacy (Ousby 1997: 139). Often the policemen are described as alienated from their family or society. Their work is unrewarding, stressing and even physically dangerous (Panek 1987: 177). According to Paul (1991: 186), humanizing the detective was the most important change towards realism in detective fiction, also in the respect that the detective could be fallible, weak and imperfect. The racial, ethnic and gender issues brought up in the police procedurals are further manifestations of realism (Scaggs 2005: 90).

Also, the offenses, for instance, rape and torture are more atrocious than in the classical detective stories. The shocking effects they cause unite the police-hero and the reader. Often the reason for the criminals' behaviour is found in the way the society is run (Panek 1987: 182-183).

Panek (1987: 185) adds that the police forces resemble military regime, detection is seen as a profession rather than a part-time employment and to conclude, despite the hard work of the police violence and crime are everlasting and never-ending.

Scaggs (2005: 89) claims that whereas the private eye served individuals, in the police procedural the police are protecting the whole society. Also the serial form, familiar to police procedurals, strengthens the emphasis of machinery that keeps an eye on the individuals and maintains discipline. The third-person narrative gives a more realistic touch than the first-person narrative that was used in the hard-boiled stories. (Scaggs 2005: 93).

As many of the popular police series are nowadays adapted to television, sometimes the characters are more familiar to the public than the authors. Therefore people talk, for example, about the latest Chief Inspector Wexford novel rather than the latest Ruth Rendell novel. (Ousby 1997: 164).

The so-called "police paradox" can still be sometimes seen even in the contemporary books. It means that the local police are seen incompetent if the hero-policeman of the story, for example, happens to be on a vacation in the area. It can be also realized through rivalry between a country police versus city police, or through the police hierarchy or gender. (Roth 1995: 62).

In some police series the combination of two policemen has been substituted by a combination of a policeman and a policewoman. And in the latest development the boss can be a woman and the subordinate a man. (Ousby 1997: 169).

4.8.2 Roman policier

Regarding detective literature, France has not been one of the most productive countries, but the little that has been published has been of good quality (Parkkinen 1985: 46). *Roman policier* is the French equivalent for English police procedural. The tradition of *roman policier* started with Vidocq, Gabriou

and Leroux. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 173). Their modern successor is Belgian George Simenon who revived the the French detective story and created Inspector Jules Maigrét of the Sûreté, one of the most famous detectives in the world (Symons 1985: 108). Simenon was also one of the most productive authors in the world: he wrote 500 books that have sold more than 800 million copies. Out of the five hundred 76 are Maigrét novels. (Haasio 2003: 130).

The main focus of Maigrét books is not in the action but on the characters. Simenon depicts the ordinary life in Paris, provincial towns and French countryside in an arresting way (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 173). The attraction of Maigrét books is the sympathetic character of Maigrét himself and on the other hand the detailed and lively description of the setting (Kukkola 1985: 86). Inspector Maigrét is not a super-sleuth but an ordinary bourgeois man. His methods are very unconventional and he attempts to solve the crimes by lengthy discussions (Haasio 2003: 133-134).

The characters, which are presented in a realistic and credible way, form an interesting juxtaposition with the plot that could be described as artificial (Symons 1985: 133). He is not interested in the methods of the criminal, but psychological upheaval that leads an ordinary man to commit a crime (Benvenuti and Rizzoni 1979: 151).

However, Monsieur Maigrét is almost as well known as Sherlock Holmes. Unlike his forebear, Simenon makes Maigrét quite human with lots of personal detail (Symons 1985: 135-136).

4.8.3 Crime novels or psychological thrillers

Many scholars have claimed that there were some psychological aspects already in the mysteries of the Golden Age. Knight (1980: 111), however, argues that psychology was only used in those cases to highlight the methods employed by the detective and to cover up thin plots and intuitive reasoning.

The crime novel differs from a detective novel in the sense that it is a story about the criminal and the crime instead of being a story about detection. In Ousby's view (1997: 142) it is more versatile than detective novel which normally is restricted by a formula. The crime thriller lays emphasis on

potential danger and is directed to the reasons behind the deed instead of investigations, and this is why a synonym to crime thriller could rather be whydunnit instead of whodunnit (Scaggs 2005: 107, 112).

Hilfer (1990: 2-3) points out that the world of detective story is ultimately rational and that in the conclusion of the final chapter the detective relieves the reader from a feeling of guilt. In contrast, the world of crime story is complex: the concept of guilt and innocence are not clear and may bring the feeling of threat and remorse in the reader.

The popularity of serial killer motif in the contemporary crime fiction is in Scaggs' view (2005: 116) a natural continuum to the development that started from Poe. As the representatives of crime novels I want to bring up two British authors, P.D. James and Ruth Rendell and American Patricia Highsmith.

P.D. (Phyllis Dorothy) James published her first book *Cover her Face* in 1962. A specialist in Health Care system in England, James exploits her knowledge and the settings of some of her books are conveniently set, for example, in a clinic or a nurses' training school. In her first novels Superintendent Adam Dalgliesh solves the murders. Later, James created a female private investigator, Cordelia Gray, whose actions are closer to her female colleagues in America. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 152-153).

In Woeller and Cassiday's (1988: 154) view, the need for social reform as well as recognition and rehabilitation of the psychologically impaired individuals is emphasized in James's novels. Her stock-in-trade are closed circle of suspects and a murder in an exotic milieu, both ingredients of a classical whodunnit (Haasio 2001: 92).

Ruth Rendell, a contemporary of P.D. James, had her first novel *From Doon with Death* published in 1964. She has written police procedural novels, non-serial novels and also under the name of Barbara Wine (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 154). In the first-mentioned, the main character is Detective Chief-Inspector Reginald Wexford who works with Inspector Michael Burden. Wexford is a middle-aged policeman living in a small town in Middle-Sussex with his wife and daughters. (Symons 1985: 179).

Though these stories represent in a certain way traditional *roman policier*, the difference lies in the themes. Rendell reflects on modern issues like racism, sexual deviations and psychological discrepancies, yet with sympathy and compassion. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 154).

Characteristic to her novels is the psychological development of the personae and the clashes between different classes of the society. In several of her books she describes the conflicts of a whole community and the reasons for the discord. Often the characters are ghastly. Outwardly they may seem rather normal and middle class but some stimulus may turn them into alienated and deviate. There are often also opposite characters: black and white, a son of a worker and a son of a cultural home, and so on. (Haasio 2001: 149-150). Many times in her books the main character is under a mental pressure, which leads to an act of violence (Symons 1985: 179-180).

Her non-serial novels, also called as chillers, contemplate even more on the psychological side of a human being. The traditional form of a Golden Age detective story is often abandoned and the murderer can be announced in the first sentence of the book, like in *A Judgment in Stone* (1977) and the murderer's actions can be followed throughout the book. Despite of that, the suspense still holds all the way till the end. (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 155).

According to Haasio (2001: 150-151), the novels of Rendell are excellent sociologic-psychological analyses of modern Britain. He also praises the depth of characters, carefully depicted settings and the abundance of details.

American Patricia Highsmith is yet another female author worth mentioning, who succeeds in combining the plots and the characters. For some reason she has not quite been so popular in her home country as in Europe (Symons 1985: 165-166). She is regarded as one of the representatives of psychological suspense literature. In her books the world is one of oppression and estrangement. She describes ordinary daily lives suddenly turning into nightmares and the wicked do not necessarily get punished (Haasio 2003: 87-88). Alfred Hitchcock made a movie adaptation of one of her most famous stories *Strangers on a Train* (1950) in which two strangers commit a murder on other's behalf. Another well-known novel is *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955) (Woeller and Cassiday 1988: 159-160).

4.8.4 The engaged model

Engaged model is a term coined by J.K. Van Dover. It means that though the detectives seemingly work alone and may be isolated from the society or their families, they still identify with groups with social agendas, like gender, religion, race, sexual orientation or a particular region. They may form a non-traditional family, e.g. with their friends or by adopting children. (Van Dover 2005: 50, 52). The Engaged Detective novel tends to emphasize certain areas or institutions and thus educate the reader about the customs and way of life or revise the readers' political views (Van Dover 2005: 55, 112).

Mandel (1984: 78-80) claims that the broadening market of crime stories forced the authors to specialize in order to stand out. Therefore, they offered the reader additional information on a specific topic, like forensic medicine, horse-racing or orchid-growing, often being experts themselves. In contrast to the Golden Age writers, contemporary authors have to make a great deal of research for their books.

Also historical features became fashionable. Dutch Robert van Gulik specialized in Chinese murder mysteries. His Judge Dee stories take place in China in the 7th century and they are based on a true character, Ti Jen-chien, who was a prominent criminologist and statesman. (Kukkola 1985: 104).

4.8.5 Anglo-Saxon trends

There are some distinct features in the modern crime literature in the Great Britain that enable the classification of certain trends.

The first one is the provincial aspect. In the traditional detective stories the murder was so complicated that the country police had to call in the Scotland Yard. This served the purpose of omitting the local atmosphere and it also enabled the using of the same detective in various settings. In modern crime stories, however, it seems to be the opposite and the provinciality brings more reality to the narrative. Reginald Hill's Superintendent Andrew Dalziel works in Yorkshire, Rendell's Wexford in Sussex and Colin Dexter's Inspector Morse in Oxford, to mention a few. (Binyon 1989: 120-121).

The second feature is a combination of psychology and tradition and there are three notable female authors that have managed successfully to merge

psychological aspect and traditional British whodunnit: Frances Fyfield, Minette Walters and Margaret Yorke. (Haasio 2000: 132, 175; Haasio 2001: 55).

John Le Carré and Len Deighton represent the action embodiment and depict the world of the spies and cold war. Action-packed stories by Dick Francis take place mainly in horse races. Historical settings are portrayed in prize-winning and highly-valued Peter Lovesey's Inspector Cribb stories happening in the Victorian era. (Haasio 2000: 50; Haasio 2001: 33, 109, 114).

The recent popularity of Scottish crime novelists, such as Ian Rankin and Denise Mina has generated a new concept: "tartan noir", referring to *roman noir* and Scotland. According to an article in Metro tabloid (2004: 6), Ian Rankin has claimed that the crime literature is the only genre that is trying to shed light on modern Britain.

4.8.6 Trends in the USA

The trends in the USA differ considerably from the ones in the Great Britain that were presented above.

According to Haasio (2000: 9), the tradition of the American hard-boiled school lies very heavily today on the shoulders of female authors. Not only are the writers women, also their "heroines" are women who have undergone hardships. The pioneer is Marcia Muller's creation Sharon McCone. Muller's books emphasize social problems and demand for equality. Haasio lists four more female authors as the best examples of American hard-boiled school today: Patricia Cornwell's main character is coronary Cay Scarpetta, Sue Grafton and Sara Paretsky write about brisk private eyes Kinsey Millhone and V.I. Warshawski. Private investigator Carlotta Carlyle by Linda Barnes is somewhat more conventional than her colleagues Millhone and Warshawski. (Haasio 2000: 9, 30, 70, 145 and 154).

The British tradition in the U.S. is also very much alive today. Though American, Elisabeth George and Martha Grimes are masters in the traditional British puzzle whodunnit. Their detective stories take place in Britain, where as Donna Leon writes about murders that happen in Italy, most often in Venice. (Haasio 2000: 57, 77 and 108).

One of the characteristics of American crime literature is the stories about the courtrooms and police precincts. Mandel (1984:108) claims that during the 70s corporations became obsessed by circumventing the law which they saw as hampering their business. In his view the consequent expansion of the legal profession was also reflected in literature.

The books by John Grisham and Scott Turow follow in the footsteps of Perry Mason. Though stylistically quite different, the events take place mainly in the law circles and courtrooms. Ed McBain writes about police precincts and in Donald Westlake's books the main characters are criminals, sometimes even unlawful policemen. Intense and disputed works of James Ellroy depict the hectic and desolate society of Los Angeles. (Haasio 2000: 46, 48, 80 and 123; Haasio 2001: 157, 164).

4.8.7 Trends in the Scandinavia

The boom in crime literature has continued in the Scandinavia, too. In the following chapters we shall take a brief look on the characteristics of the crime literature in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Denmark.

The following Finnish authors have been ranked as the most notable and best by Risto Raitio and Keijo Kettunen.

The Finnish pioneer in detective fiction was Rikhard Hornanlinna (alias Rudolf Rikhard Ruth) who published his first novel in 1910. A number of imitators followed but nothing remarkable happened until in the forties, when prolific Marton Taiga (aka Martti Löfberg) and Mika Waltari joined in the genre. Waltari was already a distinguished writer and his best-seller Inspector Palmu stories that presented traditional puzzles gained a wide circulation. (Raitio and Kettunen 2002: 8-19).

It seems that the first notable authors were quite productive: Aarne Haapakoski, who had several pen names, such as Henrik Horna and Outsider, wrote some 3000 short stories during the years 1931-61. In the sixties there was only one leading crime author: Mauri Sariola. His first book was an immediate success within the reviewers and the readers. He wrote 64 stories

more, but in the seventies his quality began to fail along with his success. (Raitio and Kettunen 2002: 21-36).

According to Raitio and Kettunen (2002: 42-48), Pentti Kirstilä and Matti Yrjänä Joensuu managed to revive the crime writing in Finland in the seventies. Kirstilä's stories are a combination of procedurals and puzzles. Joensuu is a policeman who writes police procedurals and has often been compared with Swedish couple Sjövall-Wahlöö. He shares their pessimistic mind-set and criticism towards the welfare state. By the end of the seventies new authors started to pour in, especially well represented were women writers, like Eeva Tenhunen, Pirkko Arhippa and Outi Pakkanen. (Kukkola 1998: 7).

Of the present-day authors Raitio and Kettunen (2002: 54-64) bring up humorous detective novelist Risto Karlsson, Juha Numminen who writes about the underworld of Helsinki, and Ilkka Remes whose books are thrillers. Seppo Jokinen is the only one continuing the police procedural tradition. There are three authors who represent the hard-boiled style: crime reporters Harri Nykänen and Jarkko Sipilä and also Reijo Mäki whose narrative owes a lot to Philip Marlow.

The 1990's saw the coming of remarkable female authors. Sirpa Tabet writes thrillers with a supernatural twist and Anja Angel represents feminist branch of crime novel. Leena Lehtolainen's DCI Marja Kallio –series differs in one respect from other Finnish and also international detective stories as this policewoman leads a perfectly normal family life. (Raitio and Kettunen 2002: 71-72).

I also want to add to the list of prominent Finnish writers newsman and author Matti Rönkä, who won in 2007 the Glass Key prize, which is given yearly to the best Scandinavian detective story. His books tackle issues like immigrants and social problems.

Raitio and Kettunen (2002:73-77) state that there is no such thing as a specific Finnish crime story; most of the books are influenced by international trends. From the nineties onwards the amount of Finnish crime novels has risen steadily and this development seems to continue.

In 1984 The Finnish Whodunnit Society was founded to promote this literary genre. It has a publishing series of its own as well as a quarterly

journal. The society also arranges various events. (Raitio and Kettunen 2002: 78). It also founded a whodunnit library in Helsinki in 2004.

Sweden has been considered the leading country of detective literature in the Scandinavia. Here are some reasons for the justification.

Probably one of the best known Swedish author is Maria Lang who was for a long time the best selling detective author in the Nordic countries and has been called the Agatha Christie of Sweden (Haasio 2004: 86).

A married couple, Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö, continued the *roman policier* tradition but in a more pessimistic atmosphere and expressing social criticism (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 176). Their Inspector Beck -series can be seen as a landmark of Scandinavian detective literature. Sjöwall and Wahlöö criticized strongly the classical whodunnit tradition and published in 1972 a reform program resigning from it (Haasio 2004: 144). In the books of Sjöwall and Wahlöö, commissioner of the Stockholm Police Martin Beck and his team pessimistically believe that no matter how hard they work crime and violence will never end (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 176).

The contemporary detective authors in Sweden follow in the tradition of Sjöwall and Wahlöö by describing the estrangement of the individual and Swedish society with its flaws. The books of Åke Edwardsson portray the life of Detective Inspector Erik Winter in Göteborg. The stories by Inger Frimansson take place in Stockholm. (Haasio 2001: 38).

Productive Henning Mankell became truly popular after he published his first detective story featuring Kurt Wallander of the Ystad police in 1981. Also his stories are full of strong realism and reflections of the distortions of the society (Haasio 2001: 51).

Jan Guillou is best known for his thrillers featuring agent Carl Hamilton. In addition to the criticism towards the Swedish society he also touches upon international political issues (Haasio 2001: 71).

Liza Marklund is an author of the new generation. Her heroine is crime reporter Annika Bengtzon. Being a celebrity in her own country, Marklund has been accused of being too calculating. She has taken pains with the marketing of her books, e.g. by posing in the covers herself, and this has caused irritation within some people. (Haasio 2001: 121, 126 and 128).

The above mentioned authors have been listed by Ari Haasio. The list could have included also the names of Arne Dahl, Katarina Mazzetti, David Lagercrantz, Åsa Larsson and Stieg Larsson who have also gained a wide international readership.

Jukka Koskelainen (2005: C2) claims that Sweden has become the leading country of crime fiction. On the other hand he regrets that as most of the books still concentrate on criticism towards the society, it does not leave space for introducing fresh viewpoints to the genre.

From the Norwegian crime literature two women authors must be mentioned: Karin Fossum and Anne Holt. The major themes in Fossum's books are motive behind the crime and the effect of the crime.

Holt, former Minister of Justice of Norway, concentrates more on social dilemmas: equality of women, rights of the homosexuals, corruption and racism. The heroine is somewhat exceptional: Police sergeant Hanne Wilhelmsen drives a Harley Davidson and is a lesbian. (Haasio 2001: 46 and 88).

Jo Nesbø has also risen to the vanguard of the Scandinavian crime literature. He, too, has won the Glass Key prize in 1998 (website: DekkariNetti, n.d.).

In Iceland the readers have been interested in real crime stories that have taken place during the last centuries. The main interest among the readers has not been in catching the culprit, but on consideration of reasons and implications of the crime and mental factors of the guilty party.

After 1997 there was a sudden increase in the number of crime novelists. The five most famous authors are: Birgitta Halldórsdóttir, Stella Blómkvist, Árni Þórarinnsson, Viktor Arnar Ingólfsson and Arnaldur Indriðason. Indriðason has won Glass Key prize twice and also once The Golden Dagger, which is an award given annually by the Crime Writers' Association for best crime novel of the year. (website: Islantilainen rikosromaani, n.d).

Denmark is probably not quite as known yet in Finland as Sweden, Norway and Iceland for its crime authors. Two, whose books have been translated into Finnish are, Leif Davidsen and Erik Otto Larsen. The first, a journalist, author

and an expert on international politics, has won the Glass Key in 1999. (website: Leif Davidsen, n.d.). Larsen is a painter, graphic artist as well as author and also a Glass Key winner from 1995 (website: Erik Otto Larsen, n.d).

As we know have some knowledge on the composition as well as history of crime genre, it is time to introduce the comparison made by Julian Symons on the differences between the classical whodunnit and a modern crime story. Books by Agatha Christie and Ruth Rendell will be analysed on the basis of the classification in the following chapters.

5. COMPARISON BETWEEN A DETECTIVE STORY AND A CRIME NOVEL

In this section I shall briefly take a look at female authors and why have they been so successful in the domain of crime literature. Also, Agatha Christie and Ruth Rendell are introduced in brief. I have chosen these two authors as representatives of best-selling authors of their own era. Intriguingly, there are some similarities in their background as well: both starting their careers as housewives who initially began writing as a hobby. Also on the face of it, they seemed to represent opposite sides of detective fiction: Christie focused on the puzzle element where as Rendell emphasizes the psychological aspects.

After the short introductions I shall expand upon the classification made by Julian Symons on how the classical detective story differs from a modern crime story. At the end of this section there is a comparison between novels written by Agatha Christie and Ruth Rendell based on Symons's categorization.

5.1 Background information on Christie and Rendell

Since the 18th century fiction writing has been one of the rare opportunities for educated women to earn a living and already in the 20th century the fees were substantial (Gill 1990: 32).

Detective novelist P.D. James (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1983: 29) says that the men excel in private eye and police procedural novels, especially with violent crimes. Women set the murders to the ordinary lives and places, which makes a striking contrast. They are also better with the details, which, according to James, is essential regarding the solution to the problem. Women also tend to describe the characters, their motives and emotions more than their male counterparts.

James (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1993: 22) also claims that women are more interested in cosy evil mind and inner pressures that a closed community can create and which may one day break out in a most extreme way.

5.1.1 Agatha Christie, 1890-1976

Agatha Miller was born in 1890. She was married in her twenties and became a housewife, Mrs Christie. One of her hobbies was writing, but it had not been

anything serious. She saw being a writer secondary to her role as a wife. (Rowland 2001: 1-2, 7).

In her Autobiography Christie tells that while she was working in a dispensary during the WWI she had been playing with the idea of writing a detective story. She offered the first manuscript to three publishers and it was always rejected until The Bodley Head got interested in publishing it. (Christie 1977: 255-260).

Maida and Spornick (1982: 62) offer three reasons why Christie started to write detective fiction: First of all, she had a lively imagination and secondly, she respected the Victorian values, such as the class system, good conduct and perception of good and evil. And last of all, detective fiction was popular at that time. Christie claimed that writing was only a way to make a living, not pleasure but immense exertion. But she does not explain why she kept on writing after her financial situation was secured. (Gill 1990: 152).

Agatha Christie's fame is mainly based on particular kind of whodunnit stories, they are puzzles and morality plays where the wicked are always punished (Kukkola 1990: 53). One of her tricks is to introduce a whole set of stock characters and in the end surprise the reader by showing that some of the characters were not what they had seemed to be (Van Dover 2005: 33). Thompson (1993: 126) says that her text is often linguistically ambiguous giving option for a number of interpretations thus leaving the reader sufficiently uncertain about the correct context.

In a number of her books there can be seen disappointment towards the British legal system that may leave the culprit unpunished. The moral principles are strict and narrow-minded. A murder can only be compensated by the death of the murderer. (Lehtolainen 1990: 20, 27).

Christie has been blamed for idealizing Edwardian England, but Thompson (1993: 123) points out that also other authors committed the same crime, e.g. Evelyn Waugh in *Brideshead Revisited*.

She also has been criticized for portraying only characters from her own social class and that the description of the working class is prejudiced. One of her shortcomings according to her critics is neglecting thorough portrayal of the milieu and the psychological side of the murderer. (Gill 1990: 161, 202). Instead, she focused on the key issue of her books: the puzzle element. She

always played fair and did not demand any special knowledge from her readers, simply an attentive mind (Barnard 1980: 53, 77).

According to Julian Symons (1977: 38), the puzzle element is the answer to her popularity even in the 20th century, it never goes out of fashion. Edmund Crispin (1977: 41, 43) claims that though the plots are complicated the language is quite simple and the characters universal, which makes it easily translatable and applicable to human nature in all kinds of societies and cultures.

Knight (1980: 128) suggests that Christie's successful combination of middle class self-centeredness and social collectivism, gave the reader a comforting impression of a safe society based on a group of individuals.

5.1.2 Ruth Rendell, 1930-

Ruth Grassman was born in London 1930. At first she worked as an editor, but after she was married to Donald Rendell in the age of 20 she became a housewife. For years she wrote books that never got published. Finally, in 1964 *From Doon with Death* was printed. She has won American Edgar prize and the English Gold Dagger for four times, which is more than anyone has ever done before. (Torppa 2005: 6).

When Rendell started to work within the detective genre, she intentionally chose to emphasize the psychological, human features instead of the classical main aspects like the puzzle element and technical investigations. She claims that the ambiguity of evil in the modern crime stories can be explained by the rise of psychology to the awareness of popular circles. (Cooper-Clark 1983: 128-129). She has frequently brought up her interest in Freud and Jung and she has depicted unconscious strains both in the victim as well as the detective. She likes to write about people under stress. (Rowland 2001: 9, 194). She also says that it is easier to write about the bad, because it is more varied and offers more excitement, the good is always the same (Cooper-Clark 1983: 137-138).

Rendell states that the black and white world described in the detective stories of the Golden Age reflected the contemporary world, at least the world of the upper class (Cooper-Clark 1983: 128). In her opinion, the class division has not disappeared from England and that is why it turns up so often in her books (Torppa 2005: 5). She feels that the class system does not promote social

stability but brings up criminal behaviour instead. She feels that it needs critical examination (Rowland 2001: 42, 193).

The social views of Rendell can be seen in her books when compared with the classical whodunnits: arresting the criminal does not restore the moral and social order because also the criminal is seen as a victim and the society which is to blame for it is still operating unchanged (Rowland 2001: 40).

Ruth Rendell's plans are to become more of a political and psychological novelist. She tells that she was rather surprised that one of her books which was quite political did not rouse any shock or adverse reactions in her readers (Rowland 2001: 195).

5.2 Detective stories versus crime novels

“The detective story has changed into crime novel. Such a statement needs not so much justification as definition. A comparison of the main features in the two kinds of book may help in showing that they are really not the same article with a different label.” (Symons 1985: 162)

Symons (1985: 164) sees this division useful as it shows how different the objectives of the detective storywriter and crime novelist are. The primary purpose of detective story is to set a puzzle. The crime novelist, however, wants to create a mystery but on the other hand (s)he is interested in the human aspect and behaviour.

Dorothy L. Sayers (1993: 142-143) asserted that the detective novel only presents a known fact. It ignores feelings and reports incidents in a downbeat manner. The interest does not expand to the mind of the murderer because his/her personality must be concealed till the end of the story. She also claims that a strong emotional charge may hinder the smooth progress of the narrative.

P.D. James (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1983: 20-21) agrees confirming that the main difference between a detective story and a crime novel is that in the beginning of a detective story there is a murder and the murderer is unknown until to the last pages of the book. The detective represents justice and the solution is the main issue in the story. In the crime novel the murderer may be known already from the start and the main focus is on the impact of the deed on the characters. In a crime novel there is not necessarily any resolution at all.

Palmer (1984: 97) points out that in the detective stories the actions of the hero (= the detective) were always justified because he is trying to restore social order. In crime novels this justification is missing and Palmer sees that this reflects the changes of the modern society.

Knight (1980: 112) brings up a Freudian interpretation of the characters in a classic whodunnit: the criminal represents id, the instinctive side of a man, and the detective the superego, the controlling side.

In the classical detective story the moral values are encoded in the social system. There is no pondering on questions about justice, the story ends when the culprit is exposed by the Great Detective. The crime story, instead, challenges the idea of justice. For instance, a guilty person may not be caught at all. Or if s/he is caught, the reader may have strong feelings about the punishment. And in the most extreme case, it may be someone totally innocent who is brought to justice. (Hilfer 1990: 73-74).

5.2.1 Comparison between the main features by Julian Symons

Julian Symons has listed in his book *Bloody murder* the main comparable features between the detective story and the crime novel: plot, detective, method, clues, characters, setting, social attitude and puzzle value (Symons 1985: 162-164). I chose this classification for my thesis as I was interested to see how well the criteria match with the books by Christie and Rendell that I had chosen. In the following chapters I shall expand on these features one by one and then analyse the chosen texts on the basis of the definitions of these features.

I would also like to point out that it was quite easy to find references to Agatha Christie's books, as well as Golden Age literature, compared with Ruth Rendell of whom relatively, and in my opinion surprisingly, little has been written. Nor have the modern psychological crime stories been examined yet. Therefore the references to Christie's book and classical detective fiction are evidently lengthier than the ones on Rendell and modern crime stories

5.3 The Analysis of *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*

Christie, Agatha 2001. *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (From now on referred to as MAS). London: Harper Collins.

5.3.1 Plot

Based on a deception which may be mechanical (locked room), verbal (misleading remarks), concerned with forensic medicine (poisons, blood groups, fake prints) or ballistics. Book is constructed backwards from this deception, revelation of which is the climactic point to which everything leads. (Symons 1985: 162)

Christie created several plot structures but the concealment and cover-up of the real motive became her trademark (Parkkinen 1985: 40-41). Another feature in the earlier stories was using poison as the murder weapon. In several stories she also employed the locked room mystery and later on she became fascinated by nursery rhymes. (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 117, 120).

Christie did not include long passages of trials or court sessions in her books and they always ended up in a final culmination and revelation of the culprit. (Maida and Spornick 1982: 67). Cawelti (1976: 91) says that establishment of guilt has more importance in the classical detective story than the punishment of the criminal. According to Woods (1990: 19-20), as the verdict and punishment always take place outside the story, the omission of public justice from the detective story correlates with the ban of public executions that came into effect in 1868.

In *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* Arthur Hasting is a guest in a manor house called Styles, a home of an old acquaintance of his, John Cavendish. Then suddenly one night Mrs Inglethorp, the step-mother of Mr Cavendish, is found in a locked room horribly dying of poisoning. The country manor house is filled with suspects, all having been somehow dependent on Mrs Inglethorp. A Belgian refugee, ex-policeman Hercule Poirot, happens to live in the neighbourhood and is called to help with the investigation by Poirot's friend, Hastings. After numerous red herrings at the end of the book the murderer is exposed by Monsieur Poirot.

The example below illustrates one of the deception methods used by Christie depicting how Mrs Inglethorp is dying in a seemingly locked room:

Example (1)

“‘We must try and break the door in I suppose. It’ll be a tough job, though. Here, let one of the maids go down and wake Baily and tell him to go for Dr Wilkins at once. Now then, we’ll have a try at the door. Half a moment, though, isn’t there a door into Miss Cynthia’s room?’

‘Yes sir, but that’s always bolted. It’s never been undone.’

‘Well, we might just see.’

He ran rapidly down the corridor to Cynthia’s room. Mary Cavendish was there, shaking the girl – who must have been an unusually sound sleeper – and trying to wake her. In a moment or two he was back.

‘No good. That’s bolted too. We must break in the door. I think this one is a shade less solid than the one in the passage.’

We strained and heaved together. The framework of the door was solid, and for a long time it resisted our efforts, but at last we felt it give beneath our weight, and finally, with the resounding crash, it was burst open.

We stumbled in together, Lawrence still holding his candle. Mrs Inglethorp was lying on the bed, her whole form agitated by violent convulsions, in one of which she must have overturned the table beside her. As we entered, however, her limbs relaxed, and she fell back upon the pillows.” (MAS, 45-46)

5.3.2 Detective

May be professional or amateur, and if amateur may run detective or inquiry agency, or get involved by chance in criminal cases. Always at the centre of story's action, most often the hero, and generally a keen observer who notices things missed by others. (Symons 1985: 162)

As already mentioned before, Agatha Christie had also other detectives, but in this comparison I shall concentrate on Hercule Poirot who is best known of Christie’s detectives and also is the main character of *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in which book he began his long career.

The main character is of course the detective himself and the main focus is in detection. Though there are moral issues behind each murder, every story starts from the beginning: the detective does not refer to precedent cases or persons (Van Dover 2005: 27). As a rule, the detective is not personally interested in the case he is investigating (Cawelti 1976: 81).

The purpose of the detective is of course to solve the crime, but also to hold back the solution from the reader for a certain time (Pyrhönen 1989: 74). Woods (1990: 16) asserts that the detective does not simply catch the criminals but also stands as a shield between the society and the perpetrators’ moral impact and simultaneously by doing this he becomes an outsider.

Many of the Golden Age detectives have narcissistic characteristics, which are manifested in the great care of the appearance or in eccentric hobbies. This is one way of creating suspense in the novel: the reader is anxious to see whether the self-important sleuth can really crack the crime (Pyrhönen 1989: 43). Birns and Birns (1990: 128-129) state that the caricature-like detective was also useful in deluding the criminal believing that the detective does not pose any real threat.

Agatha Christie felt that her detective could not be a complete copy of Holmes, he had to be logically thinking to be able to solve the crimes and he had to be very different from the stock characters of the detective stories (Sanders and Lovallo 1985: 7). Hercule Poirot was not interested in forensics and pursuits, that part he willingly left for the police. Instead, he preferred a comfortable armchair and counted on his “grey cells”. (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 117, 120).

Despite Christie’s productivity it is amazing how little we know about Hercule Poirot, he remains almost unchanged from the first appearance to the last. Not much information is given on his background, family or friends. Christie has pointed out that it was a mistake to create an elderly sleuth, though at the time she had no idea that her creation would continue detecting for the next 55 years. It is also significant that opposed to the other sleuths of the time, Poirot is not a typically heroic character, not physically or any other way. (Gill 1990: 50-52).

It is surprising that Poirot became so well-liked: he looked peculiar, he spoke English in a funny way and had a French name. But after the war in the 1920’s, the Belgian refugees had been offered shelter and homes in Britain and they were regarded gallant (Watson 1988: 166). According to Watson (1988: 167), Poirot was not even Belgian, but a representation of English stereotype for a foreigner and for that reason familiar to the reader.

Being a refugee from a neutral country, Poirot was not seen as a threatening character, especially when accompanied with his friend, Arthur Hastings, who embodies the English gentleman (Maida and Spornick 1982: 65). Hastings also guaranteed Poirot an access to the upper class households (Gill 1990: 54). Just as with the pair of Holmes-Watson, Poirot’s companion-chronicler Hastings is described so dim-witted that the reader rather has sympathies for the super

sleuth than intellectually identifies himself with Hastings (Watson 1988: 167-168).

Maida and Spornick (1982: 89) claim that of all famous detectives in literature, Poirot is the most international. He is at ease, no matter on which side of the world murder takes place, London, Paris or Far East.

In *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* Monsieur Hercule Poirot, a refugee from Belgium, makes his debut. He is half professional, half amateur, as he is a retired policeman. Poirot has sharp eyes and ears and usually the others are more or less puzzled about his observations. Of course, everything is made clear in the final gathering and confrontation. The following examples demonstrate the thorough working methods of Poirot and also his self-conceited personality:

Example (2)

“On the chest of drawers there was a tray with a spirit lamp and a small saucepan on it. A small quantity of a dark fluid remained in the saucepan, and an empty cup and a saucer that had been drunk out of stood near it.

I wonder how I could have been so unobservant as to overlook this. Here was a clue worth having. Poirot delicately dipped his finger into the liquid, and tasted it gingerly. He made a grimace.

‘Cocoa – with – I think – rum in it.’” (MAS, 64)

Example (3)

“With infinite care, he took a drop or two from the grounds in each cup, sealing them up in separate test tubes, tasting each in turn as he did so. His physiognomy underwent a curious change. An expression gathered there that I can only describe as half puzzled, and half relieved.

‘Bien! He said at last. ‘It is evident! I had an idea – but clearly I was mistaken. Yes, altogether I was mistaken. Yet it is strange. But no matter!’” (MAS, 89)

Example (4)

“‘The moment has come,’ said Poirot thoughtfully, ‘and I do not know what to do. For, you see, it is a big stake for which I play. No one, but I, Hercule Poirot, would attempt it!’ And he tapped himself proudly on the breast.” (MAS, 227)

5.3.3 Method

If the crime is murder (it almost always is), method may be bizarre or misleading, i.e. the victim appears to have been shot but was in fact poisoned. Sometimes the method may be highly ingenious, as in locked room mystery or itself puzzling, as in a poisoning case where everybody ate and drank exactly the same things. (Symons 1985: 163)

The main component in the classical detective stories is naturally the crime, which creates the mystery. The attention of the reader is kept alert by making the solving of the crime sound difficult and almost impossible for the detective

(Pyrhönen 1989: 7). The first detective stories were not concerned about crime itself. It was only used as a background for the puzzle (Mandel 1984: 15).

The competition set by the puzzle does not merely exist between the murderer and the sleuth; it is also a competition where the reader is set against the murderer, or the sleuth or even the author (Maida and Spornick 1982: 68).

People have always had the fear of death. But according to Mandel (1984: 41), the bourgeois society became obsessed with death seen as an accident and this led to the obsession of crime and murder. However, in the detective story the death is treated as an objective of investigation, dispassionately and void of feeling. Rowland (2001: 26) asserts that the theatrical murders of the Golden Age parody death which is then therapeutically accounted for and disposed of as an abnormal, solved problem by means of detection.

The gory details are always omitted as Christie felt that upsetting the reader was unnecessary and in any case the emphasis of the story was on the plot, not the deed itself (Symons 1977: 27).

Mrs Inglethorp was found in an apparently locked room. She had drunk coffee with poison in it, but all the others had had the same coffee.

Example (5)

“I shook my head, unconvinced.

‘We do not agree, eh?’ said Poirot. ‘Well, let us leave it. Time will show which of us is right. Now let us turn to other aspects of the case. What do you make of the fact that all the doors of the bedroom were bolted on the inside?’

‘Well – I considered. ‘One must look at it logically.’

‘True.’

‘I should put it this way. The doors were bolted – our own eyes have told us that – yet the presence of the candle grease on the floor, and the destruction of the will, prove that during the night someone entered the room. You agree so far?’

‘Perfectly. Put with admirable clearness. Proceed.’” (MAS, 120)

5.3.4 Clues

An essential element. There will be perhaps a dozen of them in the story. The detective may explain their meaning at the time, or deductions may be left to the reader. (Symons 1985: 163)

In detective fiction two sets of clues can be used: material and logical. In Christie’s novels, Hercule Poirot is less concerned about the material clues. But Christie also uses textual clues: letters, checks, maps etc. which normally have a great importance, and that, according to Gill (1990: 38-39, 49), gives a fairer

chance for the reader to reach the solution. Material clues are described in detail. Clothing, furniture, the layout of rooms, etc., add realistic touch to the setting. (Watson 1988: 208).

In Christie's books, in addition to concrete clues, like footprints and burnt matches, there are clues to be found in the behaviour of the suspects that give away their true character (Maida and Spornick 1982: 79).

Agatha Christie was a master of clues and this book contains numerous, both valid ones and red herrings. The story of *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* runs through the detective finding and tackling the clues, which are listed below with examples from the book:

1) deceitful husband

Example (6)

"Miss Howard nodded grimly.

"True enough! Afraid I said some things to Emily she won't forget or forgive in a hurry. Don't mind if they've only sunk in a bit. Probably water off a duck's back, though. I said right out: "You're an old woman, Emily, and there's no fool like an old fool. The man's twenty years younger than you, and don't you fool yourself as to what he married you for. Money! Well, don't let him have too much of it. Farmer Raikes has got a very pretty young wife. Just ask your Alfred how much time he spends there."" (MAS, 23)

2) the dying words of Mrs Inglethorp

Example (7)

"At that moment, Dr Bauerstein pushed his way authoritatively into the room. For one instant he stopped dead, staring at the figure on the bed, and, at the same instant, Mrs Inglethorp cried out in a strangled voice, eyes fixed on the doctor:

'Alfred – Alfred –' Then she fell back motionless on the pillows." (MAS, 48)

Example (8)

"'Mr Inglethorp,' said the Coroner, 'you have heard your wife's dying words repeated here. Can you explain them in any way?'

'Certainly I can'

'You can?'

'It seems very simple. The room was dimly lighted. Dr Bauerstein is much of my height and build, and like me, wears a beard. In the dim light and suffering as she was, my poor wife mistook him for me.'

'Ah!' murmured Poirot to himself. 'But it is an idea, that!'

'You think it is true?' I whispered.

'I do not say that. But it is truly and ingenious supposition.'" (MAS, 144)

3) crushed coffee cup in Mrs Inglethorp's room

Example (9)

"'Mon ami,' he said, turning to me, 'somebody stepped on that cup, grinding it to powder, and the reason they did so was either because it contained strychnine or – which is far more serious – because it did not contain strychnine!'" (MAS, 65)

4) remains of the cocoa

Example (10)

“What time did you bring it up last night?”

‘About quarter-past-seven, I should say, sir.’

‘And when did you take it into Mrs Inglethorp’s room?’

‘When I went up to shut up, sir. About eight o’clock. Mrs Inglethorp came up to bed before I’d finished.’

‘Then, between seven-fifteen and eight o’clock, the cocoa was standing on the table in the left wing?’

‘Yes sir.’ Annie had been growing redder and redder in the face, and now she blurted out unexpectedly:

‘And if there was salt in it, sir, it wasn’t me. I never took the salt near it.’

‘What makes you think there was salt in it?’ asked Poirot.

‘Seeing it on the tray, sir.’” (MAS, 80)

5) stain on the carpet

Example (11)

“He then made a very careful examination of the drawers of the wash-stand. Crossing the room to the left-hand window, a round stain, hardly visible on the dark brown carpet, seemed to interest him particularly. He went down on his knees, examining it minutely – even going so far as to smell it.

Finally, he poured a few drops of the cocoa into a test tube, sealing it up carefully. His next proceeding was to take out a little notebook.” (MAS, 66)

6) locked despatch case

Example (12)

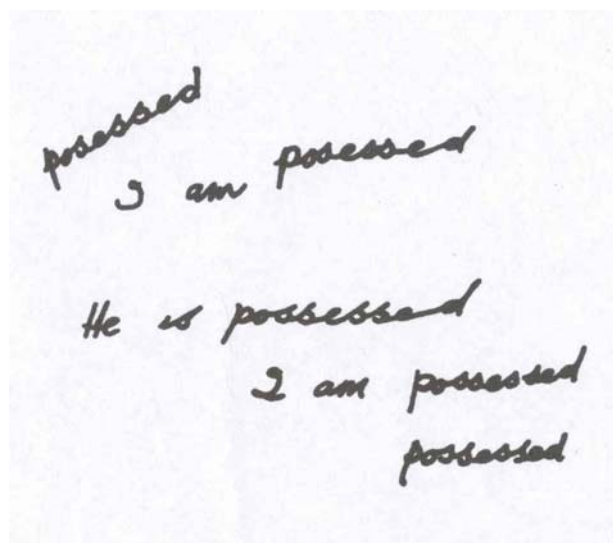
“A small purple despatch-case, with a key in the lock, on the writing table, engaged his attention for some time. He took out the key from the lock, and passed it to me to inspect. I saw nothing peculiar, however.” (MAS, 63)

7) scribbled-over envelope

Example (13)

“He pulled a crumpled envelope out of his pocket, and tossed it over to me. It was rather a curious document. A plain, dirty-looking old envelope with a few words scrawled across it, apparently at random.” (MAS, 84)

Illustration 3. (Christie: The Mysterious Affair at Styles. p. 85)



8) thread on the door bolt

Example (14)

“Next, he examined the framework of the door we had broken in, assuring himself that the bolt had really been shot. Then he went to the door opposite leading to Cynthia’s room. That door was also bolted, as I had stated. However, he went to the length of unbolting it, and opening and shutting it several times; this he did with the utmost precaution against making any noise. Suddenly something in the bolt itself seemed to rivet his attention. He examined it carefully, and then, nimbly whipping out a pair of small forceps from his case, he drew out some minute particle which he carefully sealed up in a tiny envelope.” (MAS, 64)

9) candle grease on the floor

Example (15)

“With a dramatic gesture, he pointed to a large splash of candle grease on the floor by the writing table. ‘It must have been done since yesterday, otherwise a good housemaid would have at once removed it with a blotting-paper and a hot iron. One of my best hats once – but that is not to the point.’” (MAS, 67)

10) burned fragments in the fireplace

Example (16)

“‘We will look through the desk in the boudoir first,’ explained John, ‘and go up in her bedroom afterwards. She kept her most important papers in a purple despatch-case, which we must look through carefully.’

‘Yes,’ said the lawyer, ‘it is quite possible that there may be a later will than the one in my possession.’

‘There is a later will.’ It was Poirot who spoke.

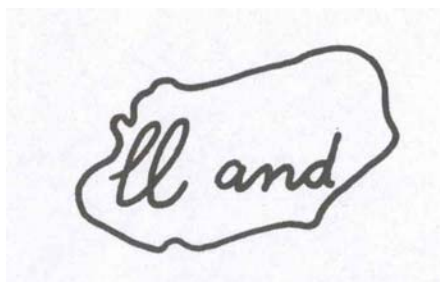
‘What?’ John and the lawyer looked at him startled.

‘Or rather,’ pursued my friend imperturbably, ‘there was one.’

‘What do you mean – there was one? Where is it now?’

‘Burnt!’

‘Burnt?’” (MAS, 99)

Illustration 4. (Christie: *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. p. 69)

11) Lawrence’s shaken appearance in her mother’s bedroom

Example (17)

“I turned to Lawrence, to suggest that I had better leave them now that there was no further need of my services, but the words were frozen on my lips. Never had I seen such a ghastly look on any man’s face. He was white as chalk, the candle held in his shaking hands was sputtering on to the carpet, and his eyes, petrified with terror, or some such kindred emotion, stared fixedly over my head at a point on the further wall. It was as though he had seen something that turned him to stone. I instinctively followed the direction of his eyes, but I could see nothing unusual.” (MAS, 46)

12) fingerprints on the poison cupboard

Example (18)

““Good heavens!’ I exclaimed. ‘But what were Lawrence Cavendish’s finger-marks doing on it? He never went near the poison cupboard the day we were there?’

‘Oh, yes he did!

‘Impossible! We were together all the time.’

Poirot shook his head.

‘No, my friend, there was a moment when you were not all together. There was a moment when you could not have been together, or it would not have been necessary to call Monsieur Lawrence to come and join you on the balcony.

‘I had forgotten that,’ I admitted. ‘But it was only for a moment.’

‘Long enough.’” (MAS, 229-230)

13) hot weather

Example (19)

““There are two facts of significance.’

‘And what are they?’

The first is that the state if the weather yesterday. That is very important.’

‘But it was a glorious day!’ I interrupted. ‘Poirot, you are pulling my leg!’

‘Not at all. The thermometer registered 80° in the shade. Do not forget that, my friend. It is the key to the whole riddle!’” (MAS, 124)

14) freshly planted bed of begonias

Example (20)

“He had stepped outside the french window, and was standing, apparently lost in admiration, before the various shaped flower beds.

‘Admirable!’ he murmured. ‘Admirable! What symmetry! Observe that crescent; and those diamonds – their neatness rejoices the eye. The spacing of the plants, also, is perfect. It has been recently done; is it not so?’

‘Yes, I believe they were at it yesterday afternoon. But come in - Dorcas is here.’

‘Eh bien, eh bien! Do not grudge me a moment’s satisfaction of the eye.’

‘Yes, but this affair is more important.’

‘And how do you know that these fine begonias are not of equal importance?’

I shrugged my shoulders. There was really no arguing with him if he chose to take that line.” (MAS, 70)

15) quarrel heard by the servants and Hastings

Example (21)

“Cynthia was waiting for me, and greeted me eagerly with:

‘I say! There has been the most awful row! I’ve got it all out of Dorcas.’

‘What kind of row?’

‘Between Aunt Emily and him. I do hope she’s found him out at last!’

‘Was Dorcas there, then?’

‘Of course not. She “happened to be near the door”. It was a real old bust-up. I do wish I knew what it was all about.’

I thought of Mrs Raikes’s gipsy face, and Evelyn Howard’s warnings, but wisely decided to hold my peace, whilst Cynthia exhausted every possible hypothesis, and cheerfully hoped, ‘Aunt Emily will send him away, and will never speak to him again.’” (MAS, 38)

Example (22)

“As I ran out to the tennis court a few moments later, I had to pass the open boudoir window, and was unable to help overhearing the following scrap of dialogue. Mary Cavendish was saying in the voice of a woman desperately controlling herself: ‘Then you won’t show it to me?’

To which Mrs Inglethorp replied:

‘My dear Mary, it has nothing to do with that matter.’

‘Then show it to me.’

'I tell you it is not what you imagine. It does not concern you in the least.'

To which Mary Cavendish replied, with a rising bitterness: 'Of course, I might have known you would shield him.'" (MAS, 37)

16) peculiar clothing and accessories of Mr Inglethorp

Example (23)

"'Still – I do not see – ' I began.

'Neither do I see. I tell you, mon ami, it puzzles me. Me – Hercule Poirot!'

'But if you believe him innocent, how do you explain his buying the strychnine?'

'Very simply. He did not buy it.'

'But Maze recognized him!'

'I beg your pardon, he saw a man with a black beard like Mr Inglethorp's, and wearing glasses like Mr Inglethorp, and dressed in Mr Inglethorp's rather noticeable clothes. He could not recognize a man whom he had probably seen in the distance, since, you remember, he himself had only been in the village a fortnight, and Mrs Inglethorp principally dealt with Coot's in Tadminster.'" (MAS, 153)

17) mysterious walking hours of Dr Bauerstein

Example (24)

"'Yes, a good deal that was peculiar came out today,' continued Poirot. 'Dr Bauerstein, now, what was he doing up and dressed at that hour in the morning? It is astonishing to me that no one commented on the fact.'" (MAS, 158)

18) letters sent by Mrs Inglethorp

Example (25)

"'I sent for you, Annie, because I thought you might be able to tell me something about the letters Mrs Inglethorp wrote last night. How many were there? And can you tell me any of the names and addresses?'

Annie considered.

'There were four letters, sir. One was to Miss Howard, and one was to Mr Wells, the lawyer, and the other two I don't think I remember, sir – oh, yes, one was to Ross's, the caterers in Tadminster. The other one, I don't remember.'

'Think,' urged Poirot.

Annie racked her brains in vain.

'I'm sorry, sir, but it's clean gone. I don't think I can have noticed it.'" (MAS, 78)

Illustration 5. (Christie: The Mysterious Affair at Styles. p. 138)

July 17th Styles Court
Essex

My dear Gwyn
Can we not bury
the hatchet? I have
found it hard to forget
the things you said
against my dear husband
but I am an old woman
very fond of you
Yours affectionately
Emily Inglethorp

19) Lawrence Cavendish's strange testimony in the inquest

Example (26)

“His suggestion that his mother might have been poisoned accidentally by means of the tonic she was taking, that did not strike you as strange – hein?”

‘No, I can’t say it did. The doctors ridiculed it of course. But it was quite a natural suggestion for a layman to make.’

‘But Monsieur Lawrence is not a layman. You told me yourself that he had started by studying medicine, and that he had taken his degree.’

‘Yes, that’s true. I never thought of that.’ I was rather startled. ‘It is odd.’” (MAS, 156-157)

20) broken bellcord

Example (27)

“My good Dorcas, I have an idea – a little idea – if it should prove justified, what magnificent chance! Tell me, on Monday, not Tuesday, but Monday, the day before the tragedy, did anything go wrong with Mrs Inglethorp’s bell?”

Dorcas looked very surprised.

‘Yes, sir, now you mention it, it did: though I don’t know how you came to hear of it. A mouse, or some such, must have nibbled the wire through. The man came and put it right on Tuesday morning.’” (MAS, 218)

21) false beard found in the attic

Example (28)

“What is it?”

‘Look!’

The chest was nearly empty, and there, reposing right at the bottom, was a magnificent black beard.

‘Ohó!’ said Poirot. ‘Ohó’ He returned it over in his hands, examining it closely. ‘New,’ he remarked. ‘Yes, quite new.’” (MAS, 180)

22) strychnine

Example (29)

“Why, there is altogether too much strychnine about this case. This is the third time we run up against it. There was strychnine in Mrs Inglethorp’s tonic. There is the strychnine sold across the counter at Styles St Mary by Mace. Now we have more strychnine, handled by one of the household. It is confusing; and, as you know, I do not like confusion.” (MAS, 231)

23) sleeping powder

Example (30)

“Excuse me, mademoiselle, one minute.’

‘Yes?’ she turned inquiringly.

‘Did you ever make up Mrs Inglethorp’s medicines?’

A slight flush rose in her face, as she answered rather constrainedly:

‘No.’

‘Only her powders?’

The flush deepened as Cynthia replied:

‘Oh, yes, I did make up some sleeping powders for her once.’

‘These?’

Poirot produced the empty box which had contained powders.

She nodded.

‘Can you tell me what they were? Sulphonal? Veronal?’

‘No, they were bromide powders.’

‘Ah! Thank you, mademoiselle; good morning.’” (MAS, 115)

As can be seen from this long list, Christie offers numerous clues in the course of the story, thus fulfilling the criterion set by Symons.

5.3.5 Characters

Only the detective is characterized in detail. Otherwise characterization is perfunctory, particularly after the crime when people become wholly subsidiary to plot. (Symons 1985: 163)

This shows clearly in Christie's books. She placed emphasis on the plot structure and the characters were just lightly sketched stereotypes or "stock characters" as Colin Watson aptly phrased it in *Snobbery with Violence*:

"In book after book they appear – the diffident, decent young pipe-smokers; the plucky girls with flower-like complexions; the wooden policemen, slow but reliable; the assorted house-party guests, forever dressing for dinner or hunting missing daggers; the aristocrats concealing their enormous intellects beneath a veneer of asininity; the ubiquitous chauffeurs, butlers, housemaids and the rest of the lower orders, all comic, surly or sinister, but not quite human" (Watson 1988: 101-102).

Christie confined to her own social class in her set of characters. Though she was right-wing, her books are nearly free of any political references (Gill 1990: 88-89). The characters represent only a fraction of the whole society, the secluded and privileged part. The thoughts and opinions of the common people are not seen interesting. (Watson 1988:16).

The persons of the Golden Age novels are frequently described as papier-maché or two-dimensional (Watson 1988: 101-102). But Birns and Birns (1990: 123,130) claim that Christie implies a doubleness in the human personality which makes any character of the book a viable murderer. Instead of being shallow they are deliberately artificial which makes the reader suspect they are concealing something about themselves. Often the characters have both pleasant and nasty features, which make them easily adaptable to least likely suspects, likely suspects and red herrings. (Cawelti 1976: 119).

Cawelti (1976: 91) has defined the functions of the characters in a more detail and presented four main roles in the classical detective story:

- (a) the victim
- (b) the criminal
- (c) the detective
- (d) those threatened by the crime but incapable of solving it: detective's assistant, the incompetent official police and a group of false suspects

We shall now take a closer look on these roles. In a classical detective story two characters that are unsuitable for the society are removed: the victim and the murderer. The status of the murderer is two-fold: on the other hand s/he has got rid of a member of a society who has broken against the rules. On the other hand, murder is a serious offence, which also breaks against the rules set by the society and this is the reason why eventually the murderer has to be caught. (Pyrhönen 1989: 16-17).

Social and economic concerns may be given as background of the criminal, but they are not used to understand the motivation for the crime (Day 1990: 82-83). In the world of Christie the worst crimes after murder are treason and adultery (Lehtolainen 1990: 27). The characters portrayed are not too complex, the motives for the crime are always very simple, like greed, jealousy and self-protection (Cawelti 1976: 92).

One of the most significant conventions of the classical detective stories is the absence of the criminal until in the last chapter of the books. He has initiated the whole process of detection, but remains in the background, though s/he might commit further crimes to cover the primary one (Roth 1995: 162). Woods (1990: 17) points out that the actions of the criminal were only recounted through the detective's narrative and the true identity of the criminal was withheld until the last chapter of the book. And even then he is silenced as the detective recounts what the culprit has done and for what reason.

The personality and motives of the criminal cannot be made too interesting and complex because it might blur the confirmation of his/her guilt, which should always be undisputed (Cawelti 1976: 92). If it is likely that the exposed murderer cannot be convicted in a courtroom, it is acceptable to let them commit a suicide or if the detective finds the deed justifiable, may even let them go. This is why using detectives is quite handy: a British policeman could not act this way. (Barnard 1980: 109).

In Christie's books most often the murderer is a member of upper social class, a lawyer, a doctor, and so on (Maida and Spornick 1982: 75). She never made the murderer out of the socially stereotyped characters, like blacks, Jews or uneducated workmen (Gill 1990: 136).

The murder is sort of a game that should not upset the reader too much. In order not to make the reader emotionally too involved there are some characteristics that make the murder in some way acceptable: the victim is someone particularly unpleasant, s/he has power over the others that is used heartlessly or has some critical knowledge, for example, about the true identity, past crime or marriage of the murderer. (Lehtolainen 1990: 19-20).

According to Christie, the victim can be anyone: a man, a woman or a child. She sees that the victim him/herself by his/her own actions has caused the murder to happen. The potential victims possess a flaw in their personality, which makes them disagreeable and easier for the reader to dislike and distance oneself from. (Maida and Spornick 1982: 71).

The role of the detective was already recounted in chapter 5.6.2 and here we shall get acquainted with his sidekick.

The narrator is the “assistant” of the Great Detective. He might be simple, but honest and he reports the events painstakingly, though he is miles behind the super sleuth with his deductions. (Kettunen 1990: 31).

Initially, the sidekick was introduced in detective stories to offer a first-person narrator to the story. It serves the purpose of the reader seeing what the detective is doing, but still not allowing to enter his thoughts. Another reason is that the author can smoothly lead the reader astray and consequently postpone an untimely solving of the case. The narrator also creates an admiring atmosphere by giving account of the clever deductions and the reader easily relates himself with the Watson or even the suspects of the story. (Cawelti 1976: 83).

In classical whodunits also the police are interested in catching the criminals. The British police are seen as just and friendly, often living in the area where the murder takes place. People feel that the police protect them and therefore are quite willing to help in the murder investigations. The police are also essential in the detective stories, because they represent the official side of the society. The detectives make use of their resources (Maida and Spornick 1982: 145-147). The police are good when dealing with the ordinary cases, but when the murderer is someone too cunning and the police are not able to proceed with their usual methods, then the detective is called in to help the police (Van Dover 2005: 23).

In Christie's books almost everyone is a suspect at some stage. She often utilized "the double-identity trick": the person is not who s/he is supposed to be (Maida and Spornick 1982: 72). Christie also favours "the double bluff", where a suspected person is acquitted but turns out to be the guilty party after all, or where the murderer has acted as a potential victim (Birns and Birns 1990: 123, 130). Following the Poe tradition, the circle of suspects and witnesses is interviewed but instead of clarifying things up, the reader gets even more confused (Cawelti 1976: 86).

With regard to other roles in classical whodunits, according to Watson (1988: 139), the great number of servants functioned as providers of testimony, they discovered the murder victims and on account of the nature of their job they observed curious behaviour of their employers and their guests.

Like previously mentioned, the only important character in the classical detective story is the detective, all other persons are minor characters. As an example here is a detailed depiction of Hercule Poirot and a sketchy portrayal of John Cavendish in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. The comparison of the two clearly demonstrates Christie's emphasis on the detective:

Example (31)

"Poirot was an extraordinary-looking little man. He was hardly more than five feet four inches, but carried himself with great dignity. His head was exactly the shape of an egg, and he always perched it a little on one side. His moustache was very stiff and military. The neatness of his attire was almost incredible; I believe a speck of dust would have caused him more pain than a bullet wound. Yet this quaint dandified little man who, I was sorry to see, now limped badly, had been in his time one of the most celebrated members of the Belgian police. As a detective, his flair had been extraordinary, and he had achieved triumphs by unravelling some of the most baffling cases of the day." (MAS, 35)

Example (32)

"I had been invalidated home from the Front, and after spending some time in a rather depressing Convalescent Home, was given a month's sick leave. Having no relations or friends, I tried to make up my mind what to do, when I ran across John Cavendish. I had seen very little of him for some years. Indeed, I had never known him particularly well. He was a good fifteen years my senior, for one thing, though he hardly looked his forty-five years. (...) John practiced some time as a barrister, but had finally settled down to the more congenial life of a country squire. He had married two years ago, and had taken his wife to live at Styles, though I entertained a shrewd suspicion that he would have preferred his mother to increase his allowance, which would have enabled him to have a home of his own." (MAS, 9-11)

5.3.6 Setting

Mostly confined to what happens before the crime. Later, plot and clue requirements take over and setting (school, newspaper office, theatre, etc.) fades. (Symons 1985: 163)

Christie maintained the basic structure of the detective novels throughout her career. The setting of the murder remained almost the same, except for the shift from the countryside to the city (Maida and Spornick 1982: 67).

Usually the setting is limited: the murder takes place in a country house, a train, a boat on the Nile, or a seaside resort, an island, perhaps. The setting thus serves by limiting the number of suspects but it also functions as a place of purity, or an image of it, before the murder takes place. (Van Dover 2005: 37).

The contrast between the manor house and the outside world symbolises rationality and hidden guilt. The crime has evoked chaos but the detective resumes peace and order by solving the crime. (Cawelti 1976: 97).

According to crime novelist P.D. James, the seemingly smooth countryside village and the suppressed emotions underneath offer a stronger motive for murder than a backstreet dwelling (Gill 1990: 202). The cosy and safe village setting also creates an effective contrast to the murder (Watson 1977: 107).

Watson (1988: 169-170) gives an apt portrayal of a classical whodunnit setting:

“The setting for the crime stories by what we might call the Mayhem Parva school would be a cross between a village and a commuters’ dormitory in the South of England, self-contained and largely self-sufficient. It would have a well-attended church, an inn with reasonable accommodation for itinerant detective-inspectors, a village institute, library and shops – including a chemist’s where weed killer and hair dye might conveniently be bought. The district would be rural, but not uncompromisingly so – there would be a good bus service for the keeping of suspicious appointments in the nearby town, for instance – but its general character would be sufficiently picturesque to chime with the English suburb dweller’s sadly uniformed hankering after retirement to the ‘country’”

According to Maida and Spornick (1982: 170-171), the setting and the atmosphere must be in balance to create a suitable factor for detection. Christie is seen quite economical considering the description of the settings, as if too detailed description would baffle the reader. Even the servants can be seen as a part of the setting.

In her books Christie uses her own habitat as a setting, whether in countryside, London or Middle East. But perhaps the most appropriate place

for her murders was the countryside, a small microcosm of its own. Christie was quite interested in houses and a keen decorator herself. Her books give a good conception of what she regarded as an elegant country home, with nice architecture, libraries, dining rooms, servants quarters, gardens, lawns, greenhouses, etc. (Maida and Spornick 1982: 172, 180-181).

Sanders and Lovallo (1985: 253) assert that Christie was a good social historian because by using a country village as a setting for decades she was able to express the changes in time, values and manners in the same surroundings. But though she reflected the new trends through the characters, her own attitude remained conservative (Sanders and Lovallo 1985: 272).

The most dangerous room, of course, is the library, which offers an easy access for the murderer through the french windows and there is always the excuse of going there to borrow a book (Maida and Spornick 1982: 183).

A small group gathered to spend a weekend together in a country house is the most popular concept for the setting (Maida and Spornick 1982: 182). After the murder, the setting does not have importance and actions take place in different places, though within the village.

Example (33)

“The village of Styles St Mary was situated about two miles from the little station, and Styles Court lay a mile the other side of it. It was a still warm day in early July. As one looked out over the flat Essex courtly, lying so green and peaceful under the afternoon sun, it seemed almost impossible to believe that, not so far away, a great war was running its appointed course. I felt I had suddenly strayed into another world.” (MAS, 12)

5.3.7 Social attitude

Conservative. (Symons 1985: 163)

Watson (1988: 102) observes that the conservatism manifests itself in the manners of the characters: everybody attends the Sunday service and though the murder victim has hardly gone cold, the house guests gather for meals as usual.

Also in Styles the characters continue to perform their upper class ceremonies:

Example (34)

“Everyone was assembled in the dining-room. Under the circumstances, we were naturally not a cheerful party. The reaction after a shock is always trying, and I think we were suffering from it. Decorum and good breeding naturally enjoined that our demeanour should be as usual, yet I could not help wondering if this self-control were really a matter of

great difficulty. There were no red eyes, no signs of secretly indulged grief. I felt that I was right in my opinion that Dorcas was the person most affected by the personal side of the tragedy.” (MAS, 92)

Example (35)

“By tacit consent, all mention of the tragedy was barred. We conversed on the war, and other outside topics.” (MAS, 193)

The conservative values are also shown in the attitudes towards servants and women:

Example (36)

“Thank you, Dorcas, that is all I have to ask you. ‘He rose and strolled to the window. ‘I have been admiring these flower beds. How many gardeners are employed here, by the way?’

‘Only three now, sir. Five, we had, before the war, when it was kept as a gentleman’s place should be. I wish you had seen it then. But now there’s only old Manning, and young William, and a new-fashioned woman gardener in breeches and such-like. Ah, these are dreadful times!’” (MAS, 77)

Christie’s texts have been sometimes criticized for being racist and anti-Semitic but as an excuse it has been said that she was merely reflecting the less favourable thoughts and attitudes (or prejudice) of her time towards foreigners and ethnic groups. However, in the 30’s in the eve of the Second World War she stopped using anti-Semitic references (Sanders and Lovallo 1985: 142). But still, later on Christie used the prejudiced attitudes of the reading public to deceive the reader (Barnard 1980: 24). The anti-Semitic attitude is clearly seen in the portrayal of Dr Bauerstein:

Example (37)

“‘The coast? I asked puzzled. ‘What has that got to do with it?’

Poirot shrugged his shoulders.

‘Surely, it is obvious!’

‘Not to me. No doubt I’m very dense, but I cannot see what the proximity of the coast has got to do with the murder of Mrs Inglethorp.’

‘Nothing at all, of course,’ replied Poirot, smiling. ‘But we were speaking of the arrest of Dr Bauerstein.’

‘Well, he is arrested for the murder of Mrs Inglethorp-‘

‘What!’ cried Poirot, in apparently lively astonishment ‘Dr Bauerstein arrested for the murder of Mrs Inglethorp?’

‘Yes.’

‘Impossible! That would be too good a farce! Who told you that, my friend?’

‘Well no one exactly told me,’ I confessed. ‘But he is arrested.’

‘Oh, yes, very likely. But for espionage, mon ami.’

‘Espionage?’ I gasped.

‘Precisely.’” (MAS, 214)

Example (38)

“‘He is, of course, a German by birth,’ said Poirot thoughtfully, ‘though he has practised so long in this country that nobody thinks of him as anything but an Englishman. He was naturalized about fifteen years ago. A very clever man – a Jew of course.’” (MAS, 215)

5.3.8 Puzzle value

Generally high. The detective and the puzzle are the only things that stay in the memory. (Symons 1985: 164)

According to P.D. James (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1993: 23), the ingenious mystery was the main issue in the stories, leaving the style, atmosphere, character descriptions and social problems to the side.

In *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* the whole story is based on puzzle element. New clues come up constantly and they are solved systematically, double identities are discovered and misunderstandings clarified. The story moves on from one puzzle to another until the final revelation.

This analysis proves that Christie's *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* fulfills the criteria of a detective novel set by Symons to the full. Next, I will move on to examine *The Lake of Darkness* by Ruth Rendell.

5.4 The Analysis of The Lake of Darkness

Rendell, Ruth 1999. *The Lake of Darkness*. (From now on referred to as LD).
London: Arrow.

5.4.1 Plot

Based on psychology of characters – what stresses would make A want to kill B? – or an intolerable situation that must end in violence. No deceptions of locked room or faked print kind, no obscure poisons. Most often the problem is something like: 'Has A really killed B, and if he has what will happen to him?' Book is constructed forwards from such a problem. (Symons 1985: 162)

The book has two intertwined plots: At first we are introduced to Finn, who has killed before and is hired to kill once again. A property owner needs to get rid of a tenant who refuses to leave her flat and he hires Finn for this reason. Finn plans the murder very carefully, but ends up to kill Anne Blake violently on the spur of the moment. After the murder Finn continues his life normally taking care of his frail mother.

The other plot is about fraud and it presents Martin, who has won a considerable sum of money in the pools. A friend of his, Tim, has given him a vital tip but after some consideration Martin does not tell Tim about his good fortune but instead gives some of it away on charitable purposes. One of his chosen ones is above-mentioned Finn's mother, who has worked as a charwoman for Martin's family some years back. However, Tim finds about the money and decides to take his revenge on Martin with the help of his pretty girlfriend, Francesca, who seduces Martin in order to get expensive presents and perhaps some of the money. Martin desperately falls in love with her not knowing that she is Tim's girlfriend and as the story advances he buys her an expensive flat. Around the same time Martin gives some money for Finn in order so that he could buy a nicer flat for his mother, but in his confused mind Finn misinterprets the money being a down-payment for another murder. Due to his misunderstanding Finn kills Francesca in cold blood. The horrible truth comes out at the end when Finn goes to meet Martin for the rest of the money he believes he is due. Devastated Martin attacks Finn and in the struggle Finn accidentally pushes Martin down the balcony. With all his previous murders Finn had managed to get away without any suspicion, but on this tragic

accident he makes a mistake and leaves crucial evidence behind. The following extracts illustrate how Finn was willing to kill Anne Blake simply for financial benefit and how her unfortunate words sign her own death warrant:

Example (39)

“On the morning of his birthday, his twenty-sixth, one of Kaiafas’s children came round with the money in a parcel. He knocked on Finn’s door. Someone downstairs must have let him into the house. They didn’t know it was his birthday, Finn realized that, it was just a coincidence. He undid the parcel and checked that it contained what it should contain, two thousand five hundred pounds in ten-pound notes. Now it had arrived he had better get on with things, he might as well start now.” (LD, 7)

Example (40)

“Anne Blake had been living there since before Kaiafas bought the house, ten or twelve years now, and she wouldn’t leave even for a bigger bribe than Kaiafas was giving the Frazers. She had told Kaiafas she wouldn’t leave for twenty thousand and he couldn’t make her and the law was on her side. He could have the flat, she said, over her dead body.” (LD, 10)

5.4.2 Detective

Often no detective. Occasionally a detective runs through a series of stories, but rarely shown as a brilliant reasoning machine. Most often the central character is just somebody to whom things happen. (Symons 1985: 162)

According to P.D. James (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1983: 18), in the modern detective novels the division between the detective representing the good and the murderer the evil is not so clear. As the novels are getting more complex, psychological and human aspects are added in, both light and dark sides can be seen in the detective himself in his weaknesses.

As mentioned earlier, Rendell has written three different kinds of books: police procedural novels, non-serial novels and also under the name of Barbara Wine. *The Lake of Darkness* belongs to the second category. In the Wexford-series Rendell wanted to make Wexford a real person by giving him a background: a family with children and grandchildren. His marriage is like a sanctuary for him (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1983: 136-137).

But in this novel there is no detective or other investigator and the police are only mentioned once, when they make routine inquiries and question Finn about the murder of Anne Blake, the difficult tenant. The central characters are Finn and Martin Urban.

The following example shows the marginal role of the police in the novel:

Example (41)

“The police came and talked to Finn. He was one of the last people to have seen Anne Blake alive. Her friends in Nassington Road had told them that. Finn said he had left the house in Modena Road at half-past four, soon after she had come in and had driven straight

home. They seemed satisfied, they seemed to believe him. Finn thought how different things might have been if one of the officers, that middle-aged detective sergeant for instance, had happened to have been involved in the investigation into Queenie's death eleven years before. But no one connected the carpenter and electrician of Lord Arthur Road with the fifteen-year-old white-headed boy who had been in the house in Hornsey when another woman was beaten to death." (LD, 84)

5.4.3 Method

Usually straight forward, rarely vital although ballistic or forensic details may play an important part. (Symons 1985: 163)

Ruth Rendell (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1983: 129) has said that she preferred the psychological aspects to the forensic ones. She feels that there is a chance that anyone can collapse if the balance in life is shaken suddenly.

This explains why the emphasis is not on the method. If someone has a breakdown s/he most probably will take what is handy and use it. Though the deed may be carefully planned, the murderer may end up using altogether different methods as happens in this book in the murder of Anne Blake.

There is nothing ingenious in the murders executed by Finn, he rather acts on impulse: Queenie and Anne Blake are brutally beaten to death, Francesca is run over by car and Martin falls from the balcony as a result of a struggle. This is how the killings occur in the book:

The killing of Queenie:

Example (42)

"He carried the dream of killing her about with him for two years, but when he actually did the deed it happened spontaneously, almost by chance. One night Queenie awakened him and Lena, saying she had heard someone in the house downstairs. It was springtime, three in the morning. Finn went down with Queenie. There was no one there, though a window was open and some money, about seven pounds in notes and change, had been taken out of a tin in one of the kitchen cupboards. Queenie was carrying the poker they used for riddling out the slow-burning stove in the living room.

'Give me that,' Finn said.

'What d'you want it for?'

'Just to try something out.'

She handed it to him and turned her back to look for her rings, the wedding band and the engagement ring, which each night she took off and dropped into a glass dish in the mantelpiece. Finn raised the poker and struck her in the back of the head. She made a terrible sound, an unnerving, groaning wail. He struck her again and again until she was silent and lying in a big, huddled, bloody heap. He let the poker fall and turned round slowly and saw Lena standing in the doorway." (LD, 87-88)

The killing of Anne Blake:

Example (43)

“Finn no more intended to move forward and strike than he had intended to move forward and strike Queenie. It happened, that was all. It happened without his volition or his desire in the same way, perhaps, as the stone had moved and the picture had fallen. At one moment he was standing, watching with these night-seeing eyes of his, at the next the hammer was in his hand and he had fallen upon her. Queenie had made terrible sounds. Anne Blake made none but a throaty gasp, falling forward from the knees as he struck her again and again, now using the wide, flat side of the hammer.” (LD, 59-60)

The killing of Francesca:

Example (44)

“A thrill of power ran through him. The clear brown sky seemed to be meshed all over with a dazzling veil of gold. But for a distant throb there was silence. Finn made the van glide slowly along. On the left-hand side, ahead of the moving figure, the pavement petered out. It would be necessary, inevitable, soon to cross that wide curving roadway, white and gold and glittering at close on midnight.

The head above the fur collar turned to the right, to the left, to the right again. The black shadow dipped into the road. Finn was in second gear. He ramméd his foot hard down on the accelerator, changed in one movement up into fourth, and shot towards the shining, moving pillar of fur. Now, at last, he saw the eyes, round, shining, dark with terror. He had to swerve in pursuit, to make sure. A shattering scream rang through the glittering empty air, arms were flung up in a desperate useless defence, and then, when it seemed as if the suddenly huge, screaming animal-like shape must flatten and paste itself against his windscreen, he felt it under the van, the wheels crunching flesh and bone.” (LD, 166)

The killing of Martin Urban:

Example (45)

“Martin Urban ducked and stumbled out on to the balcony. London glittered out there like the window of a tourist souvenir shop. Finn stood poised in the doorway, his arms spread, his body quivering. And the man who had given him five thousand pounds from some quixotic altruism Finn couldn't even begin to understand, stood against the low parapet, convulsed, it seemed, with some kind of passionate need for revenge. He leapt forward, deceived perhaps by Finn's white thinness.

But Finn was there a split second before him, to smash with his right arm harder than he had ever smashed before. And a strange thing happened. Martin Urban raised arms hugely above his head in some exaggerated defensive gesture. He staggered backwards in an almost comic, tip-toe slow motion, bathed in the shining night air, against the spangled backdrop, staggered, teetered, until the parapet wall that reached lower than the tops of his thighs, was just behind him. Finn could see what would happen and he jumped to catch the man before he fell. He jumped just too late. Martin Urban made contact with the wall, doubled over backwards, and with a low cry, fell.” (LD, 199)

These four descriptions bear similarities in that they are all cruel and brutal, the absence of any elegance that can be found in Agatha Christie's plotting and planning is obvious.

5.4.4 Clues

Quite often no clues in the detective story sense. (Symons 1985: 163)

The clues do not play an important part if compared with a classical whodunnit. The unimportance and insignificance of clues is emphasized by the absence of police or detective who would search for them and analyse them.

The few clues are painstakingly taken care of by Finn, the murderer, except the last one that he accidentally leaves behind to Martin's flat.

The crime scene of Anne Blake's murder:

Example (46)

"There was no Lena this time to come and witness what he had done. He must keep this from Lena, wash himself of all the blood that so terrified her, deny her all newspapers. Finn picked up Anne Blake's umbrella and furled it. He felt inside the carrier and found there a small suede handbag in which he found twenty-six pounds in notes, a cheque book and two credit cards. He took these and the money with him. (...) The rain had returned now to all the force of its former intensity. Finn stepped out into the rain and let it wash him clean. (...) He also washed the hammer in the rain. Once back in the van, he stripped off his plastic tunic and rolled it up into a ball. Underneath he was perfectly clean and fairly dry. He replaced his hammer in the tool box and fastened the lid. The gas fire would still be on in Anne Blake's flat, might very likely remain on all night but it wouldn't burn the house down.

The problem was to get rid of the contents of the handbag, particularly the cheque book and the credit cards. Finn drove home." (LD, 60-61)

After the accidental death of Martin Urban:

Example (47)

"The picture of devotion!" said Mrs Gogarty with admiring sighs. She studied the cards, laid out now for Finn. 'There's a lot of death here...' she began.

Over Lena's head Finn gave her a warning look.

'Ah!' She slid the cards together and the Death Card, Scorpio's death card, death cloaked and riding a pale horse, came out on top. She covered it with Queen of Wands. In her mechanical gypsy voice she said, 'There is money here, my darling, a lot of money. But wait... No, it's not coming your way, you'll have a disappointment.'

The hand that held Lena's grew cold and limp. He bent down, he looked unseeing into the soother's face.

'What? What did you say?'

'A disappointment over money... Why are you looking at me like that?'

Finn saw, not the cards which Mrs Gogarty's hands now covered in fear, not Lena's face, apprehensive, growing stricken, but a cheque that lay on a writing desk, locked up in Martin Urban's flat. The date had been written – had his name?

The women's eyes fearfully upon him, he stood upright yet trembling in that tiny room, listening to the distant sound of a siren crying through the dark, a herald of the one that must cry for him." (LD, 201)

This again is very different from Agatha Christie. The exhaustive list of clues in Christie's *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* is dramatically different from Rendell, who instead concentrates on describing characters.

5.4.5 Characters

The basis of the story. The lives of the characters are shown continuing after the crime, and often their subsequent behaviour is important to the story's effect. (Symons 1985: 163)

When Ruth Rendell's opinion was asked in an interview (Cooper-Clark 1983: 139-140) about books written by Agatha Christie, she said that she admires the plots and surprises but regarding the characterization and emotional content, the books are almost void.

Ruth Rendell (as quoted in Cooper-Clark 1983: 130-132) thinks that there is a certain type of people that are destined to be victims, as if expecting to be ill-treated. However, not all of them ever become victims as it all depends on odds. She also claims that nowadays people suppress their emotions and that she wants to show in her books the contrast of people moving from shyness and inhibition into passion and expressing their feelings.

Here is a description of the thoughts of Finn, the murderer, illustrating his psychopathic and delusional state of mind:

Example (48)

"When he was thirteen the poltergeist started. Lena, who was psychic, believed that they were spirits but Finn knew better. Sometimes he could feel the energy coursing through his veins like electricity along wires, charging his muscles and raying out through his finger ends. Lena saw his aura for the first time. It was golden-orange like the rising sun. He was aware of his brain waves, of a surplus of power.

One day all the plates in Queenie's china cupboard rattled down off the shelves and a lot of them smashed. Another time a brick came flying through the kitchen window, and in the same hour the framed photograph of Queenie in her Staff Nurse's uniform, wearing her SRN badge, fell down off the wall and the glass cracked.

Queenie said Finn was responsible, he was doing it himself, though even she couldn't explain how he had brought into the house a rockery stone no one could lift an inch off the ground. The poltergeist went away soon after he started smoking hashish and when they were gone he regretted them bitterly, praying for their return to any god or spirit or seer he came across in his reading. But they had deserted him. He decided to kill Queenie.

There were a number of reasons for this. He was afraid of her mockery and alarmed of her distaste of his pursuits. She burned a book of his about the Rosicrucians. He also wanted to know how it would feel to have killed, and he saw killing as a fire baptism into the life he wanted to lead and the like of person he wanted to be. Queenie was the obvious choice for victim, ugly, stupid, unsympathetic, one who had never begun to see the light, a young soul." (LD, 86-87)

5.4.6 Setting

Often important to the tone and style of the story, and frequently an integral part of the crime itself, i.e., the pressures involved in a particular way of life lead to this especial crime. (Symons 1985: 163)

In *The Lake of Darkness* the setting does not merely serve as a background to the action. It also brings more light on the personalities and highlights their characteristics, such as Martin's fussiness and wealth compared with the shabby and poor life of Tim and Francesca.

The living conditions of Tim and Francesca drive them to swindle Martin. There is a huge contrast in the way they live in compared with Martin's Highgate Hill flat:

Example (49)

"Into his flat, 7 Cromwell Court, Cholmeley Lane, he now let himself with the feeling of deep satisfaction and contentment he always had when he entered it. There was a pleasant smell, a mixture, light and clean, of new textiles, furniture polish and herbal bath essence. He kept all the interior doors open – the rooms were impeccably neat – so that when you walked through the front door the impression was rather as of entering the centrefold of a colour supplement of *House and Garden*. Or so he secretly hoped, for he kept such thoughts about his flat to himself, and when showing it to a newcomer merely let him through the living room to exhibit from the picture window the view of London lying in a great well below. If the visitor chose to comment on the caramel Wilton, the coffee table of glass set in a brass and steel frame, the Swedish crystal or the framed paintings from the Yugoslav naïve school, he would look modestly pleased but that was all. He felt too deeply about his home publicly to enthuse, and along with his gratitude to goodness knows whom, a certain fear about tempting Providence. There were times when he dreamed of its all being snatched away from him and of his being permanently back in Copley Avenue." (LD, 20-21)

The flat of Tim and Francesca:

Example (50)

"The pavements here were even stickier and more slippery than in Finchley. It was a depressed, semi-derelect region to which the taxi had brought them, a place where whole ranks of streets had been demolished to make way for new council building. Acres of muddy ground stood bare between half-dismantled ruins, and some of the streets had become mere narrow lanes running between temporary fences ten feet high. Even in the driest weather the roadways were muddy, smeared with clay from the tyres of tractors and lorries. There was an air of impermanence, of dull, unhopeful expectancy, as of the squalid old giving place to a not much more inviting new.

But Samphire Road was sufficiently on the borders of this resurgent neighbourhood for it and the streets which joined it and ran parallel to it, to be left alone. Samphire Road, with its rampart-like houses of cardboard-coloured brick, its grave-sized front gardens, its ostentatious treelessness, was to be allowed to live out its century undisturbed and survive until at least 1995. Sulphur-coloured lamplight turned the fog into just such a pea-souper as Samphire Road had known in its youth.

Francesca unlocked the front door of number 22, painted some years before, the shade of raw calves' liver, and let herself and Lindsay through an inner door into the hall of the ground floor flat. Inside it was as cold as only an old house can be which has no central heating, which has been empty for ten hours, and when the month is January. It was damp as well as cold, with a damp to make you cringe. Francesca put lights on and humped Lindsay into the kitchen where she lit the gas oven and switched on the electric wall heater. Breakfast dishes were still stacked in the sink. She unwrapped Lindsay's layers of clothes and then her own layers, spreading her fur coat over the back of a chair to dry. The two of them squatted down in front of the open oven and held out their hands to the pale bluish-mauve flames." (LD, 118-119)

5.4.7 Social attitude

Varying, but often radical in the sense of questioning some aspect of law, justice, or the way the society is run. (Symons 1985: 163)

It is implied in *The Lake of Darkness* that the society is not able to help those who are destitute, the elderly, the ill and mentally impaired. This is why Martin wants to donate part of his money to the needy. In this book Rendell also deals with modern issues that would have not been included in a classical whodunnit, such as gender roles and homosexuality. She presents the intense relationship between Martin and Tim that does not fit into the traditional social patterns.

Martin's letter to Miss Watson:

Example (51)

"Dear Miss Watson,

I don't know if you will remember me. We met last Christmas at the house of my aunt, Mrs Bennett. I have since then been told that you have a housing problem and that when your employer goes to live abroad next year, you expect to be without home. The purpose of this letter is to ask if I can help you. I would be prepared to advance you any reasonable sum for the purchase of a small house or flat, preferably not in London or the Home Counties. You could, if you would rather, regard this sum as a long-term loan, the property eventually to revert to me by will. I should then be able to look on this money in the light of an investment. However, please believe me that my interest is solely in helping you solve this problem and I hope that you will allow me to be of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Martin W. Urban" (LD, 38)

Martin is almost naïve when offering his money to people he hardly knows instead of helping someone close, like his friend Tim. Martin's behaviour subsequently drives Tim into desperate deeds.

Gender roles:

Example (52)

"That his cleaner was a mister not a missus was due to the Sex Discrimination Act. When Martin put his advertisement in the North London Post he had been obliged not to state that he required female help, and when Mr Cochrane turned up, similarly obliged not to reject him. He was lucky to get anyone at all, his mother pointed out." (LD, 23)

This is very contrary to what we are accustomed to in Christie's books where everybody had their place and roles. It would have been out of the question to have a male cleaner in the "Mayhem Parva".

Homosexuality:

Example (53)

“Tim was trying to grab his shoulders so as to beat his head against the ground. Martin was stronger. He was bigger and heavier than Tim, and more powerful. He got hold of Tim’s wrists and held them behind his back, wrapping him in his arms.

With this success, this subduing of Tim, a tremendous excitement seized him. He was wrestling with Tim, he was doing what he had longed to do in those dreams. And in the pressure of Tim’s hard flesh, the friction of his body writhing and turning so that they rolled this way and that, embraced so tightly that each body seemed to penetrate the other and fuse with it, he felt himself charged and stiff with desire. He felt a passion which made his relations with Francesca seem thin and cold.

Whether Tim realized or not he didn’t care. He was lost to all caution and all inhibiting restraint. He spoke Tim’s name in a hoarse whisper and the struggling slackened. There was a moment in which Martin hardly seemed to breathe and then, because he couldn’t help himself, he put his mouth over Tim’s and gave him a long, enduring kiss. The release that came with that kiss seemed to take with it the repressive burdens of a lifetime. He rolled away from Tim and lay on his face.

Tim got up first. He did what he would do on the gallows or at an H-bomb early warning. He lit a Gauloise. His mouth quirked up on one side at Martin and he gave a sort of half-wink. Martin was flooded with shame, the burdens of a lifetime were still there. He got to his feet and sat, hunched, in one of the fireside chairs.” (LD, 189-190)

In my opinion there are surprisingly many lesbian couples portrayed in Christie’s books, but everything is insinuated very discreetly and uninhibited events as described by Rendell above do not appear in her books.

5.4.8 Puzzle value

Sometimes high, sometimes almost non-existent. But characters are often remembered for a long time. (Symons 1985: 164)

In my view there are two puzzle elements in this book. Firstly, Francesca has given Martin the idea that she is still living with her husband though in reality they have separated long time ago. She also gives Martin a false home address when he insists on escorting her home. By a twist of fate in that address lives a man, whom Martin erroneously takes for Francesca’s husband. The fact that Francesca actually lives with Tim in another address is only revealed at the last pages of the story. The other puzzle element is that the only time this fabricated husband is described he is said to be wearing a fur coat. When Finn is about to commit his third murder the reader is under the assumption that Finn is after him instead of Francesca, though it has been told earlier that she also usually wore a fur coat. Therefore the news of her death comes as a great surprise to both Martin Urban and the reader.

Example (54)

“There was no need to watch and wait. As in his vision, Martin Urban’s enemy was in the front garden, unlatching the white iron gate. But this time there was no meeting of eyes.

Finn hadn’t even switched off the engine. He watched the figure in the fur coat close the gate and turn immediately left into the side street.” (LD, 165)

Twists of fate play a great part in *The Lake of Darkness*. Also, when Martin wants to donate some money to Finn and his mother, Finn insists the money to be sent to him wrapped in a newspaper, just like the payment he has previously received for the murder from the property owner. Coincidentally Martin has scribbled the down on that particular newspaper what he thought was the address of Francesca and her husband. This is how Finn got the idea of the possible target. In the paper there is also a story about the murder of Anne Blake which Finn takes as a hint that Martin knows what he has done.

Example (55)

“While he had been there cars had passed continually, though the traffic had never been heavy. At just seven minutes to eleven, a white Triumph Toledo pulled up outside number 54 and after a little delay a woman got out. She was young and tall with a straight nose and lips curved like the blades of scimitars and hair like a bronze cape in the sulphur light. Finn lowered his window. He expected to see emerge from the car the man in the fur coat but instead he heard the voice of Martin Urban call softly:

‘Good night, Francesca.’

That settled for Finn certain questions that had been perplexing him. This was the right place, after all, this was it. He had doubted. He raised his window and watched the woman stand by the gate, then open the gate and walk up one of the concrete strips to a door between the house wall and the boundary fence. She waved to Martin Urban, opened the door and let it close behind her. Finn felt relieved. He watched the white car slowly depart, then gather speed.” (LD, 154)

5.5 Summary of the main differences between Christie and Rendell

I will now illustrate the findings that I made in the analysis in the table below:

	<i>The Mysterious Affair at Styles</i>	<i>The Lake of Darkness</i>
PLOT	Important	Secondary
DETECTIVE	Central character	Non-existent
METHOD	Locked room and poison	Impulsive, straightforward
CLUES	Abundantly	One clue
CHARACTERS	Only detective important	Main emphasis
SETTING	Manor house	Various living conditions
SOCIAL ATTITUDE	Conservative, racist	Radical
PUZZLE VALUE	High, essence of the story	Only two puzzle elements

It can be clearly seen that the classical detective story and the modern crime novel differ dramatically. As the detective story concentrates on plot and puzzle, the crime story focuses on the psychology of the characters. Christie has seen a lot of trouble in working out the method, clues and puzzle but the characters, except Hercule Poirot, and perhaps Captain Hastings, remain vague.

Rendell, on the other hand, evidently wants to make the reader think what runs in the minds of the characters and how they react to the world around them. Whereas everything seems to be neatly calculated and planned in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, in *The Lake of Darkness* there is room for chance and the unexpected. After reading Christie the reader can put the book away satisfied, but after reading Rendell the reader may be disconcerted and baffled for some time.

6. CONCLUSION

In my view, Julian Symons's categorization proved out to be quite useful and workable when searching for differences between a classical detective story and a modern crime novel. The features can be easily found in the books of Christie and Rendell, or not to be found, as in the question of detective: as we learned, in crime novel there often is no detective at all. However, the question is how sensible it is to try and find these differences. I would not put too much weight on finding the dissimilarities, but rather see that the emphasis has simply moved from the puzzle element to the characters. It is useful, though, to remember that even today there are crime novelists who put more stress on the mystery than on the characters. For the benefit of the crime genre enthusiasts, the field just has expanded so that everyone can find a story for their own taste. Therefore I would not expand Symons's allegation that *the detective story has changed into crime novel* to cover all modern crime literature, but point out that in addition to classical whodunnit there are also other forms of crime literature with a slightly different focus.

However, the comparison did reveal, as Symons suggested, the different objectives of the detective storywriter and crime novelist: In Christie's book the emphasis was on the puzzle. There were numerous clues, suspects, etc. to mislead and perplex the reader. Rendell's book, on the other hand, focused on the behaviour and inner life of the characters, both murderer and the victims.

It was interesting to notice how much easier it was find references and studies concerning the Golden Age literature, the modern crime literature clearly has not yet attracted scholars as much one might have thought. Even most of the recent studies focus on Golden Age.

7. FUTURE RESERACH

Dorothy L. Sayers (1993: 150-151) offered already in her time some views for the future. She believed (quite wisely) that more emphasis of the three elementary questions of detective fiction “Who”, “How” and “Why” will be put to the latter. But she also expressed her worry that one day the detective fiction will come to its end because all possible tricks have been used and the reading public has learned them.

There are some other pessimistic views, too. Cawelti (1976: 43) felt twenty years ago that the glory days of detective fiction were over as the genre had not been able to change and develop with the times. However, he saw that the element of mystery would still go on as an important element in other formulaic types. Panek (1987: 189) claims that the police procedural is the final manifestation of detective novel and nothing substantially new has been invented since.

In Mandel’s view (1984: 111, 132), the amount of crime has increased, e.g., in the form of drug-trafficking and organised crime. He is quite skeptical of the outcome and claims that the crime fiction has returned to its beginnings when reflecting the modern society: the villain can be seen as a hero and the police are corrupt and not to be trusted.

It is true that the world around us has changed remarkably since the Golden Age of detective fiction and naturally it keeps producing new themes to crime literature. For instance, there was a boom in the 1980’s on serial killers. It seems that the traditional motives for murder, like monetary gain or jealousy, are not enough in the present world. Instead, complex psychological structures and disorders as well as inequality in the modern society have come up. (Saine 1997: 319).

Kukkola (1997: 5) has noticed big changes already ten years ago: the spy stories brought up by the cold war have nearly deceased and instead we have stories of modern mafia, monetary conspiracies and international politics.

A trend that can be noticed in the recent detective stories is that there is a team consisting of criminologists, forensic scientists, lawyers and policemen

working together often replacing the super detective (Woeller and Cassidy 1988: 175, Scaggs 2005: 100).

We can no longer presume that the readers of crime stories unequivocally support the values of the society around them as was the case in the Golden Age. Instead, the contemporary crime stories facilitate readers to question the ethics of the surrounding culture. (Mandel 1984: 124).

In my opinion, the police procedurals with provincial aspect generate from the pastoral settings of Golden Age whodunnits. As it has been pointed out, there are always two levels of detection in the detective novels: on one hand the detective is trying to find a solution and on the other, the reader is trying to do the same. I firmly believe that the reader is anxious to find the solution also in the modern crime stories. This manifests how the conventions of the classical detective story are still alive today.

In Dove's (1990: 25) opinion, the classical Golden Age formal-problem story is still alive for example in the novels by P.D. James. He claims that even the hard-boiled school uses many conventions of the classic story.

Ousby (1997: 165, 175) remarks that the British have tried to preserve what has been possible from the Golden Age and adapt it to the current life and society, and he thinks that instead of the detective it is the British policeman that has come to stay in the crime literature. In America the legacy of Chandler is still strong and the tradition of the private eye dominates the crime literature.

In addition to the classical format, there is also the modern crime story that reflects on society and psychology. It can be already seen that new branches in crime prevention such as international terrorism, biohazards, computer crimes, human trafficking and so on will produce new themes for the crime writers also in the near future.

And finally, we must not forget the fact that the Golden Age stories that were written almost hundred years ago are still enthusiastically read even today.

By making this comparison between Agatha Christie's and Ruth Rendell's books I discovered that there truly are distinct differences between the classical detective stories and modern crime novels as suggested by Julian Symons. However, after completing the task I felt that it did not bring much

new light on the genre in general. It certainly made the classifications clearer, but as already mentioned above, the discussion on where to draw the lines could last forever. The mystery was still there, but instead of the question being “who” it was “why”.

I sincerely feel that enough has been written on the history of detective or crime fiction and also on Golden Age and the hard-boiled school. Instead, more interest should be focused on the structure, themes and characters of modern crime fiction. Many splendid books by creative authors are waiting for to be analysed in more detail and new ones are written, printed and sold in growing numbers. I hope that in the near future we shall find sharp analyses in modern crime literature in the bookshops.

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Appendix I: 'Decalogue'

Ten commandments according to Ronald Knox

(<http://www.classiccrimefiction.com/commandments.htm>):

- 1) The criminal must be mentioned in the early part of the story, but must not be anyone whose thoughts the reader has been allowed to follow.
- 2) All supernatural or prenatural agencies are ruled out as a matter of course.
- 3) Not more than one secret room or passage allowable.
- 4) No hitherto undiscovered poisons may be used, nor any appliance which will need a long scientific explanation at the end.
- 5) No Chinaman must figure in the story.
- 6) No accident must ever help the detective, nor must he ever have an unaccountable intuition which proves to be right.
- 7) The detective himself must not commit the crime.
- 8) The detective is bound to declare any clues upon which he may happen to light.
- 9) The stupid friend of the detective, the Watson, must not conceal from the reader any thoughts which pass through his mind; his intelligence must be slightly, but very slightly, below that of the average reader.
- 10) Twin brothers, and doubles generally, must not appear unless we have been duly prepared for them.

Appendix II: Twenty rules for writing detective stories

(Originally published in the American Magazine (1928-sep) and included in the Philo Vance investigates omnibus (1936).

<http://gaslight.mtroyal.ab.ca/vandine.htm>

THE DETECTIVE story is a kind of intellectual game. It is more — it is a sporting event. And for the writing of detective stories there are very definite laws — unwritten, perhaps, but none the less binding; and every respectable and self-respecting concocter of literary mysteries lives up to them. Herewith, then, is a sort Credo, based partly on the practice of all the great writers of detective stories, and partly on the promptings of the honest author's inner conscience. To wit:

1. The reader must have equal opportunity with the detective for solving the mystery. All clues must be plainly stated and described.
2. No willful tricks or deceptions may be placed on the reader other than those played legitimately by the criminal on the detective himself.
3. There must be no love interest. The business in hand is to bring a criminal to the bar of justice, not to bring a lovelorn couple to the hymeneal altar.
4. The detective himself, or one of the official investigators, should never turn out to be the culprit. This is bald trickery, on a par with offering some one a bright penny for a five-dollar gold piece. It's false pretenses.
5. The culprit must be determined by logical deductions — not by accident or coincidence or unmotivated confession. To solve a criminal problem in this latter fashion is like sending the reader on a deliberate wild-goose chase, and then telling him, after he has failed, that you had the object of his search up your sleeve all the time. Such an author is no better than a practical joker.
6. The detective novel must have a detective in it; and a detective is not a detective unless he detects. His function is to gather clues that will eventually lead to the person who did the dirty work in the first chapter; and if the detective does not reach his conclusions through an analysis of those clues, he has no more solved his problem than the schoolboy who gets his answer out of the back of the arithmetic.
7. There simply must be a corpse in a detective novel, and the deader the corpse the better. No lesser crime than murder will suffice. Three hundred

pages is far too much pother for a crime other than murder. After all, the reader's trouble and expenditure of energy must be rewarded.

8. The problem of the crime must be solved by strictly naturalistic means. Such methods for learning the truth as slate-writing, ouija-boards, mind-reading, spiritualistic seances, crystal-gazing, and the like, are taboo. A reader has a chance when matching his wits with a rationalistic detective, but if he must compete with the world of spirits and go chasing about the fourth dimension of metaphysics, he is defeated ab initio.

9. There must be but one detective — that is, but one protagonist of deduction — one *deus ex machina*. To bring the minds of three or four, or sometimes a gang of detectives to bear on a problem, is not only to disperse the interest and break the direct thread of logic, but to take an unfair advantage of the reader. If there is more than one detective the reader doesn't know who his codeductor is. It's like making the reader run a race with a relay team.

10. The culprit must turn out to be a person who has played a more or less prominent part in the story — that is, a person with whom the reader is familiar and in whom he takes an interest.

11. A servant must not be chosen by the author as the culprit. This is begging a noble question. It is a too easy solution. The culprit must be a decidedly worthwhile person — one that wouldn't ordinarily come under suspicion.

12. There must be but one culprit, no matter how many murders are committed. The culprit may, of course, have a minor helper or co-plotter; but the entire onus must rest on one pair of shoulders: the entire indignation of the reader must be permitted to concentrate on a single black nature.

13. Secret societies, camorras, mafias, et al., have no place in a detective story. A fascinating and truly beautiful murder is irremediably spoiled by any such wholesale culpability. To be sure, the murderer in a detective novel should be given a sporting chance; but it is going too far to grant him a secret society to fall back on. No high-class, self-respecting murderer would want such odds.

14. The method of murder, and the means of detecting it, must be rational and scientific. That is to say, pseudo-science and purely imaginative and speculative devices are not to be tolerated in the roman policier. Once an author soars into the realm of fantasy, in the Jules Verne manner, he is outside the bounds of detective fiction, cavorting in the uncharted reaches of adventure.

15. The truth of the problem must at all times be apparent — provided the reader is shrewd enough to see it. By this I mean that if the reader, after learning the explanation for the crime, should reread the book, he would see that the solution had, in a sense, been staring him in the face—that all the clues really pointed to the culprit — and that, if he had been as clever as the detective, he could have solved the mystery himself without going on to the final chapter. That the clever reader does often thus solve the problem goes without saying.

16. A detective novel should contain no long descriptive passages, no literary dallying with side-issues, no subtly worked-out character analyses, no "atmospheric" preoccupations. such matters have no vital place in a record of crime and deduction. They hold up the action and introduce issues irrelevant to the main purpose, which is to state a problem, analyze it, and bring it to a successful conclusion. To be sure, there must be a sufficient descriptiveness and character delineation to give the novel verisimilitude.

17. A professional criminal must never be shouldered with the guilt of a crime in a detective story. Crimes by housebreakers and bandits are the province of the police departments — not of authors and brilliant amateur detectives. A really fascinating crime is one committed by a pillar of a church, or a spinster noted for her charities.

18. A crime in a detective story must never turn out to be an accident or a suicide. To end an odyssey of sleuthing with such an anti-climax is to hoodwink the trusting and kind-hearted reader.

19. The motives for all crimes in detective stories should be personal. International plottings and war politics belong in a different category of fiction — in secret-service tales, for instance. But a murder story must be kept gemütlich, so to speak. It must reflect the reader's everyday experiences, and give him a certain outlet for his own repressed desires and emotions.

20. And (to give my Credo an even score of items) I herewith list a few of the devices which no self-respecting detective story writer will now avail himself of. They have been employed too often, and are familiar to all true lovers of literary crime. To use them is a confession of the author's ineptitude and lack of originality. (a) Determining the identity of the culprit by comparing the butt of a cigarette left at the scene of the crime with the brand smoked by a suspect. (b) The bogus spiritualistic se'ance to frighten the culprit into giving himself away. (c) Forged fingerprints. (d) The dummy-figure alibi. (e) The dog that does not bark and thereby reveals the fact that the intruder is familiar. (f) The final pinning of the crime on a twin, or a relative who looks exactly like the suspected, but innocent, person. (g) The hypodermic syringe and the knockout drops. (h) The commission of the murder in a locked room after the police have actually broken in. (i) The word association test for guilt. (j) The cipher, or code letter, which is eventually unraveled by the sleuth.