

# The development of literary thought and the detective genre

 Niyazova Gulnorakhon Gulyamovna

Associate professor (PhD), Renaissance Educational University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

**Received:** 27 January 2025; **Accepted:** 25 February 2025; **Published:** 27 March 2025

**Abstract:** This article examines detective fiction as a structured literary genre characterized by logical reasoning, mystery, and deduction. It explores the evolution of detective fiction from its origins in the works of Poe and Doyle to its modern developments, highlighting key narrative strategies, cognitive principles, and discourse structures. The study also considers the role of gender, power dynamics, and the cognitive mechanisms underlying detective storytelling, referencing both Western and Uzbek detective literature.

**Keywords:** Detective fiction, discourse, narrative strategies, cognitive principles, gender, power dynamics, logic, deduction, mystery, Uzbek detective literature.

**Introduction:** Detective fiction, as a literary genre, is distinguished by its structured narrative, logical problem solving, and the interplay between crime and investigation. Defined by suspense, intellectual intrigue, and the pursuit of truth, this genre has captivated readers for centuries. Its evolution has been shaped by various literary traditions, with classic detective stories adhering to strict conventions while modern interpretations introduce new complexities.

Given its distinct characteristics, detective fiction has drawn considerable attention from literary scholars who seek to analyze its discourse structure, thematic elements, and cognitive aspects. Researchers such as R. Messac define detective fiction as a systematic and methodical narrative that unravels a mystery using rational means. Similarly, P. Kelly emphasizes the genre's connection to modernity, arguing that detective fiction operates within established models that shape both its creation and reception.

## EVOLUTION OF DETECTIVE FICTION

The study of detective fiction has deep historical roots, with elements of detective narratives appearing in ancient literary sources. The emergence of detective themes is closely linked to humanity's desire to understand the motives behind crimes. Such plots can be found in the mythological "crime" stories of ancient

Greek epics. However, attitudes toward crime evolved over time. During the Middle Ages and up until the 18th century, legal transgressions were perceived as offenses against God, and literature of that era often carried moralistic warnings against sin and temptation. Significant changes in crime fiction began in the early 19th century, eventually leading to the formation of the classical detective story.

The origins of detective literature are closely associated with Edgar Allan Poe. Drawing inspiration from the memoirs of François-Eugène Vidocq, a former criminal who later founded the first private detective bureau in Europe, Poe created "logical" stories, which he referred to as "ratiocinative tales." These include *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841), *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (1842–43), *The Gold-Bug* (1843), and *The Purloined Letter* (1844).

Linguist Yuri Kovalev characterizes these works as follows:

1. The plot revolves around unraveling a mystery or crime.
2. The story presents a problem that must be solved through logical reasoning.
3. An intellectual competition emerges between the detective and the reader, who has equal opportunities to solve the puzzle.

4. A stable "detective-narrator" duo is present.
5. The primary focus is not on the investigation itself but on the detective's cognitive process.
6. Key epistemological methods include intuition, deduction, and analysis.

Thus, Edgar Allan Poe laid the foundation for detective fiction as a distinct literary genre by establishing its classical narrative structures, styles, and archetypal characters. He shifted the focus from the nature of the crime and its motivations to the process of uncovering the mystery as an intrinsic element of the crime itself. According to Umberto Eco, people are drawn to detective stories because their plots inherently revolve around the art of speculation. Although contemporary detective fiction has become more socially oriented, focusing more on crime itself, this fascination with deduction and mystery remains a defining feature of the classical detective genre.

#### LITERARY THEORIES ON DETECTIVE FICTION

Since the detective genre is relatively new compared to other literary forms, the first systematic attempts to analyze and explain its essence began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This period coincided with the genre's emergence as a distinct and recognized category within literature. Scholars and literary critics sought to define its key characteristics, narrative structure, and thematic significance.

One of the most influential early thinkers on detective fiction was the British scholar, essayist, and writer Gilbert K. Chesterton. In addition to his literary criticism, Chesterton was also an accomplished author of detective stories, most notably the Father Brown series. In his essay *In Defense of Detective Fiction*, he argued for the legitimacy of the detective genre, countering the skepticism of critics who dismissed it as mere entertainment. He asserted: "The detective novel or story is not only a completely legitimate literary genre but also possesses clear and genuine advantages as a means of serving the common interest."

Chesterton believed that detective fiction engaged the reader's reasoning abilities, promoted moral clarity by contrasting justice with crime, and provided a structured narrative in which order was restored through logic and deduction. Unlike other forms of popular fiction, which often relied on sensationalism, detective stories encouraged a disciplined, rational approach to storytelling.

In another important essay, "How to Write a Detective Story", Chesterton outlined fundamental principles that he believed should underpin a successful detective narrative:

- The primary goal of a detective story is not to

confuse or mislead the reader unnecessarily but to guide them toward the resolution of a mystery.

- At its core, a detective story is a simple narrative form: the author presents a mystery surrounding a crime, which must then be solved.
- The criminal should play a central role in the story, yet they should remain inconspicuous and beyond suspicion for most of the narrative.
- Detective fiction is, above all, a game—a contest of intelligence between the reader and the author, embodied in the figure of the detective.
- While the story should incorporate elements of mystery and intrigue, it must also maintain a sense of realism.

Beyond these narrative principles, Chesterton also viewed the rise of detective fiction as a natural historical phenomenon, closely tied to the social and cultural transformations of the modern era. He believed that detective fiction fulfilled a deep-seated need within urban society—a desire to impose order on the chaos of modern life.

#### STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES OF DETECTIVE FICTION

One of the most influential theorists in this field, Tzvetan Todorov, has proposed a structural framework for detective discourse. His principles outline essential elements such as the presence of a detective, a criminal, and at least one victim, as well as the exclusion of romantic subplots and supernatural explanations. These structural guidelines highlight the logical coherence and narrative precision that define the genre. According to Todorov: "A detective story must feature a single detective, a single criminal, and at least one victim (typically a murder victim)."

Modern literary scholars continue to study detective fiction through the lens of discourse analysis. In particular, R. Messac defines a detective story as: "A narrative dedicated to methodically and consistently revealing the precise circumstances of a mysterious event through rational means."

Similarly, P. Kelly contextualizes detective fiction within the framework of modern literature, emphasizing that specific structural models govern its development and interpretation. He asserts that modernity both facilitates and limits the production and reception of mystery fiction, highlighting the intricate interplay between literary conventions and societal influences. As Kelly notes, "Modernity, at the most general level, enables and constrains the creation and reception of mystery fiction," underscoring how historical and cultural contexts shape the evolution of the genre.

#### CONCLUSION

Detective fiction, as a structured and methodical literary genre, has undergone significant transformations over the centuries while retaining its fundamental focus on logic, deduction, and mystery. Its development has been influenced by literary traditions, cultural shifts, and theoretical frameworks proposed by scholars such as Poe, Chesterton, Todorov, and contemporary critics. By engaging with both narrative complexity and cognitive intrigue, detective fiction continues to hold a significant place within literary thought, reflecting evolving societal concerns and intellectual pursuits.

The genre's protagonists, whether the infallible detective of the Golden Age or the flawed anti-hero of contemporary noir, embody the changing perceptions of justice, morality, and human nature. Gender representations within detective fiction, including the role of female detectives and assistants, further highlight the genre's engagement with broader societal transformations. This ongoing dialogue between literary form and cultural discourse makes detective fiction a valuable field for academic inquiry, encompassing sociopragmatic, cognitive, and narratological perspectives.

By engaging with both narrative complexity and cognitive intrigue, detective fiction continues to hold a significant place within literary thought, reflecting evolving societal concerns and intellectual pursuits. As the genre progresses, it is likely to continue incorporating new narrative techniques, interdisciplinary approaches, and diverse voices, ensuring its relevance in both literary studies and popular culture. Through this continuous reinvention, detective fiction remains a dynamic and intellectually stimulating genre that bridges entertainment with philosophical and analytical depth.

## REFERENCE

- Анджапаридзе Г. Жестокость канона и вечная новизна / Г. Анджапаридзе // Как сделать детектив / пер. с англ., франц., нем., исп.; сост. А. Строев; ред. Н. Португимова – Москва: Радуга, 1990. – С. 276–291.
- Ковалёв, Ю. В. Эдгар Аллан По. Новеллист и поэт [Текст] / Ю. В. Ковалёв. - Л.: Худ. лит., 1984. — С. 293-295.
- Эко, У. Заметки на полях «Имени розы» [Текст] / У. Эко // Имя розы. - М.: Книжная палата, 1989. — С. 426-463
- Честертон Г. К. В защиту детективной литературы / Г. Честертон // Как сделать детектив / пер. с англ., франц., нем., исп.; сост. А. Строев; ред. Н. Португимова – Москва: Радуга, 1990. – С. 13–26.
- Честертон, Г. К. Как пишется детективный рассказ

[Текст] 7 Г. К.Честертон // Писатель в газете: Художественная публицистика / Сост. А. Я. Ливергант. - М.: Прогресс, 1984. - С' 300-305.

Честертон Г. К. В защиту детективной литературы / Г. Честертон // Как сделать детектив / пер. с англ., франц., нем., исп.; сост. А. Строев; ред. Н. Португимова – Москва: Радуга, 1990. – 17с.

Messac, R. Le «Detective Novel» et l'Influence de la Pensee Scientifique [Texte] / R. Messac. - Geneve: Slatkine, 1975. — 84 p

Kelly, G. R. Mystery Fiction and Modern Life [Text] / G. R. Kelly. - Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998. - 227 p.

Todorov, T. The Poetics of Prose [Text] / T. Todorov. — Ithaca; New York: Cornell University Press, 1977. - 272 p.

Эйзенштейн С. О детективе / С. Эйзенштейн // Приключенческий фильм: Пути и поиски: сборник научных трудов / отв. ред. А. С. Трошин. Москва : ВНИИК, 1980. – С.129–163.

Вулис А. Поэтика детектива / А. Вулис // Новый мир. – № 1. – 1978. С. 241–259.

Niyazova G.G. Cognitive paradigm impact on thought study //Xalqaro konf//Lisoniy meros va tilshunoslik taraqqiyoti” xalqaro ilmiy-amaliy anjuman. Andijon davlat universiteti.2024

Niyazova, G.G. Concept of Discourse in Modern Linguistics Impact Special Issue on Modern Trends in Science, Technology and Economy May 2023, [www.ijtsrd.com](http://www.ijtsrd.com). ID: IJTSRD57377