CHAPTER 3. A.

THE HISTORY OF DETECTIVE FICTION IN INDIA AND ABROAD: ITS MODIFICATION BY ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE AND SARADINDU BANDYOPADHYAY: -

As far as the history of the emanation of detective fiction is concerned, there are contradictory opinions. Literary historians, as Ousby points out, have traced it to the Bible (Daniel, Susanna and the elders) and to the puzzle tales of the Enlightenment like Voltaire's Zadic (1747) where the protagonist, following the method of logical deduction, describes the physical appearance of a horse and a dog he has never seen (*The Wordsworth* 253). Christopher Pittard identifies the *Newgate Calender*-s, first published in 1773, as the precursors of sleuth stories [1]. In contrast, according to Shovan Tarafdar, Aryan literature, written between 1500 B.C and 550 B.C, predates European literature[2]. In this context, Ranojit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh identify the parable of Sarama, the dog that helps gods to track down the *Poni*-group of cattle-snatching dacoits in the 10th *Mandala* of the *Rig Veda* written in 1500 B.C, as the "first detective story of the world" (747). Other examples of primitive detective stories include the 16th Century Italian tale that was translated into French in 1719 by the Chevalier de Mailly, and subsequently into English in 1722 as The Travels and Adventures of Three Princes of Sarendip, Alexandre Dumas's The Three Musketeers and the La Comedie humaine series by Honore de Balzac.

However, the first meticulously recorded and constructed detective story, according to Michael Seidman, Julian Symons and Douglas G. Greene, was written in English by Edgar Allan Poe and, therefore, predates the properly demarcated Indian/Bengali detective fiction[3]. Significantly, though English detective fiction was not influenced by the sub-genre of any other European language, it influenced the Bengali detective fiction considerably. The Indian litterateurs failed to avoid and isolate themselves from the influence of the language and different literary sub genres of the principal colonisers, and the Bengali detective stories written between 1890 and 1950 mostly reflect this influence.

The ingenuous characteristic features of the English detective fiction that have had served as the model for writers in other languages include the concept of the arm-chair detective, of a third person narrator who is the best friend of the detective but not the detective himself, and the sleuth's employment of many physical and psychological stratagems in detecting criminals.

Seidman, Symons and Greene refer to The Adventures of Caleb William (1794) by William Godwin that deals with an amateur investigator and an efficient police spy, and to Memoires (1828) by Eugene-Francois Vidocq – the Parisian *Surete* chief with criminal antecedents, as being the two important precursors to detective stories. Pittard observes,

> "One of the earliest examples of…[detective stories]…were the four volumes of the Memoires of Eugene-Francois Vidocq…published between 1828 and 1829. Vidocq's position is particularly interesting, as before becoming a detective ha had been an infamous forger and prison-breaker, and the role of the detective as halfway between respectable society and the criminal would continue to be developed well into Victoria's reign"[4].

Ousby, Seidman, Symons, Greene and Pittard have unanimously pointed out that the clearly demarcated history of European detective fiction started in the 1840s with Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and his fictional detective, C. Auguste Dupin[5]. In the five short narratives, referred to as "tales of ratiocination or reasoning" – "The Murderers in the Rue Morgue" (1841), "The Gold Bug" (1843), "The Mystery of Marie Roget" (1842-3), "Thou Art the Man" (1844) and "The Purloined Letter" (1845) – Poe has had brought the basic ingredients of primitive detective stories together and initiated almost every significant principle used by detective story writers even in the twentieth century.

It can be noted that Poe's narratives exhibit some important characteristic features that were later to be followed by every writer of English detective fiction of the early twentieth century. First, his detective is a White Christian European who belongs to one of the powerful imperial countries – France. Second, C. Auguste Dupin is brilliant and eccentric, and is accompanied by an "obligingly imperceptive [but once again a White European] friend who narrates the story" (*The Wordsworth* 253). Third, Dupin is, to quote Seidman, Symons and Greene, "abrupt, contemptuous of the police, and more like a reasoning machine than human being"[6]. In Bloody Murder, Symons writes. "Aristocratic, arrogant, and apparently omniscient, Dupin is what Poe often wished he could have been himself, an emotionless reasoning machine" (39). Fourth, the detective is not in service of any police force, but is what Doyle popularised in his Holmes narratives as "the private investigator". Fifth, Dupin confronts mystery with a "coherent, though not exclusively scientific methodology of detection, and he produces the solution with a triumphant flourish that both surprises and satisfies the readers" and the same procedure is followed by Holmes and Poirot[7]. Finally, Poe neither vividly describes nor presents any strong female character in the Dupin narratives, an attitude that can be noticed in Doyle.

With the initiation and maintenance of regular police forces along with their detective departments in different European countries including England, France and Germany from the late 1840s onwards, the sub genre of detective fiction came to achieve popularity and readership. Seidman, Symons and Greene cite Diary of an Ex-Detective (1860) and The Lady Detective (c. 1861) as two of the more popular English detective stories of 1850s and 1860s by anonymous writers[8]. William Russell's Recollections of a Police Officer (1856), Experiences of a French Detective (1861), and Experiences of a Real Detective (1862), Ellen Price's The Trail of the Serpent (1861), and East Lynne (1864), were also widely read. The in-service detective officials depicted in these short stories and novels were popular enough in colonised India as to inspire Darogar Daftor (1892), the first Bengali detective fiction written by Priyanath Mukhopadhyay, a resident of Calcutta, the contemporary Indian capital.

According to Pittard, the character of Inspector Bucket portrayed in Bleak House (1852) by Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is "the first British literary detective". He writes,

> "With Bucket, Dickens at once created the prototype of the literary detective, and emphasised his uncertain status in society, as the figure who stands halfway between respectable society and criminals (who would, by the end of the nineteenth century, become configured as a race apart). Like Dupin, Bucket has an air of omniscience, and while not quite arrogant, his confrontation of Sir Leicester Dedlock during the course of his investigation is certainly self-assured"[9].

Great Expectations (1860-1) and The Mystery of the Edwin Drood (1870) point to the *sensation novel* of the 1860s.

The sub genre of the sensation novel matured in Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1837-1915) – the writer of Three Times Dead (1860) and Lady Audley's Secret (1862). Seidman, Symons and Greene identify Collins as "the…best [writer]…of detective novels"[10]. In The Moonstone (1868), which represents a shift towards detective fiction in that the mystery was clearly defined, Collins presents a detailed picture of the rose-loving Sergeant Cuff making convincing logical deductions from the given facts, though there is no murder or a crime of highest magnitude. The Woman in White (1860) dealing with the investigation of Marian Halcombe and The Law and the Lady (1875) starred by Valeria Woodville are Collins's other sensation novels.

Prior to the appearance of Sherlock Holmes in the late 1880s, Emile Gaboriau (c.1832-1873) of France and Anna Katharine Green (1846-1935) of the United States of America had established their respective fictional investigators, Monsieur Lecoq – "the professional detective", and Inspector Ebenezer Gryce, respectively, as convincing and apparently real characters through such novels as L`affaire Lerouge (1867), Monsieur Lecoq (1868) and The Leavenworth Case (1878). Gaboriau's The Slaves of Paris (1868) stresses the colonial ideology implicit in the contemporary European sleuth stories. Seidman, Symons and Greene also include, in addition to B.L. Farjeon, Thomas W. Speight and Fergus Hume as "writers of genuine detective novels...of...the mid 1880s" other than Reginald Barrett[11]. The central character of the White investigator dealing with White criminals particularly of Europe remained the prominent feature of these detective stories, and the Australian publishers turned down Hume's The Mystery of a Hansom Cab (1898) to stress that "no Colonial could write anything worth reading" (Symons 60). All the female characters, like those in Hume's Madame Midas (1888), are also European or American Whites, residing in societies that adhere to the Euro-American social conventions, and even the locale in these stories is urban Europe or America. The detectives are either in-service policeman or share an apparently good rapport with the regular police personnel who alternatively perpetrate the imperial control in contemporary eastern colonies. This relationship of bon homie is broken in the Sherlock Holmes stories where the investigator is openly critical of and ironic about the abilities and efficiency of the government police and detective forces who often turn situations complex and difficult for the investigating officers through their mutually aggressive rivalry.

Most of the instances of crime dealt with in the pre-Sherlock Holmes stories are not of international ramification. The main action does not involve a large number of countries, and the narratives exhibit a claustrophillic character. The investigating sleuths, in absence of developed gadgets and forensic sciences, depend more on their logical reasoning for identifying criminals. Most importantly, the Western detective story writers prior to 1880 have not had vociferously advocated the expansion of imperial controls in the East – a phenomenon observable in Doyle's Holmes narratives.

Sherlock Holmes differs from the earlier European fictional detectives in not only his dependence more on physical evidences and scientific experiments than on simple logic, but also in his serving as the mouthpiece for expression of Doyle's ideas of the British cultural supremacy and England's prowess as an omnipotent coloniser. Through Holmes Doyle advocates and justifies the British rule of the Orient, particularly India. Moreover, the detective always fortifies and vindicates his deductions with the help of different bio-chemical experiments, and uses his encyclopaedic knowledge, newspapers and reference books to identify and analyse the anti-social personalities and their behavioural traits even before he has come in actual contact with them. His pragmatism, that apparently borders on eccentricity, makes him stab at the carcass of a dead pig with a "barbed-headed spear" in "The Adventure of Black Peter" (620), join a group of opium addicts at an opium den to detect the whereabouts of "an enemy" in "The Man with the Twisted Lip" (169), and minutely analyse cigars' ashes to decipher the addiction of an initially-unknown assailant in A Study in Scarlet (53). The detective, according to Ousby, incorporates within himself "a strong feeling for the atmosphere of late Victorian and Edwardian London, an interest in the methods of Victorian science…a subtle sense of the macabre, and a chivalric concern for justice and the unjustly oppressed", which preciously point out the author's own ideology, and help Holmes stand out as separate from the other contemporary fictional sleuths (*The Wordsworth* 850).

Through his characterisation of Holmes, Doyle introduces readers to an impartial, mechanical sleuth who, in his demeanour, is more like Dupin: a reasoning machine than a human being. It, however, deserves mention that Dupin does not find plenty of scopes for expressing his emotions during his adventures: he prefers to remain confined to his house and to depend more on permutations-combinations of paraphernalia of the crime to analyse and zero in the criminal without undertaking strenuous outdoor chases. On the contrary, in spite of his statement, "Crime is common. Logic is rare. Therefore it is upon the logic rather than upon the crime that…[the detective]…should dwell" in "The Adventure of the Cooper Beeches" (Doyle, *The Complete* 252), Holmes depends more on rigorous outdoor adventures than on arm-chair logical analysis. In stories like "A Scandal in Bohemia" and "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone", he takes the help of disguise. Unlike Dupin, Holmes, during most of his adventures, comes across a number of characters, including different beautiful women like Irene Adler in "A Scandal in Bohemia", Violet Smith in "The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist", and Violent Hunter in "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches" but never betrays his emotions to and about them, or ruminate about his meetings with his female clients. The women in Sherlock Holmes stories, contrary to those in the Lecoq and Dupin narratives, are conspicuous by their silence and lack of action in spite of their being physically present in most of them.

Again, in contrast with Lecoq or Dupin, Sherlock Holmes deals with crimes of international ramifications. To exemplify, he wages war against trans-Atlantic groups of criminals in The Valley of Fear and "The Adventure of the Final Problem", detects missing letters lethal enough to start international war in "The Adventure of the Second Stain", and recovers a confidential international naval treaty in "The Adventure of the Naval Treaty". His clients are international figures: the King of Bohemia in "A Scandal of Bohemia", the prime minister of Britain and the Secretary for European Affairs in "The Adventure of the Second Stain", and a member of the British royal family in "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client". Significantly, most of these clients are directly or indirectly concerned with the spread of European, and more specifically, British imperialism. Moreover, unlike Dupin's and Lecoq's, Holmes's filed of investigation is not bound within England but spread over the United States of America in The Valley of Fear, Tibet, Norway and Persia in "The Adventure of the Empty House" and Switzerland in "The Adventure of the Final Problem". Doyle thus grants mobility and flexibility to his White imperialist sleuth as far as possible.

The most significant difference that distinguishes Holmes narratives from the other Eurocentric detective stories written before the 1880s concerns the identity and distinctiveness of the criminals. It is important that most of the criminals in the Sherlock Holmes stories – for example, Jefferson Hope of A Study in Scarlet, Jonathan Small and Tonga of The Sign of Four, Grimesby Roylott of "The Adventure of the Speckled Band", McGinty of The Valley of Fear, James Calhoun of "The Five Orange Pips", Sebastian Moran of "The Adventure of the Empty House" and Culverton Smith of "The Adventure of the Dying Detective" – are either residents of or have direct or indirect links with England's former or contemporary colonies, particularly India and the United States of America. In his detective stories, Doyle, an Orientalist as Edward W. Said identifies him, identifiably implies that guile and crime being intimately and intricately associated with the psychological and cultural constructs of the colonised people, particularly the Orientals, and because stints at the colonies necessarily corrupt the White colonisers, the Westerners have the right to seize colonies and dominate the colonised populace (*Culture* 184). Through the aggressively patriotic and nationalistic character of Holmes, an instance of which exhibited in his bulleting "V.R" or *Victoria Regina* on his drawing room wall in "The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual" (*The Complete* 334), Doyle underscores the perceived cultural supremacy of England and judges the Orientals like Tonga, Mahomet Singh, Abdullah Khan of The Sign of Four and Daulat Ras of "The Adventure of the Three Students" against the colonisers to highlight the colonised individuals' perceptively inferior culture, ludicrous dresses, and malignancy. While dealing with a person associated with the Orient, the investigator takes extra precaution but also often tends to patronise him not only to assert his (Holmes's) own superiority in being a *pure* White European living in Europe, but also to identify himself as a British citizen – a representative of world's most powerful imperialist country. In contrast, Gaboriau, Collins and Poe have nowhere aggrandised their aggressive Whiteness; nor do they express the perceived cultural and intellectual superiority of their fictional detectives in a manner Doyle does.

Doyle's ingenuousness in and success at creating Holmes influenced Arthur Morrison (1863-1945) to introduce Martin Hewitt in *Strand* in 1894, and Emmuska Orczy (1865-1947) to create 'the Old Man in the Corner' and Lady Molly of Scotland Yard (1910). While the narratives about Hilda Wade and Miss Cayley were serialised in *Strand* by Grant Allen, L.T.Meade wrote about the adventures of "Dr. Clifford Halifax, M.D". Other post-Sherlockian popular detective fiction include the adventure tales of the 'scientific detective' Dr. John Thorndyke written by Richard Austin Freeman (1862-1943) in which readers know every detail of the crime, those of the 'blind detective' Max Carrados by Ernest Bramah, and of the 'members of the detective family' – Paul Beck, Dora Myrl-Beck and young Beck – by M. McDonnell Bodkin.

The most important post-Sherlockian sleuth belonging to what Pittard refers to as "the Golden Age of Detective Fiction", is Father Brown created in 1911 by Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936)[12]. Seidman, Symons and Greene note that though Chesterton's detective stories "contain some of the most ingenious detective puzzles ever devised", they suffer from the defect of being fantastic against the precisely rational Sherlock Holmes stories [13]. The Innocence of Father Brown (1911), The Wisdom of Father Brown (1914), The Incredulity of Father Brown (1926), The Secret of Father Brown (1927) and The Scandal of Father Brown (1935) present a White English Christian clergyman "as round and dull as a Norfolk dumpling" of mediocre monetary and social status, who reads crime and criminals in a Christian ethnocentric perspective, and attempts to make the criminals submissive through religion (*Merriam Webster's* 179). Though Brown is identifiably English and is an upholder of the religion of the West, he does not vociferously assert his nationality or advocate British colonialism. Chesterton's art of writing detective fiction profoundly influenced the Indian/Bengali litterateur Saradindu Bandyopadhyay in his creating the character of the Bengali middle-class detective, Byomkesh Bakshi. About the transition between Holmes and the likes of Father Brown, Julian Symons writes,

> "In writing about most of Sherlock Holmes's immediate successors one has to make a change of gear. The interest of their work lies in the cleverness with which problems are propounded and solved, rather than in their ability to create characters or to write stories interesting as tales rather than puzzles. The amount of talent at work in this period gives it a good claim to be called the first Golden Age of the crime story, but it should be recognised that the metal is nine-carat quality, whereas the best of Holmes stories are almost pure gold…" (65).

Influenced by Doyle as they were, the early twentieth century Euro-American detective storywriters continued to present their sleuths as being exclusively White and in their stories Orientals continue to invariably have criminal links. These narratives came to unconsciously betray their writers' imperial ideology, and the early twentieth century American sleuth stories exhibit a xenophobic temperament in their protagonists.

Early twentieth century American writers of detective fiction include Jacques Futrelle who created Professor S.F.X Van Deusen – the "uncompromisingly omniscient" detective, Arthur B. Reeve, and Melville Davisson Post whose detective, Uncle Abner, lives in the pre-Civil War western Virginia, and reads crime and detection in moral terms. Seidman, Symons and Green write,

> "The last part of the 19th century was dominated by the fictionalised memoirs of Allan Pinkerton, beginning with The Expressman and the Detective (1874). In 1882, a steady stream of dime-novel detective adventures began appearing, featuring such characters as Old Sleuth, Old King Brady and Nick Carter"[14].

In Uncle Abner, Master of Mysteries (1918), Post created the first coloured detective character in English literature, and has brought about the issue of the intelligent colonised individual in fiction. However an atmosphere of Christian belief and practices subsumes Abner in the dominant group of the colonisers and thus denies him a proper representation as a coloured man and voice. About the early American sleuths, Raymond Chandler writes,

> "Their characters lived in a world gone wrong, a world in which, long before the atom bomb, civilisation had created the machinery for its own destruction and was learning to use it with all the moronic delight of a gangster trying out his first machine-gun. The law was something to be manipulated for profit and power. The streets were dark with something more than night"[15].

By creating the character of Raffles, "the amateur cracksman", E.W.Hornung, Doyle's brother-in-law, defied his stern observation that the criminal must not be made a hero. Raffles is a shady figure but possesses within him the snobbery often exhibited by Holmes. To Sukumar Sen, this is an instance of the juxtaposition of the super sleuth and super criminal in a single person for production of a superior detective (9). Arsene Lupin by Maurice Leblanc and Hamilton Cleek by Thomas W. Hanshew are other two fictional investigators of the 1920s with criminal antecedents. Though the Lupin and Raffles narratives differed in the thematic treatment from those of Holmes, the detectives remain essentially the White Eurocentric ones.

With the decline in the sales of the two popular literary magazines, *The Strand Magazine* and *Lippincott's* during the First World War, which Symons relates to the broad socio-economic changes taking place in wake of the War in Bloody Murder: from the Detective Story to the Crime Novel, the British short stories were replaced by detective novels mostly written by women. Mary Roberts Rinehart – the creator of the "Had I known…" school, Carolyn Wells and Marie Belloc Lowndes whose The Lodger (1913) unravels the mysteries of the Jack the Ripper murders begun in London in 1888, belong to this period. The *mystery novels* simultaneously gained prominence, and contemporary writers of this sub genre included A.E.W Mason (the creator of Inspector Hanaud), who wrote At the Villa Rose (1910) and The House of the Arrow (1924), Gaston Leroux , author of the locked room puzzler, The Mystery of the Yellow Room (1909), and E.C.Bentley who, in Trent's Last Case (1913), introduces a sleuth (Philip Trent) who is not a reasoning machine but actually falls in love with the widow of Sigsbee Manderson, thereby expressing humane emotions.

The period between 1918 and 1939, "the Golden Age of Detective Fiction" according to, other than Pittard, Julian Symons, saw the emergence of another Orientalist detective, Hercule Poirot, formerly with the Belgian police department, in the writings of Agatha Christie (1890-1976)[16]. Starting with The Mysterious Affairs at Styles (1920), Christie expresses her Orientalist attraction and biasness in Murder on the Orient Express (1934), Ten Little Niggers (1939) and Murder in Mesopotamia, which, while focussing on the murder of Louise Leidner, stresses the impossibility of a harmonious coexistence of the West and the East. The elderly English spinster Miss Marple is another of her popular creations.

Dorothy Sayers (1893-1957), another Golden Age writer, introduced Lord Peter Wimsey – "the dashing young [English] gentleman-scholar whose erudition and native curiosity set[s] him apart from the ordinary detective" – in Whose Body? (1923). Wimsey also appears in novels like The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club (1928), Strong Poison (1930), The Nine Tailors (1934), and Busman's Honeymoon (1937).

About Christie's and Sayer's narratives, Stephen Knight observes, "[These]…novels are restricted in setting, class and behaviour, realising in a mandarin way the patterns of southern English bourgeois world" (Knight 82). According to Pittard,

> "The detective-figures operating within [the] cloistered environment…[of the early twentieth century]…can be seen as closely identified with them

> privileged classes. Christie's Miss Marple, for example, in contrast to the militant detective heroines of the more recent crime fiction, is in many respects the embodiment of the sheltered, upper-middle-class English village life; …Sayer's Lord Peter Wimsey…is a caricature of the English aristocrat conceived with an immensely snobbish, loving seriousness"[17].

Other popular detective characters of the period between 1920 and 1940 include Philo Vance conceived by S.S.Van Dine in 1926, Margery Allingham's Albert Campion (1928 onwards), Inspector French by Freeman Wills Crofts, Ellery Queen's detective of his own name, Anthony Berkeley's Roger Sheringham, Anthony Gethryn by Philip Macdonald, Dr. Gideon Fell and Sir Henry Merivale by John Dickinson Carr, Perry Mason by Erle Stanley Gardner, Roderick Alleyn by Ngaio Marsh, John Appleby by Michael Innes, Nigel Strangeways by Nicholas Blake, and Nero Wolfe by Rex Stout. A.A.Milne's The Red House Mystery (1922), Frances Noyes Hart's The Bellamy Trial (1927) and C.P.Snow's Death under Sail (1932) initially enjoyed wide readership but failed to create lasting detectives.

The fictional detectives of the Golden Age exhibit similar and distinct characteristic features as separate from the other pre-Sherlockian and post-Sherlockian sleuths. First, all the Golden Age detectives are either British or American; but no other European writer could follow and maintain the standards for writing detective fiction as set forth by Leroux and Gaboriau. Second, though most of these detectives had been conceived on lines of Dupin and Holmes, they are not secluded or mechanical, and appear as sympathetic and socially pro-active characters. Even as they analyse, though not in accordance with

Holmes's empirical and deductive procedure, and chase, they exhibit emotions like Trent who marries the suspect in Trent's Last Case. Third, even as these writers exhibit an awareness of the centrality of their position as the privileged Whites, they are not xenophobic – the strain of which can be most noticed in the contemporary American writers; nor do they vociferously advocate Britain's imperial conquests. Fourth, Seidman, Symons and Greene point out that the Golden Age writers took great pains to make their investigators appear real and convincing, and in the process, deceived readers by drawing fantastic maps of the scenes of murder, timetables and segregate lists of clues[18]. In The Murder of Roger Ackroyd (1926), Agatha Christie reveals the narrator, Dr. Sheppard, as the real murderer at the end – a literary device first executed. Fifth, the Golden Age detectives are not arrogant and omniscient like Holmes, but are gentlemen created to conform to the public taste and are alterable with changes in readers' mood and opinion. Even when Doyle and Chesterton were confronted with the differences in the general readers' changes of opinion, they did not alter the basic behavioural traits and approaches of Holmes or Brown. Finally, detectives like Poirot, Wolfe and Wimsey conform to the *Twenty Golden Rules* set down in 1928 by Monsignor Ronald Knox who, to maintain the *purity* of detective fiction, co-founded with Anthony Berkeley, the Detection Club in 1930 with Chesterton as its first president. Similar rules were promulgated by S.S.Van Dine (Willard Huntington Wright) in order to curtail tricks that the detective storywriters of the 1920s and 1930s had been playing with the unsuspecting readers. Todorov notes that the rules made it compulsory that the detective, as soon as he discovers a clue, should convey it to the readers, and that detective fiction should be more concerned with puzzles rather than the crime itself and should elaborate its puzzles in strict obedience to the rules of logic and fair play (Todorov 50). In late 1930s' stories like the Nero Wolfe, Nigel Strangeways, John Appleby and Perry Mason narratives, the attendant Watson-like character vanished, and readers came in direct association with the detective.

According to Seidman, Symons and Greene, detective stories from Poe up to the early works of John Dickinson Carr, Ellery Queen and S.S.Van Dine, followed the Classical pattern[19]. Though the plots of such stories were tightly woven, the authors could not achieve realistic characterisation. The restrictive pattern of such Classical detective fiction that separated it from thrillers, adventure stories, chase novels and spy stories, was abandoned in the American authors, Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. The American *Hard Boiled* school of which Carroll John Daly, the creator of Race Williams, was the founder put, according to Ousby, et al., "murder back in the hands of people who commit it with real weapons for real reasons, not just to provide the reader with a puzzle" (*The Wordsworth* 254). *The Black Mask*, a detective fiction magazine founded in 1920 by H.L.Mencken and George Jean Nathan, particularly carried the Hard Boiled stories reflecting the realities of post-World War I America in direct opposition to Doyle's deliberate veiling of the real social and political conditions of contemporary Europe, in general, and England, in particular, in his Sherlock Holmes stories. "With its tough, down-at-heel private eyes [that is, the detectives] and its sleazy urban world of vice and hoodlums" (*The Wordsworth* 254), the Hard Boiled detective story school established itself more firmly prominently and at par with the Sherlock Holmes narratives when Hammett's Sam Spade and Chandler's Philip Marlowe – private investigators working for meagre fees – appeared in 1929 and 1939, respectively.

The sleuths of Hard Boiled detective fiction are characterised by their honesty, ruthlessness and a casualistic approach towards sex and deception. For example, in The Maltese Falcon (1930) Sam Spade does not allow his lust for the suspected murderess to impede the course of justice. Pittard writes,

> "...The hard-boiled investigator...[was]...a tough, independent, often solitary figure, a descendant of the frontier hero and cowboy, but as re-imagined in the 1920s, a cynical city dweller...He can achieve a degree of control, but , unlike the classic Holmesian detective, he cannot restore order and set all to rights. The basic narrative pattern pits this lone investigator against brutal criminals, often in league with a corrupt power structure"[20].

Though Seidman, Symons and Greene have isolated only Jonathan Latimer – the creator of Bill Crane, and Ross Macdonald as being the other two important writers belonging to the Hard Boiled school, James M. Cain and Horace McCoy's The Postman Always Rings Twice (1934) and They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (1935) are written according to the Hard Boiled conventions. W.R.Burnett's Little Caesar (1929), Paul Cain's Fast One (1932), Mickey Spillane's early Mike Hammer novels published between 1947 and 1952, David Goodis's Dark Passage (1947), Gil Brewer's thirty novels written from 1951 to the 1960s, and the first female Hard Boiled writer Leigh Brackett's five novels and Jim Thompson's Nothing More than Murder (1949), The Killer Inside Me (1952) and A Hell of a Woman (1954) are other reputed Hard Boiled stories.

Ousby, et al., have distinguished two other sub-genres in detective fiction that have emanated out of the Classical and Hard Boiled detective stories: the crime novel, which puts more stress on criminal psychology than on mystery, and the police novel in which the investigating officer is an efficient police officer, contrary to the characterisation of the official force in stories such as Doyle's (*The Wordsworth* 254). Of the former type, Ousby, et al., include Anthony Berkeley Cox, Patricia Highsmith, Julian Symons and Ruth Rendell as the important writers. Of the latter, which portrays "the policemen heroes at odds with the bureaucracy", enquires "into the social and personal origins of crime" and is able "to propound a neat puzzle when the occasion requires", John Creasey, Ed McBain and Nicholas Freeling were the important contributors (*The Wordsworth* 254).

Though Seidman, Symons and Greene, in "Detective Story", have also included spy fiction, but in situations where both the crime and the criminal are known to the readers and to all the protagonists as observed in the spy novel, the detective's role of undertaking arduous investigation is minimised, and he, instead, begins to play the role of an executioner. David Seed observes,

> "The spy story is a close but distinct variation on the tale of detection with the difference that there is no discrete crime involved but rather a covert action which, as John Cawelti and Bruce Rosenberg argue, transgresses conventional, moral or legal boundaries. The action is self-evidently political since it involves national rivalries and constantly veers towards a paranoid vision of 'violation by *outside* agencies' and 'violation of individual

> autonomy by *internal* agencies'. A further distinction from the detection genre is that the investigator is often himself an agent and therefore, unlike Todorov's ideally detached detective, is implicated in the very process he is investigating. And since the genre is defined by its international subject, the novels can only be partly explained through formalist analyses like that of Bruce Merry" (Seed 115).

With the absence of the elements of mystery and deduction, spy short stories and novels like Erskine Childers's The Riddle of the Sands (1903), W. Somerset Maugham's Ashenden (1928), Graham Green's A Gun for Sale (1936), Horace McCoy's No Pockets in a Shroud (1937), Eric Ambler's A Coffin for Dimitros (1939), and above all, the James Bond stories of the 1950s by Ian Fleming, have been excluded by Ousby, et al., in their discussion of detective fiction (*The Wordsworth* 254). Robert Ludlum's The Chancellor Manuscript (1977), The Bourne Identity (1980), and The Parsifal Mosaic (1982), and Frederick Forsyth's The Odessa File (1972), The Dogs of War (1974) and The Fourth Protocol (1984) are other reputed spy novels.

While the Sherlock Holmes stories deal with the serious implications of social and political crimes and record their debilitating influence on specially the English social life, a considerably less serious strain of crime writing appeared in England after the conclusion of the Second World War. As recorded by Steve Holland in The Mushroom Jungle, these stories were published in paperback editions, and tried to relate the exhibition of the detective's intelligence in the Holmes narratives to the American "tough guy and gangster" pulps. The trend was initiated by Frank Dubrez Fawcett, Harold Kelley and Stephen Frances, who were encouraged by the success of James Hadley Chase's No Orchids for Miss Blandish (1939). Ted Lewis, who followed Jack's Return Home (1970) with six more crime novels until 1980, have been regarded by Pittard, and Rennison and Shepherd in Waterstone's Guide to Crime Fiction as the finest figure of the 1970s' revival of British noir[21]. In the late 1980s, Maxim Jakubowski's Black Box thrillers and Blue Murder imprints, and the writings of Jim Thompson, David Goodis and Cornell Woolrich became popular British neo-noir stories. Ian McEwan's The Innocent, Colin Bateman's Cycle of Violence and Ian Banks's Complicity assimilated thriller conventions with the serious treatment of wider historical conflicts, a trend first observable in Doyle's "His Last Bow". Will Button in "The State We're In" (1995) have identified the 1990s' British crime stories as efforts to expose the dwindling economic and social influence of England after fifteen years of erratic Conservative rule under Margaret Thatcher. Pittard notes that though these novels and short stories have been influenced by the American hard-boiled protagonists, they are, in a revival of the trends in Sherlock Holmes narratives, distinctively English in tone, style and settings that include Walthamstow, Manchester, and Meadow Road near the Oval Cricket Ground[22].

American crime writing between 1970 and the commencement of the 21st century show revivifications of the traditional patterns of literary noir. Edward Bunker's No Beast So Fierce (1973) and Little Boy Blue (1981) deal with effects of imprisonment and deprivation from a criminal's point of view, George V. Higgins's The Friends of Eddie Coyle (1970) with love, revenge and betrayal, Craig Holden's The River Sorrow (1995) with sexual obsession and wrong man plots, and James Ellroy's novels of the

1980s and 1990s with post-Second World War violence in Los Angeles. The protagonists of new investigative series are eccentric and concern themselves with crime especially in the northern American cities and towns, like the alcoholic policeman Matt Scudder created by Lawrence Block in A Stab in the Dark, Amos Walker by Loren Estleman in The Midnight Man, the Vietnam veteran, Cooper MacLeish by Sam Reaves in A Long Cold Fall (1991). Other late American crime novel protagonists include the guilt-ridden New Orleans Black detective, Lew Griffin, created by James Sallis, the Cajun detectives – Dave Robicheaux and Rene Shade – by James Lee Burke and Daniel Woodrell, respectively, Dave Brandstetter by Joseph Hansen, and the hard-drinking detectives – Milodragovitch and Sughrue – introduced by James Cumley in the first half of the 1990s. In an instance of the development of detective family stories, Joe Lansdale relates the White investigator Hap Collins to the gay Afro-American Leonard Pine in Savage Season and Two-Bear Mambo, while Spenser develops a strong family bondage with his Black assistant, Hawk and the Jewish psychiatrist, Susan Silverman, in the Chandlersque novels of Robert B. Parker. The post-modern American detective stories denote a significant shift from the tradition of the Sherlock Holmes narratives. The Holmesian intelligence and theory of deduction have been replaced by chase, firings and tortures on the captives, sexual assaults, and vociferous attacks against the American consumerism – an issue that is attacked by Ross Macdonald in The Underground Man (1971) and James Hall in Buzz Cut (1996). These stories also eschew the issue of patriotism that is so much a feature of Doyle's detective stories.

The emergence and steady evolution of the sub genre of detective fiction in European and particularly English literature profoundly affected the literature of the colonies, particular those of England. In the late nineteenth century, England had its Indian headquarters in Calcutta, Bengal, which was, until December 1911, the administrative as well as cultural capital of India. Long before 1947, Bengali had evolved itself into a strong and important language with rich literary heritage, and in pre-independence India, the sub genre of detective fiction had become more distinct and popular in Bengali than in any other Indian language. In fact, there is no evidence that any other Indian language and literature contained, in contemporary India, a detective character as popular as Byomkesh Bakshi. Had there been any, the adventures had never been meticulously chronicled.

Byomkesh Bakshi, the Bengali middle class private investigator who calls himself 'the inquisitor', first appeared in the *Bashumati* periodical in 1932. He was preceded by a number of primarily Bengali fictional detectives who were constructed after the European detectives like Holmes, Poirot and Father Brown, and were, in fact, Euro-centric investigators with Indian/Bengali names that work in a climate and atmosphere found mostly in England.

Though Nagendranath Gupta (1861-1940) wrote "Churi Na Bahaduri" ("Theft or an Act of Bravado?") in the April 1886-edition of *Bharati*, a monthly literary magazine edited by Swarnakumari Debi (1855-1932), the history of Bengali detective fiction formally began in April 1892, with the publication of "Banomali Daser Hatya" ("The Murder of Banomali Das"), the first story of the 206-tale-strong Darogar Daftor ("The Office of the Officer-in-Charge")-series written by Priyanath Chattopadhyay (1855-1947), an employee with the detective department of Calcutta Police (started in 1868) between 1878 and

1911. In Sangshad Bangla Sahityasangi, Sisir Kumar Das observes, "Priyanath Mukhopadhyay first started [the] trend [of detective fiction] in Bengali literature" (96). In its review of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth volumes of Darogar Daftor, the June 1893-issue of *Bharati* wrote, "What Mukhopadhyay is trying to do is noble to us" that echoed Damodar Debsharma's observation, "We can easily count Babu Priyanath Mukhopadhyay's detective narratives as highly original sensational novels" (Mukhopadhyay, *Darogar* 5-7). The first book of the series, which ran for twelve years, was published by Baninath Nandi on behalf of M/s. *Sikdarbagan Bandhob Pustakalaya O Sadharan Pathagar*, Calcutta, though he was later succeeded by Upendrakishore Choudhury.

The first formal Bengali detective fiction introduced a police officer-in-charge working under the British administration against the colonised members of his own community, and Mukhopadhyay's very conception of the protagonist pointed to an overwhelming influence of the imperial canon. The stories were based on the real-life experiences of the author, who, being an administrator and the receiver of British titles and honours, regarded the Indians as dangerous thieves and necessarily malignant. In his other novels, Tantia Bhil, Detective Police, Thagi Kahini ("The Thagis"), Boer Yuddher Itihash ("The History of the Boer War") and the autobiographical Tetrish Bathshorer Police Kahini, ba, Priyanath Jeevani ("Police Tales of Thirty-three Years, or, Priyanath's Autobiography"), Mukhopadhyay points out to the various aspects of "superb governance" by the English colonisers. Ranojit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh write, "Priyanath was just a story teller, not a litterateur per se. He simply chronicled his experiences in contemporary Bengali language." (748). But his anti-colonised ideology received a wide readership "among the

Bengalis, the Assamese, the Hindustanis, the Oriyas, the Maharastrians, the Sikhs and the Englishmen" (Mukhopadhyay 8). The 30 April 1893-issue of *Hope* commented, "Babu Priyanath Mukherjee is well-known to the public as a writer of popular detective fiction, and his latest volume, Kulsam, sustains his previous reputation" (Mukhopadhyay, *Darogar* 6). It was only in Ingrej Dakat ("The Englishman Dacoit") that he obliquely hinted at the evil in the colonisers' psyche. That Mukhopadhyay was an employee of the Calcutta Police, an institute founded in 1856 to control and obliterate the Bengali nationalists, was itself an assertion of his ignoble collaboration with the imperialists. In "About Kolkata Police: the Empire at its Zenith", the official website of the police branch informs:

> "In 1856 the Governor-General promulgated an Act treating Calcutta Police as a separate organization and S. Wauchope, who was then the chief magistrate of Calcutta, was appointed as the first commissioner of police. He had to face difficult days because of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the first upsurge against British rule. He *handled the situation ably* (italics mine) and was knighted for his achievement. During the incumbency of his successor V.H. Schalch the Calcutta Police Act and the Calcutta Suburban Police Act, which are still in force, were enacted in 1866. Two years earlier (1864) the Commissioner of Police had become the Chairman of the Justices as well and a Deputy Commissioner was appointed to look after the executive police. It was Sir Stuart Hogg who first set up the Detective Department in Calcutta Police in November 1868 with A. Younan as the superintendent and R. Lamb as the first-class inspector..." [23].

The trend initiated by Mukhopadhyay was sustained by Girish Chandra Basu (1865-1933) in "Sekaler Daroga Kahini" ("The Contemporary Police Tales") that was published in *Nabajeevan*, a periodical edited by Akshay Sarkar, in 1893. Three years later Kaliprashanna Chattopadhyay (1863-1919) published "Bankaullar Daftor" ("Bankaullah's Office") in which he narrated twelve exploits of Barkatullah who was popularly referred to as Bokaullah, and thereafter, Bankahullah – the police inspector employed by the Calcutta Police commissioner, Sleeman, to annihilate the *Thagis*. Ironically, most of Bankahullah's raids were directed against the Bengali youths whom the British detectives had labelled 'terrorists' but who were actually the young Indian freedom fighters fighting against the colonisers. Significantly, in spite of all his efficiency, Inspector Bankaullah remains subordinate to the British commissioner and has to remain satisfied only with the colonisers' patronisation. In his collaborating with the imperialists to torment people of his own country, Bankahullah exemplifies what the British administrators in India aimed at: they educated the Indians and employed them under themselves only to use them either as clerks – the 'writers' – or to control and exterminate their own countrymen. However, that Chattopadhyay has chosen to write about a Muslim could be interpreted as his attempt at bridging the communal gap between the two principal religions of India that have been estranged by the intermittent riots engineered by the colonisers.

The historian Harishadhan Mukhopadhyay (1862-1938) first contributed to the realm of children's detective fiction in Bengali. The writer of the history of Calcutta published "Hatyakari Key" ("Who is the Murderer?") in the April 1890-issue of

Bharati. His "Ascharya Hatyakanda" ("The Perplexing Assassination") published in *Sakha O Sathi* is the first Bengali thriller for adolescents (Chattopadhyay and Ghosh 748).

Bhuvanchandra Mukhopadhyay (1842-1916) continued with the police fiction convention in the six-volume Markin Police Commissioner ("The American Police Commissioner") which has White Westerner as the chief protagonist and whose total action occurs in the Occident. His Samaj Kuchitro ("The Dirty face of Society"), Haridasher Guptakatha ("Haridash's Secrets") published in the early 1880s, however, focussed more on societal scandals than on heinous crimes. His other crime stories include Bilati Guptakatha ("Secrets of the West") and London Rahoshyo ("London's Mystery"), a translation. Kshetra Mohon Ghosh and Surendra Mohon Bhattacharyya were the other contemporary writers of police stories.

Mukhopadhyay's instance is not only an example of the failure of the pre-Saradindu Bandopadhyay Bengali detective story writers to avoid the direct influence of the European, particularly, English sleuth story writers, it also indicates the trend of the contemporary Indian investigators to seek safe recluse in a colonial background, under the protection and authority of the perceptively superior Western imperialists. Sarat Chandra Sarkar's "Goyenda Kahini" ("Detective Tales")-series serialised between 1894 and 1898, the "Detective Galpo" ("Detective Stories")-series which republished anonymous contributions to *Hitobadi* published from Kalighat, Calcutta, by Nirod Boron Das, were no exception.

Sukumar Sen has identified Panchkari Dey (1873 – 1945) as the first Bengali litterateur to "serialise indigenously conceived detective story" (6). However, Ranojit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh differ:

> "Whereas Priyanath Mukhopadhyay wrote tales based on his own experience, Panchkari Dey blended romance with those ingredients. Nevertheless, his stories were not original – at best, they were Western tales in Eastern garb" (749).

Dey's detectives, Debendra Bijoy Mitra, Arindam Basu and Gobindoram appeared in a total of twenty eight stories, including "Neelbashana Sundari" ("The Beauty in Blue") (1904), "Hartoner Naola" ("The Trick of the Cards"), "Mayabini" ("The Mysterious Lady"), "Manorama" ("The Enchantress") and "Hatyakari Key" ("Who is the Assassin?") between the 1910s and 1920s. It is important that in his characterisation of Debendra Bijoy Mitra, his principal investigator, the writer exhibits certain characteristic features common to all the Bengali sleuths in late pre-independence India. First, while creating Mitra, Dey relied heavily on Wilkie Collins and Emile Gaboriau's construction of their respective detectives, and on the plotting of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Identifiably a combination of Sergeant Cuff and Lecoq, Mitra is a thinly veiled European detective who investigates in an Oriental locale. Second, both Debendra Bijoy Mitra and Arindam Basu Dey's are (in-service and retired) police officials (employed with the imperialist Calcutta Police), similar to the sleuths in the stories by Collins, Wood and Braddon. That they are not independent or private investigators denotes the absence of general administrative powers and freedom to take independent decisions that the British colonisers denied to the colonised Indians. Third, apart from having a name common to the Bengali landlords who were, in late pre-independence India, the *de facto* representatives of the British administration, Mitra exhibits hybridity in his dress too – a mixture of the traditional Indian/Bengali and European formals comprising of plated shirt with hard cuffs, open-breasted sleeveless coat made of china silk, black bordered processed dhoti, and Derby shoes (Gupta, *Byomkesh* 11). In his introduction to the second volume of Saradindu Omnibus, Pratul Chandra Gupta underlines Mitra's imperial compatibility by comparing him with Edward-VII (*Byomkesh* 11). The manner in which Mitra and Basu dress themselves exemplifies the extent to which the English societal norms and conventions had influenced the colonised populace in India. Fourth, both Mitra and Basu wage investigation within the city of Calcutta like Boranagar, Behala and Hazra Road, and have their residence in the metropolis. Regions outside the metropolis was not considered safe for these hybridised colonised detectives who had deliberately distanced themselves from the Indian freedom struggle and who apprehended, as "criminals" or *thangare*-s, Indian youths fighting against the British colonisers. Finally, following the convention of the English writers of detective fiction, Dey has presented his sleuths as belonging to the affluent section of the society. Like a European, Mitra uses a landau, hansom cab and phaeton whenever he goes out.

According to Sen, Dey has exhibited marked originality in his detective narratives by introducing the idea of the *super sleuth* in his characterisation of Arindam Basu (6). A similar idea has been suggested in Doyle's portrayal of Mycroft Holmes in "The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter" ("Neelbashana Sundari" bears evidence of Dey's acquaintance with this particular Sherlock Holmes story), but not explicitly stated. The Bengali litterateur distinguishes the levels of dignity and societal positions of the two detectives – Mitra and Basu – according to their age: Basu is senior to Mitra. Dey has also been one of the earlier writers of detective fiction to indicate a personal relationship between the two Bengali investigators – Arindam Basu is Debendra Bijoy Mitra's grandfather-in-law. In Basu's having criminal antecedents, Sen detects a reaffirmation of the ancient Indian belief that only a (former) criminal can be most efficient in apprehending a defaulter (Sen 6). He compares Basu with Leblanc's Arsene Lupin, and states, "The great thief we read about in the detective stories [Panchkari Dey had] written for children, was a great police officer of contemporary age and the Indian predecessor of Mycroft Holmes" (6).

Besides Swarnakumari Debi, Hemendra Mohon Basu (1866-1916), a renowned industrialist of colonial Calcutta, was also instrumental in imparting maturity to the Bengali detective stories: in 1896 he initiated the *Kuntalin Puraskar* for original Gothic, humorous, fantasy and detective stories, and the winners of the award for sleuth stories included Rajoni Chandra Dutta of Srihatta Bejura School, Dinendra Kumar Roy, Jagadananda Roy of Santiniketan, and Saralabala Dasi Sarkar (1875-1961) whom Ranojit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh identify as "the first woman writer of detective fiction in India" (749).

The period between 1890s and 1940s was the colonial period in Bengali detective fiction. Starting from Priyanath Mukhopadhyay and extending upto Mihir Kumar Sinha's "Mohon"-series, the writers were consciously or unconsciously influenced directly and moulded by the shifts in the realm of contemporary Western detective stories. This trend is reflected in Harihar Sheth's "Adbhut Guptolipi" ("The Mysterious Cryptogram") published in *Pradip* (1905) and Ambika Charan Gupta's Swarnabai (1909) serialised in *Goyenda Galpo*, a monthly he himself edited. On the other hand, *Nandan Kanan,* the first monthly Bengali crime magazine that strengthened this colonial conception, came to be published from Calcutta regularly from 1902 onwards. It was published by Upendranath Mukhopadhyay, and edited and anonymously contributed by Dinendra Kumar Ray (1869-1943), whose two hundred and seventeen odd narratives on the exploits of the anglicised Robert Blake, started with "Bidhir Bidhan" ("The Justice of Fate"), were serialised in "Rahoshyo Lahori" ("Collected Mystery Tales").

Robert Blake was the most popular prototype Eurocentric investigator in pre-independence India in the 1910s and 1920s, and in his characterisation of the British detective, Ray had depended on different English periodicals, particularly *Union Jack* and the *Sexton Blake*-series to the point of being indicted for plagiarism. Arun Chattopadhyay states, "The Bengali writer literally copied from the Western periodicals" (4).

Contrary to Panchkari Dey, Dinendra Kumar Ray did not forcibly and ludicrously Indianise his White detective created on lines of Holmes and Father Brown. Set in London and its suburbs, the Robert Blake narratives like "Ayesha", "She", "Ruposhi Marubashini" ("The Desert Beauty"), "Bhuter Jahaj" ("The Phantom Ship"), "Chiner Dragon" ("The Chinese Dragon") and "Jaal Mohanto" ("The Dubious Priest") easily give their readers the illusion of reading fiction by an English author. In his introduction to the second volume of Saradindu Omnibus, the noted Bengali literary critic Pratul Chandra Gupta writes,

> "It was not Panchkari Dey but Dinendra Kumar Ray whose detective stories could first successfully captivate millions of young hearts. He had also been inspired by – nay, he had literally translated several European sleuth narratives, but he differs from Dey because unlike the latter, he had not given an Indian garb to an identifiably Western investigator or had attempted to create a Calcutta out of Caliente. The related merits and demerits notwithstanding, the Robert Blake stories, in our childhood, seemed to be the very epitome of London geography. Our first acquaintance with the embankments of the Thames, the locality of Fulham in southern London, the Croydon aerodrome, Sohopara or Piccadilly was only through Roy's exciting tales…" (*Byomkesh* 7-8).

Apart from exhibiting a concern with the faithful representation of a White coloniser in an imperial country like England, the Blake stories suffered from anachronisms, incongruity and other situational impossibilities that developed from the author's attempts to enlist different European gadgets in his stories. Gupta comments,

> "The pre-First World War readers were credulous as well as cooperative. In one of…[Ray's popular]…detective stories, the sleuth comes across mountains and springs within one hour of leaving Howrah station! In another story by an early writer, the investigator discovers the plundering

> dacoits in a distant house by affixing a microscope in a hole on the trunk of a tree…!" (*Byomkesh* 8).

Ray's success in popularising the fictional sleuth led to an unprecedented spurt in composition of detective stories between the 1910s and 1930s and paved way for the growth of post colonial response in them. Ranojit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh write,

> "For four decades between 1890 and 1930, the Indian detective story writers had endeavoured hard to satisfy the contemporary readers' palette. They had not only made acquaintance with the dreaded criminals possible for the otherwise reclusive Indian commoner, but also had thrown light on different societal problems. Above all, they demonstrated how, even after having multiple annihilations in the plot, Shakespeare's Hamlet and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's Krishnakantar Will ("The Will of Krishnakanta") differ from detective fiction.
>
> During this period, the influence of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in Bengali literature had waned, and had been replaced with Rabindranath Tagore's and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's. Contemporary mystery writers were captivated by their lyricism, efficiency of plot-construction and psychoanalytical excellence…" (749).

In the 1920s, Bengali detective fiction matured further, though in the colonial perspective, in Hemendra Kumar Roy's narratives like "Jakher Dhan" ("The Hardguarded Treasure") (first published in *Mouchak*, a monthly for adolescents), "Jayantar Kirti" ("Jayanta's Achievements"), "Manush Pishach" ("The Human Monster"), "Shahjhaner Mayur" ("Shahjahan's Peacock Throne") and "Padmaraag Buddha" ("The Carbuncle Buddha"). Roy (1888-1963) introduced three sets of detectives – the Jayanta-Manik-Sundarbabu group, the Hemanta-Rabin group and Inspector Satish. Though exhibiting originality in the issue of event management in stories, Jayanta, Manik and Hemanta strictly adhere to the rules of detection promulgated by Poe and Doyle. Kulada Ranjan Roy (1878-1950) merely translated English detective stories into English and Premankur Atarthi (1890-1964) Indianised The Hound of the Baskervilles into Jalar Petni ("The Apparition of the Swamp") in *Mouchak*.

Contribution to children sleuth literature, started by Hemendra Kumar Roy, found abundance in Monoranjan Bhattacharyya (1903-1939), who began to satirise the cult in his stories on Hukkakashi like "Padmaraag" ("The Carbuncle") (first published in *Ramdhanu* in 1928), "Ghosh-Choudhurir Ghori" ("Ghosh-Choudhury's Watch") and "Sonar Harin" ("The Gold Stag"), a trend first started by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in "Detective", a short story, in the June 1898-issue of *Bharati*. He also started the trend of naming detective stories in alliterative words[24]. Importantly, Bhattacharyya's detective remained a representative of the colonisers – only Hukkakashi, being a Japanese gentleman, represented an Oriental imperial power. Shibram Chakroborty (1903-1980) created Kolkekashi, Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay (1873-1932) created Gobardhan and Mohit Mohon Chattopadhyay, in the late 1950s, introduced Bhomboldas and Kebalram to depict he imperial investigators as objects of ridicule and stinging satire. This trend was sustained in the emanation of Parashar Verma in "Goyenda Kabi Parashar" ("Parashar – the Litterateur-Sleuth") (1956). Premendra Mitra (1904-1988) constructed a detective whose epiphanic flairs for writing always ended in his poems' finding their way to dustbin.

The launching of different investigators' series between 1930 and 1940 first underscored the shifting of the contemporary Indian detective fiction from the colonial phase to its post colonial avatar. In his contributions to the *Rahoshyo Chakro* (Mystery)-series edited by Monoranjan Chakroborty, and in Reshmi Fansh ("The Silk Noose"), Shomon Sabhar Kriti ("The Exploits of the Annihilators") and Katamundur Karshaji ("The Tricks of the Severed Head") (the last two were serialised in *Kytayani Goyenda Granthamela* series), Gajendra Kumar Mitra (1908-1994) created Tarun Gupta, an essentially Bengali detective, concerned, for the first time, with problems typical to the Bengali society in pre-independence India. Sourindra Mohon Mukhopadhyay (1884-1966) wrote Aram Bagh ("The Pleasure Garden") and Rishi Moshai ("The Ascetic") in the *Nabakatha Granthamela* ("The New Voices")-series published by Radharomon Das whose maiden venture was the *Rahoshyo-Romanchyo-Adventure* ("Mystery-Romance-Adventure")-series. Sumathanath Ghosh (1909-1984) wrote Moron Golap ("The Lethal Rose") in the *Kytayani Goyenda Granthamela* ("The Kytayani Collection of Detective Stories")-series published by Nripendra Kumar Basu from 1935 onwards. In the last section of the decade, *Deb Sahitya Kutir*, a Calcutta-based publishing company brought out the *Kanchanjungha*-series contributed by Hemendra Kumar Roy, Naresh Chandra Sengupta, Buddhadeb Basu, Nripendra Krishna Chattopadhyay, Shaiylobala Ghoshjaya and Probhabati Debi Saraswati who later started the *Krishna*-series on the adventures of

Krishna, a woman sleuth. The same company was responsible for the resurgence of colonialist detective fiction writing in the late 1950s when it began to publish the adventure tales of the anglicised Deepak Chatterjee by Swapankumar in the *Biswachakra*-series and Sourendra Mohon Mukhopadhyay's *Prohelika*-series.

It was in 1942, when the anti-British campaign had reached a crucial state in Bengal and Punjab, that Sashodhar Dutta (d. 1952) began his *Mohon*-series and introduced a rural picaro championing the cause of the dominated Bengalis. *General Printers and Publishers Limited*, which, in 1938, had published the *Bichitryo Rahoshyo*-series, benefited immensely from these exploits of the "Robin Hood of Bengal" edited by Mihir Kumar Sinha until Dutta's death (Chattopadhyay and Ghosh 750). The popularity of the *Mohon*-series precisely indicated the changing sentiments of the colonised Indian readers. However, Abhijit Gupta is dismissive of the qualitative efficiency of both Swapankumar and Dutta:

> "The high seriousness and erudition of the Byomkesh Bakshi stories were however suitably counterpointed by the execrable productions of Sashodhar Dutta and Swapan Kumar. Their respective protagonists, Mohon and Deepak Chatterjee, were the source of a host of unforgettable one-liners which have become the stuff of legend…Coming to Feluda from Mohon and Deepak Chatterjee may seem almost anti-climactic…" [25].

In the same decade, Nihar Ranjan Gupta (1911-1986) began the first of his eighty odd stories about the adventures of Kiriti Roy and his associate, Subrata. In the anterior flap of the cover-jacket of Kalo Bhromor ("The Black Wasp" – the first Kiriti Roy story) (Kolkata: Mitra and Ghosh Publishers Private Limited, 1985. Rpt. 2004), Pramathanath Bishi (1901-1985) thus describes the anglicised investigator:

> "Kiriti Roy is six and a half feet tall, fair and stout. His curled hair is mostly combed back, and the black celluloid spectacles make his clean-shaved face highly attractive".

In Tarafdar's description of Kiriti Roy as "...the typical Eurocentric investigator – clad in the familiar hat and ulster" is exemplified the failure of Gupta to avoid the Western literary influence[26].

In the Byomkesh Bakshi stories, whose first narrative, "Pather Kanta", was published in the June 1932-issue of *Bashumati*, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay sought to efface the colonial heredity of Indian detective fiction. In the *introduction* to Byomkesher Diary ("The Diary of Byomkesh") (Calcutta: P.C.Sarkar and Company, 1933), he states,

> "Readers have often questioned whether...[the Byomkesh Bakshi]...stories are not the duplicate copies of English detective fiction. For their kind information, all these are my original contributions...Many people nurse a snobbish attitude to the sub-genre of detective fiction as if it were an inferior

> form of literature. I think it is erroneously conceived. I do not feel ashamed to write what Edgar Allan Poe, Conan Doyle and G.K.Chesterton could" (*Byomkesh* 1005).

The litterateur's being from a *third world* country like India is significant in the post colonial perspective. "[The term]…'third world' retain[s]…[its]…power because…[it]…suggest[s] an alternative culture, an alternative 'epistemology', or system of knowledge" (Young 17-8). His writing his detective stories in Bengali itself is a post colonial response:

> "In African countries and in India, that is in post colonial countries where viable alternatives to *english* continue to exist, an appeal for a return to writing exclusively, or mainly in the pre-colonial languages has been a recurrent feature of calls for decolonisation. Politically attractive as this is, it has been seen as problematic by those who insist on the syncretic nature of post colonial societies. Syncreticist critics argue that even a novel in Bengali or Gikuyu is inevitably a cross-cultural hybrid, and that decolonisation projects must recognise this. Not to do so is to confuse decolonisation with the reconstitution of pre-colonial reality" (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 30).

Lauding the originality and efficiency of Bandyopadhyay's contribution, Abhijit Gupta writes,

> "Till Quentin Tarantino hit upon the happy – but by no means original – idea of rehabilitating the cops and hitmen of forgotten Fifties pulp in pulp fiction, they had inhabited a half-forgotten, ill-lit corner of our consciousness, always well-dressed, always giving chase or being chased, superbly suave even in the direst of vicissitudes. All this changed with the coming of…Byomkesh Bakshi. [He]…threw away the three-piece suit, the rakish fedora, the regulation brier and slipped into the…comfortable dhoti-punjabi…"[27].

"Satyanweshi ("The Inquisitor"), regarded the first story of the canon because it first introduces the inquisitor and his associate to one another, was written in 1933 – a most crucial juncture in the history of the Indian nationalist movement, particularly for Bengal where the youths "taught in western philosophy, Vivekananda's *Nabavedantabad* and Bankim [Chandra Chattopadhyay's]…patriotism, had thrown themselves in an…[all-out]…armed struggle against the British colonisers" (Pahari 254). With the exception of the Bengali detective fiction written between 1890 and early 1930s, the social and political turmoil came to be reflected in contemporary Bengali literature. While Priyanath Mukhopadhyay, Kaliprashanna Chattopadhyay and Bhuvan Chandra Mukhopadhyay were directly employed under the British administration and came to maintain silence about, if not praise, the excesses of the colonial rule, Bandyopadhyay was a lawyer practicing in the British dominated Indian courts until 1938 (after which he moved to Bombay to write film scripts) and, understandably, could not exhibit an active interest in the nationalist movement. Nevertheless, he registers his protest against the colonial excesses and the colonial encroachments in the realm of Indian/Bengali literature through the path of Fanonian *collusion*: by making Byomkesh Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay identifiably Bengali, by making them deliberately ignore anything made in the West, and by making them avoid referring to anything British or European at all. He thus creates a post colonial world which has been constructed by the imperialists but which effectively shuts them out from its society.

Of all the Bengali sleuths created up to the 1930s, Bakshi was the first to have a Bengali middle class background and had no previous record of serving under the imperial forces. He was, like Holmes, the first private investigator in Bengali detective fiction and the first to have a biographer-friend like Ajit. Unlike Blake or Mitra, Bakshi is not a typical European investigator oddly disguised as an Indian; neither are his locales ludicrous superimpositions of the Orient on the Occident. He does not live in the imperial metropolis of London, but in Calcutta inhabited by the colonised populace and does not frequently use landaus or phaetons. Dinendra Kumar Ray, Priyanath Mukhopadhyay and Kaliprashanna Chattopadhyay frequently refer to British governance and customs in their stories where as Saradindu Bandyopadhyay maintains a total silence. His detective also differs from the other contemporary Bengali detectives in his dress. Bakshi wears dhoti and punjabee against the elaborate ulster-hat of Kiriti Roy or Mitra's combination of English and Indian traditional dresses. His first name is uncommon but is not aristocratic like that of Mitra. Influenced by the English sleuth stories as they are, Robert Blake, Debendra Bijoy and

Bankaullah wage on-spot investigations and undertake outdoor adventures in contrast with Bakshi who depends more on his intuitive powers for detection.

It is significant that while Panchkari Dey's and Dinendra Kumar Ray's investigators are supermen capable of feats requiring enormous physical and mental potency, Bakshi is never presented as being extraordinary in appearance and faculties. Ajit Bandyopadhyay describes the first appearance of the detective at Dr. Anukul's boarding house without any superlatives:

> "He looked to be about twenty-three or twenty-four. His demeanour was that of an educated person. He was fair, well-built and handsome, and his face radiated intelligence. But he seemed to have fallen on bad times lately; his dress was in dishabille, his hair was uncombed, his shirt looked frayed and his shoes too had taken a rough hue for lack of polishing. He had an expression of eager anxiousness on his face…" (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 5).

Of all the fictional Bengali detectives up to the 1930s, Bakshi is the youngest when he makes his appearance in "The Inquisitor" at the age of "twenty-three or twenty-four" – that suggests his capacity for continuing with his investigations longer. Bandyopadhyay makes his sleuth narratives exceptional by detailing about the family background of the detective: Bakshi's father is a teacher of mathematics, and his mother is a Vaishnavite (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 434), and by providing him with a full family comprising of Satyabati, Khoka, Ajit Bandyopadhyay and Puntiram.

The most notable characteristic feature of the Byomkesh Bakshi stories that distinguishes them from the other contemporary Bengali detective narratives is the conspicuous absence of the colonisers. Although ten of the thirty three Bakshi narratives – "Satyanweshi", "Pather Kanta", "Shimonto Heera", "Makorshar Rash", "Arthamanartham", "Chorabalee", "Agniban", "Upasanhar", "Raktomukhi Neela" and "Byomkesh O Boroda" – were written before the Indian independence, it is significant that no White European, except a senior police officer in "Pather Kanta" and the English police commissioners referred to in absence by Bakshi in "Satyanweshi" and "Arthamanartham", has got a presence or role in the seven other stories, and in the twenty three narratives written after 1947. Contrary to Mitra or Blake, Bakshi does not refer any case to the higher White officials or wait for their permission to start his investigations. Bandyopadhyay's criminals are not the nationalists whom Bankaullah and Mitra chase, but are ignoble antisocial individuals. While the earlier sleuths continue their investigation up to a certain extent, identify the criminal, and get him/her arrested or executed by the colonial policemen, Bakshi tries to decide the punishment of the criminals by himself, and except in "Bonhi Patango" and "Satyanweshi", seldom involves the police at his own accord. In Sherlock Holmes stories the awarding of the death sentence to the criminals is suggested, if not explicitly stated, at the end of the narratives: for example, Jim Browner in "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box" and Patrick Cairns in "The Adventure of the Black Peter" are certain to be executed. It was a common practice among the British colonisers to hang the Indians, particularly the Bengali and Sikh youths, without a proper trial; but in the Byomkesh Bakshi stories no Indian is sentenced to death. On the other hand, criminals like Prafulla Roy in "The Gramophone Pin

Mystery", Phonibhusan Kar in "Where There's a Will" and Amaresh Raha in "Picture Imperfect" commit suicide that might be interpreted as the sign that the Indians preferred suicide to arrest and torture by the British colonisers. In spite of their being criminals, Roy, Raha and Kar retain enough self respect as to commit suicide before being pilloried in front of the commoners. Also, Byomkesh Bakshi lacks a "daftor" (office) – the convention having been initiated by the colonisers themselves.

That Bakshi knows how to use a revolver has been suggested in his holding one while apprehending the homeopathic physician in 'The Inquisitor" (23), but he does not use guns, a colonial gadget, except in "Bonhi Patango" and "Amriter Mrityu". On the other hand, Debendra Bijoy Mitra, the American police commissioner and Robert Blake possess revolvers and readily wield and fire them while chasing criminals.

The Byomkesh Bakshi stories also began to differ from the contemporaries in their detailed treatment of love, romance and human relationships. For example, Panchkari Dey, Bhuvan Chandra Mukhopadhyay and Dinendra Kumar Roy, focus exclusively on crime and detection without any reference to the complex interrelationship among the human beings including the sleuth and the criminal. In contrast, Byomkesh Bakshi narratives like "Where There's a Will" (Byomkesh Bakshi-Satyabati), "Picture Imperfect" (Rajani-Dr. Ghatak), "Bohni Patango" (Shakuntala Devi-Inspector Ratikanta Choudhury), "Aadim Ripu" (Probhat Halder-Shiuly Mazumder), "Kahen Kabi Kalidas" (Aurobindo Halder-Mohini), "Shanjarur Kanta" (Prabal Gupta-Deepa Bhattacharyya) and "Magno Mainak" (Henna-Jugal Chand) contain at least one pair of lovers. Bakshi has himself been presented in roles of a husband, a friend and a father. While most of the English detective stories by Doyle, Chesterton and Christie are singularly free from the author's vivid portrayal of the love sequences and relationship among the lovers, and Dinendra Kumar Ray, Panchkari Dey, Nihar Ranjan Gupta and Priyanath Mukhopadhyay never depict the detective or his acquaintances as lovers in lengthy courtship or post-marital dialogues, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's stories put much stress on the portrayal of human relationships and courtship and thus achieve uniqueness.

The 'return to the Indian roots'-consciousness propagated by Bandyopadhyay was instrumental in giving rise to three important crime fiction periodicals in the 1940s: *Rahoshyo Romanchyo*, edited jointly by Bimal Kar (1921-2003) and Arun Bhattacharyya (1925-1985), *Rahoshyo Chakro* edited by Srikrishna Goswami, and *Detective* by Dhruba Sarkar. Prashad Sinha's *Chalantika*, initially a literary magazine, metamorphosed itself into a detective fiction journal in 1948-9. *Romanchyo*, another important detective fiction periodical, was conceived in 1932 by Mrityunjoy Chattopadhyay, its editor between 1933 and the late 1950s, and the contributors included Premendra Mitra, Shaiylojananda Mukhopadhyay (1909-1976), Panchugopal Mukhopadhyay (1910-1957), Pronob Roy, Sunil Kumar Dhar, Fanindra Paul, Achintyo Kumar Sengupta (1903-1976), Probodh Kumar Sanyal (1905-1983), and Somnath Lahiri (1909-1984). From its first edition of 32 pages published on 9 January 1932 onwards, each litterateur was to contribute original stories on the exploits of Investigator Pratul Lahiri and his companion, Biswanath Chakroborty, in subsequent issues, and was to consciously avoid referring to the Western methodology and intervention.

Bengali detective fiction of the 1950s was contributed, other than Premendra Mitra, by Pronob Roy (1908-1975), the editor of *Romanchyo* for two subsequent issues, who demanded in his stories that the criminal be looked as a human being. Panchanan Ghoshal (1907-1990), a former police executive, resuscitated the style of Priyanath Mukhopadhyay in his personal police memoirs like Rakto Nadir Dhara ("The Bloody River"), Pocketmar ("Pickpocket") and Bikkhyato Tadanta Kahini ("Famous Tales of Detection"), and composed the multi-volume Aparadh Bigyan ("Criminology"). Raj Sekhar Basu (1880-1960) asserted the triumph of the colonised over the coloniser in his prodigal Rakhal Mustaphi, whom Sherlock Holmes is forced to consult after journeying from London to Calcutta in Neel Tara ("The Blue Star"). While Gobindolall Bandyopadhyay wrote *in cognito* about Dilip Sanyal and Tridib Choudhury, Parimal Goswami popularised Brajobilash with an unconventional excellence in the art of disguise. The Indianisation of the investigators in the late fifties continued in narratives of Bidhayak Bhattacharyya, Dhirendralall Dhar, Samoresh Basu (1924-1988), Santosh Kumar Ghosh, Manobendra Bandyopadhyay, Nirendranath Chakroborty, Adrish Bardhan (b. 1932), Sudhangshu Kumar Gupta and Gouranga Prashad Basu – the writer of Kanya Kalanko Katha ("The Scandal of Women"), Neelima Nishsheshey Nihato ("Neelima's Exhaustive Extermination") and Geeta Kapurer Atmohatya ("Geeta Kapur's Suicide"). Bardhan's Indranath Rudra and Samoresh Basu's Gogol achieved most popularity.

The sixties' Bengali literary detectives exhibit signs of decadence in originality. Written in post-independence India, the stories of this decade did not exhibit any pronounced post colonial response though they had moved away from the Western conventions of crime fiction. There is no actual psychological development of the sleuths and the sixties' detective stories exerted their influence only for a very short period. Significantly, none of the other Indian languages seems to have so successfully produced and popularised literary investigators as Bengali. Conceived in the late 1960s, Karamchand has remained the only popular sleuth in Hindi. While Krishanu Bandyopadhyay wrote fifty stories on Bashab's adventure, Ananda Bagchi (b. 1932), Tarapada Roy, Sobhon Shom (b 1932), Robin Deb and Sreedhar Choudhury created Satyapriyo, Garjan Goyenda, Subho Choudhury, Robin Deb and Shankar Choudhury, respectively. Amit Chattopadhyay (who wrote several Pratul Lahiri-stories), Hiren Chattopadhyay (creator of Sudhamay and Mac Choudhury) and Himanish Goswami ("Dey and Daw"), Sunil Kumar Ghosh and Sukhomoy Mukhopadhyay are the other sixties' Bengali crime story writers. Gurnek Singh's Amaresh-tales deserve mention because he learned Bengali which was not his mother tongue to write exclusive detective narratives.

Between 1970 and 1979, Satyajit Ray created Feluda and Hari Narayan Chattopadhyay introduced Parijat Bakshi – the fictitious nephew of Byomkesh Bakshi – to enrich the subgenre on the indigenous lines of Saradindu Bandyopadhyay. Samoresh Basu created Ashok Thakur, Syed Mustafa Shiraj (b. 1930) introduced the retired Colonel Niladri Sarkar, Kamakshi Prashad Chattopadhyay created Anukul Verma, Priyabroto Mukhopadhyay popularised Partha Gupta, Indrajeet Roy wrote narratives on the exploits of Rakesh, Kali Kinkar Karmakar on that of Chitta

Chatterjee, Ashapurna Debi (1909-1995) on Botokesto Sardar and Manjil Sen on Shadashib. Anish Deb (b. 1951) wrote short tales of detection without any protagonist.

Prodiptyo Roy's Jaga Pishi and Monoj Sen's Damayanti were two popular women investigators of the 1970s. They challenged the patriarchal conventions of confining women indoors in the detective stories. It can be observed that in a Bengali detective story a woman directly involved in the plot is either a nymphomaniac transgressor, an un-ashamed offender or knows much more than she should have.

It is important that in this decade Himangshu Sarkar, for the first time, created a rogue-detective who could be identified with the protagonists of the Western hard boiled narratives written by Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler (*The Wordsworth* 254). Narayan Sanyal's adventures of Sherlock Hebo parodies Doyle's creation from an Indian/Bengali point of view. In the late seventies, Sukumar Sen unsuccessfully tried to impart a historical perspective to detective fiction, similar to Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's "Durgo Rahoshyo" in his exploits of Kalidas. His most important contribution, however, is Crime Kahinir Kaalkranti, an authoritative historical analysis of the development of the Indian and Bengali detective stories over the ages.

Satyajit Ray (1921-1992) has contributed bounteously to the realm of Bengali crime fiction single-handedly in the seventies and eighties. His Feluda, whose first adventure, Feludar Goyendagiri ("Feluda's Investigation") was published in 1965, is a Bengali (bachelor) gentleman of 26 Rajani Sen Road, Calcutta, who undertakes daring outdoor adventures in company of his cousin and narrator, Tapesh or 'Topshey' and the detective story writer, Lal Mohon Ganguli better known as 'Jatayu'.

In Ray's creation the post colonial response is achieved through the detective's hybridity and cultural ambiguity. Feluda's modes of detection are based on the science of deduction, popularised by Doyle in his Sherlock Holmes narratives. He depends, much like the English investigator, on empirical evidences, is strongly built, six feet tall, and is an expert in shooting with Colt, which, unlike Byomkesh Bakshi, he always carries with him. The detective who makes no qualms about imprinting "Prodosh C. Mitter, Private Investigator" on his visiting card, exhibits a wide mobility in the thirty plus stories written on him, Robertsoner Ruby ("Robertson's Ruby") , Jato Kando Kathmandutey ("Incidents at Kathmandu"), Bombaiyer Byombete ("Bombay's Rogues"), Darjeeling Jamjomat ("Theft in Darjeeling") and Sonar Kella ("The Golden Fort") being the more famous among them. Abhijit Gupta observes,

> "For over two decades, Ray dominated the filed like no one had done before but it is also true that fewer and fewer practitioners were producing crime fiction with any degree of seriousness" [28].

The period between the eighties and the beginning of the twenty first century is yet to find a significant contributor to the sub-genre of Bengali crime story. Sekhar Basu and Nirendranath Chakroborty have undertaken experiments in composing a few crime stories. Pratul Chandra Gupta's narratives on the adventures of Shadu Thakuma, an elderly widow, could not multiply because of his untimely death. Chattopadhyay and Ghosh note,

> "The Bengali detective stories of the eighties and afterwards have taken an unexpected turn. We are now encountering stories suited more to the palette of the younger generation of these days. Most of the modern detective story writers are litterateurs of no mean repute. They have stretched the confines of the subgenre to an unprecedented level. Geography, history and science are now being freely used to make detective stories resemble study materials in general knowledge!" (754).

Among the Bengali fictional detectives of the nineties', Arjun created by Samoresh Majumdar (b. 1943), Tito, Papan, Kakababu and Santu created by Sunil Gangopadhyay (b. 1934), and Fatik introduced by Sirshendu Mukhopadhyay (b. 1935) are more popular. But both Majumdar and Gangopadhyay write stories that could be identified more with the adventure tales than proper detective narratives. Shastipada Chattopadhyay's Pandav Goyenda, the detective team comprising of five adolescent investigators – Babloo, Billu, Bhombol, Bachchhu and Bichchhu – and their dog, Panchu, characterise the primarily adolescent face of the nineties' tales of detection. Prior to his death in 2003, Bimal Kar had written a number of detective stories with the Bengali gentlemen – Kikira and Tarapada as the protagonists, the only exception to the decade where the detective stories are essentially Indian/Bengali and free from any Western influence.

Presided by Sukumar Sen, several distinguished Sherlock Holmes fans, including Pratul Chandra Gupta, Premendra Mitra, Santosh Kumar Ghosh, Samoresh Basu, Debipada Bhattacharyya, Arun Kumar Mitra, Nirendranath Chakroborty, Subhadra Kumar Sen, Ranjit Chattopadhyay, Ananda Bagchi and Badal Basu, established *Holmesiana*, a Calcutta-based crime story club, on 27 August 1983 to ensure regular and spontaneous participation in detective story writing though in the post colonial perspective. The club has stopped functioning.

The subgenre of detective fiction is one of the more read ones in any literature, more so in English, French and Bengali. With the passage of one hundred and twenty years since its conception in Priyanath Mukhopadhyay's retrospective narratives, Bengali detective fiction has rapidly altered itself. Just as Arthur Conan Doyle had overwhelmingly expressed his imperial ideology through Sherlock Holmes, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay has been most instrumental in imparting a post colonial fact to Indian crime story writing.

NOTES:

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15. See Pittard, Christopher. "American Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction, 1920s-1940s: a Brief Introduction". 14 March 2005 <http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/Hard-Boiled.html>
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CHAPTER 3.B.

IMPERIAL TEXTS VERSUS POSTCOLONIAL NARRATIVES: EXISTING CRITICISM ON THE SHERLOCK HOLMES AND BYOMKESH BAKSHI STORIES: -

Although several critical commentaries have been written on the biography of Arthur Conan Doyle and on the methodology, dress, and scientific experiments conducted by the "world's greatest detective" since the writer's death in 1930, critical works rereading the Sherlock Holmes stories as imperially compatible texts are limited in number[1]. On the other hand, even at the commencement of the twenty first century, there is no formidable criticism of the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives in the postcolonial perspective.

In the list of "Further Reading" to the Sherlock Holmes narratives in Sherlock Holmes: a Centenary Celebration (London: John Murray, 1986), William S. Baring-Gould's Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1962), Michael Harrison's I, Sherlock Holmes (New York: E.P.Dutton, 1977) and Michael Hardwick's Sherlock Holmes – My Life and Crimes (London: Harvill Press, 1984) have been mentioned as the authentic biographies of Sherlock Holmes, while S.C. Robert's Doctor Watson (London: Faber and Faber, 1931) and Michael Hardwick's The Private Life of Dr. Watson – Being the Personal Reminiscences of John H. Watson (New York: E.P.Dutton, 1983) as those of John H. Watson, other than eight biographies of Doyle, including Adrian Conan Doyle's The True Conan Doyle (London: John Murray, 1945), and Arthur Conan Doyle's autobiography – Memories and Adventures (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924) (129). Allan Eyles recommends twenty seven critical works as being important to understanding the canon (Eyles 129). The *Janus Books*

Limited's webpage, titled "List J: Detective Fiction, Jack the Ripper, and Sherlockiana", available as a link to http://www.sherlockian.net, also lists two hundred fifty six books – serial number 232 to 487 – under "Sherlock Holmes" . It is significant that none of the books mentioned above could be discerned to contain criticism of the Sherlock Holmes stories in the postcolonial perspective studying Holmes's character as an Orientalist imperialist, though in several sections of the fifty six short stories and four novels, Doyle has obtrusively asserted his colonial ideologies. Even the second volume of William S. Baring-Gould's The Annotated Sherlock Holmes (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1967) does not include any of such postcolonial critical works (807-24). Moreover, in his autobiography, Doyle has maintained a complete silence about the issue of his narratives being literature on the British Empire.

Even at the beginning of the twenty first century works reading the Holmes canon in postcolonial perspective are limited in number. The following nine collections of critical essays and treatises might be cited as have achieved prominence.

Catherine Wynne's The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism and the Gothic examines how British imperialism, Irish nationalism, and Catholic allegiance are juxtaposed in the detective stories of Doyle who is generally perceived as an English defender of the British Empire and apologist but whose father was an Irish resistor against the British rule and whose uncle resigned as the principal cartoonist for the *Punch* magazine after it ridiculed the Catholic Pope. By placing the Sherlock Holmes narratives within a colonial context, the complexity of which is evident in Doyle's gothic tropes of shifting landscapes, disguised criminalities, spiritualism, and sexual anomalies and conflicts, she underscores the importance of colonialism in his fiction, but does not illustrate the several aspects of the Saidian Orientalism in Holmes's attitude to and interactions with the people from the East in general and India in particular.

Wynne especially focuses on the phenomenon in modern Irish literary criticism which treats Celtic litterateurs like Bram Stoker, Oscar Wilde, William Butler Yeats and James Joyce writing during the union of Britain and Ireland between 1801 and 1922, as *metrocolonial* subjects whose psychic landscape and socio-political attachments were contoured by their interstitial location between the ruling centre and the subjugated margins of the Empire. Their ethno-national duality conditioned a likewise differently textured ambivalence toward the cultures of both imperial assertion and colonial resistance, of which their representational interests and strategies seem in part symptomatic. In her criticism, the writer seeks to extend the recent critical trend by placing a British native and lifelong resident in a culturally ambiguous Irish company while pointing out that Doyle, whose fictional detective appears as "a definitively English sleuth", was not only "of southern Irish descent" but gradually came to balance his imperialistic enthusiasm with guardedly Irish nationalist sympathies (3, 7). Irishness and Irish politics present in the detective, military and mystical aspects of Doyle's fiction are segregated for separate analyses.

In The Urban Jungle: Reading Empire in London from Doyle to Eliot, Joseph McLaughlin describes the effects of Britain and the British culture on colonised people and demonstrates how the influence worked both ways. Focusing on the relationship between the literature of British imperialism and early Edwardian metropolitan culture, he offers an account of the cultural confusion caused by bringing the foreign home, and how narratives and language formerly used to describe the colonies became ways of reading and writing about life in London – "that great cesspool into which all loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained" (*A Study* 13). A major section of canonical literature by Doyle, Margaret Harkness, Joseph Conrad, T. S. Eliot, William Booth, and Jack London display this inversion of colonial rhetoric. By deploying the metaphor of "the urban jungle", litterateurs like Doyle and Conrad reconfigure the urban poor as "a new race of city savages" and read urban culture as a "Darkest England" – a region like Africa that is full of danger and novel possibilities. Though McLaughlin refers extensively to Edward W. Said's Orientalism in course of his work, a detailed analysis of the Indian scenario in Doyle's imperial perspective is not undertaken.

Patrick Brantlinger's Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914 deals with the relationship of British Imperialism to racial ideology. The author writes, "Empire involved military conquest and rapacious economic exploitation, but it also involved the enactment of often idealistic although nonetheless authoritarian schemes of cultural domination. The goal of imperialist discourse is always to weld these seeming opposites together or to disguise their contradiction" (861). This double aspect of imperialism gains significance in context of the colonial situation in the middle of the twentieth century and afterwards. In his critical work, Brantlinger discusses causes for the emergence of pro-British nationalistic literature after the Indian Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, and his arguments can be stretched to analyse the imperial ideologies expressed in the stories of Doyle, Edward Morgan Forster or Rudyard Kipling in the post-1857 British literary canonical perspective.

In his internet-treatise, "A Post-colonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle's Holmes Narratives", at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imperial/india/conan_doyle.htm>, 21 July 1999-revised edition, Nicholas Stewart, "redefi[nes] the British literary canon as imperial construct and influence", and analyses two specific Sherlock Holmes narratives – The Sign of Four and "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" – to underline the precise areas that make the two stories "Doyle's imperially compatible text[s]" and reflect the writer's "fear and rejection of intercultural experience[s]".

Joseph A. Kestner's Sherlock's Men: Masculinity, Conan Doyle and Cultural History takes as its subject the ways in which the entire Holmes canon "served to model male gender behaviour"(7), as social pressures upon male identity became particularly acute in the early-twentieth century, citing references to his Masculinities in Victorian Painting (1995). In this study he attempts to chart Doyle's shifting concerns about the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century masculinity by analysing the Holmes narratives in chronological groupings to produce a

Victorian, an Edwardian, and a Georgian Holmes. Although the writer has acknowledged that "stabilising bourgeois, hegemonic masculinity" was Doyle's general project, he sees such definitions as always being "inwardly conflicted" (13) and reveals many strains and contradictions contained within the illusion of a monolithic masculine identity during late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. Kestner's book especially discusses issues concerning the function of regulating, policing, and investigating cultural institutions and practices, the consequences of imperialism for masculinity, the criminal as transgressive masculinity, the functions of law promulgated by the colonisers and the punishment meted out by them to the colonised individuals, and the presentation of international politics in the Sherlock Holmes stories.

In Sherlock Holmes: Victorian Sleuth to Modern Hero, edited by Charles R. Putney, Joseph A Cutshall King, and Sally Sugarman, a collection of papers from the 1994 *Conference of the Baker Street Breakfast Club* at Bennington-Vermont, Philip K. Wilson, Patrick Campbell, Nicholas Meyer and Edward B. Hanna discuss the changing the social and imperial history of England that had imparted a colonial character to the late nineteenth century detective stories like Doyle's, and include the issues of Sherlock Holmes's work-ethic, rereading Holmes as an archetypal hero, and the influence of the Sherlock Holmes narratives on the twentieth century detective and science fiction.

In the Adrienne Johnson Gosselin edited Multicultural Detective Fiction: Murder from the 'Other' Side, Patricia Linton reads detective novels by the subaltern litterateurs like Linda Hosan as resistant texts against the imperial hegemony, though in the American perspective (17-36). Wayne Templeton's "Xojo and Homicide: the Postcolonial Murder Mysteries of Tony Hillerman" presents a postcolonial criticism of detective stories but, once again, from the viewpoint of an American (37-60). In the twelfth and sixteenth chapters, John Cullen Gruesser and Gosselin relate multicultural detective fiction to Black writing and Harlem Renaissance. Multicultural Detective Fiction does not read the Holmes stories as containing Doyle's imperial ideology, though the issue of postcolonialism and resistance through subaltern detective stories have been addressed.

Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, in "Empire and Its Discontents: Three Narratives of the Indian Mutiny of 1857" – his address to the South Central Modern Language Association's 59th Annual Meeting at Omni Austin Hotel Downtown, Austin, on 1 November 2002 – had described how the late nineteenth-century Indian writing in English as well as the contemporary general Indian literature begun to register vociferous protest against the imperial domination and socio-cultural hegemony of the English colonisers, which ultimately culminated in such postcolonial detective stories like Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's. His Crime and Empire: the Colony in Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Crime deals with the issues of principally the British Empire, imperialism and policing (1-3), and postcolonial analyses of the discourses on imperial ideology (8-12) in the introductory chapters. A historical survey of crime writing and colonisation of India and other English colonies (23-37) is followed by a section on the anti-colonial and patronising attitudes adopted by different English litterateurs and politicians, from Fielding to Peel (45-58). In the fourth chapter, Mukherjee has dealt with subaltern detective fiction as a mean to "resist the New Police", while the fifth and sixth describe representation of the Indian criminals and the Indian Sepoy Mutiny in the late nineteenth century English and Indian novels, operations against the thuggees, and refer to the writings of Meadows Taylor and other novelists of the Mutiny. However, with its limited references to Doyle's assertion of colonial and Orientalist ideologies in his Holmes narratives (188), Mukherjee's work is not a detailed criticism of the Sherlock Holmes stories in an anti-imperial perspective.

The list concludes with a reference to Jeffrey Richards's "Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle and the British Empire". In this essay, Richards seeks to identify those particular areas in the Holmes narratives where Doyle can be observed obtrusively championing colonial control of the Orient, and contrasts the Holmes canon with Kipling's imperially-compatible stories like The Jungle Book (1894) and Kim (1901) that are set in India.

While a formidable part of Sherlockian criticism has been undertaken in the United States of America, a former British colony, by American critics, most of these works start with the identical supposition that Holmes is the best fictional detective in the world, who has transcended the realms of literature to gain the stature of an icon. Importantly, even though different Sherlock Holmes stories incorporate within themselves Doyle's imperial ideology, few critics have explicitly identified him as an Orientalist and censured him for being a relentless champion of the British imperial interests at the cost of the Eastern subaltern populace.

The lack of postcolonial readings of the Holmes canon can be explained of the following grounds. First, Holmes having been rendered "world's greatest detective" (*The Wordsworth* 850) through Doyle's artistic excellence, readers generally tend to overlook the persistence of the imperial strain which makes Doyle's conception defective and demeaning to the former British colonies. Second, by demonstrating themselves as Orientalists and advocating in favour of the British imperial interests, Holmes and Watson externally manifest the contemporary European commoners' dream of expanding their colonial control, and were overwhelmingly accepted as ardent champions of the cause of the empire. The myth of the Orient being the land of "the Sphinx, the Genii, half-imagined, half-known…monsters, devils…terrors…desires" (Said, *Orientalism* 63) had induced in the Western psyche a general distrust and psychosis of the East and the Easterners who "in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race [and the other Whites]" (39). Holmes and his associate's attempts to marginalise the Oriental Other in the realm of literature was therefore hailed by the common Europeans who assumed a sort of self-assuring victory over the Orient when Tonga is fired at in The Sign of Four or when Daulat Ras is rigorously interrogated in connection to the leakage of examination's question papers in 'The Adventure of the Three Students". Third, the postcolonial perspective, according to Robert J.C. Young, is directed against the imperialists and can be detected especially in the writings of those Eastern litterateurs whose countries were once colonised by Britain and other European countries (Young 2). Young's assertion may well lead to the assumption that such a strain would not be normally undertaken by the Western, particularly European critics. Fourth, the Sherlock Holmes narratives, in spite of their bearing references to Doyle's imperial ideology, focus principally on the detective's ingenious methodology applied in apprehending criminals, and are more read for their forensic interests. Finally, by an explicit postcolonial criticism of Doyle would entail the European critics' admission of the Western Orientalist prejudices against the colonised populace, and as such would expose not only Doyle but also themselves to the censure of the colonised readers.

Although Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's Byomkesh Bakshi narratives, which form one of the more popular groups of Indian sleuth fiction, first depicted since 1892 an investigator who is conspicuously a member of the colonised Indian subaltern populace, they have never been explicitly read as instances of postcolonial resistance against the perceived omnipotence and uniqueness of the European detectives. At different points in his detective stories, the writer, who commenced his narratives in British India, challenges the Western supremacy revealed in characters such as Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown by depicting Bakshi as an Oriental middleclass gentleman who adheres strictly to his native Bengali tongue and counters the Eurocentric conventions for methodology, dress and daily life through his own hybridity in those specific aspects. In his interview to Partho Chattopadhyay published in the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* on 22 October 1968, his session with Pratul Chandra Gupta in March 1970, and in his diary, Bandyopadhyay has had discussed how he manoeuvred the influences of Western detective story writers like Poe, Doyle, Christie, Edgar Wallace and Jack London into creating an extraordinarily intelligent and talented but identifiably Bengali investigator (*Saradindu II* 637, 647). Kshetra Gupta rightly comments, "Like Saradindu, his detective is overwhelmingly Bengali though belonging to a later generation" (Gupta, *Satyajiter* 8).

It is important that unlike Doyle, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay did not write any definite autobiography. Some of his diary entries, letters, and the prosaic "Aamar Lekhok Jeevoner Adiparbo" (The Early Years of My Literary Life) and "Hwritkompo" (Fear) have been collectively published as "Deenlipi – 1918 O 1920" (Diaries of 1918 and 1920), "Mon-Konika" (Fragments of Mind) and "Atmojeevankatha" (Autobiographical Lines) in the twelfth volume of Saradindu Omnibus (241-466). Although he does not detail about his Indianised conception of Byomkesh Bakshi in "Atmojeevankatha", letters written to him by Mohitlall Majumder from Dacca on 10 and 30 August 1940, and by Raj Sekhar Basu from Calcutta on 9 July 1951 and 21 March 1957 contain references to how he had successfully emancipated the subgenre of Bengali detective fiction from their state of insipid collaboration with the Eurocentric tales of investigation (Bandyopadhyay, *Saradindu XII* 432-3, 440, 443). He also initiated the convention of countering the strenuous and rigorous adventures in European and particularly British detective stories with psychological approach to unravelling of mystery.

In spite of the wide popularity of the thirty three narratives, postcolonial criticism of the Byomkesh canon is limited to Sukumar Sen's Crime Kahinir Kalkranti (Kolkata: Ananda Publishers Private Limited) published in the 1980s in which the author traces the growth of Indian and Bengali detective fiction from 1892 and briefly analyses how Saradindu Bandyopadhyay resisted the Eurocentric detective fictions' hegemony through his Bengali inquisitor. In her *Translator's Note* to Picture Imperfect and Other Byomkesh Bakshi Mysteries, Sreejata Guha has limited her criticism by pointing out to the "Indian context" of Bandyopadhyay's detective stories (viii). Also, Brian Hatcher's translation of his narratives in journals like *The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad* (19:2, Fall 1997-edition) and *Critical Asian Studies* (34:3, 2002-edition) does not focus on their postcolonial connotations. Repeated Internet searches through *Google* and *MSN* have also failed to procure satisfactory results and references in this context. Therefore, in this thesis I propose to fulfil the lacunae which have been persisting in critical studies on Indian /Bengali detective fiction by tracing the growth of the Indian/Bengali detective fiction in colonial India, and through an exhaustive postcolonial reading of the Byomkesh Bakshi canon.

Significantly, Bandyopadhyay has avoided direct identification of Byomkesh Bakshi as his anti-imperial spokesperson. To identify a literary creation as a type is to narrow down the premises for its interaction and interpretation. The Bakshi narratives can be read not only as detective stories by a resisting subaltern Indian, but also as social, historical and psychoanalytical novels. It also requires mention that Bandyopadhyay had been educated under the British system of education in colonised India first at Munger and thereafter Vidyasagar College, Calcutta until 1919, and after passing law from Patna in 1926, he remained a probationary lawyer under the British judicial system in India until 1929 (Bandyopadhyay, *Saradindu II* 635). Obtrusive and vociferous protests against the British colonisers would not only have affected his profession, but also attracted the colonisers' inhibition and censure.

Bandyopadhyay was born in Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, on 30 March 1899, and spent his early life principally in Bihar and Maharastra. It was not possible for him to associate himself psychologically with and depict a realistic picture of the nationalist struggle waged by the Bengali revolutionaries in and around Calcutta. The Byomkesh Bakshi canon therefore eschews the issue of the inquisitor's strenuous participation in the anti-colonial struggle in Bengal. However, he remains a champion of the Indian cause just as Doyle is that of the British Empire.

In spite of the fact that the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives are the most popular detective stories in India, works on translation of these stories into international languages have been sparing. Professor Brain A. Hatcher of Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, has painstakingly translated some of Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's stories in different editions of *The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad,* for example, in its Fall 1997 (volume 16 number 1) and Spring 2001 (volume 19 number 2) issues, *Journal of South Asian Literature*, and *Routledge-Critical Asian Studies* {for instance, in the 34:3 (2002), 465-70-edition}.

Sreejata Guha of Stony Brook University, published Picture Imperfect and Other Byomkesh Bakshi Mysteries, a collection of seven Byomkesh Bakshi narratives published by the Penguin Books India in 1999.

The Calcutta-based crime story club, *Holmesiana*, was inaugurated on 27 August 1983 by several distinguished critics and litterateurs including Sukumar Sen, Pratul Chandra Gupta, Premendra Mitra, Santosh Kumar Ghosh, Samoresh Basu, Debipada Bhattacharyya, Arun Kumar Mitra, Nirendranath Chakroborty, Subhadra Kumar Sen, Ranjit Chattopadhyay, Ananda Bagchi and Badal Basu, to ensure regular and spontaneous participation in detective story writing and criticism of the Indian/Bengali detective stories including Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's . The literary centre could not function because of deaths of its members.

With their intrinsic anti-imperial ideology, the Byomkesh Bakshi stories have retained their popularity as postcolonial narratives even in the beginning of the twenty first century. This thesis aims to show how Saradindu Bandyopadhyay deftly countered the colonial hegemony of the Eurocentric detective fiction by creating the Bengali gentleman-inquisitor and posited a subaltern resistance against the perceived omnipotence of such Western fictional sleuths as Sherlock Holmes.

NOTE:

1. Seidman, Michael, Julian Symons, Douglas G. Greene. "Detective Story". Microsoft ® Encarta ® Online Encyclopaedia 2003. 1 April 2003. <http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761559994/Detective_Story.html#endads>