
Edgar Allan Poe's Crime and Detective Fictions Are "*The Revising History*" In the Field of Literature.

S. Sundaramoorthy*, and Dr. N.Geethanjali**

*BDUCASC, Srirangam.

**Associate professor Periyar E.V.R college.

Edgar Allan Poe is the father of modern detective fiction. It was in 1841 that the first modern detective story, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" was published by Poe. In its nascent form it has had various expressions. It survived not only in American literature, it reflection in English and French countries also. The crime and detection theme is inherent even in very ancient literature, classical or folk, Western or Oriental. The crime and detection fictions became popular in all over the world because it has the definition on what the reader or the critic expects in such a story or what the writer hopes to be able to provide. Crime fascinates man. There is the thirst among the public for crime stories and statistics reveal that about a quarter of all fiction sold in England and America is crime fiction. The fascination for detective fiction consists not only in the violence involved but in the cleverness characterizing the commission of crime as well as of its detection. The spread of literacy created the reading habit among the neo-literate sections of society, especially the labour class. To cater to their needs, printers and publishers vied with each other to produce cheap and inexpensive reading materials in the form of sensational ballads and broad sheets. These gave Edgar Allan Poe an idea to produce highly colored account of crime fictions. It is also true that Poe's stories left most American minds unenthused, while in England and France they led to spate of experiments. By his inspiration a number of writers who started to write detective fictions, such as Charles Dickens, Agatha Christie, Wilkie Collins in English. In France, the thread of the new development in crime fiction was taken up by Emile Gaborian. In New Zealand Fergus Hume was an imitator of Edgar Allan Poe. Thus his introduction of a new genre detective and crime fiction made him famous and his reputation abroad brought in a train of imitators.

POE'S IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO DETECTIVE FICTIONS:

The world's first true detective story that is the first story which centered exclusively on the process of solving a crime was Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", which appeared in Graham's magazine in April 1841. This is the first locked-room mystery by E.A. Poe. The world first ever detective is his chevalier August Dupin, the ratiocinating and amateur detective. His second work "The Mystery of Marie Roget" appeared in 1842, which is his second detective story and is the earliest instance of 'armchair' detection and also for the first time an actual crime is detective. Edgar Allan Poe solves the mystery by his detective Dupin, he uses random evidence gleaned from newspaper cuttings and he brought scientific method into the genre.

Concealment in the open is the novel technique that Poe used in “The Proloined Letter” which is his third story appeared in 1845. Here he takes into account the working of the mind of the criminals besides evident facts. Poe delights in the supernatural and mysterious and creates mysteries and puzzle. His “The Golden Bug” is a puzzle story with a cryptogram. In “The Cask of Amentillado” and “The tell tale Heart” Poe concerns himself with remorseless and ruthless murders.

THE RAISE OF THE CRIME STORIES:

The intellectualization of the crime story raised it from the shambles of disrepute, raised its status and widened its reading public. The pleasure of reading a detective story is analogous to that of attempting a crossword puzzle or solving a chess problem. Hither to as a fiction writes Poe being omniscient, was wielding power over his readers excluding his participation in the unfolding of events. The new form took the reader in to confidence, offered him a challenge giving him a sense of triumph at the end of the book, if his guess happened to be correct.

THE IMITATORS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE:

Charles Dickens wrote a detective story “Bleak House” in 1853. He also wrote a number of detective stories “The mystery of Edwin Drood” (1870). “The Recollection of a Police Officer” (1856) by William Russell (pen name Water) appeared somewhat mid way between Poe and Conan Doyle and during the later part of ‘Dickens’ and ‘Collins’ literary career. Russell claimed to be a London metropolitan police officer. Meany cheap Yellow Backs complimented his works by imitation. Wilkie Collin’s contribution to the genre was commendable. It commenced with his “The Woman in White” 1860. T.S. Eliot was fascinated by Wilkie Collins’s subsequent creation Sergeant Cuff in “The Moon stone” (1868). He applauded that work as “The first, the longest, the best of English detective novels.” In France, the new development in crime fiction was taken up by Emile Gaborian, who wrote “L affaire Lerouge” in 1863 which made him famous and his reputation. In New Zealand Fergus Hume wrote the bestselling novel “Mystery of the Hansom Cab” in 1887. At this point it is very clear that the works of Edgar Allan Poe show significant change in public as well as the other writer like Dickens, Collins and Hume.

A new way swept the whole field of the detective story in 1888. Sir Aurthur Conan Doyle transformed the prospects of the detective story overnight. His “Sherlock Holmes” remains the yet unconquered king of detective stories. Women writers took giant strides in this field. Agatha Christie competently continued the tradition, reigning supreme as the “Queen of crime” as she popularly known. Hercules Poirot and Miss Marple are the realistic and arresting characters of Christie. Dorothy Leigh Sayers an elder contemporary of Agatha Christie, tried to give a religious twist to the genre. Her “Lord Peter Views the Body” (1928), “Hangman’s Holiday” (1933) are best examples of the detective short stories.

The concerned readership is not an aristocratic minority but a growing multitude which might on occasion include the minority. Today in the west the percentage of literacy is very high and detective fiction is demanded by everyone who knows to read and who has the curiosity to know what happened next. The credentials of society and taste and artistic values are becoming

democratic. The whole credits go beyond Edgar Allan Poe for intruding of a new genre detective and crime fiction. So he can be proudly called as the father of Modern Detective Fiction.

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