

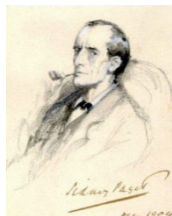
Definition of crime detective writing: narratives that centre on criminal acts and especially on the investigation, either by an amateur or a professional detective, of a serious crime, generally a murder.

Victorian Detective Fiction

- Notably known for the Sherlock Holmes stories 1887
- Changing nature of society in late 18th century meant more value was placed on portable property rather than land
- The Industrial Revolution increased the growth and population of the city
- The theft of property became a real threat because people lived in close proximity
- The establishment of the Metropolitan police in 1828 created the figure of the official police detective
- Originally crime literature before 1800 had focused on the criminal as the sympathetic hero, however, from 1773 this began to change
- The Newgate Calendar published details of real life crimes but the criminal was used as a dreadful warning of what might happen to criminals
- Poor Law Act 1834—poor people had to go to a workhouse if they need help
- By early 1800 crime writing began to focus on justice
- The Newgate Calendar began to write short fictional crime stories—the most famous of which was Oliver Twist (1837-9) but the sympathetic portrayal of criminals became increasingly controversial
- Penny Dreadfuls detailed the exploits of criminals from the previous century but were thought to cause and encourage crime among juveniles
- The focus shifted from the criminal to the detective who captured the criminal, hence Sherlock Holmes

Social and Historical Context

- Context: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – Trained to be a Dr, started writing whilst training. First Sherlock Holmes 'A Study in Scarlet' published in 1887. Conan Doyle was a keen sportsman and was also interested in politics, spiritualism and social justice.
- The Victorian Era – Rapid change in medicine, science, technology and industry took place during Queen Victoria's rule (1837-1901). Cities like London grew considerably alongside the growth of engineering and textiles industries.
- Victorian London – London was a dirty, busy, overpopulated city that was growing quicker than it could cope with. Many people were desperately poor, some were very rich. All existed in the thick, claustrophobic London.
- The British Empire – Britain had been colonising land for a long time, but by the 19th century, imperialism was at his height and the British Empire was a superpower. British people felt a moral responsibility in the world but went on to exploit many countries for financial gain.
- Race – Britain had colonised many lands but were still afraid of rebellion. Forcing British values, language and religion on native peoples was commonplace and Britain needed to show these people as inferior savages to justify their violence.
- The Role of Women – Women were viewed as the inferior gender, reliant on their fathers and then their husbands and only able to inherit if there was no male heir.
- Class – Class divides were strong and clear, particularly in London during the Victorian period. Each class had little understanding of others. Middle class society represented a strict moral code: Christian beliefs, hard work, decency, respectability and family.
- Victorian Detective Novel – Stories of crimes being solved through analytical deduction. Conventions include 'locked room' murder, red herrings and an incompetent police force



Crime Detective Conventions

- An innocent victim
- Red herrings
- Motive
- Villain
- Detective
- Crime
- Justice
- Trail of clues
- Plot Twist

A **mystery** needs to create suspense and tension. There needs to be jeopardy, memorable characters and plot twist.

Sub-genres of crime literature

- In 1887, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle introduced the character of Sherlock Holmes in his novel 'A Study in Scarlet'. The famous detective went on to appear in many more short stories and novels published in popular monthly magazines such as The Strand.
- Today, the mystery genre has many different sub-genres. For example:
 - The cosy or manor-house mystery (popularized in the Poirot and Miss Marple novels of Agatha Christie) where a murder occurs and people who were in the house come under suspicion.
 - Hard-boiled detective fiction (from American writers like Raymond Chandler) with tough private detectives investigating grisly crimes.
 - Police procedurals – detective stories written from the perspective of the police

Victorian Law and Order

- Prior to the rise of the police force, law and order was governed by the 'Bloody Code' which was savage and disordered and needed overhauling
- Robert Peel a politician and later the Home Secretary reformed this system and created what we now know as the police force
- Waltham Black Act—hanging crimes disappeared
- Death Penalty—severely restricted
- Riot Act—if 12 or more people gathering together in riotous assembly failed to disperse after an hour the army would be brought in and the remaining people given the severest penalty of the law—death
- Peel's introduction of the new idea to create the police force was initially treated with suspicion and thought to be corrupt—it was opposed because of a fear of the government controlling the lives of the people
- 1829 Peel persuaded the public that the police would control crime
- The police became the main deterrent of crime, rather than the noose
- Policemen were originally known as 'Peelers' - now called 'Bobbies'
- First patrolled the streets of London 29th September 1829
- Uniform included blue coat-tails and top hats, uniform had to be worn on and off duty; 20-27 years of age and 5ft 7 inches tall
- Worked seven days a week and earned £1; five days holiday a year
- From 1830s criminals were sent to Australia or hulks on the Thames

Key Vocabulary

Sleuth	Detective
Red herrings	False clues that are planted to mislead
Deduction	Drawing a conclusion based on a general principle
Inference	a conclusion which is based on evidence
Iniquitous	Grossly unfair and morally wrong.
Immoral	Not conforming to accepted standards of morality.
Heinous	A person/wrongful act (usually a crime) that's odious or wicked.
Nefarious	Typically of an action or activity that is wicked or criminal.
Impartial	Treating all rivals or disputants equally.
Conundrum	A confusing and difficult problem or question.
Penal	Delivering punishment of offenders under the legal system
Punishment	A penalty inflicted as retribution for an offence.