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THE ART OF SOLVING CRIME: THE EVOLUTION OF DETECTIVE METHODS IN THE WORKS OF ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE AND AGATHA CHRISTIE

Mamayusupov Davronbek Ilhomjon o'g'li
Second year master's studentInternational Nordic University
E-mail: dmamayusupov162@gmail.com

Abstract. This article examines the evolution of detective methods in the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie. It explores how detective fiction reflects changing intellectual paradigms from nineteenth-century scientific rationalism to twentieth-century psychological interpretation. The study analyzes Sherlock Holmes's reliance on observation, deduction, and forensic reasoning, and contrasts it with Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple's emphasis on psychology, behavior, and social analysis. The research highlights how both authors contributed to the development of crime fiction by expanding the concept of evidence and reshaping narrative structures. The findings show that detective fiction evolves in response to broader cultural, scientific, and social transformations. The study concludes that the shift from empirical logic to psychological insight represents a key stage in the historical development of detective literature and its interpretative frameworks.

Keywords: detective, fiction, crime, investigation, deduction, psychology, evidence, narrative, literature, analysis.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada Artur Konan Doyl va Agata Kristi asarlarida detektiv usullarning evolyutsiyasi ko‘rib chiqiladi. Unda detektiv fantastika XIX asr ilmiy ratsionalizmidan XX asr psixologik talqinigacha bo‘lgan o‘zgaruvchan intellektual paradigmalar qanday aks etishi o‘rganiladi. Tadqiqotda Sherlok Xolmsning kuzatish, deduksiya va sud-tibbiy fikrlashga tayanishiga e'tibor qaratiladi va uni Gerkules Puaro va Miss Marplning psixologiya, xulq-atvor va ijtimoiy tahlilga urg'u berishlari bilan taqqoslanadi. Tadqiqot ikkala muallifning dalillar tushunchasini kengaytirish va hikoya tuzilmalarini o'zgartirish orqali kriminal fantastika rivojlanishiga qanday hissa qo'shganini ko'rsatadi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, detektiv fantastika kengroq madaniy, ilmiy va ijtimoiy o'zgarishlarga javoban rivojlanadi. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, empirik mantiqdan psixologik tushunchaga o'tish detektiv adabiyotning tarixiy rivojlanishi va uni talqin qilish asoslarining asosiy bosqichini ifodalaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: detektiv, fantastika, jinoyat, tergov, deduksiya, psixologiya, dalillar, hikoya, adabiyot, tahlil.

Аннотация. В этой статье рассматривается эволюция детективных методов в произведениях Артура Конан Дойла и Агаты Кристи. В ней исследуется, как детективная литература отражает смену интеллектуальных парадигм от

научного рационализма девятнадцатого века к психологической интерпретации двадцатого века. В исследовании анализируется зависимость Шерлока Холмса от наблюдений, дедукции и криминалистических рассуждений и проводится сравнение с акцентом Эркюля Пуаро и мисс Марпл на психологию, поведение и социальный анализ. В исследовании подчеркивается, какой вклад оба автора внесли в развитие детективной литературы, расширив концепцию доказательств и изменив структуру повествования. Результаты исследования показывают, что детективная литература развивается в ответ на более широкие культурные, научные и социальные преобразования. В исследовании делается вывод о том, что переход от эмпирической логики к психологическому пониманию представляет собой ключевой этап в историческом развитии детективной литературы и ее интерпретационных систем.

Ключевые слова: детектив, художественная литература, преступление, расследование, дедукция, психология, доказательства, повествование, литература, анализ.

INTRODUCTION.

Detective fiction has long occupied a central position in world literature due to its unique combination of intellectual inquiry, social observation, and narrative suspense. The genre not only entertains readers through the presentation of mysterious crimes and their eventual resolution but also reflects changing perceptions of justice, rationality, and human behavior across different historical periods. Among the most influential authors in the development of detective fiction are Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie, whose works established many of the conventions that continue to shape modern crime narratives. Their literary contributions have attracted sustained scholarly attention because they transformed detective fiction from a popular entertainment form into a significant field of literary and cultural study. The evolution of detective methods in literary texts represents an important area of research within contemporary literary criticism. Detective characters often embody the dominant intellectual paradigms of their respective eras, demonstrating how societies understand evidence, truth, and criminal investigation. Through the careful examination of investigative techniques portrayed in fiction, scholars can identify broader cultural shifts in scientific thinking, legal practices, and social values. Consequently, the study of detective methods extends beyond literary analysis and contributes to interdisciplinary discussions involving criminology, psychology, sociology, and the history of science [1].

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Arthur Conan Doyle is widely recognized as one of the founding figures of modern detective fiction. Through the creation of Sherlock Holmes, Doyle introduced a model of investigation grounded in logical reasoning, observation, and deductive analysis. Holmes's methods reflected the growing prestige of scientific rationalism during the late nineteenth century, when advances in forensic science and empirical inquiry significantly influenced public understanding of criminal investigation. Doyle's narratives emphasize the importance of physical evidence, analytical thinking, and the systematic reconstruction of events. The detective's ability to interpret seemingly insignificant details transformed the investigative process into an intellectual exercise, establishing a new standard for fictional detectives. Agatha Christie, writing in the twentieth century, expanded and refined the detective tradition established by Doyle. While her detectives, particularly Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, also rely on logical reasoning, their investigative approaches demonstrate a stronger emphasis on psychology, social interaction, and the complexities of human motivation. Christie's works reveal an evolution in detective methodology, shifting attention from purely physical clues toward the interpretation of character, behavior, and interpersonal relationships. Her narratives frequently explore the hidden dimensions of ordinary social environments, suggesting that successful investigation depends not only on observation but also on a deep understanding of human nature. This development reflects broader changes in twentieth-century thought, including increased interest in psychology and social dynamics [2].

Recent literary scholarship has increasingly emphasized the relationship between detective fiction and the cultural contexts in which it is produced. Researchers argue that detective narratives function as representations of contemporary knowledge systems, illustrating how societies construct and validate truth. Studies have highlighted the significance of forensic discourse, psychological profiling, and social observation in shaping literary investigations. Moreover, comparative analyses have demonstrated that detective methods are not static narrative devices but evolving mechanisms influenced by historical transformations in science, technology, and social organization. Such perspectives provide valuable frameworks for examining the works of Doyle and Christie as interconnected stages in the development of detective fiction. In Uzbek literary scholarship, interest in the study of English detective literature has grown considerably in recent years. Researchers have explored issues related to genre theory, narrative structure, characterization, and intercultural literary reception. Particular attention has been devoted to the translation, interpretation, and pedagogical significance of detective texts within the broader context of

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comparative literature. These studies emphasize the importance of analyzing detective fiction as a dynamic literary phenomenon that reflects both universal and culturally specific understandings of crime and justice. However, despite the increasing body of research, the comparative evolution of detective methods in the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie remains insufficiently examined. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the transformation of detective methods in the selected works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie. By comparing the investigative strategies employed by Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, and other prominent detective figures, this research seeks to identify the major developments in literary representations of crime detection. The study further explores how these evolving methods reflect broader intellectual and cultural changes, contributing to a deeper understanding of detective fiction as a significant literary and social discourse. Through this analysis, the article aims to demonstrate that the progression from Doyle's scientific deduction to Christie's psychological investigation represents a crucial stage in the historical evolution of detective literature [3].

LITERATURE REVIEW. Detective fiction has developed into one of the most extensively studied literary genres due to its ability to combine narrative complexity with social, philosophical, and cultural commentary. Contemporary literary scholarship approaches detective fiction not merely as a form of entertainment but as a reflection of intellectual paradigms, scientific developments, and social transformations. Researchers emphasize that the detective narrative functions as a mechanism through which societies negotiate concepts of truth, justice, rationality, and order. Within this scholarly framework, the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie occupy a particularly significant position because they established and transformed many of the conventions that continue to define detective literature. Recent studies on Arthur Conan Doyle focus primarily on the relationship between scientific rationalism and literary investigation. Scholars argue that Sherlock Holmes represents the embodiment of empirical observation and analytical reasoning. The detective's investigative process is frequently interpreted as a literary adaptation of scientific methodology, where hypotheses are formulated, evidence is collected, and conclusions are reached through logical deduction. Researchers note that Doyle's narratives emerged during a period characterized by rapid advancements in science and technology, which significantly influenced public perceptions of crime detection. Consequently, Holmes's methods are often examined as representations of modern scientific thinking and the growing authority of forensic knowledge. Another important area of research concerns the role of observation in Doyle's detective fiction. Contemporary critics emphasize that

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Holmes's success depends not only on his intellectual abilities but also on his extraordinary capacity to perceive details overlooked by others. Scholars suggest that observation functions as both a narrative device and an epistemological principle. Through meticulous attention to physical evidence, Holmes transforms ordinary objects into sources of meaningful information. This approach establishes a model of detective work in which knowledge is produced through systematic examination and logical interpretation. Such findings have contributed to broader discussions regarding the relationship between literature and scientific discourse [4].

Recent literary analyses have also explored the social dimensions of Doyle's investigative methods. Researchers argue that Holmes's deductions frequently rely upon an understanding of Victorian social structures, professional identities, and class distinctions. Although the detective presents himself as an objective observer, his interpretations often depend upon cultural assumptions shared by his contemporary society. This perspective has encouraged scholars to reconsider the apparent neutrality of scientific reasoning within detective fiction and to examine the influence of social context on investigative processes. The scholarship devoted to Agatha Christie demonstrates a somewhat different emphasis. While Christie's detectives employ logic and deduction, researchers highlight the increasing importance of psychological analysis within her narratives. Contemporary studies suggest that Hercule Poirot's investigative success derives less from forensic examination than from his ability to understand human emotions, motivations, and behavioral patterns. Scholars frequently describe Christie's detective methodology as a synthesis of rational analysis and psychological insight. This approach reflects broader intellectual developments associated with the growing influence of psychology in twentieth-century culture [5].

Research on Christie's works also emphasizes the significance of social interaction as a source of evidence. Unlike Holmes, who often focuses on physical clues, Poirot and Miss Marple devote considerable attention to conversations, relationships, and personal histories. Scholars argue that Christie transformed detective fiction by expanding the concept of evidence beyond material traces. In her narratives, seemingly insignificant remarks, emotional reactions, and social behaviors become crucial components of the investigative process. This shift represents an important stage in the evolution of detective methods and demonstrates the genre's adaptability to changing cultural understandings of human behavior. A growing body of research examines Christie's treatment of deception and perception. Scholars note that her novels frequently challenge readers' assumptions regarding truth and appearance. Through carefully

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constructed misdirection, Christie encourages both detectives and readers to question initial interpretations of events. Such narrative strategies have been analyzed as reflections of modern concerns regarding subjectivity, uncertainty, and the limitations of human knowledge. Researchers argue that Christie's detective methods reveal a more complex understanding of reality than the relatively straightforward rationalism associated with earlier detective fiction. Comparative studies involving Doyle and Christie have become increasingly prominent in recent years. Researchers identify both continuity and transformation in the evolution of detective methodology. On one hand, both authors emphasize logical reasoning and the systematic pursuit of truth. On the other hand, they differ significantly in their understanding of evidence and investigative practice. Doyle's narratives privilege observable facts and scientific analysis, whereas Christie's works emphasize psychological interpretation and social observation. Comparative scholars suggest that these differences reflect broader historical transitions in intellectual culture, moving from confidence in empirical science toward greater recognition of human complexity. Recent interdisciplinary research has further enriched the study of detective fiction. Scholars working at the intersection of literary studies, criminology, and cultural history argue that fictional detectives often mirror contemporary developments in criminal investigation. Advances in forensic science, psychological profiling, and behavioral analysis have influenced both literary representation and public understanding of crime detection. As a result, detective fiction serves as an important cultural archive documenting evolving investigative practices and changing conceptions of justice [6].

Within Uzbek literary scholarship, interest in English detective fiction has expanded considerably. Researchers have examined the structural features of detective narratives, the artistic functions of suspense, and the cultural significance of detective characters. Comparative literary studies conducted by Uzbek scholars emphasize the educational and analytical value of detective fiction, particularly its capacity to develop critical thinking and interpretative skills. Several studies have explored the translation and reception of Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot in Uzbek literary culture, highlighting their enduring popularity among readers. Scholars also emphasize the importance of investigating detective literature within broader frameworks of intercultural communication and literary influence. Despite the substantial body of existing research, several gaps remain evident. Many studies focus exclusively on individual authors without systematically comparing the evolution of detective methods across different historical periods. Furthermore, although scholars frequently discuss deduction, observation, and psychology, relatively little

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attention has been devoted to examining how these investigative elements interact within a broader developmental framework. Therefore, a comparative analysis of Doyle and Christie provides an opportunity to identify major transformations in detective methodology and to understand how literary representations of crime detection have evolved in response to changing intellectual and cultural conditions [7].

Table 1.

Comparative Overview of Detective Methods in Recent Scholarship.

Research Focus	Arthur Conan Doyle	Agatha Christie	Scholarly Interpretation
Primary investigative tool	Observation and deduction	Psychological analysis and deduction	Evolution from empirical to psychological investigation
Type of evidence emphasized	Physical clues, forensic traces	Behavior, motives, social relations	Expansion of the concept of evidence
Detective's role	Scientific analyst	Psychological interpreter	Change in detective identity
Intellectual foundation	Rationalism and empiricism	Psychology and social observation	Reflection of changing intellectual trends
Narrative structure	Evidence-driven investigation	Character-driven investigation	Increased narrative complexity
Reader participation	Following logical clues	Interpreting motives and deception	Higher cognitive engagement
Crime-solving approach	Reconstruction of events through facts	Reconstruction of motives through human behavior	Broader understanding of causality
Cultural significance	Confidence in scientific progress	Exploration of social and psychological realities	Representation of different historical contexts

Table 2.

Main Themes Identified in Contemporary and Uzbek Scholarship.

Theme	Key Findings

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Detective fiction as literature	Recognized as a serious literary genre with cultural significance
Scientific investigation	Strongly associated with Sherlock Holmes narratives
Psychological detection	Central characteristic of Christie's detective fiction
Narrative techniques	Use of suspense, clues, and misdirection
Social context	Crime reflects broader social structures and values
Reader engagement	Detective fiction promotes analytical and critical thinking
Comparative literary studies	Increasing interest in cross-cultural and historical comparisons
Uzbek scholarship	Focus on genre development, translation, and literary reception

The reviewed literature demonstrates that detective methods evolved significantly from the scientific and observational model represented by Arthur Conan Doyle to the psychologically oriented investigative strategies developed by Agatha Christie. Contemporary and Uzbek scholarship collectively indicate that this transformation reflects broader cultural, intellectual, and literary developments, making comparative analysis an essential approach for understanding the historical evolution of detective fiction [8].

RESEARCH DISCUSSION. The comparative analysis of detective methods in the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie reveals a significant transformation in the conceptualization of crime investigation within detective fiction. This transformation is not merely stylistic but reflects deeper intellectual, cultural, and methodological shifts in how truth, evidence, and human behavior are understood in literature. The findings of the present study demonstrate that detective fiction evolves in parallel with broader epistemological changes in society, moving from a primarily scientific-rational framework toward a more psychologically and socially complex model of interpretation. One of the most important outcomes of this research is the confirmation that Arthur Conan Doyle's detective methodology is fundamentally grounded in empirical observation and logical deduction. Sherlock Holmes represents a model of reasoning that prioritizes visible evidence, material traces, and structured analytical thinking. His investigative approach reflects the intellectual climate of the late nineteenth century, when scientific progress strongly influenced literary production. The discussion of Holmes's methods shows that crime-solving in Doyle's works is constructed as a rational reconstruction of events, where truth is assumed to be discoverable through careful analysis of physical clues. This

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reinforces the idea that early detective fiction is closely aligned with the ideals of positivism and scientific certainty [9].

In contrast, Agatha Christie's detective methods demonstrate a shift toward psychological interpretation and social contextualization. Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple rely less on physical evidence and more on understanding human motivation, emotional responses, and interpersonal relationships. The analysis indicates that Christie expands the concept of evidence beyond material objects to include speech patterns, behavioral inconsistencies, and social interactions. This development suggests that twentieth-century detective fiction reflects a growing awareness of the complexity and unpredictability of human nature. The discussion confirms that Christie's approach introduces a more nuanced and interpretative form of reasoning, where truth is not simply discovered but reconstructed through psychological insight. Another important aspect revealed in this study is the transformation of the detective's role. In Doyle's narratives, the detective functions primarily as a scientific analyst who deciphers hidden truths through objective reasoning. Holmes is portrayed as intellectually superior, emotionally detached, and methodologically precise. However, in Christie's works, the detective becomes more of a social interpreter who navigates complex human relationships and uncovers hidden motives. This shift indicates a broader change in literary representation, where detective figures are no longer purely rational machines but also observers of human psychology and social behavior. The evolution of the detective's role reflects the increasing importance of interdisciplinary thinking in literature, combining logic with empathy and psychological awareness [10].

The findings also highlight changes in narrative structure and reader engagement. Doyle's detective stories typically guide the reader through a linear process of deduction, where clues are gradually revealed and logically connected. In contrast, Christie's narratives often employ misdirection, unreliable information, and complex character interactions that require readers to reassess their assumptions. This structural difference suggests that detective fiction has evolved from a puzzle-solving model based on clear logical progression to a more interactive and interpretative reading experience. The reader in Christie's works becomes an active participant in the investigative process, which increases the cognitive complexity of the genre. Furthermore, the discussion emphasizes the cultural and historical context influencing both authors. Doyle's emphasis on scientific reasoning corresponds to a period of growing trust in empirical knowledge and technological advancement. Christie's focus on psychology and social behavior reflects the twentieth century's interest in human consciousness, motivation, and social dynamics. This historical progression demonstrates that

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detective fiction is deeply embedded in its cultural environment and serves as a literary reflection of changing intellectual paradigms. From a comparative perspective, the study confirms that both authors contribute to the development of detective fiction but in different directions. Doyle establishes the foundation of logical deduction and scientific investigation, while Christie expands the genre by integrating psychological depth and social complexity. Together, their works represent two stages in the evolution of detective methodology: the rational-empirical stage and the psychological-interpretative stage. This dual development highlights the adaptability of detective fiction as a genre capable of incorporating new intellectual trends while maintaining its core structure of mystery and resolution. The discussion also aligns with broader scholarly perspectives that emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of detective fiction. Modern research increasingly views detective narratives as intersections of literature, criminology, psychology, and cultural studies. The present analysis supports this view by demonstrating that detective methods in fiction are not isolated literary devices but reflections of real-world investigative practices and theoretical frameworks. In this sense, Doyle and Christie not only shaped literary traditions but also contributed to the cultural understanding of crime investigation. The findings of this study suggest that the evolution of detective methods from Doyle to Christie represents a significant shift in literary epistemology. This shift moves from certainty and empirical logic toward interpretative flexibility and psychological complexity. Such a transformation illustrates the dynamic nature of detective fiction and its ability to adapt to changing intellectual and cultural environments [11].

CONCLUSION. The comparative study of detective methods in the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie demonstrates a clear evolution in the narrative and intellectual foundations of detective fiction. Doyle's detective model, represented by Sherlock Holmes, is primarily based on logical deduction, empirical observation, and scientific reasoning. In contrast, Christie's approach introduces psychological analysis, social interpretation, and a deeper focus on human motivation, as seen in characters such as Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. The research confirms that this transformation reflects broader historical and cultural changes in society, particularly the shift from nineteenth-century scientific rationalism to twentieth-century psychological and social awareness. While Doyle establishes the foundations of modern detective methodology, Christie expands its scope by incorporating complex human behavior and interpretative reasoning. Overall, the evolution of detective methods highlights the adaptability of detective fiction as a literary genre. It shows that crime-solving in literature is not static but continuously shaped by intellectual trends and cultural

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contexts. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of detective fiction as both a literary and cultural phenomenon.

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