

GENRE CHARACTERISTICS OF DETECTIVE WORKS

Feruz Akhmedova

Faculty of Pedagogy and Languages, Angren University

fakhmedova1902@gmail.com

Abstract

The article analyzes the genre characteristics and types of detective works. It explores the distinctive features of detective literature, its structure and main elements, as well as the differences between the subgenres within the genre. The article focuses on scientific approaches to determining the genre of detective works, communicative and structural analysis methods, genre categories, stylistic features, and specific characteristics of detective stories. It also examines various forms of detective works and their process of transformation.

Keywords: Genre, genre identification, classic detective, psychological detective, detective text, cognitive approach, aesthetic approach, detective intrigue, closed-type detective, police detective, revenge detective.

Introduction

The detective genre occupies a unique place in world literature. Its popularity is linked to mysterious events, complex plots, and the images of ingenious detectives. This article is dedicated to analyzing the main genre characteristics of detective works, their development, and their manifestation in contemporary literature. The research focuses on studying aspects such as the structure of detective works, the system of characters, plot devices, and literary techniques.

In contemporary literary studies, as in linguistics, the definition of genre is not yet fully formed. Initially, the definition of genre appears as a means of classifying a literary work thematically. Today, the following most general definition of literary genre exists, which is explained by V.V. Kozhina as: "...a historically forming type of literary work; in the theoretical concept of genre, the characteristics inherent in a more or less broad group of works characteristic of a period, a specific nation, or world literature are generalized" [Kozhina, 1964]. In turn, M.A. Chernyak proposes to distinguish literary works based on a categorical principle: "In popular literature, strict genre-thematic canons have been developed, which constitute models of prosaic works in terms of form and content, include a defined structural scheme, and share commonality with a set of themes, designated figures, and character types. Canonical beginnings and typical templates lie at the basis of all genre-thematic diversity of popular literature; it is precisely on their basis that readers expect 'a specific appearance' from a genre" [Chernyak, 2008]. Thus, in literary studies,

the criteria for genre include the plot composition of the work, the space-time framework, a stable set of characters, and their characteristics.

In this article, genre categories are distinguished from the perspective of a communicative approach. V.I. Karasik emphasizes that the communicative approach: "...is based on the analysis of communicative situations as the most important meaning-creating component of the text" [Karasik, 2006]. Contemporary linguistics emphasizes that: "...the need arises to take into account the circumstances of communication and the characteristics of communicants, that is, a transition to a communicative model of text presentation is required" [Karasik, 2006].

Also, E.A. Varlakova focuses on the ethical evaluation function associated with the nature of the detective intrigue: "The detective plot is based on the opposition of 'good' and 'evil,' and its invariant scheme is implemented in the system of characters 'hero' 'criminal' ('victim'), and includes the invariant plot components 'crime,' 'investigation,' and 'resolution.' The existence of an intellectual puzzle distinguishes the detective from other genres of adventure literature" [Varlakova 2012: 9].

E.N. Gerasimenko also emphasizes this genre characteristic: "A detective story is always a puzzle, a secret that the reader solves independently together with the author, which gives him the opportunity not only to demonstrate logical thinking, deductive abilities, but also helps to understand human psychology. Also, a distinguishing feature of a good detective story is the moral idea contained within it, which is associated with exposing and punishing the criminal" [Gerasimenko 2013: 39].

Literary scholars also distinguish the psychological detective story. In this type of detective story, the situation may not adhere to the traditional straightforward investigator and the stereotypical psychology of the characters. Usually, a crime committed on the basis of personal motives (envy, revenge) is investigated, and the main aspect of the work's plot is the study of the motivations of the accused, their beliefs, and past opinions. Examples: Boileau-Narcejac - "Les Louves," "She Who Was Gone," Sébastien Japrisot - "The Lady in the Car with Glasses and a Gun."

In the analysis of genres, it is necessary to single out the historical detective story. The detective events take place in the past, and a historical crime is investigated in the present. Examples: Agatha Christie - "Five Little Pigs," John Dickson Carr - "The Devil in Velvet," Boileau-Narcejac - "The Enchanted Forest."

Often there are also detective stories filled with irony. In an ironic detective story, the investigation process is depicted in a humorous way, focusing on solving the puzzle. Such works often parody the traditional foundations of the detective novel. The interconnected plot of the ironic detective story does not play the main role. More significant are the individual humorous events and the light atmosphere of the work. Examples: Agatha Christie - "The Secret Adversary," Donald Westlake - "Bank Shot," Darya Dontsova - all her works.

Currently, the fantastic detective story is very popular. The works of this genre are a combination of fantasy and detective fiction. Events can take place at any time and in any

place, in any fantasy of the author. For example, in a dream, in a parallel universe, and the characters can stop time themselves. Examples: Stanislaw Lem - "The Investigation," Isaac Asimov - the "Lucky Starr – Space Ranger" series.

The most exciting and interesting detective story is the spy detective story. This genre depicts the work of intelligence officers and spies, both in wartime and peacetime. The difference between a spy detective story and a political detective story is that it focuses more on intelligence work and surveillance. Examples: Somerset Maugham - "Ashenden: Or the British Agent," Joseph Conrad - "The Secret Agent," Boris Akunin - "The Turkish Gambit," Ian Fleming - the "James Bond" novel series.

The political detective story also occupies a special place in detective literature. The main intrigue is dedicated to political events and competition between various political or business figures. Examples: Robert Ludlum - almost all his novels, Agatha Christie - "The Big Four," Boris Akunin - "State Counselor."

The detective story closest to real events is the police procedural. It depicts the work of a professional group. The reliability of the plot is closest to reality. The criminal may often remain unknown or escape punishment due to negligence in the investigation or lack of evidence. Examples: Sjöwall and Wahlöö - the "Martin Beck" novel series, Andrei Kivinov - "Horror on Shtachek Street."

In a "hard-boiled" detective story, there is more of a novel character than in other subgenres. A feature of this genre is to focus on the main character and his actions. He resists the environment: organized crime. The *noir* genre is directly related to the "hard-boiled" detective story; the difference is that the position of the main character – if in a typical "hard-boiled" detective story it is an investigator, in *noir* - it is a person who is directly involved in the crime. Examples: Dashiell Hammett - "Red Harvest," Raymond Chandler - "Farewell, My Lovely," "The High Window," Chester Himes - "Run Man, Run." Similar to the previous one, there is also a criminal detective story (gangster novel). This originated from the "hard-boiled" detective story, their difference being in the main characters. They are not private detectives, but rather representatives of the criminal world. The events are described from the criminal's point of view, and not from the point of view of the people looking for him. The investigation of the crime may be average. Examples: James Hadley Chase - "The World in My Pocket," Mario Puzo - "The Godfather." The most psychological detective story is the revenge detective story. The main character of such a detective story is a revenger. Unlike other types of detective stories, the main character in it is not an ordinary person, but a revenger with enhanced qualities. Also, the revenge detective is considered the beginning of the superhero genre in comics. Examples: Brian Garfield - "Death Wish," Don Pendleton - "The Executioner."

And finally, the cozy mystery. In cozy mysteries, the emphasis is not on violence, but on solving puzzles, relationships in society, and the interests of the characters. Examples: L.D. Brown - "The Cat Who...", R.M. Brown - "Mrs. Murphy."

At each stage of historical development, the detective story reflects the characteristics of social themes, forming ideas about the concept of "justice" during that period. An

important cultural factor in the development of the content of detective works was the court. The court process is described in detail in detective literature, for example, in the works of D. Hammett, R. Chandler, E. McBain, J. Grisham. The history of the modifications of the detective novel genre clearly shows that the detective story is a living and developing aesthetic phenomenon with its own nature, structure, and function.

N.Yu. Georginova, researching the works of R.O. Freeman, R. Chandler, S. Eisenstein, A. Vulis, B. Brecht, V.V. Melnik, N.N. Volsky, N. Ilyina, J. Symons, identifies several reasons for the popularity of the detective genre: the psychological needs of the reader (overcoming fear, seeking help, alleviating guilt, seeking emotions) and socio-cultural needs (seeking romance, observing characters, intellectual play). R.O. Freeman noted it as follows: "There is no more popular genre than the detective... Because a genre that appeals to culture and intellect clearly demonstrates that there is nothing bad in it" (Freeman, 1990, 29). According to R.O. Freeman, "the detective story, being able to fully reflect all the characteristics of the genre, a well-written work with a proper background and interesting characters, created in accordance with the strictest literary canons, is perhaps the least common phenomenon in artistic prose" (Freeman, 1990, 29). R. Chandler also expressed a similar idea: "However, the detective story - even in its most traditional form, is very difficult to write... A good detective writer (we cannot possibly be without them) is forced to compete not only with all those who are dead, but also with their living colleagues" (Chandler, 1990, 167). The author clearly defines all the complexities of writing a good detective story: "In my opinion, the main difficulty with a traditional or classic detective novel, based on logic and analysis, is that in order to achieve at least relative perfection, such a work requires qualities that are rarely combined in one person. A cold-blooded constructor usually cannot create lively characters, his dialogues are boring, there is no dynamism in the plot, there are no bright, clearly seen details at all. The pedant-rationalist, on the other hand, will be emotional like a drawing board. His scientist-detective works in a new laboratory, but the faces of his characters cannot be remembered. But a person who can create good vivid prose is absolutely unsuitable for creating an iron alibi" (Chandler, 1990, 167). A. Vulis stated: "The detective story is a genre. But it is also another theme. More accurately, a combination of both. The genre has a very clear program of events, so we know in advance some of the main episodes of the work that we have not yet read" (Vulis, 1978, 246).

In determining the dominant genre marker of a detective text, its organizational-structural characteristic can be emphasized. The core element of the story is always an intellectual investigation intrigue, while the surrounding information space performs an attributive function, often formalized with schematic descriptions. The secondary role of the artistic-descriptive component in the detective genre is also manifested in the choice of a serial model of storytelling, in which the main characters and the atmosphere of events are described only in the initial texts. Subsequent episodes of this sequence of events allow the reader to focus on the process of intellectual guessing, without distracting him with excessive artistic details. The main character of detective works is always distinguished by

a specific form of deductive reasoning, while his other personality qualities are defined in a clearly schematic way.

Detective texts mainly belong to the category of popular literature and are always person-oriented with a high degree of event complexity. The linguistic and stylistic means and all the structural components of the text are aimed at the main goal, which is to keep the reader's attention throughout the entire story.

A detective text is always a situation of direct communication between the author and a specific reader, implying cooperation with the reader at the level of partnership in the process of solving the crime. In addition, since a crime is a socially harmful act, the communicative purpose of a detective text is to evaluate the event and characters from the perspective of morality accepted by society.

At the same time, the detective genre can be defined as a unique literary form with a strict plot structure, based on the process of exposing a crime, and with typical functionally colored characters. Works belonging to the detective genre can be classified as literature written for mass readers. This orientation towards a mass audience has contributed to the formation of a stable set of internal-linguistic and extralinguistic means in the detective genre, which help to arouse the interest of a potential reader.

I.A. Dudina distinguishes two compositional structures in detective discourse: the subject-referent situation and its procedural component. The subject-referent situation chronologically defines the program of events developed within the genre space. The procedural component is the cognitive sphere of detective discourse, that is, the place where the author has a direct impact on the reader, where influence is exerted using literary and linguistic means. Here, the formation of the work's conceptosphere begins, where priority concepts for the detective story are distinguished: mystery-solution and crime-punishment [Dudina 2008: 12].

The growth of typical intra-genre diversity in detective prose can also be reflected in its linguistic composition. Researchers of detective genre works have noted and described the differentiation of types of detective prose. Peter Messent, in his book "The Crime Fiction Handbook," distinguishes the following types of the detective genre:

- classic detective fiction — a literary work with a plot related to the uncovering of mysterious crimes, in which crimes are solved by logical methods;
- "Golden Age" detective fiction — British detectives written within the classic tradition during the period before and during World War II;
- hard-boiled fiction — a harsh, unsentimental style of American detective prose, which introduced realistic and naturalistic nuances into the detective text;
- police procedural — a British detective story in which the main character is a police officer and is close to the classic detective model [Messent 2013].

Speaking about intra-genre typology, it is possible to identify its main distinguishing criterion. This criterion is the method of formalizing the dominant genre marker of the text, that is, on the basis of what communicative practices the presentation of the intellectual investigation intrigue is depicted.

Three criteria can be distinguished for dividing detective texts into subgenres: the main character, time, and space. The main character is equipped with appropriate qualitative characteristics depending on the type of text. For example, in a classic detective story, this will be a person with outstanding analytical abilities. In a hard-boiled detective story, the main character is distinguished by physical activity, determination, and originality.

The time and space in texts belonging to the classic detective or “Golden Age” type are directly related to the process of searching for a solution and are not connected with the real world. In hard-boiled detective texts, the categories of space and time are associated with modernity, and include familiar characters and events in social life.

Police novel texts simultaneously combine the main character category of the classic detective and the space and time categories of the hard-boiled detective.

The criteria for belonging to a genre presented in the article: the communication motive and communicative means, allow for analyzing detective texts based on the basic concepts of the communicative approach. Intra-genre differentiation, on the other hand, determines the types of texts based on their dominant features.

Detective literature has been studied by literary scholars as an independent subject. The research of the French sociologist R. Messac, “The Detective Novel and the Influence of Scientific Thought” (Messac, 1929, 698), written during the period when the detective genre emerged, is one of the earliest and most cited works. This definition of the genre is given in the research of P. Boileau and T. Narcejac (Boileau, Narcejac, 1975, 122), where it is emphasized that a detective story is based on uncovering and solving events through investigation and analysis. Sometimes, French researchers use the terms “policier” and “dététive” to describe the detective genre. According to them, the French tend to use the term “policier” more because they prefer the police as the investigator. The police are more realistic, without unnecessary speculation, ready to go to despair, and find a decision based on feeling and intuition, without creating unnecessary theories. The “Anglo-Saxons”, on the other hand, prefer the detective – he is from the upper class, educated, and tactical. His image is more romantic and he sees solving crime as a hobby (Boileau, Narcejac, 1999, 611–632). This idea helps to understand the use of this or that term in French.

References:

1. Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). Problema rechevykh zhanrov [The problem of speech genres]. In *Literaturnokriticheskie stat'i* (pp. 428-472). Khudozhestvennaia literatura.
2. Varlakova, E. A. (2012). *Tekstotipologicheskie kharakteristiki angloiazynchnogo detektiva XX veka* [Text-typological characteristics of the English-language detective story of the 20th century] (Doctoral dissertation abstract). Saint Petersburg.
3. Gerasimenko, E. N. (2013). Detektivnyy tekst kak ob'ekt filologicheskikh issledovaniy [Detective text as an object of philological research]. *Naukovi Zapysky*, 1(3(75)), 39-51.
4. Dolinin, K. A. (1999). Rechevye zhanry kak sredstvo organizatsii sotsial'nogo vzaimodeystviya [Speech genres as a means of organizing social interaction]. *Zhanry Rechi*, 2, 7-13.

5. Dudina, I. A. (2008). *Diskursivnoe prostranstvo detektivnogo teksta* [Discursive space of the detective text] (Doctoral dissertation abstract). Krasnodar.
6. Karasik, V. I. (n.d.). *O kategoriyakh diskursa* [On the categories of discourse]. Retrieved from <http://homepages.tversu.ru/ips/Jubkaras.html>
7. Kozhina, V. V. (1964). Zhanr [Genre]. In *Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya*. Retrieved from <http://feb-web.ru/feb/kle/kle-abc/default.asp>
8. Messent, P. (2013). *The Crime Fiction Handbook*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd. <https://books.google.com/books?ld=apodhwr6amkc&pg=PT68&lpg=PT68&dq=Gender,+Genre,+and+Forensic+Detective+Fiction.&source>