

CHAPTER THREE

**AUTHORITY AND UTOPIA IN DETECTIVE
FICTION: FORMS OF POWER AND FORMS OF
PLEASURE**

“The squirrel, my good Georges, collects nuts. He stores them up in the autumn so that they may be of advantage to him later. To make a success of humanity, Georges, we must profit by the lessons of those below us in the animal kingdom. I have always done so. I have been the cat, watching the mouse hole. I have been the good dog following up the scent, and not taking my nose from the trail. And also, my good Georges, I have been the squirrel. I have stored away the little fact here, the little fact there. I go now to my store and I take out one particular nut, a nut that I stored away—let me see, seventeen years ago.”

-The Mystery of the Blue Train

When I set myself the task of bringing to light what human beings keep hidden within them, not by the compelling power of hypnosis, but by observing what they say and what they show, I thought the task was a harder one than it really is. He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his finger-tips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore. And thus the task of making conscious the most hidden recesses of the mind is one which it is quite possible to accomplish.

Sigmund Freud - *Dora*

I

The aim of this chapter is to show how in a select cluster of ‘traditional’ detective texts the narrative is complicit with state power and ideology. In such texts there is a continuum between the texts’ search for order—both structural and thematic—and the state’s desire for social control and, if necessary, the restoration of social order. The chapter examines how detective texts like Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes Adventures* (1892), plead for a society where human beings seek to repair societal deformities through the efforts of one person. This person happens to stand for a perfect order, and often happens to be a detective and a superman. In fact, it is suggested that the perfect narrative order and the perfect social order in operation in these texts are complementary both in terms of moral and structural attributes. To this end, the chapter analyzes

narratives such as Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868), D.L. Sayers' *Unnatural Death* (1927), and Agatha Christie's *The Mystery of the Blue Train* (1928). By extension, the chapter shows how the narrative technique, design, and intention of detective fiction, while retaining the conventional motifs of competition between the criminal and the detective, where the latter invariably overpowers the former, assure a society governed by law and justice. To put it differently, the end of the novel not only coincides with the end of the detective's mission but also with the restoration of a stable world order. In effect, the ends of most detective novels either restore or reconstitute a utopia for the community. This utopia invokes a sense of participation and responsibility on the part of every citizen and by extension contributes to the channelling of social desire. This is seen as the condition and consequence of narrative pleasure.

This chapter begins with the following hypotheses:

- (a) that in traditional detective texts narrative ideology works in complicity with larger power structures;
- (b) that in traditional detective texts narrative pleasure is circulated through the utopian apparatus that disguises the politics of power as avenues of pleasure; in consequence hegemonic parameters of the state are neither verified nor questioned;
- (c) that in traditional detective fiction power and pleasure are premised on a utopia of governance where a given society identifies and accepts only two kinds of ideal classes—the ruler and the ruled provided that the interests of one serve the interest of the other;
- (d) that any deviance or deviation is at best a temporary aberration in a utopian setting, and is met by arrest and punishment, two symbolic acts that point to the resumption of order or by temporary suspension of state rule.

Given that art is a social formation, some literary forms are more visibly committed to social order, discipline or reform. In any case, this dissertation remains alive to the Althusserian assertion that neither reading nor writing is innocent of ideology. To this end, this dissertation accepts that the state necessarily uses ideological state apparatuses to inject, foster and instrument aspects of power that cannot be explicitly foregrounded

or used by administrative or legal structures. It also means that the Althusserian categorization of state apparatuses as ideological and repressive does not always work clearly or uniformly. Some art forms, concomitantly, may appear repressive at a given point of time but may look hollow or hilarious in a changed social sphere. Similarly, what is termed as ideological in one situation may appear repressive in another. The invocation of utopia may therefore be both ideological and repressive.

The vision of a utopian state necessitates the formation of social/moral/political authority and power which assumes the role of perfecting societies and people. To this extent, detective fiction can be seen as partaking of narrative quests for a world which is free from dystopian elements. The detection of crime in any given society requires fixed parameters of goodness; therefore, the desire for social regulation and freedom from crime can be considered as a utopian dream where human perfection is epitomized and very often narrativised as an ontological query.

Thus, this chapter argues that the possibility of the existence of a “dream city” conditions the imposition of codes and laws upon seemingly imperfect people. The narratives of detection seem to be utopian narratives, seemingly devoted to social order, are means of legitimating apparatuses of social control. The pleasure of these texts lies not in the usual crime-inquest-discovery pattern, but rather in the investigators’ triumph in deducing the means and motives of the murders which foreground the power of social surveillance and the social/penal power structures of given societies.

The chapter argues that the infallible Holmes does not exist in the real world of crime and punishment. Instead, he operates in a “no-place” or a “never-land” representing an ideal social structure with no intrusion or alteration from resistance. Moreover all the narratives examined in this chapter design the purpose of detection for seeking the key to secrets, which determine the narrative assertion of authoritarian power through the pursuer’s supremacy in defeating and exposing the pursued. Therefore, this chapter studies how traditional detective fiction is often complicit with established forms of power as well as established notions of crime and disorder in the society of the times.

3.1.1. Utopia: Ideological Fetishism and Ideological Illusion

In a traditional law abiding society, the idea of crime and punishment is always seen in terms of utopian models that thrive on abundance or absence of crime. There is a

recurring motif of lack and plenitude in such utopian structures where lack and plenitude exist in a paradoxical state of bonding. This bonding, in turn is amplified in the relationship between law and lawlessness where the abundance of one element is the condition and consequence of the other element. The idea is that excessive law automatically rules out crime. In the real world situation, however, the relationship is complex and often at variance with this lack-excess thesis. Detective Fiction builds on the paradox that goes into defining this relationship and suggests that there is a balance between crime and punishment that is available only in a utopian world. Further, the best balance remains almost always in a state of deferral where the very basis of any utopian order is validated by postponing it to a future world or a world elsewhere.

This contradiction can be addressed by returning to Louis Althusser's terms the "Repressive State Apparatuses" and the "Ideological State Apparatuses" (1968). These two phrases between them show how hegemonic structures work for establishing the "ideal state." To this extent, the concept of utopia can be considered both as ideological fetishism and ideological illusion. What is ideal or considered perfect is influenced by the politics of authority and power. In other words, power can mould and control mental production, thereby the notion of individual freedom which is actually illusory. The idea that the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas is a fine illustration of this point (see Marx "Wage" 262). In this sense, the absolute or unique—seen in the utopian fabric, for example—is an extension of the ideological fantasy or fetish of the ruling class. In other words, the idea of utopia is not only a state apparatus but also a vehicle for creating in its subjects an illusion of freedom and responsibility, admissible to them as members of a given community or a social formation. It should be clear, however, that this sense of freedom created by hegemonic structures is in effect a strategy of domination.

The same structure of persuasion through spectral illusions of freedom is replicated in the pursuit of utopia in detective fiction. As already seen, utopia is an ideological meconnaissance (see Zizek, *Sublime*), or misrecognition where the world is misrepresented because the ruling class desires to misrepresent it with the intention of realizing its ideological fetishes. To this extent, the utopian dream is a connotation of desire where misrepresenting on the part of the ruling class and misrecognising on the part of the ruled offers certain prospects of benefits and rewards which strictly differ in respect to the class position of an individual. In this sense, utopia and dystopia are two

sides of the same coin where the dream for a perfect society may be achieved through anarchic rule and suppressing the desires of the ruled. In detective fiction the rule of legitimacy, therefore, is an extension of the very basis of utopia. Paradoxically, however, the validity of utopia is contingent upon the inviolability of legitimacy without any allowance for any deviation. This, in effect, not only rules out the possibility of crime, but also the role traditionally assigned to the detective superhero. For, the superhero comes into play in the world of crime and punishment only when there is a challenge to the utopian order itself. This very admission of the vulnerability of utopia nullifies the perfectibility of the order of civilization. In consequence, the projection of utopia carries seeds of its own destruction, a point pursued by detective fiction at an epistemological-ontological level.

3.1.2. “They Do Not Know It, but They Are Doing It”

Zizek’s work is an extended meditation on this aspect of the politics of utopia. A crime free world, philosophically speaking, gets rid of the criminal and, by extension, the police and the detective superhero. While the order of moral power would happily admit of such a possibility, the artistic order of which all humans are in a way part, would be terrified of such a spectre. For, a moral world sans crime, criminals and the police in pursuit of criminals would be dry and in a sense, dreadful, simply because of the fact that this world would be devoid of pleasure. It is imperative at this point to return to Zizek’s discussion of the politics of utopia and the concomitant ideological illusion that produces a divide between “knowing” and “doing.” As Zizek says, citing the Marxian formula, “they do not know it, but they are doing it”:

It is a matter of a discordance between what people are effectively doing and what they think they are doing—ideology consists in the very fact that the people ‘do not know what they are really doing,’ that they have a false representation of the social reality to which they belong (the distortion produced, of course, by the same reality). (Zizek, *Sublime* 31)

In other words, the vision of the utopian state necessitates the nurturing of the desires of the “others” which is essential for convincing them of unconditional freedom and happiness. To use Zizek’s term “quilting,” the possibility of a “dream city” quilts or obscures the politics of hegemonic domination where apparently “you can think freely,

you can question all authority; but as a part of the social ‘machine’, as a subject ... you must obey unconditionally the very first rule emphasizes the need to accept and obey customs and laws of the country into which we were born without questioning their authority” (Zizek, *Sublime* 80).

This means that the politics of social and human perfectibility is sought to be achieved through oppressive norms and conventions for “mould[ing] uniquely different individuals to the same shape” (Eagleton, *Theory* 13-14). Zizek, for instance, develops this point by making a distinction between “reality” and the “real” in his work *Looking Awry* (1992). Here he refers to “our common everyday reality, the reality of our social universe in which we assume our usual roles of kind-hearted, decent people ... that rests on a certain repression” (Zizek, *Awry* 17). Again, because of this, each and every individual experiences the real (psychic reality) of his/her desire, but social reality demands conformity to an ideological order imposed on his/her psychic reality. This “repression” becomes effective only when the state manages to introduce hegemonic policies in the guise of utopian dreams among the subjects for an ideal existence. In such situation, hegemonic forces distort reality by promoting the ideology of “norms and ideals unhinged from the real” (Eagleton, *Ideology* 109). Seen in the context of detective fiction and its given order of crime and punishment, authority and utopia not only supplement each other, but also substitute each other in unexpected ways. This point has been further taken up in the analysis of select detective texts.

3.1.3. Utopia and Hegemony

In this connection, Eagleton makes an interesting point. He says that utopia has been hegemonically conceived and designed “as a whole range of practical strategies by which a dominant power elicits consent to its rule from those it subjugates. To win hegemony ... is to establish moral, political and intellectual leadership in social life by diffusing one’s own ‘world view’ throughout the fabric of society as a whole ...” (Eagleton, *Ideology* 115-16). In other words, it is the ruling or dominant ideologies which shape, decide and influence how the poor and the subordinate should view the world and live their lives.

A disciplined society is a reflection of the utopian dream of a flawless and crimeless world. Therefore, it necessitates identifying deviants, surveillance of crime and executing

punishment. In a perfect world, punishment is neither a vehicle of justice nor an instrument of state retribution. Instead, it is viewed as a corollary to the consolidation and circulation of state power. A primary requisite of this structural order is surveillance. Michel Foucault's discussion of Bentham's "Panopticon" refers to the realization of strategies and tactics for an orderly society by inserting disciplinary mechanisms in the social body. The key lies in constituting a general formula of authority and domination by way of controlling instances of deviance or minimizing chances of deviation.

As seen earlier, Foucault explains the relation between those who are empowered to punish and those that are pronounced as social deviants, and develops his thesis on power through this distinction. Though the state claims that penalty does not imply the desire to punish, rather "they are intended to correct, reclaim, 'cure'; a technique of improvement represses ..., the strict expiation of evil-doing" (Foucault, *Discipline* 10). Having said that, Foucault goes on to make this important pronouncement: "but those who carry out the penalty tend to become an autonomous sector" (Foucault 10).

To this extent the "Panopticon effect" is deeply entrenched in the subject's mind through the realization and acknowledgement of the presence of social surveillance and authority in every aspect of a given society. But as Frederic Jameson argues in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a socially Symbolic Act* (1981), the instruments that force this acknowledgement carry power from their intangible nature. In other words, the power of the state apparatuses is contingent on the ability of these apparatuses to transform themselves into illusory agents of social good. Thus, the subject's apparent freedom is an illusion that is harnessed by different wings of the state. In the life of a community this agency of acknowledgement can be found in the idea of freedom from crime and rule of law, which, in reality may be nothing but the extension of the desire of the ruling elite for a certain kind of world ruled by a certain kind of order.

3.1.4. Traditional Detective Fiction and Its Unquestioned Hegemonic Parameters

Narratives of crime and detection often foreground authoritative power that is licensed to surveil any corruption—that is, deviation or deviants from the structural symmetry—within the social body. In this sense, "power" in detective fiction is a means of preservation of the regulatory codes of a disciplined society. In the traditional narratives of crime and detection, the dominant ideology of the text complies with the established

power structures which idealize society and rationally resist any challenge to a given social order. As Raymond Williams says, the belief in the mechanism of the state apparatus can be explained by the Hegelian formulation of the civilized man: “Man becomes the individual through society and civilization, saw the State as the organ of the highest human values” (Higgins, *Reader* 69). Williams makes a case for the narrative instrumental for a trained response to issues of social power. In the process “popular” narratives foreground the acceptance of social necessities and structural orders and reject any possible instrumentation of individual desires for freedom or pleasure.

There is a case for linking the search for utopia with the consolidation of authority, in spite of the fact that utopian happiness is communal and inclusive, whereas, authority is by nature restrictive. Detective fiction problematizes the linkages between authority and utopia. To this extent it can be said that traditional detective fiction analyzes the relationship between the individual and society, found to be embedded in an ontological narrative query for perfection. These narratives produce pleasure through the circulation of notions of the “good” and the “bad” established by the state’s hegemonic devices that remain unverified and unquestioned till the end. Further, this type of narrative preconditions the text into accepting what or who is to be defended and what or who is to be condemned by the representatives of state authority. It is seen, in any case, that the narrative desire to protect the hierarchies of power constantly seeks allegiance to the state’s conditioning of social order.

Moreover, traditional forms of detective fiction offer narratives which are symptomatic of the value systems and idealized world. So narratives prefigure a kind of expectation that coincides with the detective’s desire to unravel the truth. This truth which is unravelled yields knowledge that helps to establish authority in the social/penal structure of a given society. In this form, the corpus of the text remains compliant to the ideals and the legitimate boundaries of a given society. In this sense these narratives do not empathize with the “bad” or that which is not morally/socially sanctioned. Rather, the text’s loyalties seem to lie with the established power structures and codes of social regulations. The narrative upholds textual appeals for penalizing the “wrong” and restoring the “good” to their power, position and honour, thereby perpetuating the notion of utopia. In all the narratives under discussion, this notion of a utopia gifted by authority as a disguised instrument of governance is explored and problematized. Whether it is

Holmes or Poirot, a recurring motif in their investigative projects is restoring order into a threatened utopia. In this sense, the detective texts under scrutiny present a rather complex case for oscillating between utopia or pleasure and authority or power.

II

3.2.1. Holmesian World as the Idyllic Never-Land

Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sherlock Holmes Adventures* present a quest for the utopian replica of a real world which is marked by a sense of continuity in social order. In a way, such continuity is a reflection of an already established utopian order, a hallmark of which is the notable absence of any need or effort for change. In this world there is, to start with an absence of coercive forces generally responsible for keeping social order. Interestingly, the idea of utopia does not admit of opposition which may result from a contradictory consciousness or the introduction of alternative world views which an aberrant brings. These alternative views or conflicting values are seen as temporary. While all utopian orders in a sense call upon an idyllic situation where neither negativity nor darkness enters, in reality all utopias are never lands.

In essence, they are like worlds elsewhere, which, in turn, repeatedly question the existing order of everyday life. Sherlock Holmes lives in a sordid world but presses for an ideal world. To this extent, the Holmesian world is like a never land or a paradise that is always already elsewhere under erasure and under deferral. In effect, the Holmesian world is epitomized as a never-land. In this world, Holmes finds perfect solutions to tricky problems through the mythic Holmesian logic and method. The fact that human perfectibility reaches its pinnacle in the figure of Holmes is presented as a narrative precondition for pleasure. This is done by investing in Holmes' undefined but infallible social authority which, in turn, makes the mythic hero flawless and invariably victorious.

It is important to note that the apparatus that decides the ideal is also responsible for authorizing and legitimating Holmes' interpretations of the criminal acts in the narrative world. In a way, what makes these narrative worlds never-lands is undoubtedly Holmes' invincible accuracy along with what Jann calls the "close conformity to recognized codes

and laws” (Jann 685). It means that Holmes is the narratives’ apex body of justice, coding not only the criminal world, but the entire social world, given that he eventually becomes a figure of authority for social control. It is repeatedly seen in the *Adventures* that the reliability of such codes draws on a system that already makes them logical and acceptable and admitted without questions.

The adventures examined in the following section have recurring patterns of disturbance and restoration in the social order. Interestingly, however, in many of the stories deviance is used as an agent of change and an indication of challenge to the regulatory codes of a disciplined society. Given that each incident of crime marks a rupture in the world of continuity and order, a resolution becomes the mandatory narrative intention. Clearly, these narratives present societies which are not only flawless but also Edenic. So, the deviance brought in by the criminal that demands attention does not get the better of the system. Social order is not permanently disturbed, in spite of the fact that it is challenged. The fact that the continuing social order represented by the utopian condition is regained through Holmes’ infallible authority also points to an uncomfortable realization in most of the Holmes stories that the disruption caused and resolved in such idyllic settings may return. The text ensures that such fears are in a way not admitted into the narrative discourse at length. It can be seen from such paradoxical “resolutions” that the relationship between crime and punishment—and, in effect, between authority and utopia—is both problematic and unpredictable.

3.2.2. The Musgrave Legacy

In Conan Doyle’s “The Musgrave Ritual,” the world of Reginald Musgrave is described by Watson the narrator, in terms of dreams, desires and nostalgia. Holmes and Watson relate his legacy to utopian aspirations. In fact, Holmes poses as the messiah of the feudal world that in a way stands for British respectability:

In appearance [Reginald Musgrave] was a man of an exceedingly aristocratic type, thin, high-nosed, and large-eyed, with languid and yet courtly manners. He was indeed a scion of one of the very oldest families in the kingdom ... the Manor House of Hurlstone of his birth-place seemed to cling to the man, and *I* never looked at his pale, keen face or the poise of his head without associating

him with gray archways and mullioned windows and all the venerable wreckage of a feudal keep. (Doyle 595-96; emphasis added)

The ideal world of Reginald Musgrave and his class superiority is first violated when his butler, Brunton, tries to steal a paper which contained the century old Musgrave Ritual, “a sort of ceremony ... which each Musgrave for centuries past has gone through on his coming of age—a thing of private interest” (Doyle 599). The fact that Brunton decodes the meaning of the ritual and succeeds in discovering a “space” to which only the privileged have access, symbolizes a breakdown in the established order. Clearly, Brunton disrupts the peaceful and well maintained household of Reginald Musgrave by driving one of the housemaids insane, and later abruptly vanishing without a trace. With Brunton’s disappearance, Reginald Musgrave apparently loses nothing, but the disorder that has been brought upon aristocratic life must be addressed.

The narrative mediates between state power and personal authority by making use of the surveillance of Holmes. Holmes is seen as the “resonant symbol of the late Victorian faith in the power of logic and rationality to insure order” (Jann 685). When Holmes solves the mystery of Brunton’s disappearance through his infallible logic and common sense, he champions the social hierarchy which creates the likes of Brunton and defends fixed behavioral types. In the story, Holmes’ entire exercise of defending fairness and justice is dedicated to saving Reginald Musgrave’s world from disintegrating or from any kind of harm. In this world, only a person like Brunton the butler would be the guilty one, since an individual’s social position or deviance thereof are interrelated issues, already defined by structures of power. So, when Holmes restores the crown of Charles the Second along with the corpse of Brunton, he in effect restores actually the ideal order of the Musgrave legacy: “From that day to this it had been handed down from father to son, until at last it came within reach of a man who tore its secret out of it and lost his life in the venture” (Doyle 611). Holmes’ obsession with truth and order, therefore, is an ideological collaboration with the class and power hierarchy of the late Victorian social order.

3.2.3. Holmes: The Saviour of British Nobility

Similarly, in “The Adventure of the Abbey Grange,” Holmes is called upon by his friend, Inspector Stanley Hopkins representing Scotland Yard, to investigate the disorder in the

picturesque world of Lady Brackenstall, triggered by the death of her husband. In Holmes' words: "We are moving in high life. Watson, crackling paper. 'E.B.' monogram, coat of arms, picturesque address" (Doyle 986). Holmes quickly sees the missing links that may have led to the murder of the Earl, Eustace Brackenstall. His intervention also brings back stability into the scandal-threatened world of late Victorian British nobility.

It is interesting to note here that the disturbance created in Lady Brackenstall's life by her aristocratic but brutal husband is brought to an end by her former lover, Captain Jack Crocker. What should not be missed here is the fact that the crime itself is marked by a social inversion where the wrongs committed by a socially superior individual are avenged by somebody from the salaried class. It can be said that though the upheaval in the private world of the lady is resolved through the death of her husband and the termination of her physical torture, the crime-punishment question remains unresolved at this point. In fact, the state apparatus represented by Inspector Hopkins who invites Holmes to find the "truth," that is the nature of the crime, the motive of the criminal, etc.

As a representative of the Social Panopticon, Holmes must find out the truth:

"... Watson, I simply can't leave that case in this condition. Every instinct that I possess cries out against it. *It's wrong - it's all wrong - I'll swear that it's wrong.* And yet the lady's story was complete, the maid's corroboration was sufficient, the detail was fairly exact allow me to lay the evidence before you, imploring in the first instance to dismiss from your mind the idea that anything which the maid or her mistress may have said must necessarily be true. The lady's charming personality must not be permitted to warp our judgment." (Doyle 995; emphasis added)

In other words, the story divides what Žižek calls "knowing" and "doing." For, Holmes is aware of the distinction he has to make between legal and moral orders in order to clearly see the disturbance in the social order. But awareness alone is not adequate and the story puts Holmes in the middle of a paradoxical situation. This paradoxical situation arises out of the conflict between utopian order and the order of legal-moral authority.

When Holmes reaches the truth, he acts as the savior of the Brackenstall world by withholding the information regarding the conflict between the Earl and the Lady's

former lover, Captain Crocker, which would have led to a scandal. It is worth noticing how the narrative itself designs Holmes as an autonomous body of social authority, as suggested by Žižek. It is also important to note that Holmes assumes the power of the judge and acquits Captain Crocker of the crime. Though Holmes' power in his act of acquitting the guilty is not legally sanctioned, his action mutes a possible collapse of the late Victorian social order. In this world class not only creates hierarchical respectability but also social distance that must always be left secure. In this sense, this is not a necessary corollary of the legal-moral mechanism but an attempt to protect the utopian order. For, a Crocker's exoneration becomes necessary and any attempt to open the case would disturb established social expectations and disallow the upper-class its social entitlements. By keeping Lady Brackenstall's secrets from the purview of the law Holmes perpetuates the utopian order of pleasure and continuity that marks the upper-class world.

3.2.4. Holmes and Whiteness: Race, Empire and Ideology

Dennis Porter, commenting on traditional detective fiction, in his landmark work *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction* (1981), points to the fact that the genre is averse to questioning social codes and that law itself is accepted as a given. In this context, the white heroic detective as the redeemer of social order is seen as the giver of normative categories and the only legitimate interpreter of deviance. Thus, the social body in Conan Doyle's narratives of crime is coded by Holmes' "supervision" assuming the role of social, cultural and political authority.

In effect, most of these texts negotiate with the ideology of race, justifying the portrayal of the socially marginalized individual as the criminal "other." This other individual must necessarily be identified and eliminated in order to preserve the social utopia presented by the narrative order. The Holmes adventures written in the heyday of colonialism associates the "Black" with the aberrant element in the ideal white world.

The categorization of the other, in this genre is contingent on ideologies of race and empire, often seen operating in tandem. In "The Boscombe Valley Mystery," the deviant John Turner, the murderer, is white. But, given that he is a transgressor, he is labelled "Black" Jack. Similarly, in "The Adventure of Black Peter," Captain Peter Carey has been a pirate. In view of deviant past, he "was known in the trade as Black Peter, and the

name was given to him, not only on account of his swarthy features and the colour of his huge beard, but for the humours which were the terror of all around him” (Doyle 867). Here the narrative design ensures that the detective’s investigation associates a darker skin tone with antisocial stereotypes and upholds the ideology of the ruling/imperial class. This points to the fact that hegemonic power structures label an individual as deviant or normal and perceive him/her as a threat or as an asset to the economic, political and cultural order of the day.

It is worth noticing, however, that in both the cases, the narrative admits the mandatory condition of terminating the deviants through divine justice or through individual vengeance rather than through the criminal justice system. So, Turner is terminally ill and dies within seven months from detection of his crime. Captain Carey’s guilt is avenged through his murder by one of his criminal associates. In other words, the administration of justice is not always done through legal-rational avenues but through external machinations as in moral melodramas.

In “The Sign of Four,” the narrative links deviance to ethnicity. Tonga, an Andaman Islander is identified as the murderer and not the Englishman, Jonathan Small, though in the beginning at least there is no express reason for anybody to pin down Tonga. Given that Holmes represents the authorized Victorian knowledge system, represented by the new science of “racial” otherness that associates non-Caucasian features with moral depravity, Holmes’ investigation follows the prejudicial footprints of the “other” (see Cheyfitz, *Poetics of Imperialism* 1991). He explains to Dr. Watson: “*Your* toes are all cramped together. The *other* print has each toe distinctly divided” (Doyle 171; emphasis added). It is not difficult to see how the narrative justifies Tonga’s criminal status in the words of Jonathan Small’s description of the islander: “as venomous as a young snake” (Doyle 230). Tonga, it should be noted, becomes an accomplice in engineering Small’s escape from his convict’s life in the Andaman Islands. He says:

“Tonga ... was a fine boatman and owned a big, roomy canoe of his own. When I found that he was devoted to me and would do anything to serve me, I saw my chance of escape.... He was staunch and true, was little Tonga. No man ever had a more faithful mate.” (Doyle 230-31)

Interestingly, Small trades Tonga's little stature, dark skin and his ethnic ways of living for his own livelihood: "We earned a living at this time by my exhibiting poor Tonga at fairs and other such places as the *black cannibal*. He would eat *raw meat* and dance his *war-dance* ..." (Doyle 232; emphasis added). This remark is a critique of the failure of European anthropological knowledge (see Fabian, *Times and the Other* 1983). Ironically, the Holmes text lays bare the injustice and oppression of the colonial other in spite of the latter's unconditional loyalty and service. In fact, the colonies, especially India and Africa, are repeatedly referred to in the Holmes adventures as lands of danger and darkness. While the inhabitants are seen as conjurers and criminals, their values are seen as necessarily inferior to that of the colonizer. In Dr. Watson's words:

"... there was itself a little black man—the smallest I have ever seen—with a great, misshapen head and shock of tangled, disheveled hair. Holmes had already drawn his revolver, and I had whipped out mine at the sight of this savage, distorted creature.... that face was enough to give a man a sleepless night. Never have I seen features so deeply marked with bestiality and cruelty. His small eyes glowed and burned with a sombre light, and his thick lips were writhed back from his teeth, which grinned and chattered at us with half animal fury." (Doyle 204)

It shows how an individual from the "dark" colonies must be beastly and cunning in order for the narrative design to work. In the story, when Tonga sacrifices his life for protecting the secret of his white master, the narrative intention is not to highlight his devotion and faithfulness. Rather, his death becomes necessary to the narrative in order to let him die with his secrets. His death not only denies him the opportunity to defend himself but also keeps the white man's secret under cover. The fact that he jumps to his death takes away any opportunity for him to prove his innocence. In other words, the narrative enslaves and incriminates Tonga in order to disguise the hegemonic ideology that overwhelmingly determines the criminality of the other. In the land of the white, Tonga's existence is legitimate only as long as his services are required. Otherwise, he is seen as a necessary aberration, a man more likely to contribute to dystopian elements in the white world than to its social order.

The fact that the narrative categorically designs Tonga, and not an Englishman as the murderer shows how Holmes' investigation or decoding invariably returns to the social codes that define the aberrant other "by their deviation from a natural unmarked self that

was ... British, and at least bourgeoisie” (Jann 692). It is interesting to note that Holmes’ ragged crew of informers is mostly comprised of street children, called “street Arabs.” These children provide access to information through their potentially subversive ability to go everywhere and hear everything. This crew is transformed by him into a “bourgeoisie organization” of social control (Jann 696). Ironically, the upper class British utopian structure, apparently founded on justice and fair play, is an exploitative apparatus. It manipulates small children into becoming spies, though the stories never articulate anything regarding the children’s wishes. It makes sense, therefore, to look at the corrupt system that is made to look word perfect with Holmes in control. The Adventures do not directly critique or question the avenues or apparatuses of pleasure in the utopian system itself. This highlights the genre’s troubled mapping of power-pleasure relationships.

3.2.5. The Pleasure of Detective Fiction: Corpus vs. Telos

In the Holmes narratives, the sense of ending is structurally and thematically overwhelming. The ending in most cases overwrites any sense of discomfort or unease that one may have had regarding specific characters and events. For, the body of the text in these adventures gets potentially controlled by the end. It may be useful to return to a couple of points made by Dennis Porter in *The Pursuit of Crime*. Here Porter talks about the ability of detective fiction to reinvent itself as a genre in unexpected ways. Significantly, the novelty in formal attributes accrues not from the progressive sequence of action but in the digressive effects. As Porter says:

The art of literary detection depends largely on the manner in which we are diverted while we wait for the inevitable denouement. Crime solving is a vehicle making possible a journey whose stopovers are frequently more enjoyable than the purposeful approach to a destination itself (Porter 55).

In other words, the pleasure of reading detective fiction derives from the corpus of the text, rather than from the progressive sequence of action ending in discovery and termination of the narrative quest. To put it differently, the criminal act and the solution remain subservient to the numerous side-glancing details dotting the text.

The fact that Porter emphasizes “stopovers” rather than destinations is important. In this context, the corpus or the text needs to be understood in terms of what Russian

Formalists define as the “fabula” and the “sjuzet,” or in Paul Ricoeurs’s definition of plot as “events” and “story” (see Brooks, *Reading* 13). Peter Brooks explains: “Plot ... is ... an embracing concept for the design and intention of narrative, a structure for those meanings that are developed through temporal succession, or perhaps better: a structuring operation elicited by, and made necessary by, those meanings that develop through succession and time” (Brooks 12).

As suggested by Peter Brooks, the corpus of the novel is as important as the telos or the terminal configurations. In the Holmes *Adventures*, positioning of the end is such that the interregnum is made to forego its ability to connect its segments or constituents unless approved by the end itself. In other words, the corpus becomes a formal or even decorative requirement. Porter’s idea of the form reinventing itself is more or less echoed by Brooks in his discussion of the unilinear plots in fiction and the attempts by fiction writers to look for modifications. Brook says that the corpus is as important as the telos or destination. This is so because the plot of a narrative “might best be thought of as an ‘overcoding’ of the proairetic (code of actions) by the hermeneutic (code of enigmas and answers), the latter structuring the discrete elements of the former into larger interpretive wholes, working out their play of meaning and significance” (Brooks 18).

Brooks clearly borrows this idea from Barthes’ five codes. However, he chooses only the proairetic code as the means through which the author could use “stopovers” in Porter’s words or the corpus in his own description. In the Barthesian System the code of action is supported by three other codes, namely, reference, denotation and culture. While the code of action and the hermeneutic code serve Brooks as two important aspects of the detective novel that challenges older stereotypes, codes of reference and denotation dominate novels like *The Moonstone*. References to countries and cultures other than those in Europe are not moral props as in the Holmes stories, but plotted requirements.

In a way, references to the cultures, habits, and racial features of the “other” are no longer subservient to the end. Rather, they interrupt the passive linearity of the plot that would have otherwise moved to the end by somehow ideologically eliminating the “other.” In other words, the narrative production of pleasure—that is, the continuation of the utopia created by class and race—is not simply attendant on presenting authority and utopia as ideological mirror images of each other. Instead texts like *The Moonstone* raise fundamental questions regarding the teleologically driven detective plots. In this sense, a

new cluster of novels interrupts the seamless dovetailing of power and pleasure devices, whether implicit or explicit. Thus, it can be argued that the stopovers in the corpus unravel the meanings, thereby moving the narrative forward and leading it to the destination. As such the idea that narrative stopovers that constitute the corpus also contribute to the narrative design is no longer alien to detective fiction.

In the novels clustered here the body is not simply the backdrop where codings happen and decodings happen to understand the codings. A good example would be William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), where the narrative has four narrators who tell the same story, but each story has a different secret. Sometimes this novel is read as a classic challenge to the classic detective text. The relationship between ideology and aesthetic gets inscribed into detective fiction as a way of illustrating the complementarities and contrapuntality of utopia and authority and, by extension, pleasure and power.

3.2.6. Compliance and Complicity

As suggested above, Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* is a fit case to study the digressions and stopovers in the body of the text. These stopovers apart from leading to the destination illustrate the disruption of order in the social and juridical structure of society. The fact that they contribute to slowing down the narrative pace suggests that their narrative status is no longer subservient to the telos. As a matter of fact, these narrative stopovers either represent or reflect the social world and can be said to coexist vis-à-vis the state's disciplinary mechanisms represented by the police and the court.

Narrative pleasure in this case is produced by the instances of social equivalents made available by the ideologically driven text. For instance, instead of exclusively looking at heuristic aspects of pleasure and pleasure production, the detective novel looks for substituting heuristic attributes of pleasure by a complex network of social equivalents of pleasure. In the Holmes *Adventures*, the social equivalents of order and pleasure are produced by the continuity of utopian designs or orders in which the detective superhero plays a definitive part. In Wilkie Collins, the relationship between structures of power and pleasure or its social equivalents is explored through the body of the text, most notably, what has been called as narrative stopovers.

In this case also narrative pleasure accrues not from some heuristic negotiation of the reader or the text with entertainment or textual bliss, as suggested by Barthes and

Scholes (see Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text* 18-22; Scholes, *Fabulation* 26-28). The pleasure of the narrative derives from its complicity with the power structure that guards every disciplined society. The narrative becomes the ideological apparatus for preserving the state's setup. The narrative is structured in such a way that the legal/penal structure of society is supported by the text's ideological bulwark. Beginning from the theft to the discovery of the criminal, the narrative ensures that there is a tacit complicity between submission to the power of law and order and production of pleasure. As suggested by Dennis Porter, no crime is committed in isolation. It is committed in a society or a community by one member of a human group against another group or an individual of the group (see Porter 120).

Crime implies the violation of a code of conduct and demands a response in terms of the code. However, the code that defines crime is ideologically defined by the existing power relations in a given society. In *The Moonstone* the narrative representation of crime and punishment endorses the hierarchy that goes into the given social order and rejects the transgression of the given code of conduct. The novel also shows that no matter how smart or resourceful, the crime and the criminal will be accounted for by social provisions, whether institutional or individual, or both.

Though detective fiction has always been considered a wing of the ideological state apparatus called culture, the traditional form of the genre itself has rendered it into an instrument to celebrate the ideals of the repressive state apparatus. We may sight Dennis Porter here who writes that "detective stories present themselves to their readers as substitute worlds or mirrors that reflect directly the reality beyond" (Porter 115). The "reality beyond" also serves as the ideological apparatus through which texts condition social governance and social expectations. In any case, the letter of the law is influenced by considerations of class and social hierarchy. The novel circulates a concept of wealth that is clearly in conformity with the interests of power groups and hegemonic structures.

3.2.7. Detection and the Art of Othering

In *The Moonstone*, crime is seen as an activity of the lower classes and detection always aims at incriminating the socially/racially marginalized "other," while securing the position of the elite. Interestingly, in the narrative inquest the initial suspects are the "Indians" or the "Hindoos" who were indeed pursuing the moonstone. Later the

“domestic helps” of Lady Verinder’s household are roped in. The narrative produces a lot of evidence which places the “Indians” in an unfavorable position. For instance, Gabriel Betteredge, the butler of the household confronts the Indians lurking around the house. Even Penelope, Betteredge’s daughter and Rachel Verinder’s chambermaid, seems to foster doubts about them from what she hears from their conversation:

“See the English gentleman from foreign parts.”

“Will the English gentleman come here as he has promised to come, at the close of the day?” (*Moonstone* 18)

Betteredge, narrator of nearly half the novel persuades the reader into believing that Franklin Blake arrives at Lady Verinder’s house earlier than schedule because he was followed in London by “a certain dark looking stranger” (*Moonstone* 28). After the theft of the diamond, the narrative’s corroborative evidence is once again directed against the “Indians.” Franklin Blake says:

“One of them might have slipped into the hall, in the confusion, when the dinner company were going away. The fellow may have been under the sofa while my aunt and Rachel were talking about where the diamond was to be put for the night. He would only have to wait till the house was quiet, and there it would be in the cabinet, to be had for the taking.” (*Moonstone* 82)

The suspicion towards the “Indians” is withheld temporarily, given the fact that they had been in prison during the time of the theft. From this point onwards, having failed to clearly shore any evidence against the Indians the narrative looks for evidence against the housemaids. In the words of Betteredge:

We went back to the house; the Sergeant requesting that I would give him a room to himself, and then send in the servants (the indoor servants only), one after another, in the order of their rank, from first to last.

I showed Sergeant Cuff into my own room, and then called the servants together in the hall. (*Moonstone* 116)

Interestingly, the text provides half suggestions against these suspects, as if to suggest that there was a clear link between crime and the socially marginalized.

To this end, the troubled relationship between the “colonizer” and the “colonized,” always works its ways into such moments of judgment. The ability to decide on “right” and the “wrong” rests with the ruling community. Hence, what they think of the “Hindoos” in connection with the theft appears to be true. Clearly, the weaker sections of the society have been pushed into the world of crime, and then convicted by the hierarchical structure. This is evident from the way the narrative tries to protect Franklin Blake from possible prosecution. In doing so, the narrative seems to support the structure that protects a given social order or restores harmony to it, if threatened. It is interesting to note that the authoritarian eye generally considers that one who has been a criminal would always remain a criminal. Sergeant Cuff’s suspicion towards Rosanna Spearman is motivated by this idea. He says: “The last time I saw her, she was in prison for theft” (*Moonstone* 111).

Sgt. Cuff’s inquest works with the presumption that the crime could not have been committed by an upper class man or woman. Interestingly, he pushes towards pinning down Rosanna even though the circumstantial evidence against her or corroborations thereof were vague. Ideologically grounded in class hierarchy Sgt. Cuff’s inquest cannot go beyond his class interests. Sgt. Cuff is more interested in Rosanna’s half familiar and half frightened conversation with Franklin Blake in the library than in any concrete evidence: “This is a strange thing about the Diamond, sir. They will never find the Diamond, sir, will they? No! Nor the person who took it - I’ll answer for that” (Collins 92). The fact that Rosanna’s awkward behavior strengthens his suspicion regarding her is complicit with class and its ideological long shadow. He cannot for a moment imagine that Rosanna did what she did with the sole purpose of concealing Blake’s role in the theft. The narrative upholds the prevalent notion that a gentleman of Blake’s social standing and a suitor of the female protagonist cannot commit such a demeaning act.

In fact, the narrative intention of preserving the untarnished image of the upper class white male is complicit with several other corollary evidences against Rosanna. These include events such as her abrupt illness, a fire at midnight in the month of June inside her locked room, her unaccounted for movements, her several visits to Cobb’s Hole and her fascination with the Shivering Sand, etc. Clearly, her elusiveness and her eventual suicide are meant not only to shroud the crime in secrecy but also are purposely designed by the narrative to shield Blake’s reputation. Rachel, for instance becomes hysterical

once she senses Blake's involvement: "My Diamond is lost. Neither you nor anybody else will ever find it!" (*Moonstone* 88). Her unpredictable behavior and subsequent reticence and her refusal to co-operate with Superintendent Seegrave, can be seen as instances of narrative compliance with accepted notions of crime and criminals. Rachel's refusal to disclose the thief's name forms part of the narrative design of circulating pleasure by conditioning its social equivalent and by perpetuating the existing power relation in the given society. It is as if the entire episode involving Rachel was a way of countering possible narrative resistance to any deviation from the conventional social norms regarding the "good" and "bad" of the times. Here is a case of narrative ideology coinciding with the social ideology of following the fixed notion that an apparently "honest" man cannot be a thief.

3.2.8. *The Moonstone*: Selective Origin of Species

Leo Radzinowicz suggests that in the nineteenth century crime novels, "the law itself is never put on trial" (see Porter, *Pursuit* 122). This in a way endorses the conservative view of individual causation or deterministic concept of "criminal man" that upholds the view that a criminal is born and not made. Considering this view, the narrative of a detective story like *The Moonstone* does not question the legitimacy of the legal procedures which it represents. Assuring for a moment that Ablewhite is a born criminal, as the novel seems to do, the reasons for denying the possibility that Franklin Blake may possess criminal tendencies are not clear. The narrative does not account for the instinct of stealing that he reveals in his semi-conscious state, even if the theory of the laudanum (Blake's semi-conscious state due to the laudanum intoxication) was to be accepted. The policing represented by Sgt. Cuff fails to examine, one, the effectiveness of the second administration of the laudanum and, two, whether Blake feigns repetition of the first. As Gramsci suggests, the ruling class guides "what is thought" in a given society. The constant narrative effort to exonerate Blake from the guilt indicates the power of this flow of thought.

The introduction of Ezra Jennings, assistant to Doctor Candy, as the narrative design for the sole purpose of undoing the disorder set about by the thoughtless action of the doctor on the night of Rachel's birthday. Again the fact that the mystery around Jennings' parentage, and the unnamed fatal disease from which he suffers remains concealed till the end. Jennings' reference to his parents is intentionally blurred: "No. I was born, and

partly brought up, in one of our colonies. My father was an Englishman; but my mother—we are straying from our subject Mr. Blake....” (*Moonstone* 373). So, this social positioning of Jennings—his birth, his station etc.—is not important except for fulfilling what Brooks calls “narrative intention”.

In other words, the sudden appearance of Jennings and his brief existence is intentionally designed to devise a theory of the theft. This theory, interestingly, works on the notion of “right” and “wrong” defined by pleasure that is social/legally determined. It can be said that Jennings’ theory of the laudanum is neither challenged nor contradicted by the narrative evidence which actually circulates pleasure through the narrative complicity with state power. The social and the juridical structure of the narrative demand that there must be no split between the “ideal” and the “ideological.” The narrative shows how what is considered good by the powerful should also be considered the ruling social ideology. Thus when Franklin Blake gets justice and Ablewhite is defeated, the narrative upholds its complicity with the state.

The fact that Sgt. Cuff’s initial investigation remains inconclusive, or concludes with the notion that the female protagonist Rachel cannot commit an act of stealing or deception is complicit with the nineteenth century social ideology. Further, both Jennings and Sgt. Cuff shares the same view about Blake’s role in the theft, except that Jennings believed that the moonstone had been hidden. The fact that the narrative does not empower Jennings to proceed any further in his investigation whereas Sgt. Cuff is authorized to penalize the offender is not to be ignored. Again, it cannot be insignificant that the investigator already “decides” who the thief is even before gathering the necessary evidence. He tells Franklin Blake:

“I suspected the wrong person, last year, and I may be suspecting the wrong person now. Wait to open the envelope, Mr. Blake, till you have got at the truth. And then compare the name of the guilty party, with the name that I have written in the sealed letter.” (*Moonstone* 442)

This is clearly a move to foreclose, at least at the level of inquest, any deviation from the normative axis between clan and crime.

The incidents that follow are exactly what Sgt. Cuff already prepared for, establishing the narrative’s conformity with the power structure of the state. The two pillars of the

legal and penal world of the narrative—Mr. Bruff (the solicitor) and Sgt. Cuff (the investigator)—have been made the instruments of revealing Ablewhite’s secret life of pleasure and deceit and his purely mercenary interests behind planning to marry Rachel Verinder.

Dennis Porter highly suggests that it is the detective or the police who operates as the invisible or unseen seer of social surveillance and stands at the centre of the social Panopticon. He writes that “in a detective story the moral legitimacy of the detective’s role is never in doubt” (Porter 125). Therefore, it is hardly surprising that Sgt. Cuff has been entrusted with all the power to fight the power of the enemy, consequently defending and conserving the state penal codes. It is significant that the narrative presents Ezra Jennings as a person with the intellectual capacity to explore the human psyche.

Again, his investigative theory of the laudanum is presented as acceptable. However, he is not given the investigative credentials allowed to the fallible, but heroic, Sgt. Cuff. In this case, the hierarchical power reinforced by the ideology of the narrative ensures that Jennings is treated as a “dark skinned outsider” and a victim of society’s prejudice following his “anonymous,” “mixed” parentage. The fact that he loses to his social superior Cuff—clearly not as endowed in intellectual and analytical skills—is suggestive of a narrative intent subject to ideology and ideological state apparatuses.

The fact that the prim and proper life of the English Aristocracy is disturbed in *The Moonstone* can be seen as a technique of narrative assertion of racial and class superiority. The pattern of detection in this narrative begins and ends with a prejudiced view of goodness and evil seen within its social parameters. Suspicion falls on the “Hindoos” which can be seen as racial prejudice; on Rosanna Spearman, a reformed thief and member of the working class; and Ezra Jennings’ detective acumen is not given due credit for his Un-English appearance and hybrid genealogy. Moreover, the narrative designs Ablewhite’s villainy with an overtone of racial intolerance and can be explained by what Albert D. Hutter observes in his essay “Dreams, Transformations, and Literature: The Implications of Detective Fiction”: [E]ven Ablewhite’s final disguise, with black hair and a “swarthy” complexion encourages our misperception and prejudice until the very end of the tale. And the mystery, fear, and prejudice associated with the

Indians are built into the judicial testimony, misunderstanding, and exploitation (Hutter 181-209).

In this connection it can also be suggested that the narrative treats the detection of crime as a means to an end; in this case the end is the union of Rachel Verinder and Franklin Blake, signifying the restoring of the symbolical order. In other words, the text suggests what is only a union between equals. Hence, Rosanna's class and background becomes an obstacle in fulfilling her desires. To this end, her final narrative obliteration is not free from suspicion. This is even truer for Godfrey Ablewhite where the overarching social hierarchy and gentlemanly conduct ruins his chances of climbing the social ladder. It is this power that the narrative prepares to produce in the very beginning of the text by justifying Franklin Blake's status and eligibility for Rachel's hand:

After he had learnt what the institutions of Germany could teach him, he gave the French a turn next, and the Italians a turn after that. They made him among them a sort of universal genius.... He wrote a little; he painted a little; he sang and played and composed a little.... His mother's fortune (seven hundred a year) fell to him when came of age.... He lived here, there, and everywhere.... He came of good blood; he had a high courage.... (*Moonstone* 15-16)

The power of this kind of social 'guarding' of hierarchy is all-pervasive. This is exactly the kind of eligibility that dominated British upper-class marriage prospecting, uncritically dovetailing eligibility with a certain number of quantifiables and indicators of ideological apparatuses brought under the scanner by Jane Austen's famous opening in *Pride and Prejudice* (1815): "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (1).

3.2.9. Hercule Poirot: Capitalism and the Production of Pleasure

The Moonstone serves as a guardian of social hierarchy even as it operates as a detective novel. The key to the circulation of power lies in devices that translate narrative pleasure to a series of social equivalents of either pleasure or pleasure production. In the novel the production of pleasure is symptomatic of class and power controlling life and character. In other words, the novel resembles the Holmes *Adventures* in its use of social conformity as a narrative equivalent of pleasure. However, it does not necessarily allow wealth to dominate the moral fibre either of the narrative or the given society.

It would be interesting therefore to bring in a text that offers variations in the pleasure-power linkages by inserting ‘capital’ into the frame. Agatha Christie’s *The Mystery of the Blue Train* (1928), is as much about crime and inquest as about the power of international capital. It is considered for the narrative study to understand the production of pleasure through the negotiation of power between the social world (esp. the upper class) and the criminal world. It is interesting to see how the anti-social is camouflaged within the social, and how Hercule Poirot and Katherine Grey become instrumental in exposing their secretive existence which is complicit with the narrative ideology signifying authority and the symbolic order.

Poirot and Grey function in the novel as “agents” of the social world, and whatever this world desires to see or achieve is attained or fulfilled by them. This can be explained by what Dennis Porter refers to in *The Pursuit of Crime* as the detective’s role to triumph over “evil”, “contingency” and “irrationality” (Porter 225). It can be said that the detective works for morality, synthesizing the macrocosm and bringing in justice.

Porter quotes Marjorie Nicolson from her essay “The Professor and the Detective,” where she says:

Our science and our theology, our ethics and our metaphysics, are based upon a belief in implacable justice, in the orderly operation of cause and effect, in a universe governed by order, founded on eternal and immutable law. (qtd. in Porter 125)

It is this rationale that prompts Poirot to spontaneously offer himself as an investigator into the matters of Ruth Kettering’s murder in the Blue Train. He explains his ethical duty as a detective despite his superannuation, to Van Aldin when he says:

“Monsieur, if a doctor walks along the street and an accident happens, does he say, ‘I have retired from my profession, I will continue my walk,’ when there is someone bleeding to death at his feet?” (*Mystery* 173)

In this novel M. Caux, the Commissary of French Police and M. Carrege, the Juge d’Instruction represent the higher state organs. However, the private detective Poirot is given more power and authority by the narrative. It should be noted that besides his instinctive urge for detection, Poirot investigates on behalf of the powerful American

capitalist, Rufus Van Aldin. The text subtly points to the fact that Poirot works for the penal system that has been privatized and personalized by Van Aldin's capitalist ideology. This has been emphasized when he says, "Find Ruth's murderer for me, that is all I ask" (*Mystery* 252). Knighton and Mason kill his daughter for her jewels, and pose a grave danger to the power and prestige of the rich American. The fact that the jewels are "historical" and the perpetrator of the crime are his present/erstwhile subordinate staff is no less significant. The history of the jewels and Knighton's interest in it are evident very early in the novel when Van Aldin informs him about the famed jewels that he has recently bought for his daughter:

"I don't wonder at your asking that. Amongst these rubies are the three largest in the world. Catherine of Russia wore them, Knighton. That centre one there is known as 'Heart of Fire.' It's perfect—not a flaw in it"

"But," the secretary murmured, "they must be worth a fortune."

"Four or five hundred thousand dollars," said Van Aldin nonchalantly, "and that is apart from the historical interest." (*Mystery* 30)

The power of omniscience which the narrative confers upon Poirot can be seen as a technique of incorporating coherence between the design of the narrative and the design of the detective's action. Poirot has been presented with a shrewd knowledge of worldly affairs; he can already presume the possibilities of a murder even on a train, when he tells Katherine Grey, "Someday, who knows, you might be in the thick of things, it is all chance" (*Mystery* 112). Since the dominant ideology of the novel is to restore law and order, the narrative can be seen to work towards this goal when Poirot differs from M. Caux regarding the possibility of Comte de la Roche being the murderer. Poirot says: "The Comte is a scoundrel—yes. The Comte is a swindler—yes.... He proposes to steal Madame's jewels—again yes. Is he the kind of man to commit murder? I say no!" (*Mystery* 166).

When Ada Mason fabricates a story and tells Poirot of the gentleman who was seen at Gare de Lyon simply to mislead him, Poirot not only senses a discrepancy in the facts but also tells Van Aldin: "[H]ave no fears. I will discover the truth" (*Mystery* 252). Here we find a convergence of narrative intention and Poirot's conviction about the murderer. Interestingly, the narrative's assurance of providing justice to the wronged person

coincides with what could be called the integrated omniscience of Poirot as well as the narrative. Thus, the novel's complicity with state ideology, social purpose and the moral design of the narrative operates as the device that transforms pleasure into its social equivalent.

3.2.10. Narrative Design and the Ruling Class

The narrative design of this novel acts as a compliant state apparatus that endorses the juridical design and the moral legitimacy of the ruling class. In the process, it overarchingly restates the ruling class ideology by suggesting that an upper-class person—Derek Kettering, for example—cannot be a criminal. The novel also presents Katherine Grey's complicity with the penal expectations of the social world. In a way, the segmentation of the narrative by structuring it around a series of events that have a predictable sequence—her dramatic inheritance of a fortune, her travel to France by the Blue Train, being Ruth Kettering's confidante, meeting Derek Kettering at Lady Tamplin's villa, for example—reflects the larger juridical design.

Katherine's unexpected upward social mobility, her liking for Derek Kettering and her anxiety to move out of St. Mary Mead and get into high society, foreshadow her role in the detection of the truth behind Ruth's murder. To put it differently, the narrative seems to comply with the capitalist system of production relations. So when her services are no longer required, she is eased out of high society of France to St. Mary Mead once again. She is placed once again in the same old situation of a caretaker in the employment of her new employer, Mrs. Viner. In this context, it is important to refer to Katherine Grey's inferior social status connected with her past occupation as a caretaker to one Mrs. Harfield:

Katherine Grey was thirty-three. She came of good family, but her father had lost all his money, and Katherine had had to work for her living from an early age. She had been just twenty-three when she had come to old Mrs Harfield as companion.

It was generally recognized that old Mrs Harfield was 'difficult'.... At twenty-three she had been a quiet girl with beautiful eyes. At thirty-three she was a quiet woman, with those same grey eyes.... (*Mystery* 69)

Her status resembles that of the Brontës as described by Terry Eagleton in *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (1975): “And they were educated women, trapped in an almost intolerable deadlock between culture and economics—between imaginative aspiration and the cold truth of a society which could use them as merely higher servants ...” (Eagleton 8).

In fact, Katherine’s social status indicates an entrapment between imaginative aspiration and social reality and is determined by what Althusser calls “the capitalist system of production relations” (Porter 118). Since the social ideology of the times was decided by economic power and class supremacy, her role in the novel is heavily dominated by these two factors. This is observed in her tedious and exploited life at St. Mary Mead, working for the “difficult” Mrs. Harfield. Ironically, her cousin Lady Tamplin, acknowledges her state and invites her to Villa Marguerite, only after she inherits the fortune with the intention of exploiting her newly acquired financial status.

Moreover, Katherine and Derek’s relationship and the possibility of her becoming the Chatelaine of Leconbury are intentionally withheld by the narrative. To this extent, narrative pleasure is circulated through the notion of upper class supremacy, where only a person possessing either economic power or aristocratic power was eligible to claim such a social position.

The way accidental discoveries are made, or the way Katherine’s extra-sensory perception of Ruth in the garden is, cannot be ignored. Further, the extra-sensory perception of Ruth’s presence in the gardens of Monte Carlo reveals Knighton and not Derek Kettering as the murderer can be seen as the narrative apparatus that perpetuates class superiority. It keeps on persuading the reader that Ruth’s murder must have been committed by a common man. Katherine’s encounter with Ruth’s apparition can be considered as her own subconscious self which has been designed by the narrative to suggest the power of the aristocratic class.

Thus, it can be said that it not only influences but also arouses the imaginative aspiration of the common man to be a part of it. Her fascination with Derek Kettering is revealed when Poirot tells her: “There are others—more dangerous than the Comte de la Roche. They have qualities that appeal—recklessness, daring, audacity. You are fascinated, mademoiselle; I see that ...” (*Mystery* 273). Katherine’s experience serves as the

narrative purpose of preserving not only the prevalent notion of the times regarding the respectability and goodness of the upper class, but also by complying with the detective's power and theory of the murder.

There are references to gentlemanly conduct that are reflections of the narrative apparatus to shield social hierarchy. Georges, Poirot's valet, who had an extended experience of working for the aristocracy, says something about a gentleman that is both revealing and ironical. He says, "... a gentleman of the aristocracy would not behave like a Whitechapel coster. He would not do anything low" (*Mystery* 180). It is clear that the ideology of the ruling class has been upheld by the narrative through Georges. For, Georges has been a devoted believer in the virtues of the aristocracy. His faith in this class is reflected in the fact that he had decided to work for Poirot only because he had been received at Buckingham Palace and "His Majesty had been most gracious and friendly and thought very highly of your abilities" (*Mystery* 295). Therefore, it is suggested that narrative pleasure is circulated through the conformity between the narrative ideology of class and capital and the detective's assumption that the future Lord of Leconbury cannot "fall" by committing a murder.

3.2.11. Crime Detection and the Abrogation of Resistance

Though the novel is about betrayal and murder, it is worth noticing that there is no further violence or conflict in the social scene, other than Ruth Kettering's murder. In his essay titled "Class Domination and Ideological Hegemony" (1974), David L. Sallach makes an interesting connection between the end of the process of investigation and the ruling out of any possibility of resistance or protest by a human being, once he or she is dubbed a criminal. Sallach, for instance, says:

The most effective aspect of hegemony is found in the suppression of alternative views through the establishment of parameters which define what is legitimate, reasonable, sane, practical, good, true and beautiful (Sallach 38-50)

At the end of the novel there is no resistance from the criminal world and the narrative design/intention readily provides the gateway to detection. That the narrative intention and the detective are complementary can be seen from the finality of decisions. When Poirot presents the case of Knighton and Mason's betrayal to Van Aldin, they are not provided any opportunity to voice their opinion or defend themselves. Knighton is

reported to have an extraordinary criminal background operating as the Marquis, and his accomplice Ada Mason or Kitty Kidd is referred to by Joseph Aarons as “Pretty smart” and “Clever as a cartload of monkeys” (*Mystery* 340-41). The narrative does not see them any longer as living beings. With the detection of their crime they seem to recede to the background as “shadow” or “lifeless” forms, not capable of standing up for themselves. The narrative makes the criminals almost incapable of challenging the power of the detective, something that in itself can be considered a way to uphold the social ideology of the times. In other words, narrative pleasure is a reflection of its complicitness with established authority and state power.

The narrative structure of *The Mystery of the Blue Train* is conditioned by the power structures of class domination and social hierarchy. To that end, the social order symbolized by the murder of Ruth Kettering is settled through coercive forces of ideological hegemony. The narrative allows Poirot to move within ideological apparatus set by elite power groups that includes Capitalists like Van Aldin, aristocrats like Derek Kettering, the future Lord of Leaconbury, and Lady Tamplin. Poirot is authorized through the narrative’s larger “surveilling eye” which establishes hegemonic parameters, thereby blocking any possibility of any alternative or open interpretation of crime, criminals and detection. Clearly, the narrative’s resource of power is identified with the class domination and its “ideational manifestation” (Sallach) which foreshadows the entire process of investigating the secret.

3.2.12. Narrative Pleasure: Justice and Order

Crime and chaos often overrun structures of discipline and hierarchy in the detective novel as the action unfolds. However, the intervention of the heroic and infallible detective superman ensures that the restoration of order is not only smooth but also seemingly irreversible. In novels like *The Moonstone* and *The Mystery of the Blue Train*, much of the chaos is caused by the absence or invisibility of the criminal and it is the job of the detective to bring the criminal to visibility. Again, the primary narrative apparatus is dedicated to withholding and enhancing pleasure through tension and resolution. In these novels the existence of crime is never under suspicion. What needs enquiry and resolution is the identity of the criminal. The narrative apparatus ensures that the circumstances of crime in a way reflect the breakdown of social order. That must be checked by ensuring the elimination of the criminal.

In Dorothy Sayers' *Unnatural Death* (1926), there is a clear variation in this pattern of crime and detection. In the novel the crime that constitutes the narrative design is different from what was seen in the earlier novel. For example, the death of Agatha Dawson, an incident that brings in the spectre of the criminal into the novel, has the look of an unnatural event. Yet, no one is sure whether that should pass off as a natural death as well as its exact opposite. Interestingly, the logic of evidence that could establish the crime is counter-productive in absence of circumstantial corroborative or situational evidence. Instead of establishing the identity of the criminal, as is done in the normal course of a detective novel, this one requires that the event itself be authenticated as a criminal event. The identity of the criminal is logically due next. Sayers already opens up the genre and its major signposts by raising doubts over the turn key event that normally invites the detective hero.

Here the narrative apparatus of pleasure production relies not so much on the identity and conviction of the criminal as of the nature and circumstances of the crime itself. It is significant that the suspect is in a way already known to everybody. But instead of the 'who'-aspect of detection that substantially contributes to the production of pleasure, this novel initiates the prevalence of the 'how'-aspect of crime and detection. While the logic of detection is still in complicity with social control, narrative pleasure is at variance with narrative apparatuses seen in the earlier novels.

Unnatural Death can be considered to study the pleasure of reading, which is supposed to evolve from the possibility of exposure to the dangers and threats in the narrative of crime and detection. Pleasure is derived from a secure anticipation of justice provided by a secure code of assurance that justice will prevail. The point to note is that this assurance regarding the power of justice accrues not from an overarching moral order but a secure system in place. This system is assured of success because it is effectively constituted by purveyors of truth. The key to the success of the purveyors lies in surveillance.

There are two aspects that bind surveillance and purveyors of truth to pleasure. On the one hand, the security of the system enhances the individual's participation in jobs that may or may not be assigned to him/her by the community at large. This is, in a way, a symbolic transformation of carnivalesque pleasure into community work. The novel begins by negotiating with attempts to pass off a crime as a natural event. In other words,

the voluntary involvement of Wimsey in the process of inquest is indicative of the transformation of individual fulfilment or happiness into a social obligation. On the other hand, there is a clear shift in the heuristic apparatus in the sense that desire—both socially sanctioned and transgressive—can be accommodated through combinatorial goals and practices. To put it differently, deviation and deviance can now be seen not as the sole preserve of the criminally minded individual but of an ordinary or normal mind gone awry. This is a new kind of recognition that gets socially registered through multi-layered transformation of the links between pleasure and power in detective fiction.

Clearly, in this case, too, the responsibility of undoing the chaos lies largely with the detective/investigator. As against the power which evades scrutiny at a given point of time, thereby disrupting the prevalent social order, the criminal here challenges the very protocols of detection. For instance, the disruption of order is challenged by the state authority either through the help of individuals like Holmes and Poirot or through legal and penal institutions. The authoritarian power manages to retain its supremacy by defeating and exposing the “secretive.” Given that the detective novel operates in a pleasure-power continuum—which means that pleasure is coterminous with or relative to the desire for social control—established forms of power necessarily produce varied mechanisms of pleasure production.

In this novel, the desire for social control is anticipated in the private investigator Lord Peter Wimsey’s power to comprehend Mary Whittaker’s crime. He is able to see through the medical and legal complications of Agatha Dawson’s death. Mary Whittaker’s crime remains undetected and unchallenged till it comes to Wimsey’s attention. This novel is not a case of putatively accepted murder, reported crime and the thrill of discovering the murderer. Pleasure lies in following the investigator’s power to expose the means and motive of murder, and the murderer’s power to resist any such exposure. Mary Whittaker’s peaceful country life owing to her inheritance of a fortune is an important point of analysis to show how breach of law and justice behind the apparent show of order is restored. The textually predetermined chance meeting between Dr. Carr and Peter Wimsey raises the issue of undetected crime and lack of the juridical system of a given society.

3.2.13. The Power of Peter Wimsey: Private-Public Coordination

Peter Wimsey's work is supported by state power represented by his friend detective-inspector Charles Parker of Scotland Yard. But the fact that Wimsey's conviction of Whittaker's guilt is a contrast with Parker's doubt shows how the narrative assures Wimsey's quest for justice. Parker's doubt about Dawson's death as murder is answered by Wimsey: "You've got an official mind, Charles. Your official passion for evidence is gradually sapping your brilliant intellect and smothering your instincts.... I know there is something wrong about this case" (*Death* 54). Through Wimsey's conviction, the narrative intends to provide continuous social surveillance. The fact that the narrative harps as the likelihood of undetected crime coming to surface opens up prospects of the narrative design that is structured around conflict, crime, and resolution.

The power of surveillance possessed by Wimsey and Parker is represented by the narrative as infallible. So in the inquest of Dawson's death, the narrative does not provide any circumstance that may counter their assumption. It is worth noticing that the narrative apparatus—for instance, enquiries made to the nurses Philliter and Forbes, Evelyn Gotobed, Mr. and Mrs. Cobling, Rev. Hallelujah Dawson, solicitor Thomas Probyn and the lawyer Mr. Trigg, readily anticipate and comply with the latent penal design of the novel.

The fact that these socially divergent characters fulfil the social and moral responsibility of providing evidence points to the narrative's structural assurance of justice to society. It is also seen that the presentation of Wimsey as the champion of truth is supported by disabling Mrs. Forrest from drugging and seducing him. Moreover, the five pound note is a narrative tool, solely instrumental in tracing Mary Whittaker/Mrs. Forrest's crime. Therefore, each time the narrative empowers Wimsey to prove the crime, it actually a ploy to support the juridical structure of the novel. Further, the lawyer, Mr. Trigg's chance survival from veronal poisoning and his noticing the scar earlier on Ms. Grant and then on Mrs. Mead's hand is again a narrative means to expose the individual's criminality.

Ms. Climpson's role as an agent of enquiry is interestingly worked into the narrative design. She is simultaneously a user and gatherer of vital information. Wimsey describes Ms. Climpson to Parker: "She is my ears and tongue, and especially my nose. She asks

questions which a young man could not put without a blush. She is the angel that rushes in where fools get a clump on the head. She can smell a rat in the dark. In fact, she is the cat's whiskers" (*Death* 31). It is observed that Ms. Climpson's method of collecting information from the parish ladies, and her 'convenient' lodging at Mrs. Budge's inn for her investigation is once again part of the narrative apparatus that seeks complicity with the legal-penal structure. The fact that she is neither held with suspicion nor faced with any hostility to her queries, helps her in getting information that guarantee the continuity of power structures of the society.

It is interesting to see Ms. Climpson's dilemma when she finds the sheet of paper containing Vera Findlater's confessions. Expectedly, in the struggle between her social responsibility to expose "the clue to the discovery of a murder" and the Christian conscience to maintain the "sacred secrecy of the Confessional," her sense of duty towards her society triumphs over her religious priorities. Also, given that Ms. Climpson risks her life for the sake of truth and justice, and is also rescued in the nick of time from being murdered shows how characters work themselves into the social purpose and moral design of the novel. The narrative describes Ms. Climpson's condition: "... in the struggle between Miss Climpson's conscience and what Wilkie Collins calls 'detective fever', conscience was getting the worst of it and was winking at an amount of deliberate untruth which a little time earlier would have staggered it" (*Death* 275).

3.2.14. Colonial Wealth and the Criminal Other

The introduction of Rev. Hallelujah Dawson, Agatha Dawson's cousin, is one more instance of the narrative apparatus keeping pace with social notions of "otherness" and crime in the Edwardian English society. Ms. Climpson describes in her letter what Ms. Timmins, Agatha Dawson's white domestic help, thought about Hallelujah Dawson. She refers to him, for example, as a "nasty, Dirty Nigger" (*Death* 130). Then she shows him up "much against her will into the nice CLEAN drawing-room" (*Death* 130), and refuses to cook lunch for this "black moor" (*Death* 130). This is the narrative's persuasive tool to place the "English" domestic help much higher in the social structure than a man of colour. The collection of evidence in the narrative which relates to "Wicked Simon" (*Death* 149), Rev. Dawson's grandfather, who sailed away to the West Indies, and took a woman of colour to live with him, creates the condition for working narrative prejudice against the descendants of such a person. The air of superiority that one sees in white

men and women—evident, ironically—from their sympathy and pity for the unprivileged dark man is a reflection of the social bias of the novel. The narrative operates as an agent of social/racial hierarchy of the times by highlighting the importance of Agatha Dawson's charitable acts. The acceptance of her greatness is put in the mouth of the Rev. Dawson, "the inferior man," as: "She received me in the most charming way, and when I told her who I was—acknowledging, of course, that I had not the slightest claim upon her—she was good enough to make an allowance of one hundred pounds a year, which she continued till her death" (*Death* 158).

If there was further need to confirm the indirect endorsement of the English society of the times, it is seen in getting Rev. Dawson to accept his inferiority of his descent and colour. He says: "Oh, yes. I would not intrude upon her. It could not be agreeable to her to have a relation of my complexion continually at her house. But she gave me lunch, and spoke very kindly" (*Death* 159). The novel reflects the ideological underpinning of character, action and thought in race and colour.

The distribution of power relations in the novel is based on the continued subservience of the 'other' in the white world. Importantly, the novel makes an interesting foray into Caribbean colonial life, and silently borrows an image of sexual exploitation that marked the project. The cheque of ten thousand pounds—created as a narrative condition—to confirm Rev. Dawson's innocence also relieves him of his poverty. The fact that he is in need of his "white" relative's financial support for security and freedom establishes the narrative's design of placing the man of colour in a powerless position. The novel raises doubts and fears towards this "outsider" due to his illegitimate descent, dark skin and pecuniary crisis. What is even more important is that this fear of the dark 'brother' was a social reality that threatened the utopian family structure of the English middle class, due to sexual liaisons created by the colonial condition. The fact that Rev. Dawson has been the target of Mary Whittaker's viciousness is a condition and consequence of the threat posed on his weak social and economic status. The narrative intends to convey that the "otherness" of this man is a necessary condition of criminality, due to the fact that he poses a moral threat to the family integrity of the English middle class and the economic threat of claiming a portion of the family inheritance.

3.2.15. The Pleasure of Exposing

In this novel the pleasure of the text is keyed in with withholding the discovery of the criminal. Again, the murderer is not held under suspicion, rather her crime is confirmed, which is multiple murders by aid of multiple identities. To this end, the pleasure of the text is circulated through the narrative's agreement with the power of social surveillance in exposing interesting aspects of the secret. The fact that no one was clear about Agatha Dawson's murder ensures that any criminal proceeding or judicial processing is not possible. Therefore, with the purpose of consolidating the penal expectations of a disciplined order—'once a criminal always a criminal, and 'no criminal can finally beat the law'—the narrative purposely gets her to commit more crime in order to convict her. The narrative intention of delaying Ms. Climpson's confrontation with Mrs. Forrest, and Peter Wimsey never intending to meet Mary Whittaker, provides the possibility of Vera Findlater's murder. In this connection it can also be further suggested that this narrative spatialization provided by the delay in revealing the multiple identities sustain the pleasure of the text. Thus, the narrative technique of accusing the guilty of two other murders of Evelyn Gotobed and Vera Findlater heightens the pleasure of anticipating justice and the authoritarian power of restoring order in a disciplined society.

The narrative of *Unnatural Death* is very different from the earlier two narratives discussed where the authority is not threatened with violence or retaliation from the anti-social world. But this narrative differs from the fact that the power to challenge the judicial norms by connivance through disguise, as well as the attempt to violate the superhuman power of the detective circulates through the corpus of the text. Mary Whittaker, who with her cunning and intelligence tries to construct a power structure that is instrumental in her manipulation of the judicial as well as the social order. In its run, the narrative seems to shield Whittaker's crime and enhance her power to frustrate authority. However, the larger narrative apparatus manufactures twists and turns that collaborate with the omnipotent/omniscient scheme of the detective (Lord Peter Wimsey).

Interestingly, the narrative's manipulation of the establishment of authority and power is achieved primarily through "chance." For, Wimsey and his team are always provided with some kind of cue that substantially enhances their power over Whittaker. This is a coercive device to ensure social stability. The narrative design and intention not only

reflect the ideology of the aesthetic—hollowing out any structure or apparatus that repudiates the juridical/moral structure of society—but the fact that in any struggle between the social and the anti-social, the textual design already always sides with the state and its organs. The narrative always plays with any alternative power structures to rule them out. Thus, the reputation of Sgt. Cuff, Hercule Poirot and Lord Peter Wimsey remains intact. Further, their continued representation of accepted notions of loyalty and ethics survives narrative challenges. Incidents strategically inserted into the narrative corpus temporarily upset the social structure, only to be defeated by the narrative intention.

III

Detective narratives, it is seen, circulate pleasure not only by fulfilling heuristic goals, but also redistributing heuristic codes. So instead of securing individual pleasure/fulfilment of desire, narratives make considerable investments in transforming goals of pleasure into equivalent codes. This chapter concludes by suggesting that the detective narratives of Conan Doyle circulate pleasure through its infallible detective Holmes who becomes the corollary for a better world by eliminating any dystopian elements. Moreover, a particular class' utopia is another class' dystopia, and therefore, the detective's autonomy and infallible investigative methods are consciously or unconsciously directed towards the preservation and legitimation of state apparatuses or social order. Holmes assumes the role of perfecting the given societies by overseeing or supervising or completing the utopian dreams of the ruling class ideology or the imperial order. To this end, the attempts to create a utopian state disguise the imposition of hegemonic and hierarchical structures. It is important to note that this disguise—operating at the level of institutional requirements—is further cloaked in the infallibility of the ideal power and authority of the detective superhero. Holmes' success is as much a communal realization as an individual celebration. Pleasure in this narrative accrues from the transformation of the individual into the communal, where participation in a larger event is a ritual guarantor of pleasure.

Since violence begets violence, in *The Moonstone*, the precious stone possessed by John Herncastle is seen to bring disruptions into the social setup of the narrative. Towards the end, with the moonstone being transported to India once again by the “Hindoos,” order is restored into the life of Rachel Verinder and Franklin Blake. Harmony in the family is directly related to harmony in the society, and this ideology is upheld and preserved by the ending of the novel. There is always a conscious effort to establish harmony, reward the ‘good’ and penalize the ‘bad’. The production of codes that transmit equivalents of pleasure owes substantially to the narrative’s espousal of judgment and power of the law-keepers without jeopardizing individual lives. The production and circulation of codes of heroism and fairness through the power and person of the gentleman detective is important. The ordinary citizen is spared the burden of fighting notorious criminals and the success of the detective hero provides a vicarious pleasure that is reminiscent of ritual celebration of the victory of good over evil.

In *The Mystery of the Blue Train*, Poirot represents Van Aldin, a dominating figure of capitalist power. It is because the detective is seen as a preserver of systems, and what Marjorie Nicolson referred to as “... the guarantor of that cosmic purposefulness ...” (Cited in Porter 125). By absencing any conflict or resistance in the narrative is a participatory order of the detective’s action of bringing in order from disorder. Moreover, pleasure is circulated through the transformation of individual pleasure and participatory pleasure. This is done not just by having Knighton and Mason convicted, and Derek Kettering exonerated, on behalf of Van Aldin, but for the entire community. There is an indirect source of pleasure in the novel. The success of Poirot is an affirmation not of capital but of good. Therefore, narrative pleasure depends on the power production tools which re/de-code the established state power and social order.

Similarly, it is necessary to understand that the pleasure of crime and its detection is connected to the consolidation of the state ideology and the social purpose behind it. Therefore, it can be suggested that the issue of crime and detection in *Unnatural Death* produces pleasure, not in relation to the discovery of “whodunit.” The identity of the criminal in this case is quite apparent. It can be argued that it is rather the corpus of the text which can be analyzed to understand the narrative’s conformity to the various power relations in the social world of the novel. Thus, the element of pleasure in this novel is pre-determined by the narrative intention and design to establish compliance to power

and social formations. Thus, all the three traditional detective texts operate in a pleasure-power continuum.

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