

# Defacing the Indian Detective: Byomkesh Bakshi and Feluda

Prarthana Hota

Student  
School of English  
Gangadhar Meher University  
Sambalpur, Odisha, India

**Abstract-** Detective fiction as a sub-genre of crime fiction has been an important part of the history of every literature. Beginning with the blood-thirsty public hungry for a spectacle of the criminals getting punished to the stories of crimes acting as food for gossips, the common public has often loved this favourite branch of narrative.

With the suffocating depiction of the repetitive and prototypical detective figure taken from Sherlock Holmes, Saradindu Bandopadhyay took the charge of cleansing this genre off the colonial influence with his conjured character Byomkesh Bakshi, and Satyajit Ray soon followed with his character Feluda.

This paper discusses the placement of the detective figure in various contexts socially relating to the social and regional identities and consciousness, national identity and consciousness, judicial consciousness, and masculine consciousness against Satyaboti, his female counterpart representing the feminine consciousness. It also places the detective next to the panoptic powers of the narrator and analyses how the narrator uses his power. With the aforementioned studies, it also attempts a placement of the figure in the complex structure of the narrative.

**Index Terms-** Crime fiction, detective fiction, whodunit, armchair detective fiction, deconstruction, postcolonialism, poststructuralism, national consciousness, national identity, feminine consciousness, regional consciousness, structure, ideology, narrativity

## I. INTRODUCTION

In its essence, detective fiction would mean a narrative that deals with the detection of the cause of an event that essentially fuels or gives rise to the structuring of the stories. This is a sub-genre of the much popular and voraciously consumed crime fictions that had infamously swallowed England from the beginning of the Victorian era. This hunger for the consumption for this genre of writing can be attributed to the personal narratives of moral degeneration and decomposition in *The Newgate Calendar* (1773), which, for the first time provided elaborate descriptions of the crimes committed by the respective criminals with their biographical background attached. The English public was surely made aware and was instructed, that seemed to be the first and primary aim of these papers, but their availability to the public also stirs a thirst and interest for the consumption of more of such narratives.

This demand for production of the so called 'sensational literature' that Sherlock Holmes hates to engage in, led to the production of a big chunk of the whole of literary production in mainly the Victorian era. This is to identify and locate only the canon of established crime fiction as a genre, or in other words, only a history written by the canon. However, as mentioned above, essential elements of both crime and detective fictions have been seen in the oldest of text including the *One Thousand and One Nights*, for instance, the story narrated by Scheherazade, the medieval Arabic tale of "The Three Apples". Where a dead body of a woman cut into pieces ends up with Harun al-Rashid in a chest sold to him by someone who had found it on the bank of the river Tigris. Ja'far ibn Yaha is ordered by the former to solve the mystery.

There are a few dictated features of detective fiction that have rubbed themselves off in the form of stencils when Bengali detective fictions starts being serialised in newspapers and magazines. These features were all brought forth by established writers such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Edgar Allan Poe. These precursors of the whodunit discourse created detectives that were smart, sharp, and eccentric. In the classic fashion of the armchair detective, they were accompanied by a seemingly reliable and transparent story-telling figure, who is generally the narrator of the written text. Poe's detective is very much contemptuous of the Police, and works outside of their structure. Doyle's Holmes establishes the concept of a detective as a private business. These structures have been adopted, adapted, and adeptly circulated and experimented with keeping the Indian context in the background.

### *Saradindu Bandopadhyay and his Byomkesh Bakshi*

Saradindu Bandopadhyay, an advocate-turned-litterateur, had been deeply influenced by the writings of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and his stories in Sherlock Holmes, Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown, and Edgar Allan Poe's "Tales of Ratiocination". Bengali detective fiction writers did exist even before Bandopadhyay, like Dinendra Kumar Ray, Swapna Kumar, and Panchakri Dey, but what made him different is that he is impossible to place among direct copies of the volumes sensational literatures produced by the English and the West in general. Bandopadhyay's Bakshi was a postcolonial cleansing of this cultural and overpowering presence of the West in the image of the Indian detective. The stories were initially serialized in a literary magazine called *Basumati*. They were later on published in volumes. First being, the *Byomkesher Diary*. A total of thirty three stories were written by Bandopadhyay featuring Bakshi.

In terms of familiarity of the hero, Saradindu Bandopadhyay introduces this man to the Indian public who can be easily identified with the Indian context of both space and time. One instance for that could be given for his identity beyond the action of investigating. Holmes, though charismatically drawn to Irene Adler, a relationship between them never grew out of it—the super detective has

never ever fallen in love with a woman and has forever remained detached from any such action or emotion. Byomkesh falls for a woman called Satyaboti in his fifth adventure; a story called “Where There’s a Will”, whom he eventually marries, and her presence and influence are felt in most of his further investigations. Ajit and Satyaboti remain the centre of his personal life and the trio functions as a family unit. Moreover, compassion is another such sought after quality that makes one admire him more for he never fails to notice the pain and sufferings of others. In the story “Primeval Adversary,” his empathetic feelings could be observed clearly. Relating to the murder of a rich businessman called Anadi Halder, the detective engages an informer called Bikash Dutta only to relieve him of his financial crisis. Byomkesh and Bikash meet for the first time in an earlier adventure and now the informer discloses his difficult days due to the termination of his job. Byomkesh’s heart overflows with kindness and he invites him for lunch that afternoon. After briefing him about his job, Byomkesh generously gives him a hundred rupee note in advance and promises to pay him more after the job.

Byomkesh Bakshi has been adapted into movies and serials multiple times. One of the most notable of them is Chiriyakhana or, The Zoo in 1967, directed by Satyajit Ray. Kolkata Doordarshan in the 80s had produced several episodes with Ajay Ganguly as the lead actor. The second adaptation in Hindi was directed by Basu Chatterjee with Rajit Kapoor playing Byomkesh, and Sukanya Kulkarni as Satyaboti, who also was the first actress ever to have played the character. This series contained a total of thirty three episodes.

### ***Satyajit Ray and his Feluda***

Satyajit Ray hardly needs an introduction when placed in an Indian context. Writer, and filmmaker, Ray had revived the magazine Sandesh in 1961, which was originally started by his grandfather. In 1965, the first story featuring Feluda was published in the aforementioned magazine, called “Danger in Darjeeling”, which included the story of two cousins visiting Darjeeling for vacations and the troubles that follow. Feluda’s real name was Pradosh C. Mitter. With the successful reception of the story, Feluda’s character started taking a more structured shape with time. In 1970, Feluda first appeared in the magazine Desh. It was also received warmly despite of the target audience being adults. A year later, Ray introduced a foil to Feluda, and named him Lalmohan Ganguli (Jatayu) who was a cheap thriller writer, extremely ignorant and disinterested about events around him worked perfectly next to Feluda as a foil. Later on, he lives with the two cousins. Feluda, unlike other detectives who already had a godly, all-knowing persona around them, was closer to the general public. He teased his younger cousin, bullied him, and seemed much more relatable, almost like a member of one’s own family. Feluda became, hence, an important part of the Bengali consciousness in the context of literature.

Though Feluda offers all his respect to Holmes by addressing him as the “Guru” or “Master” of all the later detectives during his visit to Baker Street in the story “Feluda in London,” there is rarely anything analogous between the narratives of Feluda and Holmes. He smokes an Indian cigarette when he is confused, cracks his knuckles when excited or restless, and thinks about a problem by lying down on his tummy supported by a pillow. He also works on a problem by shutting himself inside his room for hours. In the story “Kailash Chowdhury’s Jewel,” there is an elaborate description of how Feluda switches to his thinking mode that has no resemblance to Holmes’ style of working or thinking. Feluda usually becomes silent and hates being disturbed during these moments. Sometimes he paces to and fro in his room, but most often throws himself on his bed and stares at the ceiling. His deductive calculations are scribbled in his blue notebook in a unique pattern that very few can decipher—English writing in Greek letters.

### ***Objective***

The objective of this dissertation is to deconstruct the prevailing image of the Indian detectives that has been frozen by the very transparent and reliable narrators and to critically situate these figures in relation to various elements of the structure that both the narrative and the detective finds himself in. The paper explores the location of the Indian detective in relation to the narrative, the narrator, and the bigger structures pertaining to the society in a whole for instance, the national consciousness, structural institutions like law, class consciousness, and the structure of the masculine and feminine binary. This dissertation attempts to deconstruct the persona of the detective as situated in the various spaces that interact and overlap with each other in the process of production, consumption, movement and stagnant existence of the selected texts by the selected writers, and identify the relations that resulted in the current persona of this curious character.

The paper deals with selected short stories extracted carefully from certain volumes of story-collections (Byomkesh Bakshi Stories, Byomkesh Bakshi; Picture Imperfect and Other Mysteries, The Complete Adventures of Feluda Volume I, The Complete Adventures of Feluda Volume II) that contain in their centre, the identity of the detective.

### ***Review of Literature***

The journal published by the University of Bucharest titled Identity, Otherness, Crime: Detective Fiction and Interethnic Hazards approaches the problem of identity(or identities) from the direction of analysing these narratives as specimens of popular and commercial literature. Limiting the timeline and taking examples only from the post World War-II crime fictions produced in the Southern Europe and the Middle East, it explores the meanings and problems of race as situated in the areas where these popular fictions took time to reach and analyses the experimentations in a multi-ethnic and multicultural space.

The book Questions of Identity in Detective Fiction by Linda Martz and Anita Higgie showcases a collection of essays that dives into the ways in which these narratives allow the exploration of a very wide range of meanings. The collection examines how the genre reflects the social structures as well as how it interacts and interfaces with national narratives and histories.

In the book Investigating Identities, Marieke Karjenbrink and Kate M. Quinn is one of the very few books that attempts a comparative study in this genre, by taking examples of crime fictions produced by over a dozen of countries. It also deals with the exploration of national and historical memory of the producing nation.

In the paper The Missing Detectives of Delhi, Srijana Mishra delves into the problem of location in the detective fictions of India. She explores the authority, social relations as represented in the European detective fictions set almost exclusively in the metropolis, and why that structure fails when it comes to India.

In a study done by Michael k. Walonen, called Neoliberal Capitalism in the Indian Organized Crime Fiction of Vikram Chandra and Salman Rushdie, explores how the capitalist society associates the minority and blames them for the society's ills while very comfortably places themselves-as the authority-outside this structure of criminal practices while taking into account Vikram Chandra's Sacred Games along with Salman Rushdie's The Golden House and The Moor's Last Sigh.

Raj Raj Mukhopadhyay in his paper titled When Detective Seeks the Ghost: Exploring the Paranormal in Saradindu Bandopadhyay's Baroda and Byomkesh Bakshi Stories explores the difference between the extremely rational and meticulous and scientifically deducing Byomkesh as placed next to the same writer's conjured character Broda, who narrates his paranormal experiences without any rationality, and the characters' clash and changes in ideologies after certain experiences together referring from the story "Byomkesh O Baroda".

In a paper titled The Whirligig of Creation: A Comparative Study of the Creative Concerns of Agatha Christie and Saradindu Bandopadhyay, features a comparative study of the detective figures Miss Jane Maple and Byomkesh Bakshi. The paper also studies the Western influence on Byomkesh while attempting a creative and structural comparative analysis of the creations of both the writers.

Another paper titled "A Comparative Study of Saradindu Bandopadhyay's Supernaturalism in his Detective Stories and Naturalism in Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali" by Dipa Nandi discusses the binary of Byomkesh and Baroda, as placed next to the backdrop of Pather Panchali as seen within the context of naturalism, superstition, societal structures, cultures, festivals, etc.

#### Research Gap

The aforementioned researchers and many more have attempted successfully, the analysis of the narrative of detective fictions in whole by placing the discourse in a postcolonial scenario, in the situatedness of the theories relating to popular literature, and have even tried to problematize the ethnographic view of the genre. However, less research has been done in the field of the identification of the detectives themselves in relation to the elements he exists in. The centre of every detective fiction is left untouched, and understandably so, since the narrative is thought to be constructed around the said figure.

#### Research Methodology

This dissertation uses the method of deconstruction to problematize the identity of the image of the detective by placing the detective strictly in the structure of the narrative. It also explores the different voices speaking and clashing in the discourse while locating the figure in the system of the structure he exists in. The dissertation plans to establish the transitory figure of the detective as placed in various locations inside structures starting from small to vast. It also takes into account gynocentrism, Marxism, psychoanalysis and the theories with law in order to problematize the detective's location within various layered structures that he exists in.

### Chapterisation

#### Chapter One- Introduction

This chapter deals with a general introduction to the topic, genre, selected authors, and their selected texts followed by objective of the paper, review of literature, research gaps in the chosen field, and the plan of chapterisation.

#### Chapter Two- Investigator; The Transcendental Signified

This segment deals with the identity of the detective as located in relation to the narrative. This attempts to locate the detective both as the origin and as the end of the discourse of the detective fiction.

##### Chapter 2.1 - Detective as the Object, the Subject, the Bard, the Origin, the End; A Differance

##### Chapter 2.2 – Deceptions

##### Chapter 2.3 - The Detective and the Detected; Two Faces of the Same Coin

#### Chapter Three- Narrator; The Panopticon

The chapter entails the representation of the detective as put on to display by the narrator of the text and attempts a problematization of the transparency of the narrative.

##### Chapter 3.1 - Re-presentation, Representation

#### Chapter Four- Structure; The End

This chapter makes an attempt to place the detective inside the various systems of structures and makes him suffer through all the flow of power by analysing power relation and the anxiety of belongingness.

##### Chapter 4.1- Detective; the Element Out of the Structure

##### Chapter 4.2 – Reading the Victim's Body

##### Chapter 4.3 - The Public and the Private

##### Chapter 4.4 - Three 'I's in "Indian Detective"

##### Chapter 4.5 - "Satya" with a Womb

##### Chapter 4.6 – Adaptation; A Study

#### Chapter Five- Conclusion

This final segment sums the entire paper and concludes the dissertation.

## II. INVESTIGATOR; THE TRANSCENDENTAL SIGNIFIED

When an armchair detective fiction is being produced and consumed, there are three very specific narrative layers are at play at any given point in time. One being the plane having the narrator (Ajit for Bandopadhyay and Tapes for Ray) as the voice and the audience/reader as the receiver, the other being the inner core of the plane of action, where the narrator to us becomes the receiver, and the position of the origin is too nuanced to be identified with certainty, and the third of course, being the consciousness or the mental repository of the author as the epicentre, and the consciousness of the reader as the impact point which encompasses within itself, the two former narratives. While the last give-and-take is more or less already established often before, and is rather almost

impossible to be placed because of its nuances relating to the respective consciousness and their complicated, endless referentiality and locatedness in the structure of the reality (a rather audacious claim, but true nonetheless); not just for this genre, for any given text, the following chapter shall be limiting itself to the action of problematizing the location and identification of the detective in relation to the first two layers of narratives.

### ***Detective as the Object, the Subject, the Bard, the Origin, the End; A Differance***

The investigator is ideally expected to place himself out of the structure of the crime or the action he is studying. As a professional, it is a detective's foremost duty to dissociate himself from the case he is investigating. From both the structure yielding the crime and the structure finding answers, the detective is placed above. And yet, he actively participates in both the processes; of action and detection. The narrative goes so far as to place the detective as the initially planned victim of a crime in certain cases. Moreover, he gives the crime the legitimacy. In the end of almost every story, Byomkesh narrates the entire endeavour of his arrival at the end of the tunnel. He would sit next to Ajit, and reveal the smallest of his assumptions and their connections with each other forming a coherent argument that would be enough to form a narrative for the crime and its investigation. He would reveal to the audience as well as Ajit what he was thinking at every point in time throughout the journey of the investigation (or the search of Truth, as he calls it). Hence, more than the culprit, the detective perceives the entire story. The criminal might have the desire, the motivation and the tool to fabricate a story by acting on them, however, it is the detective and his difference from the detective that earns him the tag. The detective gives the criminal an identity. The detective gives the story a kind of closure, an arrival at meaning. This gap between the action of seeking or desire and the identification of Truth is where the narrative finds itself in. On one hand the detective takes part in the seemingly endless process of significations following one clue after another tirelessly, unfolds unrelated perceptions present in the case, and enjoys the play. Yet, he is the one to drag the very process of significations or the "freeplay" of the structure to an end by giving the action of crime a legitimacy and a conclusion.

The story by Bandopadhyay titled "The Hidden Heirloom (Seemanta Heera)" very tactfully plays with the prototypical structure of the whodunits, as we see the detective (who hates to be called so) not essentially finding out or detecting the identity of the "doer". On the contrary, what he is hired to uncover -or rather, recover- is the entity that has been stolen. The identity of the criminal is already established. Byomkesh here, plays the Object. The subject, the scientist, artist Digindra Narayan Roy steals the valuable diamond from his nephew for no logical or apparent motive. For Byomkesh, to exercise as an investigator, he needs to understand the psyche of the criminal. Naturally, the first thing worth noticing in that situation would be the motive that fuelled the action. The detective's assessment is heavily dependent on structure. A definitive, concrete base or origin leading to a larger event is formed sequentially in his mind when he goes on this adventure. At any given point in time that he is engaged with the solving of a riddle, each new information places itself snugly at a location that Byomkesh allots it. Hence, origins and coherence is non-negotiable. Now that the origin(motive/desire) is missing, he is no more efficient enough to perceive the crime from a point well above the structure, since he is unable to trace its origin. The absence of a motive or a concrete desire in the aforementioned case problematizes Bakshi's position as the Subject of the narrative. Instead of being the entity out of the structure free to manipulate every other situation in search of whatever he calls the Truth, here, he has to work under conditions. It is implied in the story that Digindra Narayan was too intelligent for Byomkesh to outsmart him. While in reality, Byomkesh only had to find out a weakness. In most criminals, it is reflected in their desires. For instance, in the story "The Deadly Diamond (Raktamukhi Heera)", Ramanath Neogi's artistic and ambitious habit of stealing shiny valuables leads him to murder Haripada. And Byomkesh makes Ramanath accept his crime only by hitting at his weakest spot. By making him believe that the red neelam that he had stolen was a messiah of bad luck for him. This tactic fails with Digindra Narayan as he doesn't really have a definitive motive to fuel his desire. Needless to say, he is intelligent, but the part that was difficult for Byomkesh, is the fact that the crime was logically origin-less.

Ray, on the other hand introduces the readers to his protagonist in a much more gripping way than Bandopadhyay. A visible difference is immediately established between the teenage narrator Tapeshe and the incredibly observant twenty-seven year old Feluda. He is set apart from every other recurring character as soon as the narrative starts. He guesses correctly on which side of the mall Tapeshe sat by observing the sun-burnt side of his face. This technique is used by Ray quite obviously to attract and hold the attention of a reading public which primarily consists of kids. Pertaining to the patience span of the anticipated audience; children -which, safe to assume, isn't very long- there is less build-up in the beginning in order to introduce the detective figure unlike Bandopadhyay employs. His stories (especially the very first one) start very normally. Although one is already told of the centrality of the detective, he isn't shown showcasing his efficiency right away. They also are involved with a lot more serious events such as murder and assault. The very first story that features Feluda involves a mystery story writer as the culprit or the answer to the whodunit. Feluda almost isn't successful in finding it out but for a random trying on of the masks owned by Rajen Majumdar, that revealed the scent of cheroot hinting it could be Tinkori babu, the crime fiction writer who inspires Feluda himself. This is a rather nuanced and interesting self-referential employment of the character in the story. The originator of origins in other narratives becomes the origin of a certain narrative that happens to be something that occurs between one particular sender and receiver; here, the narrator (Topshe) and the audience.

The very first ever story featuring Byomkesh published in Basumati in 1932 itself challenges the linear structural narrative of experiences. Translated as "The Gramophone Pin Mystery", the story "Pother Kanta" shows Byomkesh's arrogance right away. This arrogance seems to be an inherent quality in him from the very beginning. It exposes two structures at a time. First, being the essentiality of workings of newspapers in the society- which shall be dealt later in the paper in the fourth chapter – and the second being the establishment of a conclusion before even the establishment of any primary event setting the motion for the act of detection. Byomkesh very confidently talks about the art of forming the right "assumptions" leading to a definitive conclusion, while the narrative itself practically starts with a conclusion. He has practically already solved the case using this very method. The story involves the serial killings of five middle-aged men with no kids, no relations, all dying in the middle of the road because of a gramophone pin stuck in their heart. However, the advertisement from the newspaper that struck Byomkesh the most, entailed the

removal of the “pother kanta”, that is, the thorn on the path. And this was to be achieved by the customer to the advertiser being at a certain place at a certain time behaving a certain way to establish the identity of the one seeking help, after which, the advertiser was to very secretly- so that he is not detected by the customer- pass on a letter which will have all the directions for the help-seeker to follow. Without even having seen each other’s face, a communication is established. Byomkesh identifies the workings of the criminal till this point in the very beginning of the story. Having showcased Byomkesh’s validity as a character worthy of being the centre, the narrative now progresses to introduce itself with the actions of the criminal. The first thing Byomkesh does in the story is to legitimize and prove his way of solving problems or rather detecting the problems. He lays the foundation for the legitimacy of his approach, and later on, the narrative goes on to do the same, creating a full circle with the series of murders being the direct effect and the advertisements being the cause. The narrative, hence uses the device of foreshadowing literally, to establish its centre (here, the detective) and later on unfolds itself towards the periphery based off the very centre and its structurality.

The story “An Encore for Byomkesh”, for instance, invokes an enemy for Byomkesh himself, from as long as ten years back. Anukulbabu, the lodge owner and cocaine supplier from the very first case that Byomkesh solves comes back after ten years, steals the poisonous matchsticks created by Debkumar Sarkar (from the story “Calamity Strikes”) after his arrest, and tries to kill Byomkesh. This interesting intersectionality hadn’t taken place in Bandopadhyay’s world before this. This time, Byomkesh is forced to be a part of the structure without being the transcendental signified. This time, he is both the effect and the cause. A situation like this should crumble into itself, which it figuratively does as Byomkesh lies (acting) dead on a hospital bed waiting for his murderer. Byomkesh here, is placed as the victim, the detective, and at the same time, the cause for the inception of the idea. The narrative, in one way or the other, simpler way or a complicated one, keeps referring back to the detective, while he is supposed to be outside the structure, and yet, actively engages with the elements of the elaborate system of the action of crime.

### *Deceptions*

The “I” gets extremely nuanced when deceptions are involved. Shakespeare in his plays used to deliberately play with the perceptions of identities by making his female characters dress up as males. In such a condition, the audience shall witness a young male playing the character of a female (Since females were not allowed to participate on the stage in the Elizabethan period, young boys played female characters.), where the character on the stage is disguised as a male as per the requirement of the story. It used to be an important device back then.

Deceptions are of many kinds when it comes to detective fictions with the aim being the same; of concealing one’s identity. While with the detective, it is generally to prevent being identified by the one he is detecting, similarly for the culprit, the intention is the prevention of identification from the detective or anyone affiliated with him. However, there are cases where the detective’s identity is laid naked in front of the criminal from the very beginning. In such cases, deceptions become central to the narrative instead of being only a device. For instance, in the story “Kailash Chowdhury’s Jewel”, we see Feluda flaunting his business card as a private detective in the very beginning. While the detective’s identity is cemented -both socially and personally- one anticipates an illusive play of identities already. In cases like these, the illusion relating to deceptions are specifically in the position of a subject. The episode involves Kailash Chowdhury’s twin Kedar pretending to be Kailash Chowdhury, while having held the real Kailash Chowdhury hostage in the attic. While Feluda is excited about his identity being properly fixed into the structure, he isn’t aware of what awaits him. And what is even more interesting is that, in order to give a meaning to the identity he has cemented, he is expected to discern the entangled and elaborate plan of deception of identities created by Kedar. Feluda, at the end, as a seeker, has to de-code the endless referential game and arrive at the ultimate signified, that is the identity of the man who has stolen the stone. The previous sentence says, “the stone” instead of “Kailash Chowdhury’s stone”, since the belongingness of the stone is also nuanced. Kedar (pretending to be Kailash, his twin) says that he found the stone before Kailash did, in the forest, which later turns out to be only a fake stone bought by Kailash Chowdhury for only fifty rupees. This elaborate and rather unnecessary drama for a stone of worth only fifty rupees entertains the targeted audience, needless to say. But along with it, what it does is, it also foils Feluda’s locatedness. By placing the well-established private detective Prakash C. Mitter against a family that bragged way more than the real worth of the things were, Ray employs the technique to the narrative, providing with a fresh, crisp, and definitive binary in relation to which, (very interestingly) further strengthens the identity of Feluda as a detective. The aforementioned symbol of Felu’s identity as a private detective, in essence, the business card he was so proud of, becomes all the more meaningful when seen in relation to the extremely interesting family he takes up as clients. This form of deception, hence, further enforces or strengthens the already established identity of the detective.

Another example shall be the actions of both Phonibhushan and Satyaboti in the story “Where There’s a Will”. Here, the subject is the character and not the narrative. Bandopadhyay deliberately makes his hero have a hard time while solving certain cases, the one mentioned above is one such. This proves to be a challenge, not because of the deceptions of the murderer, but because of a sister trying to save the brother who is an innocent suspect. Satyaboti, who interestingly becomes romantically affiliated with Byomkesh, hides the key facts about Sukumar (her brother) and his actions after the murder of Karalibabu (beneficiary to three of his nephews, including Sukumar and Satyaboti, who are the children of his sister-in-law). Interestingly, the two deceivers play their parts against each other. While Phoni hides evidences in Sukumar’s room in order to frame him for Karalibabu’s murder, Satyaboti does it to save Sukumar. It is this nuanced structure of the two deceptions that proves so difficult for Byomkesh to push through. Moreover, Satyaboti’s deception is not limited to the mere manipulation of the experiences or the hiding of the past. She very efficiently deceives, even lives her distorted truth. While she had already come across the dead Karalibabu on the very night of his death, she -despite of her knowledge of the fact- performs her daily routine of waking the patriarch up with the morning tea, so as to not tighten the noose around her brother’s neck who (so she believed) happened to be awake at the hour of Karalibabu’s murder. This episode particularly challenges the strictly structural approach one takes while forming the narrative for a crime fiction. Deceptions performed for a good intention with absolute bravery proves difficult for Byomkesh to penetrate through. “Dada is incapable of murdering someone for money. You don’t know the kind of person he is.” (pg- 112, Bandopadhyay, Saradindu, Byomkesh Bakshi; Picture Imperfect and

Other Stories, Penguin Books, 1999), says Satyaboti immediately. By doing so, she problematizes Byomkesh's locatedness outside the structure of her family, her private life, which she of course, feels obligated and answerable to because of her being a woman. This is the first time the detective's position as an all-pervading, all-knowing energy is put to question by a woman, and fittingly so, since the private spaces are generally attributed to women.

Both deceptions furthermore strengthen the identity of the detective. It might seem here as if 'Truth' is the signified in this layer of the narrative, as the detective follows, one after another, the clues to reach there and bring the case to a closure. However, in that process, he gives all the more meaning to his own identity. Two things may be inferred here: the detective is, one, the signified, two, the capitalist power holder making sure that his identity remains strong and intact in the tiring process of thesis-antithesis that he either uses or is subjected to in order to arrive at the closure.

### ***The Detective and the Detected; Two Faces of the Same Coin***

In the story "Where There's a Will", Byomkesh explains to Phonibhushan, the technicalities of the detective's work. Here, he differentiates the two kinds of murders. The "crime of passion", that, in essence, is exercised in the heat of the moment and is generally easy to detect. The other, "a premeditated crime" which is meticulously calculated by the criminal in order to very carefully save himself from being suspected, as well as frame someone else in the process for the murder as a suspect, exactly like Phonibhushan did. In case of the latter, Byomkesh explains, one has to move very tactfully, placing himself in the place of the criminal in order to understand the intention behind the crime, hence unfolding slowly, the desire, the gains and the loss that one might have after the commencement of the action.

In all detective fictions, both the investigator and the culprit are fabricators of three aspects; their own identities, of reality, and of narratives. Both the detective and the criminal engage in activities such as deception and manipulation. Byomkesh goes as far as stealing the diamond from Digindranarayan in order to recover it for his client (or, in more specific terms, restore the ownership of the valuable). These actions aren't performed by other structural forces engaged in the same ambition. One shall never find a police officer stealing the diamond back from a thief. Not belonging to a structural institution gives Byomkesh the liberty to use whatever methods he wishes, in order to help his clients. But this also places the investigator at a place not very different from the criminal's. The detective engages essentially in all the actions that the criminal does. He even sometimes considers experiencing again, the path that the criminal takes. In fact, often times, the detective takes the criminal and his actions as artist and his art. In the end of the story "The Gramophone Pin Mystery", he laments because of the police not allowing him to keep the murder weapon (which happens to be the bicycle bell) with him, and satisfies himself with the ten rupee note Prafulla Roy had given him when he had visited Byomkesh's abode disguised as an insurance agent as a memento. Hailing the criminal like a great artist, Byomkesh decides that a normal death (which of course, would mean, a death bound by structure of the society) sentenced by the court after a trial wouldn't be fitting for a man like Prafulla Roy (which of course, also isn't his real name), and approves his suicide. On the flip side, even the criminal approves of the detective's skill. In the story "Where's the Will", Phonibhushan places Byomkesh and his skills a respectable level before committing suicide. The criminal and the detective often can be placed similar to two opposing players playing the same game.

Both the criminal and the detective deal with the centrality of crime. Now, what differs is the direction. Both their actions are dictated with the same thing in the centre. While an event -that has already occurred- remains at the centre of this entire struggle, most of the time, the essential intentions of the criminal and the detective are the same. Both ponder over the intricacies of the perfect crime. While the criminal does it before the commencement of the event, the detective does the same after the event has taken place. And yet, they don't hold a cause-effect relationship. The investigator is the inverted image of the criminal on the axis of time, where the ocular device is the event.

The figure of the detective is difficult to place since, on one hand, he is the centre of the narrative structure, since he confidently engages and operates within the discourse. The very existence of the narrative is dependent on him deliberately refers to him and hence quite naturally, he succeeds in every case he takes up. However, at the same time, he makes sure to keep himself out of the structure of the narrative by only intricately analysing the structure of the case or the action from above. He can, at once be the origin, the narrator, the subject, the object, the end. This problematizes his situatedness as what Derrida calls the transcendental signified or the presence of absence of the centre or the origin.

### **III. NARRATOR; THE PANOPTICON**

The armchair narrative requires an important element for it to exist in the structure; an armchair narrator. Mostly, the armchair narrator to a detective is a faithful assistant, a friend, and above all, a presumed transparent narrator of all the experiences he has been through while accompanying his detective friend. As already established, the detective's position is rather nuanced as placed in the structure of the narrative. However, the narrator plays a rather fixed role in relation to the narrative and the detective himself. This chapter shall focus on exposing his role of the bard in both the locations, by attempting a comparative study of the narrators chosen; Saradindu Bandopadhyay's Ajit and Satyajit Ray's Tapesh. While doing that, the chapter shall also consider the portrayal of the detective and the entire narrative in the adaptations and explore the differences in narratives.

### ***Re-presentation, Representation***

What a narrator ideally does in the detective narratives is that, he makes sure to establish his friend as a hero, who continuously emerges victorious through all his adventures entailing the detection of the cause of the crime. From the point of view of the reader, the narrator acquires the position of superiority. He knows, experiences, and has realised everything much before the narrative is brought into existence. It is assumed that whatever the narrator talks about in the story, has been experienced by himself first-hand, which has formed a repository inside his consciousness, out of which, he tells his tale. One might classify the style as reminiscence. He does perform his role of a transparent reporter, and yet engages in the process of deception that Byomkesh performs. In the story

“The Gramophone Mystery”, Ajit is dressed up as the client that for the Thorn-in-the-Flesh advertiser, and hence, actively participates in the process of detection, as well as deception. Along with it, in the same story, he engages with Byomkesh in an important argument. When Byomkesh, advocating for reading through advertisements talks about -what he believes- “circumstantial evidence”, which entails a process of sequential assumptions based off the facts one already has; “an educated guess”. At reading the advertisement of the “Thorn-in-the-Flesh”, Byomkesh immediately and accurately assumes the workings of the man behind the advertisement. Upon Ajit questioning where the proof to his statements is, Byomkesh exposes his methodology of detections. Being a detective outside the structure of law and order, he is free to employ any kind of method he wants to in order to uncover the truth. He says, he uses a good guess which rarely ever falters, and then goes on finding proofs that refer to his assumptions to be true. Ajit argues that this process of finding truths is null and void, since there is no concrete evidence for the uncovered entity. Ajit hence, actively engages with Byomkesh and provides a voice to the reader and the reader’s anxieties about believing in Byomkesh as he solves a case. Every query that Ajit presents in front of Byomkesh, even when he isn’t engaged with him in an argument essentially, he still addresses a lot of the audience’s questions. In the end of the story “Where There’s a Will”, which is a case involving much complexity since all the proofs found in Sukumar’s room pointed towards him being the culprit, and no one had any reason for suspecting Phonibhushan, the real murderer. Here, we find a complex struggle of the detective with the fabricated reality where he doesn’t seem to fit in. Ajit makes the most out of this situation by asking him how he finds out the whole thing to be. Whereupon, Byomkesh narrates the entire story of the crime starting from the idea being inception into the mind of the criminal, till its manifestation. Interestingly, Byomkesh asks Ajit things like, “What did you make out of “such and such person/event”?”. By making the detective figure do this, Bandopadhyay effectively and subtly engages the audience into the narrative. Apart from being the transparent narrator for the story and a faithful assistant to Byomkesh, Ajit also represents the audience in a lot of cases. Making Ajit the voice of the readers’ collective consciousness also serves another purpose. The employment of this mouthpiece also heightens the difference between the detective and the rest of the population. One of the most important responsibilities the narrator is endowed with is of establishing the identity of the detective. It is their perception after all, that the reader gets to see a peek from. And hence, the impression and its depth in the consciousness of the receiver and the power of its representation to the structure shall remain with the narrator. Placing the narrator this way also complicates his situatedness in the narrative. Byomkesh’s remarkable observational skills, charms and arrogance immediately singles him out, both from the narrator and the structure. Not much is talked about his family, and Bandopadhyay makes sure no one is curious enough about it. Hence, critically, the narrator represents both the audience and the detective in Bandopadhyay’s world.

Practically, the power of production here lies with the bard, and the investigator remains an object from this perspective. Had this narrative voice not been with the detective, the volumes of stories for the audience wouldn’t have existed. This is true for both Ajit and Tapesh. The difference lies in the tones they use in order to describe them. Ray fixes his point of impact as the younger population, and hence, Tapesh, the detective’s cousin in the very beginning establishes the difference between himself and Felu right away. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this works amazingly for the children as readers, who don’t have much patience for the slow build-up that Bandopadhyay employs. Stories featuring Felu start quite normally, but then suddenly pick up pace not bothering to loiter around the details much longer. This difference established between the narrator of Bandopadhyay and the narrator of Ray is also important as it gives all the more meaning to the two. Felu’s cousin Tapesh is a teenager. He starts narrating his adventures right from the age of fifteen when Pradosh is twenty eight. The voice that tells the story for Ray is an easily distracted, wondering voice, and is much more appealing to the kids that Ray has anticipated his audience to be. He is easily curious, excited, and diverted. Much like Ajit, he too represents the voice of the audience, who unsurprisingly, are estimates to share a similar age. Moreover, the differences between the characters of Felu and Topesh is much more relatable and conceivable. Topesh’s tone is that of a restless teenager idealizing his incredibly sharp, intelligent and observant and cool older cousin. Bakshi, in that sense, is less of a super-hero than Feluda is. There is a lot less performance involved. He, as a detective is very obviously presented as seen from the eyes of a teenager. On the other hand, Byomkesh is much more human. He is arrogant, he is restless, he gets agitated when things don’t go his way, he easily gets obsessed with a case easily, and doesn’t rest until the case reaches an end. Bakshi’s tone and behaviour as narrated by Ajit [another man fresh out of the university], he is much more rootable and less removed from the audience than Feluda is. Also, although all these cases and stories and characters sometimes even the representative of the audience refer back to the detective, what still stand independent are the murder weapons. The tools that kill are rather a lot more memorable, be it a gramophone pin, or accidentally created poisonous matchsticks, Byomkesh is endowed generally, with the responsibility of both detecting the culprit, and the weapon. Even the stories are named that way, “Gramophone Pin Mystery” and “Agnibaan”, to name a few. Moreover, now that the differences between the two selected detective figures (or rather the projected image of the detective as perceived by the narrator), the two of them are sought out for rather different cases. While Feluda is approached for comparatively lighter cases such as threats, kidnappings, etc, Byomkesh is generally sent for solving more complicated cases like murders for a variety of reasons. As one delves deep into a comparative study of the two selected investigating figures, one might come to an inference that these differences often spring from the identity of the detective in relation to the audience. Felu’s audience isn’t assumed to be comfortable with violence and murders, hence the lightness.

The choices the two narrative make in order to populate the story is interesting. In the stories featuring Byomkesh, he himself emerges as the most memorable character. He himself gives meanings to all the actions manifested by the criminal, and other characters. Because of him acknowledging the characters and their situatedness in each story, he stops the further interpretation or any further identity that a reader might attach to the character. Feluda, however, only solves the case and gives it a closure just like that. Instead of giving an entire documentary of the crime committed, he lets the other characters and the criminal do that sometimes. Hence, leaves a room for freeplay in the establishment of the identities of the criminal. In a very similar fashion, Ray makes his characters much more memorable in the process. The characters like Mukul, the kid who could recollect his past life, featured in the story “The Golden Fortress” is one such. Similarly, Dhuru Kaka, Rajen Babu, even Jatayu, the cheap thriller writer introduced by the writer in order to foil the character of Feluda, more or less establishes himself without the detective’s or even the narrator’s help whatsoever.

His situatedness next to the narrative, like every other character that appears in the narrative, is independent on one hand as it seems that he, just like Tapesh is the panopticon. He too, being a writer, wields the power of forming narratives, although the intention is essentially capitalist and of a position of the vulgar Marxist, and although that power structure exists in a different plane, he can stand independent from the detective if one attempts such a study. However, the very intention behind Jatayu's existence in the narrative is to foil Feluda. Hence, that aspect of him referring to Felu cannot essentially be ignored because of the tangled intentions of the author, Felu, the central character, and Jatayu, the foil.

What complicates the position of the narrator, especially in case of deaths and murders is the body of the victim. Who exactly tells the story of the crime? Is it the narrator, or the author or the detective himself, or is it the body of the victim?

#### IV. STRUCTURE; THE END

The aforementioned questions lead one to the classic placement of the detective in a structure that, to be direct and specific, the society that he exists in, and continues to exist in. of course, Byomkesh or Feluda didn't stop existing after publication of the stories featuring them or a few years after that, for that matter. They continue to exist in the current society as loud as they did in the society their story reflects. From the infamous vulgar Marxist position, one would locate the detective in the society he is imagined in, which is the colonial Calcutta starting from the 1920s, and Felu has a larger canvas to cover. However, apart from that, the structures that govern the society also interact with the figures in complex ways.

##### *Detective; the Element Out of the Structure*

With the difference between the narrator, narrative, and the audience been already established, the next and final step of the study is to locate the detective next to or inside the structure of the society. Needless to say, while indulging in the crimes that take place not outside the structure, the investigator has to engage with it in various ways. In the story "Agnibaan" translated as "Calamity Strikes" Byomkesh elaborately emotes his dissatisfaction towards the insurance companies, who knowingly or unknowingly incept murderous ideas in the minds of lifelong married partners. In the same story, he also expresses his irritation at his neighbour and scientist Debkumar Sarkar's speech which entailed an elaborate reasoning for Indian scientists in need of extensively funded scientific research facilities. The idea presented by Debkumar Sarkar wasn't entirely null and void, so to speak in the terms of law. The specific speech that he delivers at the Delhi convention reveals an important binary in ideologies of the West as opposed to India. Debkumar Sarkar uses history to prove India's supremacy in the field of science. A pattern often seen and realised as the ideal way to establish one's point. The West relies, however, not on the past, but on individuality and the production and its flow and structure. Not to mention though, that the scientific research Debkumar Sarkar is talking of here, is introduced by the West. Because if not so, there was no point in the attempt to erase the difference made by the scientist in between the scientific researches of the West and India. Byomkesh ridiculing the Indian scientist trying to catch up to the West. A form of science that is destructive, as the narrative shall unfold itself with Debkumar Sarkar's plan of using the accidentally invented poisonous matchsticks in order to kill the irritating second wife for the insurance money, while in reality, the plan backfires as both his children use the pack of matchsticks before she does. This is a classic instance of an attempt of de-centering the Western science by highlighting its destructive side.

It is still however, essential to notice that the detective is ideally placed above these structures. Hence his authority to comment on them. Not much is essentially revealed about Byomkesh's family or his class. Whatever identity he has formed of himself is all based off his intellect, observational skills, and capability of solving mysteries. Hence, Bakshi himself can't be found inside the structure of the society, and yet, very actively engages with them all.

The story "Raktamukhi Neela" translated as "The Deadly Diamond" is a great example of the interactions of social classes. Haripada, originally a lower-class criminal with history of crimes and imprisonment is given a chance to improve his life by Maharaja Rmendra Sinha, a wealthy zamindar. Interestingly enough, the rich too get to represent the poor in most cases when the latter are dependent on the former. All of these characters catalyse the action of the crime in one way or the other. Rich zamindars offering jobs, acting as emancipators for the poor criminals, imprisoned men, scientists, thieves, even police; all form a structure for the Detective to operate in. The detective cuts across them all. He isn't bound which is something both necessary and ideal. The consciousness in all these individuals belonging to their respective groups in the society, whether that entails being a woman or an uneducated prisoner with no skills, or a wealthy man owning enough money to be able to help the lower classes; plays an important role in the narrative and the event of crime to be manifested. Hence, easily, these class consciousness are both the subject and the object in any narrative dealing with a crime. It is because Maharaja Ramendra Sinha aware and conscious of his wealth and his position in the structure of the society in relation to Haripada, that he feels responsible for his wellbeing, and believes he could help the man from ruins. It is because of the same consciousness that Haripada too, feels responsible for having kept the Maharaja's long stolen red neelam that his cell-mate Ramanath Neogi had given him in the prison, and later kills him for the same stone after being released. It is because the consciousness seeps deep into the minds of individuals that crimes occur.

Bakshi is removed from all this, which is exactly why he can assess the criminals with such perfection. He is incredibly god at studying the consciousness of each individual involved in any case from above. In the same story mentioned above, Byomkesh had no strong proof to produce in order to prove Ramanath as the killer. Yet, he does the seemingly impossible by hitting at the right spot. Ramanath's superstitious consciousness. By making him believe that the red neelam that he has stolen has been the reason of his downfall, he succeeds in both handing Ramanath over to law, and recovering the Maharaja's diamond.

##### *Reading the Victim's Body*

The class structures, economic stratifications, community consciousness, ownership of the narrative and its production all converge into the body of the victim. Apart from the victim's identity entailing their class, name, community, occupation, and extremely important, their past, the stiff bulk of flesh also carries the ownership of the experience it has gone through. Much like stolen entities do in other cases, the victim's body is so, with consciousness. In the stories like "The Inquisitor", Byomkesh first appearance, the body becomes a site of exercised power, as we witness the doctor Anukulbabu murdering the lower class people after they proved to



be threats that could expose his identity of the mastermind behind the supply of cocaine in the area. On the other hand, in stories like “Where There’s a Will”, the body becomes a site of resistance for Phonibhushan, a differently abled boy being slighted by his uncle. By murdering the uncle, he eliminates the nemesis, and fabricates the reality. Phonibhushan’s performance is commendable especially since he goes so far as to frame his contender in the will, Sukumar for the murder. The police would have unhesitatingly arrested Motilal because of the quarrel he had engaged in with his uncle earlier that morning, if not for the body, which revealed black spots near the nose of the dead, caused obviously by chloroform. This discovery led to the action of a thorough search through the house, which revealed a chloroform bottle in Sukumar’s room placed by Phoibhushan.

### ***The Public and the Private***

Moreover, these murders are committed in either the public, or the private. In “Agnibaan” for instance, the murderer’s daughter dies in the kitchen, which was originally meant the second wife. In “Where There’s a Will”, the patriarch dies in his bedroom. In “The Inquisitor”, two murders occur; Ashwinibabu is killed in his bedroom, while the poor man that Ashwinibabu had witnessed being killed by Anukulbabu, dies on the road. The story “Chiriyakhana” is particularly interesting in that case. Though performed in private, Nishanathbabu’s and his affiliations with the colony in certain ways blurs the binary between the private and the public. In the public murders, less of an elaborate performance is involved. It might seem as if Prafulla Roy [or whatever his real name was] and his techniques of murdering with the ingenious weapon of choice could point towards an elaborate performance, but the very genius idea defeats the essence of performance, and hence, in these cases, performance takes place behind the veil of deception. Prafulla Roy takes up a fake name and creates a fail-proof weapon to avoid suspicion, to avoid elaborate performance by escaping through deception. Phonibhushan on the other hand, kills in private, with a proudly structured performative act of damaging the meeting point of the medulla oblongata and the first cervical vertebrae. His subconscious inferiority about his deformity as placed next to Sukumar’s education, looks, manners, and abilities pushes through as he tries to employ an extremely precise action to murder Karalibabu.

### ***Three ‘I’s in “Indian Detective”***

Much has been talked of the crime and detective fictions of England, America, even the entire Europe. Few studies have also dealt with the crime fictions produced in Africa. An important perspective in the latter studies is to subvert the positions of the centre and the periphery. Calcutta as a region stands strong and bold with its colonial influence in contemporary culture. Naipul’s India; a Million Mutinies Now laments this situatedness of the place stuck in between cultures, times and consciousness. On one hand, the once colonial capital had derived its identity from this very colonial rule. Now, it stood against the regional and National consciousness. Bandopadhyay’s action of conjuring Byomkesh is one such.

Who is the “I” in the armchair narrative entailing the detective fictions is hence nuanced by three folds. For a Poe and Doyle consuming Bandopadhyay, the ambition was to create a figure that would rip off the colonial centrality pertaining to the perception of the image of a detective. He names his figure “Satyanweshi” (the one who aspires for Truth) an essentially western view as it may seem, since the very search of truth is a concept similar to the ideal of the Enlightenment, however, Byomkesh is out of this structure. Bandopadhyay does this in an interesting way. For one, he names his hero, not a detective, not a “Jasoos”, but as “Satyanweshi”. A man not in search of the criminal, but in search of Truth. Second, he establishes Byomkesh beyond the structurality of the law and its execution. He isn’t essentially against the workings of the police when investigating over a case. However, a strategic attack on the system is attempted through the story “Where There’s a Will”. The inspector Bindhubabu -a sharp individual turned dull because of the monotony of his profession- frequently objects to Byomkesh’s investigations thinking he has already solved the case based on the instances and evidences he had already found. The police and their working is based on a very straight-lined structure of referentiality. They find proofs, lay them flat on a surface for examination, find a rational sequence of significations, and in the end, arrive at a meaning. Essentially structural and logocentric. Moreover, what the police are after is the culprit. Contrarily, Byomkesh works the other way. He is able to place his meaning (for him, Truth) in various positions and locations. Since his search doesn’t end at the culprit but does so at Truth (which is not bound by structure), he is able to make his way through the struggle of the endless significations successfully while also allowing such freplay by choosing a centre that isn’t bound, and hence, doesn’t follow the “structurality of the structure”.

Feluda too, in the story “The Anubis Mystery”, runs into a sarcastic police officer on the way to the victim’s house. However, he does another job more efficiently. Ray is too busy establishing the “Indianness”. Most of his stories featuring Felu place him in a historically important place. The titles of these stories stand for that. “Danger in Darjeeling” is the first story published. The next one called “The Emperor’s Ring” takes place in Lucknow, and Tapes makes sure to mention each and every detail relating to the history of the place. Be it the event of the Sepoy Mutiny, or the mazes of the Imambaras. In the story “The Golden Fortress” too, Feluda moves to Rajasthan in order to ensure the safety of the kid Mukul. In every case that Feluda moves out of Bengal, the narrative makes sure to establish the highlights of that particular place. Ray however intentionally places his hero in places difficult to get out of. In the story “The Golden Fortress”, there were various situations where the investigation-cum-protector gets stuck, and the difficulties include not understanding a region’s language, not being able to access certain facilities not available in specific regions, and others, that one faces on moving out of one’s own place. These stories very well highlight the diversities and the very features the mentioned Indian places are known for. While on the face of it, it might seem that Pradosh is the subject here, the narrative actually takes control of the actions as the establishment of his national identity becomes central to the narrative instead of the detective or the narrator or the culprit or the victim, the narrative and the Nation and the Region seem to be the subjects. For Feluda, the national consciousness almost comes off as a burden.

### ***“Satya” with a Womb***

As already established, the character of Satyaboti in the story “Where There’s Will” plays an important part in the complication and the movement of the narrative. Satyaboti, for Byomkesh proves specifically troublesome and difficult since she seals her lips to him

quite strongly, and more importantly, for a good intention. A woman who later on visits Byomkesh's house to reveal the entire truth only after her brother is arrested upon the evidences found, only to seek help from the masculine seeker. Satyaboti is described in almost godly terms.

The introduction of Satyaboti into Byomkesh's life is particularly interesting. Needless to point out, the name is very strategically chosen. Byomkesh calls himself "Satyanweshi" (Shreejata Guha translates it into "The Inquisitor". A strictly literal translation shall be, "The Seeker of Truth"). By getting Satyaboti to tell the truth of her experiences, what Byomkesh essentially does is, he breaches the walls that the feminine mystery guards herself with. Byomkesh, The Truth Seeker befriending Satyaboti, The Deceiver only places him at a position of a masculine entity penetrating into the shield feminine mystery that surrounds Truth.

## V. CONCLUSION

Popular literatures, events, actions and performances throughout history are, in plain language, questionable. The infamous public of Elizabethan England enjoyed a good gore derived off punishments. Crimes and justice were not dissociated from entertainment and it was only customary to gather around criminals being painfully tortured. Christopher Marlowe very tactfully satisfies this hunger of his public by tearing his protagonist into parts as he is consumed and swallowed slowly by the powers of Hell. Moreover, this created a fear, and awareness among the watchers -or should they be referred as audience- about the result and consequences one has to go through when the commit a crime. But while seeping that into the consciousness, what also manages to permeate through is the sense of justice. A sense of social justice, poetic justice, and universal justice prevails as the criminal is punished with the society watching. The same society, whose rule the criminal seems to have broken. Placing the society or the watchers or the audience at the quasi-panopticon, the structure feeds the people an ideology that ensures the position of the authority as intact and gives the society an illusion of choice, which would kill two birds with one stone. It would both invoke a fear in the minds of the watchers, it would also make the people believe that their criminal is punished.

While that remains to be the socio-political aspect of it, the audience did enjoy gore and the dominating position of the watcher as the criminal withered in pain. This hunger for blood has trickled down the DNAs of the consumers of performance. Murders, assaults, theft, and so on, trigger a certain kind of consciousness, that we share with these humans who enjoyed bloodshed. The reason for relating these narratives to the elaborate and performative punishing system is that, in both the cases, the audience's hands remain clean. They don't directly engage in the activity of torturing or stealing or murdering. They don't really get involved in anything illegal. With the fourth wall still intact, the audience safely watches the entire narrative unfold, and get satisfaction out of it. Detective fictions, since their inception hence, have been entertaining the populace throughout time and space. A rather bold claim will entail that the reason for this voracious consumption of these narratives could be attributed to the superficial and para-real fulfilment of the unconscious desires relating to violence and assault. The subconscious gratification and satisfaction that one gets from these narratives are two-folds. For one, they cater to the unconscious mind craving violence, the second, they satisfy the other side of the story. Moving away from the primitive desire of enjoying bloodshed and gore, detective fiction presents the sense of poetic justice for the audience to feed and claw on.

Beginning from *The Newgate Calendar*, hence, a textual satisfaction came into the scenario. Much read and consumed, the crime fictions became a sensational way of passing one's time. Sherlock Holmes and stories of Edgar Allan Poe pioneered the structure for the crime fiction narratives that followed. In Feluda's words, "Sherlock Holmes has shown us the way. All we need to do is follow him." (pg-89, Ray, Satyajit, *The Complete Adventures of Feluda Volume- I*, Penguin Books, India, 2000) With the popularity increasing, the figure of the detective emerges as a hero who serves the society with bringing poetic justice to the structure. As India attempted this genre, a few of them were merely satisfied with copying the Eurocentric detective. Bandopadhyay takes up the charge to de-colonise the detective. He comes up with Byomkesh Bakshi, while Satyajit Ray follows with Feluda. A postcolonial reading might expose the nuances with the situatedness of both the writers and the detective.

The image of this new detective was a familiar one in the sense that he was more relatable than the European and the American almost super-hero of a persona. He was humane, arrogant, and easily relatable. He doesn't however exist outside the context of his existence. The narrative, the narrator, the structures all collectively work in complicated systems to give this detective figure his identity.

The detective in the entire system of the crime, from the inception of the desire to the very manifestation of it on the victim's body, remains an all-knowing figure. Even before the idea of the crime is incepted into the mind of the criminal, the detective seems to be aware of his mental state (although not in the same plane of existence pertaining time and space). All aspects considered, a detective isn't only invoked to follow the clues and solve a case. Instead, he is an element central to these narratives since they keep referring to this very figure. On the other hand he is also above the narrative, since he is difficult to place into the system of crime and its performance from its inception to the manifestation. The body of the victim, hence, becomes a site of the employment of either power or resistance or both. The criminal becomes the vehicle that reaches the site, and the detective can be interpreted as the traveller who follows the marks of the tyre marks in order to get to the site. The site can itself tell a story, and is perfectly capable of experiencing an event. The traveller only legitimizes the events as experienced by the site.

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