

## **Detective Deconstructed: Miss Marple as a subversion of the traditional Detective discourse**

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Detective fiction is a genre that gained critical acclaim at an unprecedented rate over the past few decades. The way in which it engages with the reader intellectually is a significant reason behind the increasing popularity of detective fiction. According to Merja Makinen, a standard assumption underlying detective fiction is that it is a male based genre because of its ratiocinating puzzle-solving element. This genre also foregrounds the discourse of “the Other” where women are assigned subordinate roles as exemplified by Mrs Hudson and Irene Adler in “Sherlock Holmes” where women are stereotyped as emotional and sentimental. Such portrayal of women in the detective novel reinforced the binary of Male/ Female where positive traits were associated with the Male whereas those which are negative were ascribed to the Female. It conveyed the idea that rationality and logical thinking are associated with masculinity whereas emotions and sentimentality are inherent in femininity. The female detective has striven to subvert the dominant patriarchal discourse by proving her abilities of deduction which are supported by knowledge seeking techniques unique to women, thus deconstructing the male/female binary opposition. Using textual analysis as the methodology, this research foregrounds the way in which Miss Marple in “The Body in the Library” subtly subverts the patriarchal discourse in detective fiction which was the dominant social discourse of her time where knowledge- seeking methods were characterized by rationality and deduction which were regarded as essentially masculine traits. To that end, the gender-related methods of seeking knowledge propounded by Belenky et al inform this research, highlighting the epistemological perspectives occupied Miss Marple. This conceptual framework is further informed by the principle claims of feminist standpoint theorists where epistemic privilege and social-situatedness of the marginalized are acknowledged thereby further deconstructing the male/female binary based on power and knowledge

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