

The Detectives Controversial Portrayal in Fiction

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Introduction

Key Words: Detectives, Investigation, Villain

I'm taking on the view of and looking into controversial detective characters in some games, comics and books, in other words "fiction", comparing and as well as looking into their actions, means of solving a case, and especially how this makes them close to a "good" villain.

I'm going to dig into how they are as characters, what they do, why, how they possibly ended up where they are and how the said controversial methods they use can be needed or beneficial to reach said goal.

The text takes on a combination of a philosophical, logical and psychological perspective. Be aware that this is all fiction, so logics, psychology and philosophy might not apply in the end.

Behaviour & What makes them stand out?

Their behaviour in fiction seems to sometimes, while not always be portrayed as eccentric or different in some way, this might be to possibly make the narrative more interesting for the reader. (Gatiss, 2013) (Hioka, 2013)

They all often have in common that they got wits or keen intelligence, great deduction skills, intuition and sometimes high intelligence. This along long with excelling in or having other skills. Example like the ones seen in the image below, to backs them up, or martial art or combat like L. (Death Note, 2006) In Kudo Shinichi's case he is excelling in football, "athletic abilities", as well as having gadgets and a wide knowledge of trivia as support (Aoyama, 1994). Then there is Inspector Gadget which as the name implies used gadgets as his main recourse. (Gadget & the Gadgetinis, 2002)

- Marksmanship
- Combat
- Athletic abilities
- Acrobatics
- Parkour
- Language
- Gadgets
- Trivia
- Convincing
- Charisma
- Carry their words properly
- Psychological Interference in Communication

(Afzal, 2020) (Skill sets)

These can act as the “other” thing that back up an already capable person. It can be used to either to assist them with knowledge and insight or physically catching and or protecting themselves in dangerous situations. Making for an even more capable individual. (Aoyama, 1994)

Nevertheless, a fresh pair of eyes to assist with an investigation. They are also possibly not bound by the police forces regulations as many are often working as private investigators. As the detective is someone from “outside” it might be logical to think that they could possibly find something that the police could have overlooked. They are often portrayed as this character that is brought into a case when the police fail to solve a case or as a second or different perspective. This can in some cases shine light on to new evidence or different discoveries. (Gatiss, 2013) (Hioka, 2013) (Death Note, 2006) This means that they can in some cases even be considered controversial as they are from the “outside” and “can” act in the grey area of what is legally allowed, while that can be said for even those in the police force at times that can easier find exploits as they know their way around and are familiar with their “playground”/ workplace. (Hioka, 2013) (Heavy Rain, 2010)

Recourses & Tools of Trade

In an adaption of Arthur Conan Doyle’s fictional character, Sherlock Holmes from the end of the 1800 century, (Gatiss, 2013) one of the villains that is hard to trace back is doing their work in a supposed normal setting. The brain processes endless amounts of information and thus filter out daily events that repeats, does not stand out, or is crucial in some way as this is the most efficient. This is also known as “Sensory Gating”. Making the human by nature bad at “spotting something they do not expect” even with training as the brain follows its standards supposed

pattern. Discretionally or Mindware gaps could also possibly explain these gaps that most humans tend to overlook. (Your Dictionary, n.d.) (Stanovich, 2011) This is making it seem like as long as the setting seem “normal” or is different from what the police force normally deals with of cases, crucial information can be lost under an investigation.

In the manga *Black Detective*, (Hioka, 2013) *Detective Conan* (Aoyama, 1994) and other comics or media the detective used many different means, thoughts or techniques which can go into this, in which some of which can be considered controversial or even illegal.



(Hioka, 2013) (Read from right to left)

These means can include as seen in the bellow image.

- “Supposed” bribing
- Scam
- Guilt tripping the perpetrator or others to reveal more information
- Paying attention to your surroundings
- Play along
- Blackmailing
- Pickpocketing
- Trespassing
- Make something seems one way
- Lying or changing up a story of the circumstances a bit to the unknowing to draw out the suspect or criminal via their actions
- Leading the situation or people down a certain part by acting a certain way/ make the situation work in their benefit
- Give someone lots of info which they can't process properly to, confuse the other into not questioning it.
- Placing tracking on people
- Invisible ink to mark people
- Putting people up
- Contradiction in information
- Information extraction
- Tracing back info
- Finding links/ connections
- Reducing possible suspects by comparing info, common traits or possibilities,
- Fingerprints
- DNA evidence like hair
- Left and right hand
- Time zone difference
- What’s left of marks on a victim and size of it. It is the marks of a rope or hands?
- Changing Voice, sometimes with a device
- How blood splatters have fallen on an object
- Trivia & Science
- Disguise
- Means such as GPS tracking via phone, e-mail can also be used.
- Natural causes that has to do with the environment tricks.
- Intel sources, police, people in different fields and sometimes even the underworld or black market

(Afzal, 2020) (Tools of Trade)

This can include many more that can work differently depending on the circumstances, people and how combined.

Example when the perpetrator or someone holding on to information knows of the circumstances, they will unintentionally at times act in a certain way that the rest of the unknowing would be less likely to do. (Hioka, 2013)



(Hioka, 2013) (Read from right to left)

Lying is hard and the body acts in a certain way based on our emotions so while there can be other circumstances surrounding a certain action one can reduce suspects based on psychological cues.

These psychological cues can include:

- Crossing one's arm

It works like a psychological defence mechanism as to “protect oneself” or in other words feel safe by closing oneself with one's body language. (Parvez, 2015)

Another well-known is-

- that one looks up to left when recalling information and up to right when fabricating lies.

This was usually more used example during an interrogation, by someone with a background in profiling, psychology or criminal psychology where one observes the person while the other asks and takes notes. This method has even in the past been used in organisational training courses to train police that are conducting interrogations. This myth was thought to be real by many psychologists for quite some time. Later another theory suggested that there is more to it that points that it may depend on handedness, but in the end a follow up study revealed that there

was no correlation between eye movement and lies. (Sherwin, 2012) (Sromberg, 2012) So, while there might be no correlation between the two, it can still be used in fiction as it is a widespread myth.

A psychopath, sociopath, one with higher intelligence could easier escape the former cause depending on which of them not as emotionally inclined. The second one might be a bit harder. On the other hand if someone did not have the role of observing then the perpetrator could lie their way out of it without looking suspicious.

- Another method is telling the supposed perpetrator of the evidence like something that person would be missing, making them unintentionally check themselves if they are missing it. (Hioka, 2013)
- One can also do the same but with mentioning how the victim looks, triggering them to think back, thus acting in a certain way which the detective can spot out. (Hioka, 2013) (As seen in the image above)

When you combine these means a certain suspect can apparently be discovered or reveal themselves when all evidence is pointing at them. At that point it does not seem worthwhile as they would be taken into custody either way for further questioning or reveal the readers suspicions. This also often ends with them trying to run away, sometimes succeeding and changing up their strategy or disgusting themselves. (Hioka, 2013)

- or B they feel mentally cornered and confess. (Hioka, 2013)

In order to measure a person's worth, you must do more than push them. The real way to test their worth is to give them power. When they gain the freedom to act outside the boundaries of law and ethics, you can sometimes see their souls. When the weak become strong... When good citizens become free to engage in violence... I'm interested to see what is the outcome of that. – Makishima Shougo, Psycho-Pass (Urobuchi, 2012)

“When a man faces fear, his soul is tested. What he was born to seek... what he was born to achieve... his true nature will become clear.” - Makishima Shougo, Psycho-Pass (Urobuchi, 2012)

Sometimes you need to push people to get to the truth.

This is at least what this certain comic and some other mediums in some cases portrays it.

As mentioned in the image (Tools of Trade) above, pickpocketing is used. In this one scenario the detective gets info from taking papers and such from people like police officers and such casually. While not the most ethical means, it's not addressed as such. (Hioka, 2013)

In *Aviary Attorney* (Aviary Attorney, 2015) the player is given the choice to break in to gather evidence. This being an illegal mean of gathering information they can't present it in the court as legal evidence. This is as, it can cause legal problems, but in the process one can get info from what they did to bring justice to the photographer that frauded a photo as evidence.

While questionable cause the detective was given a choice to break into the house of the photographer and the choices were a bit persistent by asking you 2 or 3 times like it was trying to tell the player to do it. And later addressed that it's illegal as a humorous effect where the player can choose from 3 choices, from it being very illegal, little illegal or the detective making up an excuse in such a manner that make it seems serious when what he is saying is only an excuse and presenting the French justice system in a wrong manner, which his assistant points out. (Aviary Attorney, 2015)



The Villain

In games you can find characters that is not always on the side of justice. The detective can as such be a villain with a tragic past. The main villain aka the detective is in fact one of the characters the player can play as. The crucial piece to discovering his identity was a clock that an FBI agent discovers while looking through a recording from when he clashed with the supposed culprit. The thing with the clock was that it was given to everyone that was promoted in the police station, so the villain had to have either been in the police force or a former police officer. (Heavy Rain, 2010)

Which explains why there were found close to none traces of the victims fighting back against what would otherwise normally be a considered a suspicious person. Cause it is generally perceived from when we are small that the police are someone we can trust or is the supposed “good guys”. Making it possible for someone in that setting, a police officer or someone putting them self in that role seem normal to the victim and those around. Thus, deceiving the public and making it hard to find testimonies as nothing seems out of place. As mentioned above it seems at first “normal”.

By digging too deep the detective themselves can sometimes go over to the other side. Sympathizing with your target/ perpetrator you are looking for might lead you to them. While the inside of the person and ideology might be different the thinking and thoughts can connect. But, by symptomizing you might eventually come to change your mind about something and it can lead you down another part. If humans form our life's on experience, then who is to say that you can divert from a part that you thought was right. It can lead you down another unforeseen one where you make new discoveries and start questioning your surroundings as well as your former self.

With this “overview mindset” you can see the world as a playground or “game”, the people as pawn or puppets and how they with this overview try to find ways around a system or set rules and principles. If you think of something like a “game” it might be easier to put into perspective at times. People as characters or puppets that move in a certain way that should be predictable if

you got enough information or find the right pieces to the puzzle to put the bigger picture together to use for a bigger purpose and lead in a certain direction, if not only for the thrill of it. As the villain in *Psycho-Pass*.

“I love this game that people call "life" from the bottom of my heart.” - Makishima Shougo, *Psycho-Pass* (Urobuchi, 2012)

When you can think as a villain then you might as well have the qualities to be one. The human is not a perfect existence by all means, we all make mistakes and bad decisions, and some can in turn intentional or not carry consequences that affects others.

It's not a sense of justice. Figuring out difficult cases is my hobby. If you measured good and evil deeds by current laws, I would be responsible for many crimes. The same way you all like to solve mysteries and riddles, or clear video games more quickly. For me too, it's simply prolonging something I enjoy doing. That's why I only take on cases that pique my interest. It's not justice at all. And if it means being able to clear a case, I don't play fair, I'm a dishonest, cheating human being who hates losing. - L Lawliet, *Death Note* (Ohba, 2006)

“Kira is childish and he hates losing... I'm also childish and hate to lose. That's how I know.” - L Lawliet, *Death Note* (Ohba, 2006)

There's not justice in this just pure human selfishness and what makes L stand out is many, but one of them is his means and being able to understand his “opponent”.

When you lose your end goal in the middle of the journey you might not get back on the right track and while looking for the goal a part of you could have ended up elsewhere. In short losing sight of your end goal and changing motivation can be the big issue. If not a nature or role the author has given them to make the hero “shine”.

In some cases, you might just have to be the villain to get the villain. It will at least might make for a more compelling narrative. Even if not including the detective character, there are also numerous examples of the good or hero going over to the “dark side” in fiction.

Conclusion

Even when having said tools and tricks as mentioned above some of them have more to them that can depend on a variety of other factors that plays inn. So, even if fiction portrays these as the detective's tools, it's not so easy and more to it in reality.

By being bound by “rules” or set principles you must act within those boundaries, but the one you are looking for in question might not have those set rules. So, to find them the easiest would be to have someone that can relate, is similar, can act outside this and or just as crazy. The detective might end up in places, thoughts and using means that are outside said boundaries to be able to catch the other player or outwit them.

To catch someone the best way is sometimes to play by their rules rather than what is right.

While this is highly controversial there is some level of philosophy as well as logic that would explain said action and advantages to them for both the detective and an investigation.

This outside person might be necessary at times but at the other hand they can be risky. Even the law enforcers and people in other areas of work themselves can act in a certain way that can be thought of as the least likely or not get caught cause of said regulation. Cause they don't always act too much outside the norm of their work making it hard to spot a difference.

“Laws aren't perfect, because humans who created laws aren't perfect. It's impossible to be perfect. However, the laws are evidence of the human's struggle to be righteous.” -Soichiro Yagami, *Death Note* (Ohba, 2006)

A person from inside could possibly be more likely to find loopholes that can be used for their own advantage and the law is not perfect when it comes to finding said people. Then falling outside a bit might be tempting for some, and if they are able to keep their tracks clean then it works.

Unlike real detectives their fictional counterpart can vary quite a bit depending on the developer's or writer's intention and their significance to the plot premise/ story. Not following set rules and going outside of the norm makes not only an entertaining, but also compelling narrative, by presenting things in a different way. While all might not be realistic writers at times take inspiration from reality and some aspects can have some possible philosophy, logic or explanations hidden behind.

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