CLIENTS, COLLEAGUES, AND CONSORTS:

ROLES OF WOMEN IN AMERICAN HARDBOILED DETECTIVE FICTION AND FILM

DISSERTATION

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By

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** ** ** **

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORY OF THE GENRE

According to John G. Cawelti, detective stories (along with other "formulaic types," such as westerns, romances, spy stories, and so on.) "are artistic phenomena of tremendous importance." Just as children "clutch at the security of the familiar" in their love of hearing a favorite story over and over, so do "older children and adults continue to find a special delight in familiar stories"--in the familiar characters, environments, themes, tones, and situations found in a given fictional genre. "For many persons," says Cawelti, "such formulaic types make up by far the greater portion of the experience of literature," and "an enormous percentage of books magazines, films, and television dramas depend on such formulaic structures" (1).

For Cawelti, genre stories are those "which have highly predictable structures that guarantee the fulfillment of conventional expectations" (1). Yet the generic limits are hard to define, especially in detective fiction. The very names given to this genre
in various languages suggest the vagueness of its boundaries: the French designation "roman policier" (and in Spanish, "la novella policiaca") is too narrow, since a given story may or may not involve the police. But the German "Kriminalroman" is too broad, since many novels involving criminal activity (Tom Jones or Huck Finn, for example) are out of place in this category. Our own language offers similar problems. Everyone knows what a "murder mystery" is, but not all generic examples involve murder. "Crime story" is widely used but has the same limitations as "Kriminalroman." "Detective story" seems better, but again not all examples of the form fit easily into this category: episodes of television shows about private eyes, such as The Rockford Files or Moonlighting, frequently involve scams, comedy, and/or romance, and a particular episode may or may not chronicle acts of detection, per se. In one episode of Magnum, P.I., for example, detective Thomas Magnum spends the entire show treading water and avoiding death from sharks and exhaustion as he remembers his childhood and his military father's death. The detective's friends wonder where he is and eventually manage to locate him, solving the only "mystery" this episode offers. But the detective himself is unable to do anything to help them and
demonstrates no powers of reasoning or cunning whatsoever. The strength of the episode lies in its human interest appeal as we see, through flashbacks, the small boy trying to please his father and to deal with the father's absence and eventual death.

The problem of generic boundaries is also confused by the fact that other genres are likely to trespass. Episodes of classic television Westerns often revolved around the solving of murders. Indeed, Westerns of all kinds (John Ford's The Searchers, for example, or television's Gunsmoke) frequently deal with the hunting down and/or outwitting of thieves or murderers, yet these are jobs that traditionally belong to the detective. Science fiction is also likely to encroach. The 1956 film Invasion of the Body Snatchers is structured around the solving of a mystery: Dr. Miles Bennell, trying to discover what exactly is happening to his patients, assumes the role of detective. And complicating the problem further is the fact that authors of detective film and fiction are likely to dabble in more than one genre. Edgar Allan Poe, credited with creating the detective story, is best known for his tales of horror. Alfred Hitchcock also worked in both forms, and the generic boundaries of his films are especially inclined to overlap (Psycho,
Frenzy, and Suspicion, for example). Dorothy L. Sayers has commented, "The story of detection and the story of horror form about as strong a contrast as it is possible to imagine. Their aims are, indeed, entirely opposed" (Murch 14). Yet she includes both types of stories in her Omnibus of Crime, which in the original British edition bears the title Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror.

The introductory chapter to A. E. Murch’s The Development of the Detective Novel addresses the problem of generic limitation, paying special attention to the interrelationships of the detective story, the crime story, and the mystery story, which are for Murch three distinct genres. According to her definitions, the detective story is one "in which the primary interest lies in the methodical discovery, by rational means, of the exact circumstances of a mysterious event or series of events." In the crime story, "studies of cunning criminals, reconstructions of ingenious crimes, and the motif of flight and pursuit . . . form the chief interest." In the detective story, these elements, "if they appear at all . . . are subordinate to the writer's primary purpose, which is to puzzle his readers and make them think." Murch continues:
Humor and love-making almost invariably play an important part in the crime story, providing the only happy, human sidelights upon the rogue's career and securing the reader's interest. They have no real place in the detective story, for laughter does not mix harmoniously with analytical reasoning, and, as Sherlock Holmes once remarked to Dr. Watson . . . "To tinge [detection] with romanticism produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story into the fifth proposition of Euclid."

During the twentieth century some writers have disregarded this dictum, and have successfully introduced a love interest, or even humorous interludes into a detective novel. There is always the possibility, however, that such matters will divert attention from the detective theme (Murch 11-14).

The mystery story is, for Murch, "akin to, but not identical with, the detective story." She points out that in many such tales the mystery remains unsolved, is solved by chance, or may involve the supernatural, and therefore the mystery remains outside the realm of the human reasoning powers of a detective.

R.F. Stewart also deals with the problem of generic limits in his history of detective fiction, . . . And Always a Detective: "One can point to a character in a book and say that he is a detective, if only in name, and expect a reasonable measure of agreement, but the same consensus is unlikely to follow the claim that the book in which he appears is a detective story." Stewart quotes Regis Messac's definition of a detective novel, "un recit consacre avant tout a la decouverte methodique et graduelle, par
des moyens rationnels, des circonstances exactes d'un evenement mysterieux" ("a narrative devoted above all to the methodical and gradual discovery, through the use of reason, of the exact circumstances of a mysterious event"), adding his own comment, "notice that there is no mention of a detective, while I started off with that gentleman." Stewart goes on to quote other definitions: Ordean A. Hagen, he says, agrees with his stress on the importance of the detective, identifying a detective story as one where "a detective or detectives solve the crime"; Ellery Queen, says Stewart, asserts that "first, a detective story must contain a detective who detects; second, the detective should be the protagonist; and third, the detective should almost invariably triumph"; Erik Routley focuses on the importance of the solving of a crime in his definition of a detective story as one "involving crime, a police force, a detective (who may or may not be a member of that force) and a solution. It must evoke a major interest in the finding of that solution." Stewart throws up his hands and concludes, "It has been said of definitions that they are as invidious as they are inevitable," yet he goes on to offer over a dozen more of them (11-26).

The difficulty of generic limitations for the
detective story involves another problem, too: all narrative film and fiction seem to feature an element of mystery, and the very act of reading or viewing is precipitated by a question. "What will happen?" or "How will it happen?" or "How did it happen?" or "Why did it happen?" we ask on opening a novel for the first time. We turn to page two of *Pride and Prejudice* in part to learn if Mr. Bingley will indeed marry one of the Bennett daughters; we finish the opening paragraph of the Charles Dickens novel wondering how it could possibly have been both the best and worst of times. We wish for retribution against the shark in *Jaws*, and we keep watching to find out if that wish is granted. In this sense, all written and filmed narratives are mysteries, and an attempt at a comprehensive definition of the genre may finally be impossible.

Raymond Chandler said, "Love interest nearly always weakens a mystery because it introduces a type of suspense that is antagonistic to the detective's struggle to solve a problem" (Gardiner and Walker 70). Other detective writers and their readers have agreed that romance can spoil a good mystery: Howard Haycraft notes that "too much love and romance" was voted the "pet dislike" by almost equal numbers of males and females in a poll of detective fiction readers (Murder
for Pleasure 238-39). This dissertation, however, arguing against Chandler's assertion, will establish that the impulse toward romantic love is frequently present in the American hardboiled detective genre, including The Big Sleep by Chandler himself.

The thesis of this work is that in American hardboiled detective film and fiction there exists a tendency in the handling of the primary female character toward the following "highly predictable structures that guarantee the fulfillment of conventional expectations" (Cawelti 1):

1. The detective hero begins to work either directly (hired by her) or indirectly (hired by another but in a case involving her) for an attractive female client.
2. Through a single act or a series of acts, she proves herself to be his equal in some respect, and she uses her skill to work with him in some way, actively helping him to solve the case as a colleague.
3. Once she has proven herself as an equal, the hero (who may have desired her since their first meeting but may or may not have consummated this desire) falls in love with her, making her his consort. (This love may be thwarted in some way at the conclusion of the story).

In contrast to writers, readers, and critics who object to and/or deny the presence of the romantic impulse in detective fiction, I will argue that not only is this impulse often present in these stories (especially in the hardboiled subgenre), but the fulfillment of this impulse via the three stages outlined above provides
the kind of story that is the most satisfying, both aesthetically and psychologically, for a work in the detective genre.

The focus of this dissertation will be on literary works by three authors generally acknowledged as the giants of the hardboiled subgenre: Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and Kenneth Millar (Ross Macdonald). Because films are such an important aspect of the subgenre as "cultural phenomena of tremendous importance" (Cawelti, 1), the cinematic version of one book by each author will be examined in addition to his literary works: The Maltese Falcon, The Big Sleep, and Harper (from the novel The Moving Target). Three films which are not adaptations of novels, Klute, Chinatown and The Late Show, will also be discussed as recent manifestations of the genre to which the thesis applies in interesting ways.

This dissertation will suggest that variations of the client/colleague/consort pattern outlined above tend to be present not only in the hardboiled subgenre but in the detective genre in general. Thus, before examining these works, I shall offer a historical overview of the detective genre. Following this, Chapters Two, Three, and Four will deal with works by Hammett, Chandler, and Millar (Macdonald). Chapter
Five will conclude the dissertation first by discussing three films of the 1970s in which generic changes and developments were becoming readily apparent (Klute, Chinatown and The Late Show), and then by taking a brief look at recent television shows and at the Spenser novels of Robert B. Parker (who has been called the successor of Hammett, Chandler, and Macdonald).

Although the focus of this dissertation is on the roles of women, it is not a feminist study. I consider myself a feminist but not a "feminist critic." Essentially I applaud the handling of the female characters in the works discussed here, but I suspect that many other feminists would find women's roles in the hardboiled genre to be limiting and limited, sexist, and typical of patriarchal values, fantasies, behaviors, and so on. For example, feminist Molly Haskell sees, in Jane Fonda's portrayal of the prostitute Bree Daniels in Klute, an example of "women going about the business of saving their fragile egos and . . . in danger of losing their souls" (82), where I see in the same character a strong, brave, and able woman who not only moves more competently through the criminal underworld of New York City than does the detective hero, but who is, ultimately, indispensible to him in solving the crime. It should also be noted
that this work focuses exclusively on generic examples by male authors. The topic of the treatment of women by female writers is certainly a worthy one, but it will have to be the subject of another study.

As literary subjects, crime and detection are present in world literature from the earliest times. In writing about the cinematic genre of the crime film, Stanley J. Solomon says, "The moral lesson of Cain and Abel or the ethical problems of justice and retribution in Aeschylus' plays are direct antecedents of the criminal film" (158). Dick Allen and David Chacko see "in the Oresteia, Aeschylus' trilogy, an illustration of the problems of vengeance, justice, and trial" (4). The Oresteia is but one example of an ancient Greek murder-drama. Oedipus Rex is closer to a detective play and resembles television dramas such as Columbo, since the audience knows who the guilty party is before Oedipus solves the crime. Medea bears similarities to a scam or big caper story, because the criminal arranges escape and sanctuary before committing the crime. In all three of these examples, the female characters are of primary importance and their roles are integral to plot and theme. As journalists know, theft, murder, kidnapping, rape, swindling, arson, and so on are likely to make interesting stories, and such
activities and acts of detection involving them were the raw material used by ancient writers and storytellers.

The Bible, for example, is filled with tales of transgression, discovery, and punishment. In Genesis, the first crime is a crime of disobedience, and God is the first detective, asking Columbo-like questions for which he already knows the answers—"Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"—in order to force a confession. (King James Version, Gen. 3:11). The part played by Woman here is worth noting. Eve is Adam's wife and helpmate (consort and colleague), but she betrays him, encourages him to eat of the fruit and break Divine Law; unlike Sam Spade, he is willing to play the sap for her. Moreover, since she herself has previously been tempted, she has a double role as both a victim and a criminal. This makes her character multi-dimensional and interesting, since she is neither a wronged Goody Two Shoes nor a purely evil femme fatale; she is instead a woman vulnerable and susceptible to corruption, who is also treacherous and untrustworthy.

Following the first Biblical crime in Chapter Three of Genesis is the first murder mystery, in Chapter Four. Once again God is detective, asking,
"Where is Abel thy brother?" and "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." God as judge sentences the criminal to banishment, but when Cain argues against the harshness of the sentence, "My punishment is greater than I can bear . . . every one that findeth me shall slay me," God relents, putting a protective mark on Cain and decreeing, "Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold" (Gen. 4: 9,10,13,14). Crime, detection, and punishment, then, make up a recurring Biblical theme. In the New Testament God is more benevolent and less vengeful, and the focus is on miracles, love, and forgiveness rather than on sin and guilt. But the New Testament also has its share of mystery. In the account of the Crucifixion, several earthly mysteries are involved, including the prediction and fulfillment that "one of you shall betray me" (Matt. 26: 21), and the question of the identity of the stranger who appears on the road to Emmaus after the Resurrection.

Dorothy L. Sayers identifies five ancient examples of crime fiction which establish important generic conventions. The first of these (and the one not published in its entirety in her anthology, Omnibus of Crime) is Aesop's story of "The Lion and the Fox," in
which the Fox predates later real and fictional
detectives by making a deduction based on footprints:
"While I see many hoof-marks going [into your lair], I
see none coming out. Till the animals that have
entered your cave come out again, I prefer to remain in
the open air" (10). Sayers gives each of her other four
ancient crime stories an explanatory subtitle in the
table of contents: "The History of Bel" (Analysis of
Material Evidence); "The History of Susanna" (Analysis
of Testimony); "The Story of Hercules and Cacus"
(Fabrication of False Clues); and "The Story of
Rhampsinitus' Treasure-House" (Psychological Method of
Detection: Plot and Counterplot).

Of these, "The History of Bel" (from the
Apocrypha) is closest to an actual detective story:
the King of Babylon calls Daniel to solve a locked-room
mystery and to determine what happens to food and wine
left overnight in the sealed temple of Bel. By
scattering ashes on the floor, Daniel obtains the
footprints of the devious priests and their families
who have been consuming the offerings. "The History of
Susanna" (also from the Apocrypha) is less interesting
than the previous tale in terms of plot, but it is far
more appealing in its characterization of the beautiful
and delicate, yet chaste and pious Susanna, victim of
false witness by the hypocritical, lustful Elders. Susanna is appealing as a character because of her inner strength--"her heart trusted in the Lord"--and because she is an innocent victim in a life-or-death predicament (43). Of the tales cited by Sayers, the story of Susanna is the one most important to the present study, for it is a detective story combined with the lady-in-distress tale. Susanna is no Brigid O'Shaughnessy, but her beauty and fragility as well as her strength of spirit are prototypical. In Sayers' third story, that of Hercules and Cacus (from Virgil's *Aeneid*), another generic tradition, that of the admirable criminal, is established. Hercules is the detective hero, but the criminal Cacus, not the detective, is the one with the greatest skill and cunning: he leads his stolen cattle backward to disguise their trail. Hercules seems less talented by comparison, solving the crime simply by hearing the cows mooing in their hiding place. Sayers's final example, "Rhampsinitus' Treasure House" (from the *Histories* of Herodotus), is another variation on the admirable criminal theme: the detective, King Rhampsinitus, fails to catch the criminal, even after giving his own daughter over to a bordello as part of a trap. Impressed by the thief's wiles, the King
abandons the chase, offering a pardon, a reward, and the daughter in marriage.

Present in these stories from Sayers's anthology are the beginnings of some important generic traditions: footprints as evidence, the locked-room mystery, the spiritually strong female victim, and the charming rogue or clever outlaw character. Medieval European literature saw the blossoming of the charming rogue or noble outlaw who was heroic, amusing, or at least admirable for his skill in living beyond the law. This character is essential to the hardboiled tradition: the hardboiled detective must be hardboiled because he frequently operates outside the law. In fact, all detectives in modern American fiction seem to be "outlaws"; even the character who works for the police—Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry, for example—is usually a renegade who must bend the rules and go against police procedure to get the job done. His renegade nature makes him an outsider. Not a team player, he typically has few friends, no family, and no women in his life; hence, he is a man in need of a colleague and a consort. The hardboiled detective as a modern American variant of the noble outlaw is traceable to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, when male and female outlaw characters were celebrated in
popular literature.

Chief among the noble medieval outlaw heroes is Robin Hood, whose exploits entertained the public in songs, dances, dramas, and tales. An embodiment of moral ideals, Robin is clever, courageous, chivalrous, honest, fair, and able to laugh at himself ("Robin Hood," Encyclopedia Americana, 1985); yet the fact that he lives outside the law and according to a higher power than even the king (to whom he is mostly loyal) or the Sheriff of Nottingham (whom he outwits and bests at every encounter) keeps him from being a moral superhero and makes him accessible as a human character with whom one can identify. His humanity and this ease of identification are enhanced by the fact that he is neither celibate nor immune to feminine charms. In one song (Child Ballad 149, "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valor, and Marriage") he falls in love with the fair Clorinda, whom he meets hunting. She carries "A bow in her hand, and quiver and arrows / Hung dangling by her sweet side," and she shoots the fattest buck in a herd of deer, causing Robin to exclaim, "By the faith of my body . . . / I never saw woman like thee." He is so impressed with her talents, in fact, that he proposes that same day, and they are married the next (Sargent and Kittredge 352-54). In later developments of the
tradition, he has as his colleague and consort Maid Marian, who is likewise his equal in many respects. "Robin Hood and Maid Marian" (Child Ballad 150) tells how a lonely Marian goes off to find Robin in Sherwood Forest:

Perplexed and vexed, and troubled in mind,
Shee drest her self like a page,
And ranged the wood to find Robin Hood.
The bravest of men in that age.

With quiver and bow, sword, buckler, and all,
Thus armed was Marian most bold,
Still wandering about to find Robin out,
Whose person was better than gold.

But Robin, hee himself had disguisd,
And Marian was strangely attir'd,
That they provd foes, and so fell to blowes,
Whose valour bold Robin admir'd.

Marian performs so well in fighting that, unable to beat her, Robin asks her to join his band of outlaws (Sargent and Kittredge 354-356).

The Robin Hood tradition also has both witch and evil temptress characters (the latter is the female counterpart of the charming rogue): both types appear in "Robin Hood’s Death" (Child Ballad 120). In version A, an old woman blocks Robin’s way as he tries to cross a "blacke water." Part of the manuscript is lost, but Sargent and Kittredge comment that she does so “out of her proper malignity, surely, or because she is a hired witch” (286). In version B, the seemingly invulnerable outlaw is killed by his female cousin, who
blessest him to death in a priory; Little John wants to burn the place down in revenge, but Robin, chivalrous to the last, objects:

"I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor men in woman's company.

I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at mine end shall it be" (Sargent and Kittredge 286-89).

Other English folk ballads teem with crime stories in which women have key roles. Many of these present slayings but typically feature no detective as such; instead, the listener "solves" the case by hearing the balladeer out until the identity of the criminal—frequently a woman—is revealed at the end. In the gruesome ballad "Edward" (Child Ballad 13) with its bloody, dripping sword, we discover at the end that the Mother has advised her son to kill his father. In "Lord Randall" (Child Ballad 12), the Mother is more or less the detective who discovers, through interrogation, that her son has been poisoned by his lover. In "The Douglas Tragedy," (Child Ballad 7 B) the chase to bring back the eloping Lady Margaret is begun at the instigation of the Mother; the chase ends in a blood-bath when both the father and the fiance die, as does Lady Margaret herself. The poignancy of "The Three Ravens" (Child Ballad 26) lies in the arrival of the pregnant "fallow doe," the hero's
beloved, who lifts up the slain knight's bloody head,  
kisses his red wounds, buries him, then dies herself.  

During the medieval period and into the  
Renaissance, crime and criminals continued to be  
treated in poetry and in song as romantic and daring.  
The interest in crime as a literary subject is apparent  
in three literary forms of the period: the picaresque  
novel, the gest book, and the Newgate Calendar  
pamphlets. The picaresque novel, in which vagabond  
criminals were portrayed as fun-loving and clever, is a  
variation of the Robin Hood tradition, although the  
characters are less chivalrous and charitable than  
Robin, and more comic and buffoon-like. The rogue's  
adventures were often as improbable as they were  
amusing. In England, Thomas Nashe (1567-after 1601)  
published *The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of*  
**Jack Wilton** in 1594; writing very much in the  
picaresque tradition, with Jack Wilton being a  
fictional criminal, Nashe attempted, however, to lend  
credibility to the character and his adventures by  
involving him with real-life people in the narrative.  
A similar kind of realism later influenced the crime  
genre in the hands of Defoe, Fielding, and others.  

The jest or gest books of France and England  
during the Elizabethan period were published as
chapbooks for aristocratic readers; their subject matter varied, but they featured accounts of the tricks and adventures of real and fictional criminals. One example from around 1500 is *A Gest of Robin Hood*, and the titles of two others suggest their tone and content: *The Belman of London: Bringing to Light the most notorious villanies now practised in the Kingdom*, and *The XII Merry Jests of the Widow Edythe*--an account of a female criminal in which each "merry jest" is in fact an infamous crime (Murch 20).

The Newgate Calendar pamphlets attempted to record objectively the exploits of real criminals, and they were part of a literary form that treated crime with less levity than did the picaresque novel or the jest book. The form began as early as the late fifteenth century, and it was expanded by the Chaplains of Newgate Prison in the *Newgate Calendar*, a series of pamphlets begun in the late seventeenth century containing confessions of criminals and their life histories and criminal careers. The *Newgate Calendar*’s popularity led to copycat versions, such as *The Malefactor’s Register* and *The New Newgate and Tyburn Calendar*, produced by entrepreneurs unconnected with Newgate Prison who saw the financial potential of the form. These writers identified themselves as "The
Editors" to lend credibility to stories which, unlike those of the real Newgate pamphlets, were often totally or semi-fictitious. Though conceived as money-makers, the pamphlets were pious in tone, and "The Editors" professed to be recounting the stories as a way of persuading others to shun the criminal’s way of life.

The real and imitation Newgate pamphlets metamorphosed into the Newgate novel, a popular genre of the eighteenth century that dropped the pamphlets’ pious tone and once again celebrated the adventures of criminals and rogues. But though colorful and full of admiration for the criminal, the Newgate novel tended to be essentially realistic. Bridging the gap between the Newgate Calendar and the Newgate novel was Daniel Defoe (c. 1659-1731) who wrote two short works in 1724 about criminal Jack Sheppard’s daring escapes from Newgate Prison. Defoe, in the tradition of later crime journalists including Truman Capote, actually interviewed Sheppard in prison and concentrated on approaching his story in a realistic way without philosophizing or moralizing, and without presenting his character as a larger-than-life figure who was divinely great or diabolically evil. That same year Defoe published The Fortunate Mistress, the story of the female criminal Roxana and her maid who are
discovered, pursued, and punished.

Defoe wrote a study of the notorious criminal Jonathan Wild, but Henry Fielding (1707-54) also told Wild's story in a novel which fits more neatly than do Defoe's works into the Newgate novel form. Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (1743) is a parody of other novels at the time which reverently recounted the careers of the great and/or pious. (Samuel Richardson's (1689-1761) *Pamela* of 1740 is an example of the school in its story of the young girl's virtue, prudence, and valiant attempts to resist seduction by her master.) Fielding satirizes the form by telling Wild's story with great admiration, in the tradition of the picaresque novel and other forms glorifying a charming rogue. In spite of his disrespect for the law, however, Fielding was a Justice of the Peace and founder of the only mobile London police force of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Bow Street Runners, which he established in 1848 seeing the need for a reputable law enforcement agency.¹

During the eighteenth century, public interest in reading horrifying material grew alongside its interest in reading about criminals; in 1764, Horace Walpole's (1717-1797) *The Castle of Otranto* began the vogue for the Gothic novel. Mrs. Ann Ward Radcliffe (1764-1823)
became the queen of the genre, producing a series of mystery-and-horror novels for a primarily female readership during the last decade of the eighteenth century. Her plots commonly involved a terrified heroine in a nightmarish landscape where seemingly supernatural threats are revealed at the end to have perfectly rational explanations. Radcliffe prefigures the Holmes/Watson narrative technique of showing conversations between two characters, one of whom is more skilled at noting and analyzing the details of the situation than is the other, who is as befuddled as the reader. As a woman, Radcliffe, one of the most popular writers of her day because of her skill in building mystery and suspense, was deemed an inappropriate author for tales of crime and terror, but her publishers continued to print her novels because of the enormous profits. Along with a handful of other skilled female writers of Gothic fiction during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Brontes among them, Radcliffe paved the way for later female writers of crime and detective fiction, especially for the British "Tea Cosy" school of Agatha Christie and others. The melodramatic tale of terror was also being written and read in America: for example, Wieland, published in 1798 by Charles Brockden
Brown (1771-1810), tells of a man who hears ghostly voices advising him to kill his wife and children until finally he obeys.

Alongside crime and suspense as the primary content of the novel, the twin strand of detection was developing. An eighteenth-century landmark in the development of the detective genre was the Chevalier de Mailly's *The Voyage and the Adventures of the Three Princes of Serendip*, translated from the Persian, published in Paris in 1719. Borrowing from an earlier Italian version of the same story by Cristoforo Armeno (*Pereginaggio dei Tre Giovanni Gifliuoli del Re di Sarendippo*, 1557), *The Three Princes of Serendip* contained the "lost camel" story, which has affinities with tales in the Arabian Nights and Greek mythology. In the story, the three princes are accused of theft for giving an accurate description of a lost camel that they swear they never have seen: it is blind in one eye, is missing a tooth, and is lame. They justify their description by explaining how they've made deductions from concrete evidence: the camel has eaten grass from only one side of the path though better grass is growing on the other side--this suggests it is blind in one eye; tooth-sized lumps of grass along the ground hint at the missing tooth; the camel's
footprints give away its lameness.²

Voltaire (1694–1778), whom Haycraft calls the "great grandfather of the detective story" (Murder for Pleasure xxvi) used a variation on de Mailly's primitive story of detection in Zadig (1747, 1749). In the tale of "Le chien et le cheval," Zadig, imprisoned for his precise description of a royal horse and dog, defends himself by explaining how the tracks in the ground and the animal hairs caught in the bushes gave away the animals' appearances.³

Popular interest in stories of detection continued through the eighteenth century, and began to find full literary expression with the publication of Caleb Williams in 1794; Julian Symons has suggested that this was the first crime story for which "the solution of a [detective] puzzle was . . . the main object of a book" (Bloody Murder 28). Its author, William Godwin (1756–1836), has been widely called "the grandfather of the detective story" (la Cour and Mogensen 20). Godwin himself had a varied career: a minister, political philosopher, historian, journalist, publisher, hack writer, novelist, and playwright, he was the husband of the early feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, and the father of horror novelist Mary Shelley. Godwin was a radical reformist, and Caleb Williams is largely a social
protest novel and vehicle for the author's ideas about the destructive effects of the existing social, political, and economic systems in general, as well as the evils of particular institutions such as the contemporary prison system. Caleb, a servant to the murderer, is the detective in the novel and narrates most of the story. Knowing that his master is guilty, he uses subtle, seemingly naive questions and comments to torment the killer. At various points in the story he is imprisoned, joins a gang of thieves, dons a disguise, and expresses his contempt for the existing legal, judicial, and police systems. Thus Godwin established many of the subsequent traditions of the genre: the detective who must find the criminal to save his own reputation; the detective familiar with the criminal world; the various tricks of the detective's trade, including disguises; and the view that the authorities are at best ineffective, and at worst corrupt. Godwin later revealed that in preparing this book, he had studied the Newgate Calendar and other works on crime and criminals; he also claimed to have written his novel backwards from the final solution (Murch 30, and La Cour and Mogensen 20).

By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the vogue in Britain and on the Continent for
the tale of terror had waned, but popular interest in books about detection and criminals continued. Of special interest were the thinking patterns, lifestyles, language, and trickery of the criminal underworld. Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873) dealt with these subjects in several novels published between 1827 and 1833. Influenced by Godwin, Bulwer-Lytton's works are often reformist and are permeated with the philosophy that criminals can be transformed into useful and respectable members of society; this belief, considered original at the time, was a variation on the noble outlaw idea. (Continuing parallel to this is the attitude that the official police are inept and/or corrupt.) Lord Lytton's heroes are often romantic outsiders, and the various elements of criminal life he presents--he is especially known for his use of underworld slang--make it seem exotic and glamorous. Lytton's Pelham (1827) and Eugene Aram (1832) show another kind of Godwinian influence in that both use a detective plot. In the former, Lord Pelham becomes an amateur detective as he attempts to solve a murder and save the suspect, his fiancee's brother, from the gallows. He not only dons disguises but consorts with various underworld types in order to gain information. Although the plot features elements of
both the Newgate novel and the tale of terror, an important innovation here is the fact that Pelham and his detective work are foregrounded while the crime itself, the criminal, and the victim are of lesser importance. Like Jack Sheppard and Jonathan Wild, actual criminals who had had their stories told in the previous century by Defoe and Fielding, or Catherine Hayes, the notorious female criminal featured by Thackeray in his 1838 novel Catherine, Lytton's character Eugene Aram was a real person. Aram's case had drawn the attention of William Godwin, who had planned to write the story as an indictment of the cruelties of the legal system but, being ill at the time, was forced to abandon the project. The idea was taken up by Lytton, and Aram, a murderer, was depicted as a noble character blackmailed for a crime he had committed fourteen years earlier; Lytton also created a detective theme for the story, using the murder victim's son as an amateur investigator who gathers evidence for the case. Though noble, Aram is still guilty, and is caught, tried, and imprisoned.

In his interest in the world of criminals, their habits, and their language, Lytton was indebted to a French writer, detective, and former criminal whose detective and literary work exerted a monumental
influence on modern police procedures and on the
Vidocq's Memoires of 1828 and 1829 took the literary
world of Britain, the Continent, and America by storm;
the author's detailed descriptions of his experiences
as criminal, galley slave, professional informer,
police detective, and private eye were read by such
luminaries as Lytton, Balzac, and Poe. Vidocq's story
was as colorful as that of any fictional character of
the time: after three jailbreaks, he offered to share
his knowledge of criminals with the Paris police in
exchange for amnesty; he was later promoted and became
the first Chef de la Surete when the official Paris
detective bureau was organized in 1810. Vidocq used
a variety of resources in tracking criminals--
footprints, disguises, his own familiarity with
criminal behavior and thought patterns, infiltration by
his associates into the underworld, and so on--and he
created a card index system of modi operandi and other
important information. His scientific approach was
scorned by the regular agents who resented the fact
that a former convict was permitted to work with such
freedom, responsible only to the chief of the Paris
police, but Vidocq's innovations had such a
spectacular influence on the future of official police
work that histories of modern detective work often begin with a chapter on Vidocq.

Vidocq retired from the Surete in 1833 at the age of fifty-eight and founded his own private detective agency, creating another milestone in the history of investigation. Vidocq possessed a flair for publicity, and though his reputation waxed and waned throughout his career (partly because of propaganda by the regular police who sued him for interfering with their work and at one point succeeded in having him imprisoned) he remained in the eyes of the public an ideal detective in whom were combined the seemingly conflicting characteristics of criminal and agent: a policeman who scorned the police, he vindicated public disdain for "thief takers"; an efficient tracker of criminals, he satisfied the public need for safety from hoodlums and thieves. His Mémoires offered the same double appeal: his adventures as a criminal delighted those who enjoyed reading about the cleverness and courage of charming rogues, but the Mémoires also contained detailed accounts of the tracking and apprehending of criminals and so were favored by those with an appetite for detective fiction.

Vidocq’s influence is ubiquitous in the literature of his time. Poe, who had read Vidocq, was probably
influenced by the episodic structure of the Memoires: each of Vidocq's cases forms a complete adventure, and the effect is that of a series of short stories, the form in which Poe was to excel. Balzac, a friend and admirer of Vidocq, also used the device of a series of successive adventures (novels, in Balzac's case) in which the same character appears: Balzac's character Vautrin, modeled on Vidocq, appears first in PerE Goriot, 1834-35, then in Les Splendeurs et Miseres des Courtisanes, 1843-47, and later in La Derniere Incarnations de Vautrin, 1847. Bulwer-Lytton, too, presented in Night and Morning (1845) a character, named Monsier Favart, based on Vidocq. So widespread was Vidocq's fame that his exploits were presented in stage melodramas such as Douglas William Jerrold's (1803-1857) Vidocq, the French Police Spy of 1829. And Vidocq's Memoires also established many traditions important to later examples of the detective genre: for example, the real-life Vidocq used street gang members as helpers in his detective work, and the fictional Sherlock Holmes later did the same with his Baker Street Irregulars.

Vidocq is the father of the modern scientific system of police detection, and Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1949) is the father of the modern detective story
(Haycraft, *Murder for Pleasure* xxvi; 1a Cour and Mogensen 10; Symons, *Bloody Murder* 42). Poe probably borrowed from Vidocq the idea of presenting a series of "cases" having the same hero, although Poe may have originally intended C. Auguste Dupin as a character for a single story. The debt to Vidocq is also suggested by the fact that Poe’s detective is French and the stories are set in Paris, even though some of the details of the setting and/or the action are at times inconsistent with reality (Murch 82). Dupin’s methods resemble those of Vidocq, who is even mentioned by name, albeit deprecatingly, in the first Dupin story, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841). But Dupin is more than a Vidocq clone. Poe’s hero is more aristocratic, more cultured, and better educated than his real-life counterpart; he is also more reclusive and inactive than the vivacious and lively Vidocq.

Dupin’s character develops gradually in the three-story series. In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Dupin is eccentric, one-dimensional, and not very appealing as a character, but by the final Dupin story, "The Purloined Letter" (1844-45), he has emerged as someone who is as multi-dimensional and likeable as any Poe creation. Indeed, he is one of Poe’s most amiable characters, and his appeal surfaces in "The Purloined
Letter" precisely because we see his human side in his desire to get even with the Minister D---- for an old injury, and, more importantly, in his urge to protect the woman he respects. Although Dupin goes to great lengths to explain the logic of his methods, this mystery is no mere impersonal mathematical puzzle, as was the case in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Mystery of Marie Roget (1842-43)." In the previous Dupin stories the victims were female, but being already dead they could only be avenged and not protected; hence Dupin's involvement was impersonal, especially since he was not acquainted with the victims. In "The Purloined Letter," however, the victim is someone Dupin admires and wants to help. And although she needs Dupin's protection, she is closer to being his equal than were the previous victims--indeed, her status as a "royal personage" is above his. Dupin solves the case not, as in the previous tales, for the impersonal sense of challenge it offers him, but because he wishes to safeguard the lady of whom he is a partisan. And although he gains a monetary reward for his endeavor, he takes greater delight in the fact that for the Minister D----, who has previously wronged Dupin, the tables are turned and instead of D---- having the lady in his power, "she now has him in
hers."

Not only does Dupin become, in "The Purloined Letter," one of Poe's most appealing heroes, he is also more sympathetic than many detective characters of the time. Because he is not officially associated with the police, he is free of the public ill-will toward them, yet he is also free of the criminal taint that marked Vidocq and the more overtly criminal characters of the charming rogue tradition. Dupin is not an outlaw per se (although he does lie and use tricks to fool Minister D-----), but he is an outsider who does not fit with society and has no desire to do so. In addition, his cleverness in obtaining the Prefect's reward of fifty thousand francs for a fait accompli links him with the outlaw heroes who outmaneuver or deceive the authorities; Dupin doesn't exactly outwit the police, but he certainly proves to be more clever than they.

Widely read and admired in France, Poe, along with Vidocq, spawned a new genre of literature, the roman policier. (The term "police novel" is applied in France to mysteries and detective stories whether or not the official police are featured.) Among those who excelled in the form were Eugene Sue, 1804-1857; Paul Feval, 1817-1887; Ponson du Terrail (Pierre Alexis de
Ponson), 1829-1871; and Emile Gaboriau, 1833-1873. Sue's *Les Mysteres de Paris* (1842-43) owes to the influences of Radcliffe and Vidocq in its use of the supernatural on the one hand and the criminal underworld on the other. The hero, Prince Rodolfe, is a reformist, *a la* Godwin, who wishes to punish evil and reward virtue. Sue specifically identified his debt to James Fenimore Cooper, and said that he viewed his criminals as bearing similarities to Indians on the war path; his urban Paris setting, with its mysterious and impenetrable slums, is presented much in the same way as Cooper presents the American wilderness (Murch 42). Feval's debt to Sue is clear in the title of his *Les Mysteres de Londres* (1844). Like Poe's Chevalier Dupin and Sue's Prince Rodolfe, the detective hero is an aristocrat, but the work also features a tall, thin English private investigator named Robin Cross: his name suggests Robin Hood, and his physique resembles Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's later creation, Sherlock Holmes. Although detective characters appear in his works, Feval often relates stories of charming rogue characters who use detective methods, and his criminals, rather than his *agents*, are usually the central figures. Feval's later novel, *Le Couteau d'Or* of 1856 features an Indian tracker who follows
criminals through Paris aided by a hound named Mohican—the debt to Cooper is unmistakable.

Du Terrail's *Rocambole* novels of the 1850s and 1860s are melodramatic, romantic, and improbable, but were enormously popular. Like Vidocq, the character Rocambole is in the earlier adventures a criminal, a charming rogue who later becomes a private detective; he is also arrogant, brave, strong, elegant, charming, and disdainful of the official police. Rocambole metamorphosed from criminal into private detective in the mid 1860s, around the time Gaboriau's *Monsieur Lecoq* appeared on the French literary scene in *L'Affaire Lerouge* (1863-66). Gaboriau had read Poe in Baudelaire's translation, and his hero resembles Dupin in his love of mysterious puzzles; the character also has similarities to Vidocq, since he is, in *L'Affaire Lerouge* at least, a former criminal now reconciled with the law. Lecoq's dark past is explained away in later novels (*Le Crime d'Orcival*, 1867, and *Monsieur Lecoq*, 1869). But Lecoq, like Vidocq, becomes a police detective of great cleverness, charm, perception, and determination, and as such is one of the first members of the official police to be portrayed positively in French fiction.

In British fiction, meanwhile, a very positive
image of the official police force was established in 1852 and 1853 when Police Inspector Bucket of the Detective appeared in *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens (1812-1870). Although Poe influenced early detective writers in France, and in spite of the fact that Poe focused his essay about the detective novel’s structure on the Dickens novel *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens’s debt to him seems nonexistent. But the contribution of Charles Dickens to the crime and mystery genre is substantial. Dickens’s letters suggest that, like the reading public of the time, he was fascinated with the detective police and their use of observation and deduction. *Bleak House* includes an innovative chapter in which the detective summarizes his investigation before identifying the criminal. *Hunted Down* (1859) is based on the story of the notorious murderer Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, whom Dickens had interviewed in Newgate Prison. Between 1850 and 1856, Dickens wrote a series of hero-worshipping articles for his magazine *Household Words* about the London Metropolitan Police Detective Department, and in 1867 he wrote a piece comparing the detective force with the earlier Bow Street Runners (Symons, *Bloody Murder* 45-48; Murch 92-102; 1a Cour and Mogensen 25-33). As Symons points out, Inspector Bucket is not the first detective to appear in
Dickens's works: the insurance company investigator named Nadgett in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-44) carries an assortment of business cards to disguise his identity (as do many modern fictional and real detectives), and he relentlessly pursues the criminal, calling on the police to make the arrest. But Bucket, unlike Nadgett, is a relatively major character, appearing in fourteen of the novel's sixty-seven chapters, and more important, he is a member of the London Police Force, perhaps the first official police detective in British fiction to be shown as a positive character.

Another important aspect of *Bleak House* is the detective's wife Mrs. Bucket, who acts as his trusted and indispensible colleague. At one point she takes in a murder suspect as a lodger; at another she follows the prime suspect Mademoiselle Hortense; still later she helps her husband retrieve the murder weapon. Murch calls this male/female partnership "a complete innovation in detective fiction at that time" (96), yet the germ of the couple-as-team idea was present in the tales of Robin Hood and in other works in which women had important roles and were more or less equal to men in skill and intelligence. Murch goes on to say that this partnership "has seldom been used since," yet not only is it a common phenomenon, but the male-and-female
detective story is an important subgenre, with examples ranging from Dashiell Hammett's novel and film series *The Thin Man*, to Frances and Richard Lockridge's *Mr. and Mrs. North*, to the Modesty Blaise books and comic strips, to the currently popular television series *Moonlighting*. Indeed, la Cour and Mogensen, in discussing the team of Inspector and Mrs. Bucket, say, "a special chapter [of their study, *The Murder Book*] could be devoted to examples of married couples as detectives" (25).

When Dickens died in 1870, he left behind the unfinished and unsolved murder mystery *Edwin Drood*; another key figure in English detective fiction, Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) was asked to take up the novel and finish it but refused (Murch 99). Two years earlier Collins, a friend of Dickens, had published *The Moonstone* (1868), which has been called by Julian Symons "the first detective novel written in English," and by T. S. Eliot, "the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels" (Symons, *Bloody Murder* 50, 52). *The Moonstone* featured the police detective Sergeant Cuff, based on the real-life Scotland Yard figure Inspector Jonathan Whicher, known as "the Prince of Detectives" in his day (*Bloody Murder* 51). In the novel Cuff works slowly, is methodical
rather than clever, and, along with Inspector Bucket, seems to have set the standard for English police detectives in fiction down to the present day—reliable, middle-class heroes who through thorough and plodding work manage to solve the crime and apprehend the criminal. Collins also made great use of women as characters: sometimes they appear as damsels in distress, sometimes they are the criminals, sometimes they act as detectives. *The Woman in White* (1860), for example, Collins's second-best-known novel, tells of Laura Fairlie, wrongfully imprisoned in an insane asylum; the crime is solved by the male/female detective team of a newspaper artist and Marion Halcombe, "a woman of great sincerity, intelligence, and charm" (Murch 107), and of "indomitable determination" (*Bloody Murder* 49).

Meanwhile, women were making their way into British detective fiction not just as characters, but as authors. Murch asserts, "[D]etective fiction continued to be written in England, without reaching any notable heights until the final decade of the nineteenth century. Much of it, and perhaps the best known, was the work of women writers..." (133). By the nineteenth century, Radcliffe had set a precedent for female writers of suspense fiction, and although
half a century later many publishers still felt it "indelicate" or "unfeminine" for women to write tales of anything other than social or domestic life. Many female authors chose crime and criminals as their subject matter. One of these was Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810-1865). Gaskell was among the first to contribute to Charles Dickens' magazine Household Words; among these contributions was "The Squire's Story," (1853) a short tale of murder and detection. Mrs. Henry Wood (1814-1887) was a prolific writer of the same era. She wrote dozens of books and short stories, and is best known for her murder mystery East Lynne (1861), a well-plotted detective novel noteworthy for its skillful use of evidence and legal details; East Lynne sold over a million copies in the U.S. alone during Wood's life. The year 1861 marked another important female contribution to the genre: Lady Audley's Secret, a novel of blackmail and murder by Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1837-1915). A solicitor's daughter, Braddon, like Wood, was well acquainted with the workings of the law and enhanced her fiction with legal details. The author of eighty novels, she wrote primarily thrillers that dealt with ingenious crimes. The title character is the evil one in Lady Audley's Secret, but Wood's later works feature women as
amateur sleuths. Her culprits are always apprehended and brought to justice, yet she was considered dangerously sensationalistic in her day and accused of writing works which gave criminals ideas about how to break the law. Another detective work, The Experiences of a Lady Detective, also appeared in 1861, by an author who wrote under the pseudonym "Anonyma." This collection of short stories features a detective heroine named Mrs. Paschal who, finding herself widowed and penniless at forty, took a job as "one of those much feared but little known persons called lady detectives" (La Cour and Mogensen 72).

During the following decade there appeared in America the work of a writer who has been called the "Mother of the American Detective Novel" and the author of "the first American detective best seller": Anna Katherine Green (1846-1935) (Haycraft, Murder for Pleasure xxvii; Maio 47). Perhaps Green's most important contribution is the coining of the expression "detective story" in her murder mystery The Leavenworth Case (1878). Like Braddon, she was the daughter of a lawyer and hence was acquainted with the laws and the legal system, so much so that some contemporary readers found her works "manifestly beyond a woman's powers" (Maio 47). The Leavenworth Case, her first novel, was
enormously successful and featured many of the melodramatic elements used by her sister authors in England. But the work is unique in that the detective theme is foregrounded, rather than being part of an episode or subplot as had been the case in most previous novels involving detection. Green’s hero is the police detective Mr. Ebenezer Gryce, who appears in several of her works, and he bears more resemblance to the sleuths created by Englishmen Dickens and Collins than to that of Green’s fellow countryman Edgar Allan Poe. Gryce is neither brilliant nor clever, but is patient, competent, and hard working: when Green describes her detective she emphasizes that, instead of being "a thin, wiry, individual with a shrewd eye," Gryce is "a portly, comfortable personage with an eye that never pounced" (The Leavenworth Case 241, quoted in Murch 160). A later Green novel, That Affair Next Door (1897), paired Gryce with amateur female sleuth Miss Amelia Butterworth, whom Murch speculates may have been based on “Anonyma”’s Mrs. Paschal. Another female detective, Violet Strange, appears, accompanied by a talented pet bloodhound, in Green’s short story collection, The Golden Slipper (1915).

Although Green and others continued writing detective fiction well into the twentieth century, by
the 1880s the form had begun to be exhausted; it was a
genre passing out of vogue as the Newgate novel and
tale of terror had done earlier. This downward trend
is seen in the parodies of the form that appeared with
increasing frequency on both sides of the Atlantic.
As Murch puts it, "[A]fter a long period of popularity
[detective fiction] had reached the dangerous point
when it was beginning to be laughed at, parodied, and
made to seem ridiculous" (144-45). In the U.S., for
example, Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914?) published a short
story, "My Favourite Murder" (1893), which took a
humorous jab at the form, while in Britain Robert Louis
Stevenson (1850-94), collaborating with his stepson
Lloyd Osbourne, produced The Wrong Box (1888), a
farcical parody with direct facetious references to
popular detective fiction in general and the roman
policier in particular. Murch continues:

Developments along such lines as these, with
the central figure shown as a bungler or the
subject treated humorously, would inevitably have
brought the popularity of detective fiction to an
end. Indeed, the vogue for the sensational
"police romance in the French manner," fell
sharply out of favour at this time. That the
downward trend was halted, and that detective
fiction entered, instead, on a new era of
popularity, was almost entirely due to the work of
Conan Doyle, who infused the genre with new vigour
and gave it greater prestige than it had ever
enjoyed (145).

Haycraft agrees: "The role of Doyle and Holmes in
resuscitating and rejuvenating the Poe-Gaboriau formula was enormous and far-reaching" (Murder for Pleasure 53); and so does Symons: "As soon as the Holmes short stories began to appear, editors, readers, and writers half-consciously realized that the detective story had found its natural place in popular literature" (Bloody Murder 63).

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's (1859-1930) colossal influence on the genre is universally acknowledged, but his part in determining a model for female characters and male attitudes toward them is equally monumental. It is significant that the only person ever really to outwit Sherlock Holmes was a woman, but even before Irene Adler came into in the great detective's life, his creator had established the significance of clever, intelligent, resourceful, and strong-willed female characters for the genre.

When A Study in Scarlet appeared in Beeton's Christmas Annual in 1887, Holmes and Watson were each portrayed as a man in need of a colleague and friend. The first few chapters, in fact, reek of man's general need for companionship. Watson has "neither kith nor kin in England"; for him, "[t]he sight of a friendly face in the great wilderness of London is a pleasant thing indeed to a lonely man"; and he eagerly admits,
"I should prefer having a partner to being alone."
In Chapter One, young Stamford warns Watson about Holmes, "[P]erhaps you would not care for him as a constant companion. . . . His studies are very desultory and eccentric. . . . [H]e is not a man that is easy to draw out." Yet when we first meet the great detective, he seems friendly and cheerful enough, speaking "cordially," "chuckling to himself," and showing enthusiastic excitement over his latest scientific discovery. In spite of all of this, young Stamford's parting comments suggest Holmes's inscrutability: "You'll find him a knotty problem, though. I'll wager he learns more about you than you about him. Good-bye." Chapter Two is entitled "The Science of Deduction," but at this point in the story the subject of the mystery is still the detective himself; Watson even makes up a written chart in his endeavor to understand his companion's eccentric character. And in describing Holmes, Watson mentions some enigmatically effeminate characteristics: his "extraordinary delicacy of touch," for example, or the almost coy "reticence which he showed on all that concerned himself." The new roommate also seems as much of a loner as is Watson: "I had no friends," the doctor tells us, and "I had begun to think that my
companion was as friendless a man as I was myself"—that is, until the clients and official police detectives begin to call. Interestingly, the first caller (not counting Lestrade) is female—"One morning a young girl called, fashionably dressed, and stayed for half an hour or more"—but she functions merely as a walk-on character, and we never learn why she has come. It is, instead, in the subsequent novel, The Sign of Four (1890), that we have a complete adventure surrounding a female client.

The Sign of Four begins with Holmes in a deep depression relieved only by his use of cocaine. In discussing Watson's "brochure" recounting the previous adventure, we are told of Holmes, "He shook his head sadly. . . . 'You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid.'" Watson remonstrates, "But the romance was there," and Holmes counters, "Some facts should be suppressed." After a brief discussion during which Holmes displays the powers of observation and deduction for which he becomes so well known, in comes a female client, Miss Mary Morstan.5 Doyle's initial description of Morstan is significant: she possesses "a firm step and an outward composure of manner." Her
clothing shows "perfect taste," but "bore with it a suggestion of limited means." "Her face had neither regularity of feature nor beauty of complexion, but . . . her large blue eyes were singularly spiritual and sympathetic." In addition, she has much in common with Watson, since her "father was an officer in an Indian regiment, who sent me home" as a child (Watson, of course, has served in Afghanistan), and, she, too, has "no relative in England" and has "led a retired life" with "no friends whom I could appeal to." She comes to the interview well prepared, having brought certain items that serve as clues, and Holmes remarks admiringly, "You are certainly a model client. You have the correct intuition." But after her departure, when Watson comments, "What a very attractive woman!" Holmes responds, "It is of the first importance . . . not to allow your judgment to be biased by personal qualities. A client is to me a mere unit, a factor in a problem. . . . I assure you that the most winning woman I ever knew was hanged for poisoning three little children for their insurance money." Throughout the novel, Doyle continues to endow Mary Morstan with admirable qualities which give her a high level of character congruent with that of Watson and Holmes. She is "composed" in the face of danger, and is
"resolute and collected," although a certain amount of internal agitation is suggested. Moreover, in spite of her own terror, she comforts the frightened housekeeper at Pondicherry Lodge, and when she finally breaks down as Watson (who is falling in love with her) escorts her home, he comments on her "brave nature" (although in the same breath he refers to her as "weak and helpless, shaken in mind and nerve"). At the end of the novel, Watson and Holmes have a final discussion of the case:

"Well, and there is the end of our little drama," I remarked, after we had sat some time smoking in silence. "I fear that it may be the last investigation in which I shall have the chance of studying your methods. Miss Morstan has done me the honour to accept me as a husband in prospective."

He gave a most dismal groan.
"I feared as much," said he. "I really cannot congratulate you."

I was a little hurt.
"Have you any reason to be dissatisfied with my choice?" I asked.
"Not at all. I think she is one of the most charming young ladies I ever met and might have been most useful in such work as we have been doing. She had a decided genius that way; witness the way in which she preserved that Agra plan from all the other papers of her father. But love is an emotional thing, and whatever is emotional is opposed to that true cold reason which I place above all things. I should never marry myself, lest I bias my judgment."

The story concludes as Watson remarks to Holmes, "You have done all the work in this business. I get a wife out of it . . . pray what remains for you?" and his
friend answers, "For me . . . there still remains the cocaine-bottle."

The next adventure and the first Holmes short story, "A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891), is fundamentally important in establishing a model for the roles of women in later detective fiction, but in many respects it merely picks up where The Sign of Four left off. As Mary Morstan was the female counterpart of Dr. Watson, Irene Adler is almost a doppelganger for Sherlock Holmes. The story begins:

To Sherlock Holmes she is always the woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen, but as a lover he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. . . . Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-powered lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his. And yet there was but one woman to him, and that woman was . . . Irene Adler.

Holmes's, and Watson's, and perhaps even Doyle's need to deny the importance of companionship, particularly female companionship, for Sherlock Holmes establishes him as a prototype for the later tough-guy loners of the hardboiled school. In this passage, Holmes is little more than a machine, yet like Dupin, he becomes
humanized in this story through a relationship with a woman, and this humanization is so necessary for reader identification (few readers can relate to a "perfect reasoning and observing machine") that its appearance no later than Holmes's third adventure is essential. For Symons, "[T]he very first short story, 'A Scandal in Bohemia,' makes it clear that there will be no love interest" (Mortal Consequences 66) but the tale really does something nearly the opposite. We readily see through Holmes's denial and derision of "the softer passions" to the vulnerable human being (who is so sensitive and prone to depression that he is a cocaine-addict) beneath the surface.6 Murch comments at length on the sensitive nature of Sherlock Holmes:

Dr. Watson was at pains to present Holmes as unemotional, but in this he did his friend less than justice, for the great detective was often warm-hearted and impulsive, moved to indignation, amazement, or frenzied delight, to profound sympathy with human suffering. He was patient and courteous to his women clients and was even prepared to attach some value to feminine intuition. . . . "They [women] are never to be entirely trusted," declared this wary investigator, who in his first short adventure, "A Scandal in Bohemia," had been outwitted by a woman. Yet those who brought their problems to him were as impressed by his kindness as by his cleverness. . . . Although Holmes smilingly told Watson: "The fair sex is your department," it was Sherlock, and not the doctor, who correctly diagnosed the mental stress that troubled Lady Hilda Trelawney Hope, and the real cause of Mrs. Ferguson's illness. When Watson attempted to conduct an enquiry, it did not occur to him to seek information from "the girl at the post-office, the wife of the green-grocer, or the young
lady at the Blue Anchor," until Holmes, who could follow such a course with singular success, advised him to do so (188-89).

As he introduces his tale Watson tells us:

I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage drifted us away from each other. My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention, while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street.

The mention of the detective's "Bohemian soul" is significant, for the real "Scandal in Bohemia" is the scandal of Holmes's psyche, into which he allows "the woman" to intrude.

The plot concerns a Bohemian king who wishes to retrieve some "compromising letters" written to Irene Adler, a beautiful American-born opera singer. Holmes pooh-poohs the blackmail value of the papers, but he takes more seriously the fact that there is also a photograph of the king and Adler, which she refuses to sell. Five attempts to obtain the photograph have been made: her house has been burgled twice, her luggage has been diverted, and the lady herself has been waylaid and searched, but to no avail. The opening scene ends as the detective agrees to take the case and for a large but unspecified sum of money. In part two of the story Holmes has already gone out disguised, and
has made friends with the servants and stablemen to gain information about the seemingly nefarious Adler. (Learning that she has as a frequent visitor a lawyer named Mr. Godfrey Norton, Holmes speculates, "Was she his client, his friend, or his mistress?"—analogous to the three primary roles of women in detective fiction proposed in this dissertation.) He asks Watson to accompany him in a second visit to her home, inquiring, "You don't mind breaking the law?" Watson replies, "Not in the least." "Nor running a chance of arrest?" presses Holmes. "Not in a good cause," is the answer. Holmes dons another disguise, and the two head back to Adler's quarters. During a prearranged disturbance in the street, Holmes feigns injury to gain entrance to her house. And here the tone of the story, and the reader's attitude about Adler, begins to change as Watson, peering inside of the house through a window, comments, "I never felt more heartily ashamed of myself in my life than when I saw the beautiful creature against whom I was conspiring, or the grace and kindness with which she waited upon the injured man." Holmes manages to learn where the photo is kept, and makes plans to return and steal it the following day. Later, as he and Watson are about to enter their Baker Street lodgings, a "slim youth" hurries by and
comments, "Good-night Mister Sherlock Holmes." The following day Watson, Holmes, and the king visit her house, only to learn that she has departed for the continent early that morning. She has left Holmes a note affirming that she, too, is proficient with disguise and that it was she who had bid him good night. Adler goes on to accuse the king of having "cruelly wronged" her, and to assert that she is keeping the photo "to safeguard myself, and to preserve a weapon which will always secure me from any steps which he might take in the future." Holmes reacts coldly to the king's exclamation "What a woman--oh, what a woman! ... Would she not have made an admirable queen? Is it not a pity that she was not on my level?" by commenting, "From what I have seen of the lady she seems indeed to be on a very different level to your Majesty." Watson concludes:

And that was how a great scandal threatened to affect the kingdom of Bohemia, and how the best plans of Mr. Sherlock Holmes were beaten by a woman's wit. He used to make merry over the cleverness of women, but I have not heard him do it of late. And when he speaks of Irene Adler ... it is always under the honourable title of the woman.

Symons has suggested that neither of the first two Holmes novels are very original: "He took the basic plot of A Study in Scarlet from an episode in The Dynamiter [by Robert Louis Stevenson], and in The Sign
of Four the Indian sub-plot with its theme of a
treasure which is cursed owes an obvious debt to The
Moonstone" (Bloody Murder 64). The plot of "A Scandal
in Bohemia," too, shows clear borrowing from Poe. The
possible blackmail of a royal figure, the futile
attempts to find the document, the street disturbance,
etc. all derive from "The Purloined Letter," as does
the idea of a worthy female love-interest who humanizes
the detective hero. Another important aspect of the
story is the investigator's readiness to break the law
and risk arrest in obedience to a higher moral law. As
Symons puts it:

[Holmes] upon occasions disregards the law. So,
in "The Abbey Grange" Holmes and Watson jointly
decide that they will not reveal to the police the
identity of the man who killed Sir Eustace
Brackenstall; ... in "The Blue Carbuncle"
Holmes condones a felony in the hope that he is
saving a soul. When the law cannot dispense
justice, Holmes does so himself. He is a final
court of appeal and the idea that such a court
might exist, personified by an individual, was
permanently comforting to his readers (Bloody
Murder 66-67).

This variation on the noble outlaw theme is
prototypical for later hardboiled fiction.

Holmes's disregard for the law is a notable
feature of another tale, also involving blackmail and a
strong-minded female character, "The Adventure of
Charles Augustus Milverton." As the story begins, the
title character is identified by Holmes as "the worst
man in London," and "the king of all the blackmailers." He has "a heart of marble" and "a large, intellectual head"; these two facts would seem to liken him to Watson's description of Holmes (in "A Scandal in Bohemia") as a man for whom "all emotions . . . were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind," were it not for the reader's awareness that, far from being unemotional, Holmes is, if anything, acutely sensitive. The plot focuses on some compromising letters; Milverton will use them to stop an upcoming marriage unless the intended bride of an Earl pays seven thousand pounds. In the midst of an interview with the blackmailer Holmes appears overcome with emotion: "Holmes was gray with anger and mortification." And minutes later, Holmes becomes so incensed at the blackmailer's cool and patronizing manner that he springs from his chair, crying, "Get behind him, Watson! Don't let him out!"—a decidedly irrational move, since Milverton counters by "exhibiting the butt of a large revolver." Moreover, Milverton's assertion that he is "perfectly prepared to use my weapons, knowing that the law will support me" suggests that the official legal system is no protector of the victim and the law is, instead, on the side of the criminal.
Holmes again resorts to disguise to solve the case. After having gone out for several days dressed as a workman, he returns one evening to announce to Watson:

"You'll be interested to hear that I'm engaged."
"My dear fellow! I congrat--"
"To Milverton's housemaid."
"Good heavens, Holmes!"
"I wanted information, Watson."
"Surely you have gone too far?"
"It was a most necessary step..."
"But the girl, Holmes?"
He shrugged his shoulders.
"You can't help it, my dear Watson. You must play your cards as best you can when such a stake is on the table. However, I rejoice to say that I have a hated rival, who will certainly cut me out the instant that my back is turned."

Holmes goes on to reveal his plans to burgle Milverton's house that evening, and Watson is appalled at his friend's intention of breaking the law (although Watson is really more shocked by the possibility of getting caught than by the act itself):

I seemed to see every possible result of such an action—the detection, the capture, the honoured career ending in irreparable failure and disgrace, my friend himself lying at the mercy of the odious Milverton.

"For heaven's sake, Holmes, think what you are doing," I cried.
"My dear fellow, I have given it every consideration. I am never precipitate in my actions, nor would I adopt so energetic an, indeed, so dangerous a course if any other were possible. Let us look at the matter clearly and fairly. I suppose that you will admit that the action is morally justifiable, though technically criminal..."

I turned it over in my mind.
"Yes," I said, "It is morally justifiable."

Once again Holmes is bested by a woman. He has previously shown himself impotent in capturing or harming Milverton. But as he and Watson hide behind the blackmailer's curtains before having a chance to steal anything, another of Milverton's female victims enters the study and, from a range of two feet, fires five shots into the blackmailer's chest, watches coldly as he slumps to the floor, then grinds her heel in his face. Watson's comment that "justice had overtaken a villain" sums up his attitude about the murder he has witnessed. And later, when Detective Lestrade asks for help in solving Milverton's murder, Holmes replies, "I think there are certain crimes which the law cannot touch and which therefore, to some extent, justify private revenge."

Although Holmes goes beyond the law at times, he is never an outlaw or rogue. Now firmly established by Doyle, the detective genre thrived, but tales of noble outlaws were passing out of style by the end of the century. Two exceptions represent "the last flicker for a long time of the criminal hero tradition" (Bloody Murder 84). The first of these is the enormously popular series of novels recounting the adventures of A. J. Raffles, a "gentleman-burglar" created by E. W.
Hornung (1866-1921)—Conan Doyle’s brother-in-law; Doyle protested against making the criminal a hero, but Horning nonetheless dedicated the first Raffles novel, *Raffles, the Amateur Cracksman* (1899), to Doyle. The other exception is Arsene Lupin, *gentleman-cambrioleur* (burglar), created by Frenchman Maurice Leblanc (1864-1941); stories and novels focusing on Lupin appeared regularly during the first three decades of the 1900s, and one adventure is titled *Arsene Lupin contre Herlock Sholmes*. Two other French-language writers made notable contributions to the genre in this century with law-abiding detective heroes: Gaston Leroux’s (1868-1927) *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* (*Le Mystere de la chambre jaune*, 1807) has been called the best detective tale ever written; the detective hero, Joseph Rouletabille, is a young newspaper reporter and appears in other works by the author. George Simenon (1903—) began publishing his Police Inspector Maigret novels in the early 1930s; Maigret’s adventures have appeared on television, radio, and film, and the role has been played on the screen by no less an actor than Charles Laughton.

A complete list of English-language writers who made important post-Holmesian contributions to the genre would run for pages, but several figures are
worth mentioning in passing. In Britain, G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936) was one of the first to defend the literary value of detective fiction: "The first essential value of the detective story lies in this, that it is the earliest and only form of popular literature in which is expressed some sense of the poetry of modern life" (from "In Defence of the Detective Story," The Defendant, (London: Dent, 1901), quoted Murch 10). In addition, he wrote a series of essays on Sherlock Homes which appeared in 1901 and 1907. Like Doyle, he excelled in the short form. His fifty Father Brown stories feature a mild-mannered, inconspicuous little cleric whose talent lies in psychological insight rather than in scientific knowledge or philosophical deduction, and who hunts down criminals for the sake of saving their souls rather than for the purpose of seeing them punished.

Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957) was another English intellectual who was successful with the genre; her series of novels recount the adventures of the elegant, merry, and aristocratic detective, Lord Peter Wimsey. In spite of her claim, "One fettering convention, from which detective fiction is freeing itself, is that of the 'love interest'" (Sayers, 32), her hero eventually falls in love and marries. But the real giant of the
form in twentieth-century England is Agatha Christie (1890-1976). She is known as one of the best-loved, and most prolific of the modern detective fiction writers, and her heroes Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple rank among the best-known of detective characters.

In America, Jacques Futrelle (1875-1912) took Watson at his word when he called Holmes a "reasoning and observing machine," and created S.F.X. Van Dusen, "The Thinking Machine," whose adventures appeared as a series of short stories in the first decade of the twentieth century. Considerably more human and hence more appealing was Earl Derr Biggers's (1884-1933) Chinese-American sleuth Charlie Chan, who appeared in the next decade and "who has probably inspired more genuine personal affection in his readers than any other sleuth" of the time (Haycraft, Murder for Pleasure 177). The American counterpart of Lord Peter Wimsey was the Willard Huntington Wright (1888-1939--pseudonym, S. S. Van Dyne) character, Philo Vance, an immensely popular hero who has been labelled a "monster of snobbist affectation" by Julian Symons (Bloody Murder 101). Nevertheless, the Vance novels broke records for detective book sales in the late twenties. Wright, like Sayers and others, firmly believed that the presence of a love interest destroyed the unity of
a good mystery.

The common characteristics Philo Vance shares with his British counterpart Lord Peter Wimsey suggest how much American detective fiction early in the century owed its British equivalent. But American detective fiction began to go its own way in the 1920s, and this change in direction originated in the cheap popular magazines called pulps, which had first appeared during the World War and which blossomed in the twenties and thirties. The earliest crime pulps showed the British influence of Doyle and other Victorian detective writers, but according to Symons:

[T]hey changed rapidly so that by the mid-twenties the dominating figure in them was the American private eye. The pulps catered for a large audience, literate but not literary, eager at one extreme for stories about fantasy figures with names like The Shadow and The Spider, and at another for tales of realistic violence set in recognizable surroundings. They were the blue-collar workers' version of the crime story, and their popularity reflected the rise of the gangster in American society with the coming of Prohibition in 1920 and its accompanying civic and police corruption. . . . [The] hardboiled dicks did not inhabit the same world as the Great Detective. Where the Great Detective avoided and often scorned violence, to the hardboiled dick it was as natural as drinking (Bloody Murder 123).

And meanwhile the silent cinema had become especially popular in a country with large numbers of immigrants who could not speak English but could understand the melodramatic and stagey gestures of the
movies. The very name "movies" suggests that from the time of its invention cinema's essence was action, and screen action was frequently violent. As early as 1903, the seven-year-old medium saw the production of Edwin S. Porter's (1869-1941) sensational and violent *The Great Train Robbery*, which was to remain the most popular film in the country until the next decade. According to one film historian, "as primitive an effort as Porter's . . . film was, *The Great Train Robbery*, in form and in content, signalled a critical point of departure for cinematic expression" (Beaver 47-51). This trend toward criminal activity as a subject of film continued through the teens when D.W. Griffith (1875-1948), the dominant figure in American cinema at the time, used parallel editing to build suspense in such crime films as *The Lonely Villa* (1909) and *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912), as well as in the crime subplot of *Intolerance* (1916), later released separately as *The Mother and the Law* (1918).

A public previously fascinated with criminals, suspense, terror, and detection had become intrigued with violence as well. This happened for a variety of reasons: changing attitudes about brutality and a softening of reactions against violence following the exposure of nearly four million American soldiers to
the horrors of World War One; the altered social conditions and rise of crime that accompanied the urbanization of American; the establishment of Prohibition in 1920; and the proliferation of gangsters and criminals which resulted from all of the above. In 1920 H.L. Mencken, in order to subsidize his literary magazine The Smart Set, decided to cash in on the popularity of pulps. With his partner George Nathan he established, as a vehicle for mystery and crime fiction, Black Mask, the periodical which was to give birth to and nurture the hardboiled genre. One of the earliest contributors to Black Mask was Carroll John Daly whose sleuth Race Williams is usually called the first hardboiled detective. But four months after the first Race Williams story was published, another writer appeared whose colossal talent would eclipse the work of Daly and, eventually, that of most other American mystery writers of his era: Samuel Dashiell Hammett.
CHAPTER II

WOMEN IN SELECTED WORKS BY DASHIELL HAMMETT

Allan Pinkerton (1819-1884) emigrated to the U.S. from Scotland in 1842 and eventually became the first detective on the Chicago police force. In 1850 he established Pinkerton’s National Detective Agency, one of the first and later the largest of the private law enforcement organizations in this country. Punning on private investigator or “private i.,” he coined the expression “private eye,” invented the agency trademark of the single staring eye symbolizing eternal vigilance, and created the company slogan “We Never Sleep.” Pinkerton himself led a varied and exciting life: he ran an Underground Railroad station in his home, organized the first American Secret Service force, discovered and prevented a plot to assassinate President Lincoln, served as a Union spy during the Civil War, solved several major robbery cases including the $700,000 train robbery of Adams Express Company, participated in a criminal manhunt that took him to Central America, and authored a series of dime novels based on his detective experiences, including The
Expressman and the Detective, 1875, and The Molly Maguires and the Detectives, 1877. (According to William F. Nolan, one of Pinkerton's books, The Model Town and the Detectives, was an "obvious influence" on Hammett's first novel, Red Harvest. See Hammett: A Life at the Edge 75.) His agency was the best of its kind, and the highly disciplined Pinkerton operatives were called on to serve as security guards, to solve criminal cases, and to break labor strikes across the country.

"No one is as good as a Pinkerton" was the company's advertising claim, and in 1915 the twenty-one-year-old Samuel Dashiell Hammett answered a Baltimore newspaper want ad and signed on with the agency, holding the job until 1922, with time off for military service during the World War. Hammett's career with Pinkerton took him around the U.S., to Oregon, Montana, California, Washington, D.C. And his experiences were nearly as varied and exciting as those of Allan Pinkerton himself. He worked as a strike breaker. He helped turn up $125,000 worth of missing gold which had disappeared on a ship, The Sonoma, bound for San Francisco from Sydney. He was assigned to gather evidence in the Fatty Arbuckle rape case. He shadowed comedienne Fanny Brice when her husband Nicky
Arnstein was wanted in connection with a five-million-dollar securities swindle. Hammett also followed Pinkerton's lead in turning his detective experiences into literature. His encounters with small-town corruption and labor disputes emerged in *Red Harvest*, *The Sonoma* with its hidden treasure became *La Paloma* in *The Maltese Falcon*, fat villains such as *The Maltese Falcon*’s Caspar Gutman, reminiscent of Arbuckle, appear in his work, and the fashionable and elegant Arnstein and his "funny girl" wife were perhaps real-life prototypes of Nick and Nora Charles of *The Thin Man* (Johnson 35, Layman 153).

By 1922, tuberculosis and general poor health forced Hammett to abandon his Pinkerton career, and he began to try the less strenuous way of earning a living from writing. He took a part-time position writing newspaper ads for a jeweler, a job which he sometimes did lying in bed because of the illness that had reduced his 6'1 1/2" frame to a weight of 135 pounds. He also wrote short fiction, aiming to be published in the stylish and aristocratic creation of H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan, *Smart Set*—according to its contents page, it was a magazine of "Various Burlesques, Epigrams, Poems, Short Satires, Etc."

Hammnett succeeded: in October, 1922 his first
published work, "The Parthian Shot," was printed in *Smart Set*, but this was only a small triumph, for the piece, which appeared as filler, was barely one hundred words long and the author was paid $1 (Marling 18). The following month another short Hammett piece came out in the same publication, and by the end of Hammett's first year of writing, he had sold twelve pieces to five magazines, but all had earned only small sums, and none was longer than one thousand words (Marling 17). But the impulse toward the economical writing and terseness of style that was to become his trademark was already established, perhaps due in part to the fact that he was simultaneously writing newspaper advertising.

In March of 1920, Mencken and Nathan had established another less sophisticated publication, a pulp called *The Black Mask* (the name was later changed to *Black Mask*) aimed at readers of crime stories and Westerns; it would, its founders hoped, be popular enough to help subsidize their other more literary venture. In April, Mencken admitted that although the magazine was a success, he and Nathan were "burdened . . . with disagreeable work" because of it (Nolan, *Casebook 21*), and by 1921 they had sold *Black Mask* at a profit. *Black Mask* was one of several magazines
printed on cheap pulpy paper and featuring suspense, mystery, and/or adventure stories: *Detective Story Magazine* had been established as early as 1915; others included *The Nick Carter Weekly* and *Argosy All-Story*. But the earliest *Black Mask* detective fiction, like that of its sister publications, was derivative of British mysteries and carried titles such as "The Uncanny Voice," or "The Jest Ironic." Nolan gives a wonderful excerpt from a 1920 *Black Mask* story called "The Silvered Sentinel": "With a windy shriek De Collyer fell backward upon the bed, the mounting tide of his alcoholic frenzy culminating in an overwhelming wave of insane and blasphemous mouthing, the grim justice of a retributive madness" (*Casebook* 22).

Hammett's first *Black Mask* story was carried in the December, 1922 issue; entitled "The Road Home," it was a brief third-person account of a detective named Hagedorn who pursues a jewel thief halfway around the world. Meanwhile another author, Carroll John Daly, had also begun to publish in *Black Mask*, and in 1923 Daly created the character Race Williams, generally agreed to be the world's first hardboiled detective. The first Race Williams piece, "Knights of the Open Palm," appeared in the June 1, 1923 issue of the magazine, and the Williams stories in general marked a
total departure from the purple-prose mysteries that had dominated the pulps (Nolan, Casebook 22); the character was so popular that, whenever he appeared on the cover of the magazine, sales increased by fifteen percent (Santoine, Thursday, January 16). Williams had no counterpart among the pre-existing elegant and leisured detectives. Thoroughly hardboiled, he was rugged and violent where his predecessors had been upperclass and polite. He was also a tough-talking loner who frequently operated outside of the law: Williams typically made statements like "I never bumped off a guy what didn’t need it" (Nolan, Casebook 24) and "right or wrong are not written on the statutes for me, nor do I find my code of morals in the essays of long-winded professors. My ethics are my own." (Marling 23). But, as one of Hammett’s earliest biographers, William F. Nolan, puts it, "Daly was never a good writer. . . . [H]is style was crude, clumsy, unsubtle, his characters strictly one dimensional" (Casebook 25). According to Hammett critic William Marling, a typical Daly ending is "'I sent him crashing through the gates of hell with my bullet in his brain'" (23). And Nolan cites another major flaw in Daly’s work—an unfamiliarity with his material: "Daly knew nothing of crime and criminals,
rarely ventured out of his home, loathed all outdoor sports" (Casebook 25). Nolan records that the originator of the hardboiled detective "ended as he began, after three decades in the pulps, a man unable to rise above his material" (Casebook 25).

Unlike Daly, Hammett did know crime and criminals. He had waited in cold doorways while shadowing felons, interrogated and intimidated suspects, perjured himself in the line of duty. He knew from first-hand experience about pickpockets, swindlers, and forgers. He was familiar with fingerprinting and disguise, and had scars from being hit with a brick and cut with a knife. Early in his writing career, Hammett transferred his detective experiences into fiction via stories about the nameless, middle-aged, hardworking, and unglamorous operative of the Continental Detective Agency. The first hardboiled Continental Op story was entitled "Arson Plus" and appeared in Black Mask on October 1, 1923, four months to the day after the first Race Williams piece. From then until November of 1930 there appeared twenty-six stories, two novelettes, and two novels recounting a series of cases in which the Op worked as a guard, house detective, missing-person tracer, robbery investigator, or tracker of murderers.
Female characters appear frequently in the Op stories, and rather than being static, the detective's way of relating to women undergoes a gradual evolution.

By the end of 1923 Hammett had published two articles and fourteen short stories in periodicals including *Smart Set, Brief Stories, Pearson's Magazine*, and of course *Black Mask*. One of these pieces, "Second-Story Angel" (*Black Mask*, November 15, 1923), is not a Continental Op story but features a worthy female antagonist named Angel Grace, who appears in two later *Black Mask* Continental Op narratives, "The Big Knockover" and "$106,000 Blood Money" (both 1927). In "Second-Story Angel" the sweet young green-eyed beauty is an expert thief and con artist; she manages to make fools of not one but four successive crime writers by masquerading as potential literary material in her plot to burgle their apartments and swindle them out of several hundred dollars each. When Angel reappears in "The Big Knockover," she hints that she and the Op have met before and that she has been well-treated by him; in a scene in which she is near hysteria over the death of a friend, she frantically reveals her respect and trust for the Op: "You're on the square! You were white to me that time in Philly! Paddy always said you were one white dick!" (*Hammett, The Big Knockover* 379).
That story's sequel, "$106,000 Blood Money," shows Angel having just been rescued from an attempted suicide by drowning; the Op, needing information for a case, visits her in the hospital and treats her with concern and affection:

She was lying on her back on a cot, staring at the ceiling. Her face was pale, but it always was, and her green eyes were no more sullen than usual. Except that her short hair was dark with dampness she didn't look as if anything out of the ordinary had happened.

"You think of the funniest things to do," I said when I was beside the bed.

She jumped and her face jerked around to me, startled. Then she recognized me and smiled—a smile that brought into her face the attractiveness that habitual sullenness kept out. "You have to keep in practice—sneaking up on people?" she asked.

I sat down on a small chair beside the white bed and patted the lump her shoulder made in the sheets. "What was it?" I was surprised at the fatherly tone I achieved. "What did you want to die for, Angel?"

Words that wanted to be said were shiny in her eyes, tugged at muscles in her face, shaped her lips—but that was all. The words she said came out listlessly, but with a reluctant sort of finality. They were, "No. You're law, I'm thief. I'm staying on my side of the fence. Nobody can say—"

"All right! All right!" I surrendered. . . . "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Thanks, no."

"There's nothing you want to tell me?"

She shook her head. "You're all right now?"

"Yes. I was being shadowed wasn't I? Or you wouldn't have known about it so soon. I'm a detective— I know everything. Be a good girl" ( Knockover 429-30).

Of course the fact that the Op is interrogating her is behind the "fatherly tone" he "achieves," but
his reference to her attractiveness, and his poignant
description of the girl's sense of honor among thieves
as she struggles not to divulge information, indicate a
genuine affection for her. At the end of the story,
Angel gets caught between the thieves and the law. We
learn she has tried to kill herself after watching one
gang member carve up another with a knife: "The carving
sickened Angel Grace. She left, after vainly trying to
stop Carey. And when she read in the afternoon papers
what a finished job he had made of it, she tried to
commit suicide, to stop the images from crawling around
in her head" (Knockover 456). Later she tries to kill
the gang leader but is overpowered by the leader's
moll—a character named Big Flora and described as
"broad-shouldered, deep-bosomed, thick-armed, with a
pink throat which for all its smoothness was muscled
like a wrestler's" (Knockover 396-97)—and tied to a
kitchen table, which is where Angel is when the Op and
his colleagues arrive. At the end of the story, she
winds up in the county jail along with Flora and a
young heiress named Ann Newhall who has gotten mixed up
with the gang, and Angel's final fate is uncertain.9

The Op, then, experiences something akin to
affection and sympathy for Angel, but he never acts on
his feelings. And this is perhaps his salvation, for in
the climactic, explanatory scene of "Blood Money" we learn that another operative, handsome and young Jack Counihan, is a turncoat as a result of having fallen in love with heiress and gang member Ann Newhall. Jack initially tries to convince the Op that he has betrayed his Agency colleagues for money, but the Op retorts:

"Stop spoofing! The money Papadopoulos showed you didn't buy you. You met the girl and were too soft to turn her in. But your vanity--your pride in looking at yourself as a pretty cold proposition--wouldn't let you admit it even to yourself. You had to have a hard-boiled front... You went as far as possible beyond what was needed to save the girl from the hoosegow--just to show the world, but chiefly yourself, that you were not acting through sentimentality..." (Knockover 454-55).

William Marling comments on this scene that the Op "regards anyone who leaves himself open to sentiment or love as foolish" (43), and clearly this is the same impulse at work for Sam Spade when he refuses to "play the sap" for Brigid.

Angel Grace would seem to be a prototype of Dinah Brand, the lead female character in Hammett’s first novel, Red Harvest. This appeared as four discrete novelettes in the November 1927 through February 1928 issues of Black Mask, and was reworked and published in book form in 1929. When the first installment appeared in Black Mask, the editor, Joseph "Cap" Shaw (to whom the novel was dedicated when it appeared as a
book), hailed it in a preface as "the ideal detective story--the new type of detective fiction which Black Mask is seeking to develop ... written by a master of his craft" (Symons 42). The novel has since been admired and acclaimed by writers and critics as one of the greatest books of its time. Dubbed "an acknowledged literary landmark" by poet Robert Graves (Nolan, Casebook 46), Red Harvest takes the Op to a Western mining town--named Personville but known as Poisonville--where he is hired to clean up the local corruption; he does this by pitting gang factions against each other, resulting in a bloodbath which led Andre Gide to call the novel "the last word in atrocity, cynicism, and horror," although Gide also referred to it as a "remarkable achievement" equalling "the best in Hemingway."

With its speeding black sedans, cigar-smoking corrupt police chief, bootleg gin, and hoodlums with names like "Whisper" and "Big Nick" and "Pete the Finn" and "Reno," Red Harvest is more a gangster novel than a mystery, and it would seem to embody all the icons of traditional gangster fiction. But instead of the typical gorgeous girlfriend, who is often little more than an ornament symbolizing the gangster's wealth and power, Red Harvest presents the reader with Dinah
Brand. In the chapter that bears her name, and several pages before her appearance, Dinah is described to the Op as "a soiled dove, a de luxe hustler, a big-league gold digger" (21). Since she has received a $5000 certified check from a murdered man on the night he is killed, she is the prime suspect, and the Op wants to learn everything he can about her. Before he manages to see her, he hears of her appeal to men: in addition to having apparently had a liaison with the dead man, she is the girlfriend of gangster Whisper Thaler, she's the former love of a young bank teller named Robert Albury, she "used to run around with" labor leader Bill Quint, and she has a live-in male companion named Don Rolff who is sick with tuberculosis. Yet the jilted Albury, from whom the Op gains much of his initial information about Dinah, looks back on their affair with fondness and speaks respectfully and in defense of her:

"She's money-mad, all right, but somehow you don't mind it. She's so thoroughly mercenary, so frankly greedy, that there's nothing disagreeable about it. You'll understand what I mean when you know her."

"Maybe. Mind telling me how you happened to part with her?"

"No, I don't mind. I spent it all, that's how. . . ."

"You seem to have taken it well," I said. . . .

"It happens I owe her something for it. . . . I had a little money. . . . After my money was gone there was the bank's. . . ."

"She broke off with you?"
"Yes, thank God! If it hadn't been for her you might be looking for me now—for embezzlement. I owe her that! . . . [s]he has her good side too. You'll hear enough about the other" (26-27).

Brand is an example of what Dennis Dooley calls Hammett's Dark Lady, or

the character that appears with slight variations in so many of Hammett's stories: Ines, Jeanne Delano/Elvira, Mrs. Gungen, Princess Zhukovski . . . and, later, Dinah Brand in Red Harvest, Gabrielle Leggett in The Dain Curse, and--her apotheosis--Brigid O'Shaughnessy in The Maltese Falcon. A maddening blend of innocence and manipulation, vulnerability and villainy, sometimes she gets to him and sometimes the Op manages to keep her fixed in his cold eye. . . . He knows enough to be afraid of her, but always finds her intriguing . . . and usually is soon in an uneasy alliance with her. In an atmosphere heavy with danger and malevolence, they do a dance of trust and manipulation. . . . Of course the Op's Dark Lady doesn't always turn out to be a villainess (59-60).

And Dinah Brand is more than a gangster's gun moll or femme fatale. Gertrude Stein reportedly once told Hammett that he was "the only American writer who wrote well about women" (Eames 115). Symons notes that in its presentation of Brand, Red Harvest "contains Hammett's first convincing treatment of a female character. In the early stories the women in central roles are conventionally attractive, conventionally wicked. . . . Dinah Brand is altogether different, a figure deliberately created against type" (Symons 43). Indeed, when the Op finally goes to see her for the first time, he finds quite the opposite of what he, and
the reader, expect: her house is a middle-class, gray
frame cottage, its interior is disorderly and cluttered
up. Dinah herself, who kicks a couple of newspapers
out of her way as she rises to greet him (in a later
scene she spits on the floor), is, in the following
oft-quoted passage, hardly the picture of demure female
beauty:

She was an inch or two taller than I, which
made her about five feet eight. She had a broad-
shouldered, full-breasted, round-hipped body and
big muscular legs. The hand she gave me was soft,
warm, strong. Her face was the face of a girl of
twenty-five already showing signs of wear. Little
lines crossed the corners of her big ripe mouth.
Fainter lines were beginning to make nets around
her thick-lashed eyes. They were large eyes, blue
and a bit bloodshot.

Her coarse hair—brown—needed trimming and was
parted crookedly. One side of her upper lip had
been rouged higher than the other. Her dress
. . . gaped here and there down one side, where
she had neglected to snap the fasteners or they
had popped open. There was a run down the front
of her left stocking.

This was the Dinah Brand who took her pick of
Poisonville's men. . . . (30).

Richard Layman says that Brand's "faded beauty . . .
shows the strain of getting by in Poisonville. She is
just corrupt enough to avoid being consumed by the
corruption around her. . . ." (94). Indeed, the other
moll of the novel, Myrtle Jennison, Thaler's former
girlfriend and perhaps Dinah's predecessor as queen bee
of Poisonville, allows us to glimpse a woman who hasn't
been able to withstand the strain, who hasn't avoided
being consumed. Described by Dinah as having formerly been "a classy looking kid . . . a slender blonde," Myrtle is now dying in a ward at the city hospital. Standing beside her hospital bed, the Op sees someone who "could have been a girl of twenty-five or a woman of fifty-five. Her face was a bloated spotty mask. Lifeless yellow hair in two stringy braids lay on the pillow. . . . [Her] ugly eyes . . . were shaded into no particular dark color by the pads of flesh around them. . . ." After signing a statement for the Op she suddenly throws back the bedcovers, showing him "a horrible swollen body in a coarse white nightgown" and lamenting cynically, "How do you like me? See, I'm done." Jennison is dying of the ironically named Bright's disease, and the poignancy of the scene is underscored by the Op's tough-guy reaction; as in his behavior at the bedside of Angel Grace in "$106,000 Blood Money," his feelings show in his restraint, and his lack of visible emotion in the face of such a pathetic image suggests an underlying emotional depth and sensitivity: "I pulled the covers up over her again and said: 'Thanks for this, Miss Jennison'"(86).

In her slovenly and disheveled appearance, Dinah Brand is the Op's female counterpart, for he is no
good-looking Sam Spade or debonnaire Nick Charles. He's short, at an inch or two under 5'8" (30), overweight, at 190 pounds (122), and as Dinah herself says, is "a fat, middle-aged, hard-boiled, pig-headed guy . . . [with] the vaguest way of doing things I ever heard of" (79). As a gold-digger who is "frankly greedy," she embodies the closest thing to kindness, fairness, and honesty that the Op will find in Poisonville, and he knows it. For this reason, she becomes his "best friend in the novel" (Layman 94), his drinking buddy, his Watson, his colleague. Through her toughness and through the slyness and tenacity of her mercenary behavior, she has already proven herself to be nearly the Op's equal, but this equality is emphasized when, just past the midpoint of the novel, she displays her expert driving skills when she and the Op rescue gangster Reno Starkey from a roadhouse shoot-out. Reno acknowledges her ability, commenting, "Nice work, kid. You handle the bus like you meant it" (127).

Through her adeptness at handling an automobile, a symbol of masculine power and achievement, Dinah is established as a woman who is able to function in a man's world—and a depraved, corrupt world, at that—as well as many men and better than some. In the novel
she slaps one man around, she socks another with her fist, delivering "a very respectable wallop--man-size" that knocks its recipient back several feet, and, unarmed, she faces off a fair-haired boy who is toting a blackjack: "She watched him with a face hard as a silver dollar. She was standing with most of her weight on her left foot. I guessed blondy was going to stop a kick when he closed in" (98). In addition to being a result of her skill and courage, Dinah's equality with men comes from her financial situation. She is not dependent on any man--indeed, the tubercular Don Rolff, "a down-and-outer" "she simply found . . . somewhere and took him in," depends on her and lives on her charity (27). According to Gregory, her "sloppiness and vulgarity" are "somehow redeemed for her by money--with it she has control and independence. . ." (59).

Certainly she is lawless, unscrupulous (she informs on her former boyfriend Whisper Thaler, expecting money in return) and dangerous, but according to Layman, "Dinah Brand is the best woman one could expect in Personville; she guides the op [sic] in his investigation, and his respect for her toughness is translated into something approaching real affection, even while he realizes that his feelings for her are
self-destructive" (Layman 95). These feelings develop gradually. At a prize fight he sees Dinah dolled up and out on the town with Rolff: "She had her hair trimmed at last, and marcelled, and looked like a lot of money in a big gray fur coat" (70). After the Op gives her a tip that helps her win a large sum on the fight, she waits for him outside and they go off to a Chinese restaurant and back to her place for drinks. There the Op discusses the case with her, revealing something of his strategy and methods, and she in turn shares information with him regarding former boyfriend Whisper Thaler. They don't go to bed together, even though the Op has knocked her housemate Don Rolff out cold, but they do stay up all night, drinking and talking and building a camaraderie until after six in the morning.

One chapter later, before the Op has yet had a chance to sleep, Dinah calls and again asks him over. When he arrives, she is once more poorly attired, in "a tan woolen dress with a two inch rip in one shoulder seam" and crooked stocking seams that "made s's up the ample backs of her legs." She takes him into her living room: "She sat on the chesterfield beside me and said: 'I'm going to ask you to do something for me. You like me enough, don't you?' I admitted that. She
counted the knuckles of my left hand with a warm forefinger" (95). She continues flirting with him, touching him, kneading his bicep, pouting--and the Op neither advances nor resists. A page later we learn she has been doing it to manipulate him for financial gain. The men who have been listening from the upstairs of her house emerge, and in the ensuing melee she slugs one man, heaves a corpse at another, and, when Don Rolff holds a gun on the Op who tells Dinah to do something, she laughs (in spite of the fact that two men are dead on her floor) and responds, "Talk money, darling." The Op begins bidding; she succumbs to an offer of two hundred dollars and ten cents, and grabs Rolff from behind, winding "her strong arms around him, pulling his arms down, pinning them to his sides" (95-101).

Dinah later appears at the Op's hotel room to collect her money, but even though she is presumably willing and they clearly have the opportunity (he even bathes while she is there), the Op makes no attempt to take her to bed, though he does answer affirmatively when she asks, "Take me out tonight? I've got a new outfit that'll knock them cockeyed." Later, when he shows up for the date, their repartee could easily be that of the happily married Nick and Nora Charles of *The Thin Man*:
She took me into her living room, backed away from me, revolved, and asked me how I like the new dress. I said I liked it.

"And you really think I look good in it?"

"You always look good," I said. "Lew Yard and Pete the Finn went calling on old Elihu this afternoon."

She made a face at me and said:

"You don't give a damn about my dress. What did they do there?" (121).

As the conversation continues, Dinah grows livid suspecting that the Op has put her life in danger from Whisper Thaler:

She grabbed my shoulders and tried to shake my hundred and ninety pounds. She was almost strong enough to do it.

I don't like being manhandled, even by young women who look like something out of mythology when they're steamed up. I took her hands off my shoulders.

"Oh, you're rotten!" she said. "You don't give a damn what happens to me. You're using me as you use the others--that dynamite you wanted. I trusted you."

"You're dynamite, all right, but the rest of it's kind of foolish. You look a lot better when you're happy. Your features are heavy. Anger makes them downright brutal. I'm starving, sister."

"You'll eat here," she said. "You're not going to get me out after dark."

She meant it. She swapped the rose beige dress for an apron.

By the time we sat down to the food she had almost forgotten her fright. She wasn't a very good cook, but we ate as if she were (121-23).

The Op continues to stir things up, pitting faction against faction, gangster against gangster, and the Poisonville death toll is steadily mounting when, the following evening, the Op pays a visit to Dinah
that turns out to be his last. As he arrives, she
greets him with concern: "You look tired. . . . Been
working?" He answers cynically, "Attending a peace
conference out of which at least a dozen killings ought
to grow." After a moment, she observes, "You look
ghastly," and the Op, who earlier in the book declared
"Poisonville is ripe for the harvest. It's a job I
like, and I'm going to do it," now says:

"This damned burg's getting me. If I don't get
away soon I'll be going blood-simple like the
natives. There's been what? A dozen and a half
murders since I've been here . . . and more coming
up. . . . I've arranged a killing or two in my
time, when they were necessary. But this is the
first time I've ever got the fever. It's this
damned burg. You can't go straight here. I
got myself tangled at the beginning. . . . I had
to swing the job the best way I could. How could
I help it if the best way was bound to lead to a
lot of killing?"

"Well, if you couldn't help it, what's the use
of making a lot of fuss over it? Drink your
drink."

I drank half of it and felt the urge to talk
some more.

"Play with murder enough and it gets you one
of two ways. It makes you sick, or you get to
like it" (141-43).

He continues to pour out his heart while she listens
and tries to console him as best as she can.

Eventually she recognizes the root of his problem:

"[y]our nerves are shot. You've been through too much
excitement in the last few days. Keep it up and you're
going to have . . . a nervous breakdown." She suggests
a geographical escape: "Let's go down to Salt Lake.
It'll do you good." But he replies, dismally, "Can't, sister. Somebody's got to stay here to count the dead." To calm him and steady his nerves she finally offers a dose of laudanum; he gladly accepts, saying, "I'd drink nitroglycerine tonight." The drink soothes him: "I put the doped gin down my throat. Presently I felt more comfortable. Time went by as we drank and talked in a world that was rosy, cheerful, and full of fellowship and peace on earth" (146-48). And he wakes up the next morning with his hand on an icepick that is buried in Dinah's left breast.

In the interim, however, the Op has had two successvive dreams that offer not only the key to Dinah's murder (which he's not entirely sure he didn't commit in a drugged stupor) but to his feelings for her. As the first dream begins, he is sitting on a park bench with a veiled female companion: "She was somebody I knew well. But I had suddenly forgotten who she was. I couldn't see her face because of the long black veil." He decides to speak to her, thinking that when he hears her response he'll recognize her voice. "But I was very embarrassed and was a long time finding anything to say." He speaks, but he is unable to hear her answer. Suddenly fire engines go by and she runs after them crying, "Fire! Fire!" He recognizes her
voice and "knew she was someone important to me. I ran after her, but it was too late. She and the fire engines were gone." He walks down "half the streets in the United States" looking for her, finally finds her on Victoria Street in Jacksonville, where he hears her voice but can't see her. He goes after her, walking more streets, "but no matter how fast I walked or in what direction, I could get no nearer her voice. . . . Then the voice stopped." Feeling "tired and discouraged" he goes into the lobby of a hotel facing a train station. She arrives by train, approaches him in the lobby, and "began kissing me. I was very uncomfortable because everybody stood around looking at us and laughing. The dream ended there" (149-150).

In the second dream he is "in a strange city hunting for a man I hated. I had an open knife in my pocket and meant to kill him with it." He sees the man, chases him up a long spiral staircase, and grabs his head, "a smooth hard round head no larger than a large egg." In the struggle, they stumble off the edge of a roof and drop, falling for miles (150-151).

The second dream is a doped-up version of Dinah's murder. She was killed by gangster Reno Starkey, who later confesses this to the Op. Reno had arrived while the detective was passed out in a laudanum haze, and as
Reno killed Dinah, the Op awoke and stumbled toward them "coked to the edges, charging at the whole world with both eyes shut. She tumbles into you. You go down, roll around till your hand hits the butt of the pick. Holding on to that, you go to sleep" (198).

The first dream, however, reveals the Op's emotional attachment to Dinah, the distance between them that he can't get past, and his fear of being embarrassed and humiliated as a result of expressing his affection. The black veil suggests death and danger, of course, but it also symbolizes the barrier between them and his reluctance to see her as an individual, as a subject rather than an object, as a particular woman rather than one of many women. In order to recognize her individuality he knows he must speak to her, must communicate, but his feelings of inadequacy here are almost adolescent; he is "very embarrassed" and can't think of anything to say. The fire engines and the fact that she cries "fire!" suggest her passion for him, and it is at this point, once she has symbolically shown her feelings, that he realizes "she was someone important to me. . . . [b]ut it was too late." The failure of communication continues as he follows her, hearing her voice but unable to get "nearer her voice" or emotionally close;
first he could see but not hear her, now the opposite is the case, and these point to a detachment and lack of personal commitment on his part. When she finally breaks through his emotional barrier and begins kissing him, he is unable to respond, worried about how he looks to others, concerned about his image, afraid of humiliation.

Marling discusses the two dreams at length, asserting that "the dreams have two pedestrian functions meant to be readily available to readers. They describe a 'coked up' version of Dinah's murder, the details of which Reno Starkey later makes clear."

Marling continues:

Both dreams are quests, the first after a personal emotional life that ends in embarrassment; the second after a man (reflecting the Op's occupation) that ends in death. Both have an immediately apparent sentimental value, which is one function. But, taken sequentially, the allegoric function is to imply that the admission of emotion leads to death. The hero has been warned, as heroes of the grail often are, by "supernatural" means after taking a "potion." Since this dream is the reader's single sustained view of the Op's consciousness, it appropriately unites his two functions. Its success is noteworthy. In later books Hammett attempted to create similarly compelling bridges between the quest and the realistic, and usually he failed (54).

The dream suggests that, although Dinah accused the Op of using her and of not caring "what happened to her as long as his dirty work got done" (132), he does love
her but is afraid of expressing his emotions. As Wolfe puts it, the message of the first dream to the Op is "What good is love if its ends in mockery?" Wolfe also asserts that the dreams "put the Op near the edge psychologically--ironically, just before he must cope with the novel's worst horror, Dinah's death. No wonder both his words and his deeds have a mechanical quality after he wakes up" (88-9). Indeed, on discovering her corpse, he coolly obliterates all traces that he was there that night, and later, when someone says to the Op, "You and her was kind of thick, wasn't you?" His response is as follows: "I let the question alone, lighting a cigarette" (154-55). This behavior is so cold that one suspects anything warmer would cause him to break down entirely. The Op's failure to protect a woman he loves is bound to be the most traumatizing experience of a detective's career and is a manifestation of his professional inadequacy which suggests his emotional inadequacy as well. For Sinda Gregory, the Op's primary belief is in "doing your job as efficiently as possible. . . . Instead of traditional beliefs, emotions, and values the Op has his job. . . (47)." But in allowing the murder of a loved one to occur practically before his very eyes, he would seem to have reached the nadir of his
professional existence.

Layman analyzes the Op's reaction to Dinah's death this way:

The op believes he did not stab her... But he was not her protector either. She was killed in his presence, and he would have been able to prevent her murder if he had been stronger—if he had not required the laudanum to calm his nerves. Her murder is the stimulus that causes the op to continue his work in Poisonville. He must clear himself of the killing and, insofar as he is able, absolve himself of his own guilt. When he finally leaves Personville, the op is a solitary figure whose work has left him demoralized (95-96).

Dinah's death, then, represents a fusing of the op's emotional and professional life and shows his inadequacies in each. Had he been more committed to her and less committed to his job, had he been willing to escape with her to Salt Lake instead of feeling obliged to stay and "count the dead," perhaps her death would have been prevented. Only Poisonville could produce a woman who is truly his equal, but he is, professionally, out of his depth amid that town's corruption. So, too, perhaps, is Dinah, for as Gregory argues:

[T]he end result of this system [in which money equals independence for Dinah] is disastrous... Despite her physical strength and gutsiness, she, too, is a victim of the red harvest, for she overestimates her system's capacity to control the world around her and protect her from its viciousness... All such systems at work in Personville are thus shown to be unsatisfactory, for they are naively ignorant of the power, danger, and utter corruption of the world, as represented in Personville. In an
effort to survive, each character constructs a simplistic system based on expediency rather than one which recognizes the need for flexibility. . . (59).

Finally, it is the Op’s emotional inflexibility, his commitment to behavior that is utterly "professional" and hardboiled, that is his, and Dinah’s, undoing.

Hammett’s second novel, *The Dain Curse*, appeared in July, 1929 after first being serialized in slightly different form in the November, 1928 through February, 1929 issues of *Black Mask*, and substantially outsold *Red Harvest*. But many of Hammett’s critics have dismissed *The Dain Curse* as inferior because the allegory, the quest motif, and the theme of "knighthood battling evil as he adheres to a personal code" that helped round out and give substance to the first novel all run out of control in the second.10 The plot, which Hammett himself called "a silly story" (Nolan 51) is overly romantic, episodic, and unbelievable. Crime expert John Bartlow Martin criticizes it this way:

In this single Hammett novel the detective shot and stabbed one man to death, helped shoot another dead, was himself attacked with dagger, gun, chloroform and bomb, fought off a ghostly manifestation barehanded, wrestled with five women, cured a girl of narcotic addiction—and . . . was obligated to deal with one seduction, eight murders, a jewel robbery, and a family curse (Nolan 50).
At the center of this action is the female heroine about whom Hammett’s Knopf editor Harry Block quipped, "for anyone so attractive Gabrielle is singularly repulsive. I realize that . . . her physical peculiarities must be stressed . . . but . . . she does sound exactly like a monkey" (Johnson 75). Unlike Dinah Brand, Gabrielle Leggett is "a traditional damsel in distress" (Marling 57). As Nolan says, "In contrast to the female villains Hammett was fond of portraying, Gabrielle was victim rather than aggressor, pursued by many men who were destroyed in seeking her love, a girl who turns to morphine in an effort to escape a dark reality" (52). The melodramatic extremity of her plight reaches almost comic dimension when her woes are catalogued: she has killed her own mother, she is the victim of a family curse, she has been forced into a loveless marriage, she is a morphine addict, she is exploited by the leader of a bizarre religious cult (called The Temple of the Holy Grail, in keeping with the medieval romance of the plot), she is a virgin in spite of having been married, she has a guardian who is stealing her inheritance. As Sinda Gregory says, "the whole saga of Gabrielle Leggett is so outrageous and excessive that it could be read as a darkly humorous parody of the trials and tribulations genre of popular
fiction and films" (75). In one chapter alone we learn she's tried twice to kill herself, has been the victim of a failed kidnap attempt, has run her car into a tree, and has cowered for days in a seaside cave. In the chapter that follows, she's described in this way:

Gabrielle lay in the middle of the bed, the covers gathered close to her chin as if she was prepared to duck down under them at the first alarm, and shook her head No to everything we asked, whether the answer fit or didn't (160).

Gabrielle is, then, almost exactly the opposite of Dinah Brand, totally lacking the qualities of strength, will power, and resourcefulness that enabled Brand to survive as long as she did in Personville and that make her a far more dynamic and appealing character. The first dream sequence in Red Harvest suggests the Op's attempt to deny Dinah's selfhood or subjectivity, but in The Dain Curse, Gabrielle has hardly any authentic self for one to deny. Yet in his relationship with Gabrielle, the Op appears to have learned something from his Personville experience, and this experience is referred to directly, at one point in the novel, by his colleague Mickey Linehan: "I ought to tell her [Gabrielle] what happened to that poor girl up in Poisonville that got so she thought she could trust you" (173). For in the second novel, the Op achieves more of a balance between duty and personal involvement
than he was capable of in the first: with Gabrielle he is more committed and less exploitive than in his relationship with Dinah. And, finally, instead of denying Gabrielle's selfhood, the Op restores her individuality and her will by curing her addiction.

Love, or the attempt at it, or the illusion of it, plays an important part in this cure. Nolan observes, "Hammett came closer to allowing his detective to love a woman in this relationship than in any previous Op story" (Casebook 52). During the four chapters that comprise the cure, the Op's role is more that of a suitor than of a drug counsellor, and he is frequently teased about this by fellow operative Lineman, who, referring to Gabrielle's wealth, comments, "What a swell dish . . . . What are you trying to do? Win yourself a home?" The extent of the Op's emotional involvement with Gabrielle remains ambiguous, but her feelings for him are clear from the beginning. Concerning his promises that her addiction can be cured, she says, "Don't give me any more assurances. . . . I'm drunk on them now" (171), and "Please don’t let me ever stop believing you" (173). Yet where Dinah Brand was essentially a realistic character (though perhaps a bit larger-than-life at times), Gabrielle is in many ways a typical male-
fantasy figure and fully the "damsel in distress" that Marling claims she is: she is a victim, a severely unindividuated personality, and, during the cure, a woman dependent on the Op. The Op encourages this dependence. Midway through the cure, when she is suffering horribly and beginning to cry out from the pain, he tells her, "Let yourself go. I'll take care of you." And after the worst is over, she suggests the extent of her neediness when she says, "I can do it because you say I can" (199).

Near the end of the novel, the Op and Gabrielle discuss their relationship:

When I went back upstairs, Gabrielle, in a green bathrobe, was sitting in the leather rocker that had been my bed for two nights. She had brushed her hair and powdered her face. Her eyes were mostly green. . . .

"Sit down. I want to talk seriously to you."
I sat down.

"Why did you go through all that with--for me?" She was really serious now. "You didn't have to, and it couldn't have been pleasant. . . . Why-- why did you?"
I said:

"I'm twice your age, sister; an old man. I'm damned if I'll make a chump of myself by telling you why I did it, why it was neither revolting nor disgusting, why I'd do it again and be glad of the chance."

She jumped out of her chair, her eyes round and dark, her mouth trembling.

"You mean--?"

"I don't mean anything that I'll admit," I said; "and if you're going to parade around with that robe hanging open you're going to get yourself some bronchitis" (199-200).
For Nolan this scene reveals how "the girl has come close to piercing his emotional armor" (Casebook 52). Layman holds that here the detective's "personal involvement with the beautiful woman he cares for is greater than ever" (100-01). And for Dooley, "his hard-boiled patter is at its most transparent, his idealism the least camouflaged. . . . Is it love, mere sentimentality--or something else--that motivates the Op. . . ? Hammett avoids a straight answer" (95). Indeed if, having learned his lesson in Personville, the Op has now allowed himself to fall in love, he is careful to confess nothing and to maintain an emotional distance between himself and Gabrielle. (In keeping with the novel's motif of knight-errantry, what he feels might be simply a courtly, platonic love.) It is finally unclear whether he truly loves Gabrielle or feigns affection in order to cure her, yet the Op's enhanced capacity for personal involvement in The Dain Curse has been the source of disappointment among critics, who have lamented that this less emotionally absent detective is "not very hardboiled" (Marling 67), "vulnerable" (Layman 100), and "sentimental" (Symons 54), an Op "grown old and soft" (Philip Durham, quoted in Nolan 53) a character with "diminished emotional control" (Skenazy 20).
But the real weakness of the novel is not that the author has allowed the Op to become emotionally involved, for, as Nolan puts it, "Hammett actually added depth to the op's character by allowing him to become more sensitive" (Casebook 53). The true problem with the Op's enhanced capacity for emotion in The Dain Curse is in the love object the author provides. Just as in the previous novel we gained respect for the Op through his relationship with the self-sufficient, strong-willed Dinah Brand, here our respect is eroded because of his interactions with the weak and needy Gabrielle Leggett. Gabrielle is never his colleague or partner in the novel. She fails to provide him with or help him gain information as did Dinah; she is passive, incapable of action such as the daring automobile rescue scene we saw in Red Harvest. Indeed, she never even functions as a listening Watson for the Op. With a more worthy and less dependent woman, with a female character who could function as a colleague, the presentation of the Op's emotional side would seem less of a departure from his overall character and considerably easier to tolerate, just as we tolerate and indeed admire the relationship between Nick Charles and his spunky wife Nora. But in pairing the detective with a weak, passive, and mentally unstable female,
Hammett finally reduces, rather than enhances, our admiration for his hero.

The Op's refusal, in his discussion with Gabrielle, to "make a chump of myself by telling you why I did it," foreshadows Sam Spade's reluctance to "play the sap" via emotional involvement in Hammett's third book, *The Maltese Falcon*. Like the author's two previous novels, this one was also serialized in *Black Mask*, appearing in a slightly different form in five installments between September, 1929 and January, 1930. Published as a book in 1930 (and released on Valentine's Day), *The Maltese Falcon* was the work that brought Hammett his fame and fortune: it was reprinted seven times in its first year, and the rights were sold to Warner Brothers the next, with three film versions made over the next decade. Editor Joseph Shaw praised *The Maltese Falcon* to *Black Mask*'s readers as follows: "In all of my experience I have never encountered a story as intense, as gripping or as powerful as this one" (Nolan, *Casebook* 57), and the work is generally agreed to be Hammett's masterpiece. Wolfe dubs it "Hammett's best book" (128), Gregory calls it "a brilliantly unified novel" (88), Howard Haycraft says Hammett "reached his zenith (and one of the all-time high points in the detective story) with
The Maltese Falcon" (Murder for Pleasure 170), and Walter R. Brooks, writing at the time of its publication, gushed, "This is not only probably the best detective story we have ever read, it is an exceedingly well-written novel" (Layman 112).

But although the novel's publishing history is similar to that of the first two books, The Maltese Falcon marked a striking departure from much of Hammett's previous work in several ways, including the use of the third-person point of view. First-person narration had been an integral feature of the hardboiled genre since the first Race Williams stories. (Indeed, even in non-hardboiled detective fiction, the use of a first-person, Watson-type narrator dated back to the first Dupin tale and beyond.) In general, the first-person viewpoint lends itself well to the detective genre for several reasons: it can be used to give credibility to the story, to provide a sense of immediacy to the plot, and convey a feeling of participation to the reader. With a first-person detective narrator, we as readers identify with and feel we have a stake in the detective's moral behavior: we expect the kind of moral code and sense of duty to a higher authority that has come to characterize sleuths ranging from Sherlock Holmes to the Op. And if the
detective fails to behave in a moral fashion, we are likely to feel a kind of complicity in his or her guilt. In addition, however much of a loner a hardboiled character might be, because we are allowed to listen in on the story, the detective's isolation is less disturbing than it might otherwise be. According to Paul Skenazy, "the first-person narrator becomes . . . a friend, whom we trust as our point of view, and through whom we perceive and solve" (Skenazy 24). The first-person narrator does tend, however, to be somewhat mysterious, and, Skenazy continues:

The movement to the third-person point of view in *The Maltese Falcon* extends these tendencies. Hammett's narrative voice makes no commitments, not even to his detective, and we must take our chances with him as with other characters. Though Spade serves as the model for all future hard-boiled heroes, his is a personality one doesn't particularly want to know intimately. . . . Nothing and no one really matter. Distrust and deception have become universal. The detective no longer dominates the plot by filtering the world though his individual perception; he resides within a higher authority, or lack of authority. We trust and admire, distrust and dislike, at the same time. The change in point of view suggests Hammett's distance from the detective and his ethics--and perhaps also the disintegrating power of the figure in Hammett's imagination as an incarnation of himself (24-5).

This disintegration is in part a moral disintegration. With the third-person narrative the threat of the reader feeling complicity in the acts of the main character is diminished: hence Spade's
behavior is considerably more ambiguous ethically than
the Op's ever was. Skenazy, referring to the Op,
points out that "Hammett presumably knows quite a bit
about his character's feelings, but he reveals nothing
to us as readers" (24), yet at times the Op's restraint
in itself suggests an emotional depth. Consider again
the Op's behavior soon after Dinah's death: asked "You
and her was kind of thick, wasn't you?" the Op tells us
"I let the question alone, lighting a cigarette." His
response is so controlled that one can see behind this
control to the feelings that seem about to explode
without such careful restraint. And the Op's behavior
is essentially moral--he refuses to take advantage of
Gabrielle's dependence on him when she flaunts her
sexuality by "parading around with that robe hanging
open" after her addiction is cured, and when, in Red
Harvest, the death toll mounts as a result of his
actions, he is distressed to the point of turning to
drugs in order to calm his nerves.

"Spade's ethical code, never openly stated, is not
identical with Op's," says Symons (63), and indeed, Sam
Spade's ethics are considerably more complex. For
Dooley, in The Maltese Falcon "the result [of the
third-person narration] was a morally ambiguous
protagonist whose goodness is not presupposed from the
start" (105). And Marling takes this idea a step further:

Hammett masks his character's power primarily by eliminating the first-person narrator, whose intimacy with the reader revealed his minor infidelities to the code and implied that he discussed his cases, a weakness alien to the entirely private personality of Spade. With a third-person point of view, the hero's person becomes more distant and independent. In addition, Hammett made Spade's code an innovation on the generic standard, a new version that allows him not only deception, but the pleasures of adultery and the rewards of betrayal (76).

In addition to this adultery, the novel shows us that Spade: is an experienced thief (he says, at one point, "Good God! Is this the first thing you guys ever stole?"); uses women for sex, is possibly sleeping with his secretary (at the end of the novel when he reaches for her she responds, "Not now"), has an affair with his partner's wife, feels little or no remorse over his partner's death, accepts retainers from two conflicting parties, later asserts he is really representing only himself (Gutman asks, "It will be one or the other?"; Spade replies, "There's me"), and is willing to hand over to the police any available "fall guy"--even the woman he supposedly loves (when Cairo cries, "Suppose we give them you, Mr. Spade, or Miss O'Shaughnessy, if you're so set on giving them somebody?" Spade responds, "If you think she can be rigged for the part I'm perfectly willing to discuss it with you"). It's little
wonder that Somerset Maugham considered Spade "a nasty bit of goods . . . an unscrupulous rogue and a heartless crook. . . . There is little to choose between him and the criminals he is dealing with" (Nolan, *Casebook* 61). Yet finally, one never knows for sure just what sort of person Spade is, for, as Symons says, "We are never quite sure how nearly this is genuine and how much Spade is stringing the crooks along." Marling agrees:

At times he seems more soldier of fortune out to snatch his own gain from the jaws of opportunity than detective trying to solve a crime, let alone bring somebody to justice. . . . When the falcon turns out to be a fake [and] Spade delivers them all into the hands of the police . . . insisting merrily that he has only been "stringing Gutman," can the reader believe him with any real certainty? "Don't be too sure I'm as crooked as I'm supposed to be," he tells Brigid when she wonders the same thing (105).

At the heart of this moral ambiguity are the novel's three women: Effie Perrine, Iva Archer, and, of course, Brigid O'Shaughnessy. For Wolfe, the novel is "a subtle study of moral behavior and of degrees of emotional commitment and stress" (111-12), and Spade reacts differently in terms of morality and commitment with each of the three. That Hammett saw the three as equally important in terms of what each one's relationship with the detective reveals about him is suggested in the third chapter's title, "Three Women."
Although not equal in terms of their importance to the plot, each represents a point on a moral continuum, with Effie at one end, Iva at the other, and Brigid somewhere in between.\textsuperscript{12}

Effie has been called the "prototype of all private eyes' secretaries... without her contributions, the plot of the greatest private-eye novel ever written... could not have been resolved" (Winn, \textit{Murderess Ink} 162-63). This is somewhat overstated, but Effie is the "moral voice" of the novel (Gregory 112), functioning as "a kind of 'office wife,' who is capable, dependable, and part of a team. ... It is appropriate that the falcon should come to Effie and Spade, because they function psychologically as a nuclear family" (Marling 78). Effie is a colleague of Spade's in the most official sense; he respects her judgment and trusts her intuition, yet she is a subordinate and never an equal. Effie does, however, show her detective skill early in the novel when, responding to Spade's comment "You're an angel... a nice rattlebrained angel," she replies:

"Oh, am I? Suppose I told you that your Iva hadn't been home many minutes when I arrived to break the news at three o'clock this morning... She kept me waiting at the door while she undressed or finished undressing. I saw her clothes where she had dumped them on a chair. Her hat and coat were underneath. Her slip, on top, was still warm. She said she had been asleep, but she hadn't. She had wrinkled up the
bed, but the wrinkles weren't mashed down" (28-29).

Effie does not function as Sam's partner, however; she is a subordinate and never an equal. This can be seen in Spade's condescending response to Effie's sleuthing as just described: "Spade took the girl's hand and patted it. 'You're a detective, darling, but'--he shook his head--'she didn't kill him'" (29). Moreover, because she is not a client but an employee, she is no stranger to him and lacks the mystique that surrounds any female client as a new woman entering the detective's life. Spade may or may not be sleeping with Effie, but with her "boyish" face and figure she is very much the "deseexualized daytime mother" (Marling 79). She lacks not only Brigid's mystique but also the sexuality exuded by both Iva and Brigid. Her relationship with Spade, whether or not it is a sexual one and however affectionate it may be, is finally lacking in passion.

At the other end of the moral spectrum is Iva, Spade's partner's wife and his lover. Interestingly, Spade never once calls her "angel," the epithet by which he frequently addresses both Effie and Brigid. Iva commits no crime in the novel, yet she seems the most selfish and unfeeling of the three women. If Spade is morally ambiguous, there is little or no
ambiguity to Iva Archer. She's an adulteress who cries crocodile tears over the death of the husband she sought to divorce. Like Brigid, she's a liar, but she refuses to admit to being one. She calls the police on Sam in a fit of jealousy, even though she herself was probably out with another man the night Effie visited her. Within twenty-four hours of her husband's death she is in Spade's arms, and he is utterly repulsed by her. When she comes to him moaning, "Oh, Sam, did you kill him?" he reacts by staring at her with bulging eyes; his jaw drops, he steps back from her, and, after a moment's hesitation, he laughs harshly, "Ha!"

It is through Iva that Sam realizes how compromised he is; for him, she symbolizes his corruption. She later reproaches him for having led her on and for pretending to love her; thus, she also functions as a reminder of his duplicity with women. Constantly phoning, showing up unannounced at his apartment and at his office, Iva haunts Spade like the spectre of his own moral shortcomings. It's no wonder, then, that he wants Effie to keep her away from him and that he shivers in advance of her approach at the end of the book.

According to Marling:

Like Myrtle Jennison in Red Harvest, she serves as a cautionary example of the wages of sin: Spade's inclination is to pull the covers over her and to say "Thank you" when he is done. Yet she is Spade's lot when the novel ends, and there is
something so reduced, petty, and limited in her character that it makes Spade shiver (79).

As the third woman in Sam Spade's life, Brigid O'Shaughnessy is neither the "moral voice" of the novel, nor a haunting and repulsive emblem of moral failure. Like Spade, she is morally ambiguous, and for this reason she is more nearly his equal than any other character in the book. She is first his client, then his lover, and later a partner of his in the search for the jeweled falcon. Indeed, at one point he even describes her to the police as a colleague: "Miss O'Shaughnessy is an operative in my employ" (79).

Wolfe analyzes their relationship as follows:

His repeating in Chapter 6, "You're good. You're very good," conveys . . . breathless admiration. For self-protection, he has to twist and hammer her magic down to a virtuoso performance while planning his next move. Not only does Spade love Brigid; he also believes that they are well suited. He is probably right. Both of them enjoy communicating through nuance; both like to skirt the fringes of the law; above all, each touches a central nerve in the other. The subtle verbal byplay they generate amid wavelets of sexual arousal prefigures the loving, sparkling repartee of Nick and Nora Charles in The Thin Man. In their short time together, Brigid has delighted, vexed, and won him, making good the transforming power hinted at by her front name. Losing her points the loss of many key hopes and opportunities (119).

Yet Brigid, frequently addressed as "angel" by the Satan-faced Spade, is not at all angelic. She has murdered Miles Archer, who has fallen into her trap via
his lust for her, and she has almost certainly used sex to her advantage and slept with Floyd Thursby and Captain Jacobi, both of whom are also murdered in the novel. Says Wolfe, "Whoever gets his head turned by Brigid . . . risks being hardened into a corpse."

Although Brigid effects what Spade calls a "[s]choolgirl manner . . . stammering and blushing and all that" (57), she is extremely self-sufficient and capable. Not only is she nearly successful in outwitting a gang of hardened criminals to get the falcon, she is capable of exerting force, slapping or pistol-whipping Joel Cairo when he treats her disrespectfully. As Wolfe says:

Irony helps Spade survive, along with his common sense and instinct for timing. As shrewd and crafty as he is, though, Brigid keeps pace with him most of the way. Not only is she a fine actress; like Spade she also knows how to time her best effects. She only goes into her melodramatic recital in Chapter 4 after failing to get him to say that he believes her innocent of the Archer and Thursby murders. Another brilliant improvisation follows in Chapter 8. When some shrieks of pain from Joel Cairo bring the policemen . . . into Spade's apartment, she assumes a foetal posture in order to look innocent and helpless. The improvisation works. Though Cairo's lip and forehead are both bleeding, she persuades the police that she, not he, was the victim in their scuffle. She even gets away with slapping and kicking him in the police's presence (120-21).

The central issue of the Spade/O'Shaughnessy relationship, and perhaps of all the human relationships in the novel, is trust. Dooley points out:
The word had turned up like a leitmotif through a story riddled with double crosses and broken promises--between married people, lovers, enemies, even "businesslike" partners in crime. "I do trust you," Brigid tells Spade "earnestly" in the first chapter. But she is lying at that very moment about the facts of the case. She has not even told him her real name. And when Spade confronts her with her lies a few pages later [at a time when he already suspects her of murdering his partner] she launches into an outburst of contrition and pleading, using the word trust seven times in the space of nine sentences (though even now she has not told him the whole truth and will continue to deceive and exploit Spade until the very last pages of the book (105-08).

In many ways, Brigid is a polished, slick version of Dinah Brand. Gregory calls her:

a bewildering, enigmatic woman. . . . Like Dinah Brand in Red Harvest, she manipulates her attractiveness to others for her own advantage, but Brigid is even more shrewdly calculating. She pays meticulous attention to her clothes, selecting "two shades of blue . . . because of her eyes" (108).

Where Dinah was "frankly greedy," Brigid forthrightly admits to being "worse than you could know" (57) and a liar. But these admissions and this feigned honesty are part of her subterfuge, and unlike Dinah (who demonstrated that she was essentially moral when she refused to allow the young bank teller Robert Albury to jeopardize his future by embezzling for her), Brigid is immoral. She is a liar, a thief, a manipulator, a murdereress. Unlike Dinah Brand, she has no Robert Albury whom she spares from her greed, and no Don Rolfe
whom she supports out of the goodness of her heart. Yet Brigid is, finally, as a strong-willed, capable, and independent woman, an enchanting character—so enchanting that we can readily understand why Spade, who has suspected that she was Archer’s killer all along, waits so long to surrender her to the police. When Spade does hand her over, says Wolfe:

Although we share his loss, we also approve of his action. But our approval is both grudging and detached: life shimmers and pulses less without Brigid. A tragedy of lost hopes and chances, The Maltese Falcon shows life sustaining itself both at a reduced level and at a great cost. With Brigid, Spade not only glimpsed Paradise; he also enjoyed it (121).

As author of the Op stories and of The Maltese Falcon, Hammett is credited with being the writer who established hardboiled detective fiction as a genre. Raymond Chandler commented, "Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse" (quoted in Symons, Bloody Murder 125). Of Hammett’s role as a parent of the form Cawelti observes:

It was he who licked the new story into shape, gave it much of its distinctive style and atmosphere, developed its urban setting, invented many of its most effective plot patterns, and, above all, articulated the hard-boiled hero, creating that special mixture of toughness and sentimentality, of cynical understatement and eloquence that would remain the stamp of the hard-boiled detective, even in his cruder avatars" (163).
Equally important was the role played by John Huston's 1941 movie version of *The Maltese Falcon*. Film critic Paul Schrader identifies the film as the birth of the film noir style, and Thomas Schatz quotes Schrader and extends this concept in asserting, "Huston's film did introduce the hardboiled detective story and its persona... to the screen, as it did the archetypal *femme noire*..." (116). For Schatz, the film is the prototype for all hardboiled cinema, one of "three key films which heralded the birth and development of the hardboiled-detective genre in American movies" (the other two are Wilder's *Double Indemnity* and Dmytryk's *Murder, My Sweet*) (126). Yet Schatz and other film analysts fail to see in Bogart's Sam Spade the moral ambiguity that literary critics are so quick to identify in the novel. For Schatz, Spade's "hardboiled exterior hides a vulnerable moralist and a man of uncompromising integrity" (128). Stanley Solomon agrees, saying this is essentially a film about "the confrontation with irredeemable evil, and the determination of the hero, no matter what the cost, to disclose the truth about the sordid experiences he has endured," and that this film establishes "the issue of integrity" as a central "premise" from which "stem other chief qualities of the genre" (215-17). Another
film genre writer, Stuart Kaminsky, sees in hardboiled films in general "a romantic heroism, a streak of knightly valor," although he does assert that film noir had "a heritage of the dark, controlled studio pessimism of German expressionism" and that film noir in general and Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* in particular were characterized by the presence of a "dark non-heroic hero." (46-7).

Why this reluctance on the part of film critics to see the detective's moral shortcomings? It was probably not due to the casting of Bogart, since the actor had previously portrayed bad guys in such films as *The Petrified Forest* (1936). It stems instead partly from the film's subjectivity: although Huston's movie version lacks the detective voice-overs which often characterize the genre on film and TV, it presents a more subjective view of Spade than the reader finds in the novel. Gone are the book's repeated omniscient references to Spade as "a blond Satan" (3), who "grinned wolfishly, showing the edges of teeth far back in his jaw" (10), whose "yellowish eyes glittered between narrowed lids" (26), who "asked coldly" (26), whose "eyes were shiny in a wooden satan's face" (58), whose "yellow-grey eyes glinted for an instant with malicious humor" (77), and who is, when
he finally confronts Brigid, "coldly smiling, hard of jaw and eye" (217-18).

Another major reason the viewer is less likely to see Spade's moral weaknesses involves the absence from the film of what has been called "the Flitcraft parable," a story told by Spade to Brigid early in the novel which most critics find crucial to the theme of the book. Indeed, for Marling:

The rightness of the ending, as well as an understanding of Spade's earlier actions, rest on the story that he told about Flitcraft. . . . [T]he parable's structural position is like that of the dream sequence in Red Harvest. . . . But thematically it is better integrated (74).

The Flitcraft parable is about a man who suddenly and without warning leaves his family after nearly being killed by a falling beam. For Flitcraft:

The life he knew was a clean orderly sane responsible affair. Now a falling beam had shown him that life was fundamentally none of these things. He, the good citizen-husband-father, could be wiped out . . . by the accident of a falling beam. He knew then that men died at haphazard like that, and lived only while blind chance spared them. . . . What disturbed him was the discovery that in sensibly ordering his affairs he had got out of step, and not into step, with life (Falcon 66).

Cawelti points out, "The Flitcraft story is a kind of warning to Brigid that Sam has adjusted himself to a world that is likely to betray him" (167). In other words, Sam Spade's morals are essentially situational and self-serving; as Gregory puts it, for Spade
"nothing is fixed, no values are absolute . . . ." (98).

One might as well go ahead and commit adultery with one's partner's wife, for adherence to a code that forbids this cannot forestall being killed by a randomly falling beam. And if one's beloved poses a threat---"if I did this . . . you'd have something on me that you could use whenever you happened to want to" Spade tells Brigid before turning her in--then that threat should be eliminated, especially if eliminating it also does away with something that's "bad business . . . bad for every detective everywhere" (226).

Huston's film version (for which Huston himself wrote the script) followed the novel very closely; but without the Flitcraft story Sam seems to be acting out of a consistent moral system, rather than behaving randomly in the way that best suits him and the situation. Given a Sam Spade who is more heroic--and less predatory, satanic, and morally ambiguous--the film's three women no longer function as points on a moral continuum. Here they take on different qualities than were suggested in the novel. Actress Lee Patrick as Effie Perrine is more matronly and not at all the "boyish" secretary she is in print. The physical affection between her and Spade and the suggestion that she may be sexually involved with him are also absent
from the film. Gladys George as Iva is also essentially asexual: one wonders why Spade ever got involved with her in the first place, although one can readily accept his desire to avoid her. As for Brigid, Symons has said that of the characters in the novel she alone "has worn badly, in part because heroine-villains of this kind have become common in crime stories during recent years, in part because what seemed daring in 1930 . . . sounds hopelessly dated now" (64), and as portrayed by Mary Astor, she seems even more dated in the film. Except for her first appearance at Spade's office in hat and furs, she seems, to a modern audience at least, much less physically appealing than is the character in the novel; her clothes and hairstyle are mannish and frumpy by contemporary standards, and she is a far cry from the Brigid who "pays meticulous attention to her clothes" (Gregory 108). Moreover, the Brigid of the film seems not nearly as capable, resourceful, and strong-willed as the Brigid of the novel, and some of her scenes--the one in which she slaps Cairo, for example--are apt to evoke a laugh from modern viewers. Added to this is the fact that the brief love scene and the strip-search scene (in which Spade forces Brigid to strip so he can search for a missing $1000 bill) are deleted from the film, further
undercutting the idea of her sexual appeal to men in general and to Sam in particular—an appeal which she effectively and schemingly uses as a trap. The Brigid of the film, then, is essentially a one-dimensional character, a "femme noir," murderess, and temptress. Schatz affirms, "Brigid is the archetypal hardboiled heroine: beautiful, apparently helpless and victimized, drawing the detective into the intrigue and then exploiting his particular talents—and his naive romanticism—in her perverse quest for wealth and power" (Schatz 129). Not an equal, not multi-dimensional, not an aspect of a complex ethical system, the oversimplified Brigid of the film lacks the appeal and interest of the Brigid of the novel.

Two final differences, in the film's beginning and ending, serve to make the women of the novel less important in the cinematic version. The fact that the history of the falcon is told in rolling titles at the beginning of the film sets up the story as a treasure hunt, with the focus on the lost object rather than on the main character's moral ambiguity and the way that ambiguity is reflected in the women who surround him. Indeed, the falcon tale at the beginning of the film functions thematically the way the Flitcraft parable functions in the novel.
Of even greater importance is the ending. The novel ends with this final scene missing from the film: Sam is back at his office after having turned Brigid over to the police. Effie, the "moral voice" of the novel, criticizes him for what he's done, rebuking him ("You did that, Sam, to her?"), "escaping" from his arms, and saying "I know you're right. . . . But don't touch me now--not now." At that very moment, someone enters the outer office and Effie exits, only to return seconds later with the announcement "Iva is here." Spade shivers, and replies, "Well, send her in" (229). Gregory suggests "such an ending purposefully undercuts the sureties we expect at the conclusion of a mystery novel" (99). In other words, the novel itself is unsure, like Flitcraft's life and Spade's value system. For Dooley, this scene shows Spade "returning to the grim realities of his workaday life" (108), and those realities seem grimmer still if we view Iva as the symbol of Spade's fractured, Flitcraftian moral weaknesses and values.

The ending of the film is very different. With the emphasis shifted from the detective's questionable ethics (and the manifestation of those ethics in the form of three women) to the simple hunt for a bejewelled bird, the presence of Iva at the end would
make less sense. Instead we see Brigid standing forlornly behind the bars of the elevator gate, bars which not only suggest the prison to which she'll most certainly be sent, but which also cast across her face an eerie shadow resembling a bird's giant claw. In the film, the falcon is much more nearly the objective correlative of Sam's emotion: Brigid is, finally, the human equivalent of the bird--predatory, appealing, valuable, rare, and false. Within this context, the final reference, by Spade, to the fake falcon as "the stuff that dreams are made of" is utterly appropriate; but where the Brigid of the novel was a tangibly capable equal of Spade and a "lost hope," the Brigid of the film is shallower, weaker as a human being, less tangibly Spade's colleague, and a "lost dream."
CHAPTER III

WOMEN IN SELECTED WORKS BY RAYMOND CHANDLER

Raymond Chandler is almost universally recognized as the successor of Dashiell Hammett. As Dennis Dooley puts it:

Raymond Chandler was Hammett's spiritual heir. By a most fitting coincidence, his first story appeared in Black Mask the same year Hammett completed his last novel. Like Hammett, Chandler set his stories in the moral desert of California, in his case Los Angeles. Both men are romantics, but of the post-World War I variety. Gone is the old romantic faith that murder will out. Nothing will out, Hammett and Chandler seem to say, unless somebody pretty special makes it happen—"a man," in Chandler's famous phrase, "of honor" (146).

Unlike Hammett, who brought a practical background with Pinkerton to his detective fiction but had failed to finish secondary school, Chandler was literary and educated. He had received a classical education in Great Britain, and subsequently had traveled to the Continent to study French and German in preparation for a position with the British civil service. After a brief stint as a clerk, he began a writing career which lasted from 1908 through 1912; during this time he tried to eke out a living as a freelancer, publishing poetry, translations from French and German, satirical
essays, critical articles, and reviews in a handful of British newspapers and literary publications. Chandler later disparaged this early work, which included poems with titles like "The Perfect Knight" and "The Quest," and essays called "The Remarkable Hero" and "Realism and Fairyland." In Raymond Chandler Speaking, the author comments on this period of his life:

At school I displayed no marked literary ability. My first poem was composed at the age of nineteen, on a Sunday, in the bathroom, and was published in Chambers' Journal. I am fortunate in not possessing a copy. I had, to be frank, the qualifications to become a pretty good second-rate poet, but that means nothing because I have the type of mind that can become a pretty good second-rate anything, and without much effort. . . . J. A. Spender [of The Westminster Gazette] . . . bought a lot of stuff from me, verses, sketches, and unsigned things such as paragraphs lifted from foreign publications. . . . I got about three guineas a week out of all these, but it wasn't enough. I also . . . did a lot of book reviewing . . . [for The Academy], and some essays which I still have, they are of an intolerable preciousness of style, but already quite nasty in tone. . . . Like all young nincompoops I found it very easy to be clever and snotty, very hard to praise without being ingenious. . . . Of course in those days as now . . . there were clever young men who made a decent living as free lances . . . but most of the people who did this work either had private incomes or jobs. . . . And I was distinctly not a clever young man. . . . (22-24).

In 1912 Chandler returned to America, the country of his birth, and eventually found his way into the California oil industry: by 1929 he was vice president of three oil corporations. In 1932 however, the oil boom was over, and this fact, combined with the
Depression and Chandler's own heavy drinking and domestic difficulties, led to his being fired from the business career in which he had risen from assistant auditor to corporation president in less than a decade.

Jobless and nearly broke at the age of forty-four, Chandler again tried to earn a living by writing. Jerry Speir recounts:

For a time, he considered writing for the slick magazines, but he was finally contemptuous of "their fundamental dishonesty in the matter of character and motivation." Turning elsewhere, he began to pick up the popular pulp magazines "because they were cheap enough to throw away" and, as he said, "it suddenly struck me that I might be able to write this stuff and get paid while I was learning" (9-10).

Chandler's first detective story, an 18,000-word piece which took five months to write, was published in the December, 1933 issue of Black Mask. At first, editor Joseph "Cap" Shaw had trouble deciding if the author were brilliant or mentally disturbed: Chandler had compulsively justified the right margin of the typed copy, and this struck Shaw as extremely neurotic behavior. But the editorial staff agreed that the story, "Blackmailers Don't Shoot," was the work of an accomplished writer, and bought it for the standard fee of a penny per word, or $180 for five months of work.

Chandler's first piece of detective fiction contains nearly all of the icons, devices, and motifs
that characterize his later works in general and the novels in particular. The chivalric theme so prominent in *The Big Sleep* is suggested right off in "Blackmailers" by the detective's name: "His name happened to be Mallory" (*Smell of Fear* 15). As Philip Durham says: "In 'Blackmailers Don't Shoot' Chandler created his hero, the hero--somewhat weathered and weaker--he was still writing about when he died twenty-six years later" (*Mean Streets* 80). Mallory's client is the beautiful and wealthy Hollywood starlet Rhonda Farr, the name hinting at the chivalric distance between Marlowe and his heroines. Like Mona Grant (or "Silver-Wig"), the woman Marlowe is longing for at the conclusion of *The Big Sleep*, Rhonda Farr wears a white wig, and like most Chandler heroines she is icy, tough, hard. In describing her at the beginning of the story, Chandler seems to be experimenting with the kinds of similes that later became typical of his literary style. She gives the detective "a look as hard as marble"; a few lines later she has "a voice like iced velvet" (15-16). As in other Chandler works the crime is blackmail, and the heroine has a dark past, having earlier made the mistake of consorting with racketeers. Although subsequent detectives are firmly rooted in Southern California, in "Blackmailers"
Mallory has come to Los Angeles from Chicago and is a stranger on alien turf. Chandler's characteristic foregrounding of the Los Angeles-area setting is evident, but here Mallory, as the Chicago outsider, is initiated into the Hollywood scene by his hardened female client: "'You don't know much about this Hollywood racket, do you darling?' Rhonda Farr said. She put her head on one side and hummed softly" (41).

Chandler's first detective-story heroine is a female typical of the genre. Like Dinah Brand of Red Harvest, or even Mary Morstan of Doyle's The Sign of Four, she is tough in spite of her fears about her situation. She's called "a girl . . . who had more guts than was good for her," and "she like to do things the hard way" (44). Her spunk is also apparent in the typical Raymond Chandler banter between the cynical detective and the beautiful client: Mallory comments, "You're a nasty little rat. I don't like you," and Rhonda smilingly responds, "O yes, you do, darling. You're crazy about me." Although her demeanor is compared to marble and iced velvet, her vulnerability is not invisible:

Rhonda Farr jerked to her feet, fumbling with her toe for the green slipper. Her eyes had gone wide and startled.
"You'd . . . sell me out?" she breathed.

Rhonda Farr stood quite still and shook her head slowly from side to side. She said: "No
deal, blackmailer . . . no deal." Her voice was small and tired, but her chin stuck out hard and brave.

Rhonda Farr said sharply: "Wait!" Her voice was suddenly terrified (41).

Rhonda is, then, a gutsy damsel in distress: in a plot reminiscent of *The Dain Curse* she is kidnapped and doped by her enemies, then heroically rescued by Mallory. But although she's at the center of the plot (she's being blackmailed with love letters she capriciously wrote to a former boyfriend and racketeer--letters that can be used to create bad publicity for her and her studio), she exists only on the periphery of the fast-paced action that has gangsters gunning each other down a la *Red Harvest,* and that allows little time for a love interest to develop.

Chandler's second story, "Smart-Aleck Kill," appeared seven months later, in the July, 1934 issue of *Black Mask.* Again the setting is Southern California, again the initial crime is the blackmailing of a rich film personality, again the point of view is third-person, and again the action moves forward rapidly (for instance, two men bearing guns interrupt the opening scene and kidnap the detective). But this time the victim is male, and the detective has a different name: Johnny Dalmas (next to Marlowe, he is Chandler's most frequent character, appearing in half a dozen
short stories). The story juxtaposes two women: one is "small and dark and delicately made," doesn't drink much, and won't let her boyfriend pay her rent; the other is a tall, white-faced, blonde alcoholic who's the mistress of a local politician. Hard and brassy with no redeeming qualities, the blonde is a foil for the small, dark, and clever Mianne Crayle; and it is Crayle, not the detective, who makes the crucial observation that the dead man, found alone with a hole in his right temple and a gun in his right hand, couldn't have committed suicide because he was left handed.

Chandler critics often follow Philip Durham's lead in asserting that "Philip Marlowe ... first appeared in The Big Sleep in 1939" (Durham, introduction to Killer in the Rain xi), but Marlowe in fact makes his first appearance in Chandler's third short story, "Finger Man," published in Black Mask in October, 1934. The story is a departure from Chandler's first two in his use of a first-person narrative. In the earlier pieces, Mallory and Dalmas were flat and underdeveloped tough-guy figures who seemed to exist for the sake of the action rather than as characters in their own right. With the first-person point of view, however, Marlowe emerges as a multi-dimensional
personality, capable of more interesting and significant relationships than were Mallory or Dalmas. And as a result of these enhanced human interactions, the female characters move out from the sidelines of the action and become germane to the text.

A central feature, then, of "Finger Man" is the enigmatic Miss Glenn, who not only has a bigger and more important role in the story than any previous Chandler females have had, but who is a more complex and less clear-cut personality than were the others. (Where Rhonda Farr and Mianne Crayle might be said to resemble Mary Morstan, Miss Glenn is more like the morally intricate Irene Adler.) When Marlowe is hired as bodyguard to a man named Lou Harger who intends to win big at a casino, the client tells him: "Miss Glenn is going with me. She's a tall red-head, a swell looker. She used to model. She's nice people in any kind of a spot" (Fear 96). At the casino Miss Glenn (who mysteriously is never given a first name) is ill-mannered and insulting (the scene was later reshaped and used by Chandler in The Big Sleep), but in her next appearance she displays the typical mix of moxie and vulnerability: she lights a cigarette with "a hand that was almost too steady, a hand on guard," and says to Marlowe:
"Lou is dead." Her voice was quite toneless. . . .

She went on: "A couple of Canales' boys got him in my apartment—with one shot from a small gun that looked like my gun. Mine was gone when I looked for it afterwards. I spent the night there with him dead . . . I had to."

She broke quite suddenly. Her eyes turned up in her head and her head came down and hit the desk. She lay still. . . .

I jerked a drawer open and brought up a bottle and a glass, poured a stiff one and stepped around with it, heaved her up in her chair. I pushed the edge of the glass hard against her mouth—hard enough to hurt. She struggled and swallowed. Some of it ran down her chin, but life came back into her eyes (Fear 106).

She continues to tell her story with a face that is "white and composed, but as expressionless as plaster" (107), relating how the thugs searched the apartment and mauled her:

"The big one slammed me down with his fist, and when I woke up again they were gone and I was alone with Lou dead on the floor."

She pointed to a mark on the angle of her jaw. There was something there, but it didn't show much (107).

Throughout the story the reader, like the narrator, never quite knows exactly what is going on and whom to believe. Marlowe distrusts Miss Glenn, telling us, "I hadn't believed it quite the way Miss Glenn told it anyhow" (110), and eventually accuses her of murder to her face, "You arranged for that kill" (129). But in the penultimate scene, he becomes aware of how she has been victimized and how wrong and callous and unfair he has been (and, through the first-person narration, we
as readers are likely to share his guilt and feel a
complicity in his having suspected her):

    Miss Glenn was standing up. . . . She was
talking to me quickly, in a brittle, very distinct
voice: "I didn't know Lou was to be killed, but I
couldn't have done anything about it anyway. They
burned me with a branding iron--just for a sample
of what I'd get. Look!"
    I looked. She tore her dress down in front and
there was a hideous burn on her chest almost
between her two breasts. . . .
    I pushed past her toward the telephone, shook
her hand off my arm when she grabbed at me. She
went on talking to my back in a thin, desperate
voice.
    "I thought they'd just hold Lou out of the way
until after the trial. But they dragged him out
of the cab and shot him without a word. Then
. . . the big one brought me up into the hills to
a shack. Dorr was there. He told me how you had
to be framed. He promised me the money, if I went
through with it, and torture till I died, if I let
them down."
    It occurred to me that I was turning my back
too much to people. . . .
    "Listen! Give me a break," she said wildly.
    I said: "Sure--that's all right. Take it
easy" (132).

As he is telephoning the police, Miss Glenn escapes
"out of the window into the dark garden." Marlowe
now sees the need for a knightly code of honor and a
higher justice than the one that requires him to turn
her in: "I didn't go after her. I didn't mind very
much if she got away" (133). As Durham puts it,
Marlowe has "decided that because the lady [is] mixed
up with the criminal element only through fear, she
should not be subjected to the law," and "[t]he
knightly attitude [has] become a characteristic of
Chandler's protagonist" (Mean Streets 82-83). In the story's final paragraph Marlowe still has the heroine on his mind as he informs us, "Miss Glenn made a clean getaway and was never heard of again" (133).

By 1938, when Chandler was at work on his first novel, he had published only sixteen stories in five years. The resources of the once-prosperous oil company executive were rapidly dwindling; indeed, in 1938 Chandler earned less than $1300, and he had been forced to move with his wife into furnished rooms, storing their furniture to save money. The bleakness of his financial situation may have been part of the reason why Chandler, always a slow and deliberate story writer and never prolific, now tried his hand at the more difficult task of novel writing. Durham, however, suggests an additional motive:

By this time Chandler's achievements in the short story had gone almost as far as they were to go. He had used the form to develop his setting, to create his detective-hero, and more or less to master the style he had originally chosen. Although, with the exception of a limited number of pulp readers, his work was completely unknown, he was ready and anxious to try his skill in the big arena (Mean Streets 30).

The very fact that Chandler was such a plodding and laborious writer may be one of the reasons for his use of what he called "cannibalized" material in his novels. Chandler's fourth detective piece had been
"Killer in the Rain," published in the January, 1935 issue of Black Mask and one of three Chandler stories to appear in the magazine that year. This tale of an oil millionaire and his wild, wandering daughter named Carmen was combined with "The Curtain" (Chandler's eleventh story, from Black Mask of September, 1936) to produce his first novel, The Big Sleep (1939). From "The Curtain," another first-person narrative told this time by a detective named Carmady, Chandler took the ancient general in the orchid hothouse, and the daughter married to the missing Irish racketeer. In The Big Sleep Chandler combined the plots of the two stories, fused Carmen and the General's grandson, lifted some characters name and all from the short pieces, and recast other small bits (Miss Glenn and the casino scene from "Finger Man," for example) to fit the narrative. As Durham says, "Turning short stories into cohesive novels tested the extent of Chandler's skill. It meant combining and enlarging plots, maintaining a thematic consistency, blowing up scenes, and adapting, fusing, and adding characters" (Introduction to Killer in the Rain ix). Chandler used this technique for other novels, as well. Farewell, My Lovely (1940) borrowed heavily from two Carmady stories, "The Man Who Liked Dogs" (Black Mask, March, 1936) and "Try the
Girl" (Black Mask, January, 1937); it also incorporated a portion of "Trouble Is My Business" (Dime Detective Magazine, August, 1939). The High Window (1942) used a small section of "The King in Yellow" (Dime Detective, March, 1938), and The Lady in the Lake (1943) was recast from the short story of the same name (Dime Detective, January, 1939). Even when creating his final novels Chandler was still borrowing from earlier works, for The Long Goodbye (1954) includes a small piece from "The Curtain," and Playback (1958) is a rewritten version of a film script. But as Spurrier asserts, Chandler's cannibalizing process "never again worked with such ease and speed" (11) as it did for The Big Sleep, which was written in three months—particularly remarkable considering that the creation of Chandler's first story took nearly twice as long.

For Paul Skenazy:

Chandler made two major contributions to the detective form in America: the subservience of realism to a romantic quest, and the development of the scenic and verbal properties—the tone of weariness highlighted by the shocking simile—that have become a trademark of the crime novel (30).

Both of these contributions are evident on the very first page of The Big Sleep when Marlowe, who has just commented, "I was neat, clean, shaved and sober, and I didn't care who knew it" describes the main hallway of the Sternwood mansion:
Over the entrance doors, which would have let in a troop of Indian elephants, there was a broad stained-glass panel showing a knight in dark armor rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn’t have any clothes on but some very long and convenient hair. The knight had pushed the vizor of his helmet back to be sociable, and he was fiddling with the knots on the ropes that tied the lady to the tree and not getting anywhere. I stood there and thought that if I lived in the house, I would sooner or later have to climb up there and help him (1).

Marlowe is immediately given the opportunity to display his own "knightliness" as one of General Sternwood’s daughters (he has two of them, "still in the dangerous twenties") approaches him. She is a blond with "little sharp predatory teeth" and "[h]er face lacked color and didn’t look too healthy." She flirts with him, then falls into his arms so that "I had to catch her or let her crack her head on the tessellated floor. . . . I had to hold her close to hold her up" (2-4). This is the first of several attempts to seduce Marlowe by the giggling, thumb-sucking, and seemingly naive Carmen Sternwood, and the detective’s refusal to succumb to her, though it will eventually nearly cost him his life, is evidence of his code of honor. This same Carmen Sternwood, we learn in the next chapter, is at the center of the blackmail case Marlowe is being hired to resolve. After Marlowe admits to having heard that the General’s two daughters are "both pretty and both wild" (8), Sternwood describes them in more
detail: "Vivian is spoiled, exacting, smart and quite ruthless. Carmen is a child who likes to pull wings off flies. Neither of them has any more moral sense than a cat. Neither have I. No Sternwood ever had" (10). He adds, "Vivian went to good schools of the snob type and to college. Carmen went to half a dozen schools of greater and greater liberality and ended up where she started" (11).

The contrast between the two daughters becomes more obvious in the third chapter, when Marlowe meets the older daughter. Besides being someone who "didn't look too healthy," Carmen was previously described as "small and delicately put together," "[h]er hair was a fine tawny wave cut much shorter than the current fashion," and "[h]er eyes were slate-gray and had almost no expression" (2). Vivian, on the contrary, is "worth a stare." "She was tall and rangy and strong-looking. . . . Her hair was black and wiry and parted in the middle and she had the hot black eyes of the portrait in the hall" (14-15). Equally seductive (Marlowe comments that her legs "seemed to be arranged to stare at"), Vivian is considerably more restrained in her approach--"She . . . gave me a cool level stare" (15)--and the overall intelligence of her manner also contrasts markedly with Carmen's behavior. She is also
more assertive than her seemingly pliable sister, becoming angry and snapping "And I don't like your manners" (16), then declaring "I loathe masterful men. . . . I simply loathe them" (17).

As he did in his second story, "Smart-Aleck Kill," Chandler is again juxtaposing two female characters for effect; indeed, the combination of the plots of "Killer in the Rain" and "The Curtain" is achieved by making the central female figures of the two stories sisters in the novel. As Speir says, the "thematic device which consistently structures the novels is a conflict between two women." He identifies Chandler's use of women in the other novels as follows:

In *Farewell, My Lovely* . . . the tension between Jessie Florian and Mrs. Grayle is central to that plot's resolution. . . . In *The High Window*, the strange alliance between Mrs. Murdock and Merle Davis is one of that book's primary fascinations. In *The Lady in the Lake*, the formula is equally obvious in the roles of Crystal Kingsley and Mildred Haviland. *The Little Sister* uses sisters again, Mavis Weld and Orfamay Quest. . . . *The Long Goodbye* is set in motion by Eileen Wade's hatred for Sylvia Lennox. *Playback*, in fact, is the only novel which is not organized around some conflict between two women (137).

So strong is Chandler's impulse to set up two women in contrast that he even does this with the minor characters of the two bookstore clerks. The clerk at the store which fronts for Geiger's pornography business "approached me with enough sex appeal to
stampede a businessman's lunch." When asked a
difficult question, "She didn't say: 'Huh?' but she
wanted to," she looks him over with "[e]yes medium to
hard," and she is "as sore as an alderman with the
mumps." He concludes, "She knew as much about rare
books as I knew about handling a flea circus" (20-21).
On the other hand, the clerk in the legitimate
bookstore he visits has "the fine-drawn face of an
intelligent Jewess" and "a smoothly husky voice"; she
demonstrates that she knows her business well, and,
after she gives an acutely observant description of the
man Marlowe is looking for, he comments admiringly,
"You'd make a good cop" (25-26).

In "Smart-Aleck Kill" the brunette was good and
the blonde was evil, and the same is true to a lesser
extent of the two bookstore women. But the moral
choice presented by the Sternwood sisters is not as
clear cut. Both are tainted (the murder
notwithstanding), Carmen through being extremely
promiscuous to the point of posing for pornography, and
Vivian through fraternizing with racketeers and having
married a bootlegger. Yet Vivian is not altogether
evil; as Speir says, "In Vivian's reluctance to face
her relation to evil squarely, Chandler reminds us all
of the limits of our ability to approach and comprehend
the truth" (31). Indeed, in a sense neither sister is entirely evil, and it is their moral complexity that gives dimension to their characters. In the case of Vivian, although she is a drunk and a gambler, behaves with frequent rudeness, and has covered up a murder, she is also bearing the responsibility of being the head of the Sternwood family and protecting her sister Carmen. Vivian, in fact, has the role in the novel that Anton Dravec, former steelworker and "all-round muscle stiff" (2), had in "Killer in the Rain." As for Carmen, the suggestion throughout the book is that she's semi-retarded and psychologically unstable. "She's not normal," says Vivian (214). Marlowe sees this at the end of the novel and insists only that she be sent away to a place "where they can handle her type. . . . Hell, she might even get herself cured" (214).

Of the two sisters, it is Vivian who at one point seems close to becoming Marlowe's equal and colleague. In Chapter 11 when she visits his office, the cynical sides of both of them are revealed in their badinage. She asks, "How did you get into this slimy kind of business then?" and he responds by questioning, "How did you come to marry a bootlegger?" If anything, Vivian is even more hardboiled in her opinions than is
Marlowe. When the detective mentions her missing husband's police record: "She shrugged. She said negligently: 'He didn't know the right people. That's all a police record means in this rotten crime-ridden country.'" Responding, "I wouldn't go that far" (52), Marlowe, for all his skepticism, still shows faith in the system. In Chapter 23, after the detective has rescued her from a holdup man outside a nightclub, Vivian again reveals her tough side--"The incident of the masked man with the gun seemed to have made no impression on her at all"--as well as her ability to match Marlowe's sardonic humor:

We went over to a big Cadillac. . . . On the wide back seat, loosely arranged, covered to the chin with a plaid robe, a man lay snoring with his mouth open. He seemed to be a big blond man who would hold a lot of liquor.

"Meet Mr. Larry Cobb," Vivian said. "Mister Cobb--Mister Marlowe."

"Mr. Cobb was my escort," she said. "Such a nice escort, Mr. Cobb. So attentive. You should see him sober. I should see him sober. Somebody should see him sober. I mean, just for the record. So it could become a part of history, that brief flashing moment, soon buried in time, but never forgotten--when Larry Cobb was sober" (134-35).

A sexual tension begins to build between the two as they drive to a drugstore and drink coffee laced with rye. The depiction of Vivian as woman worthy of Marlowe continues: "Vivian Regan reached into her bag for a pack of cigarettes and shook a couple loose just
like a man." The detective describes her face, "It was taut, pale, beautiful and wild. Her lips were red and harsh." He tells her "You have wicked eyes" (137), but he affirms his faith in her good qualities: when she says of her family, "[Ours] was always wild blood, but it wasn’t always rotten blood," he responds, "Not yours. You’re just playing the part" (138). The banter between them proceeds, and she calls him:

"One of those dark deadly quiet men who have no more feelings than a butcher has for slaughtered meat. I knew it the first time I saw you."
"You’ve got enough shady friends to know different."
"They’re all soft compared to you."
"Thanks, lady. You’re no English muffin yourself" (139).

They leave the drugstore and drive to a secluded and romantic lovers’ parking spot near the beach. Now that the equality between Marlowe and Vivian has been established, the reader expects a love scene to consummate their relationship. But one is likely to be as shocked as Vivian is at what follows:

I strained her against me until the shivering of her body was almost shaking mine. I kept on kissing her. After a long time she pulled her head away enough to say: "Where do you live?"
"Hobart Arms. Franklin near Kenmore."
"I’ve never seen it."
"Want to?"
"Yes," she breathed.
"What has Eddie Mars got on you?"
Her body stiffened in my arms and her breath made a harsh sound. Her head pulled back until her eyes, wide open, ringed with white, were staring at me.
"So that's the way it is," she said in a soft dull voice.

"That's the way it is. Kissing is nice, but your father didn't hire me to sleep with you. . . . I'm not blind or without sense. I have warm blood like the next guy. You're easy to take--too damned easy. What has Eddie Mars got on you?"

Marlowe's chivalry, as well as the contrast between the two sisters, is underscored in the following chapter when, having taken Vivian to her home, Marlowe arrives at his apartment to find her sister Carmen naked in his bed. Speir indicates how Chandler uses "a decided touch of irony in his treatment of the subject" of chivalry and knighthood in this scene. With Carmen beckoning to him, Marlowe, says Speir, "turns to his chess board for distraction" (30): "There was a problem laid out on the board, a six-mover. I reached down and moved a knight."

Carmen becomes more insistent, refuses to get dressed and leave, and Marlowe again looks to the chessboard, this time deciding: "The move with the knight was wrong. I put it back where I had moved it from. Knights had no meaning in this game. It wasn't a game for knights." Repulsed by her promiscuity, Marlowe feels she has defiled his place of residence: "[T]his was the room I had to live in. It was all I had in the way of a home. . . . I couldn't stand her in that room any longer." He finally deals with the situation with
this uncourteously threatens: "I'll give you three minutes to
get dressed and out of here. If you're not out by
then, I'll throw you out—by force. Just the way you
are, naked. And I'll throw your clothes after you into
the hall. Now—get started." After she leaves, he
"savagely" tears the sheets off the bed, and the next
morning he moans, "You can have a hangover from other
things than alcohol. I had one from women. Women made
me sick" (144-149).

Speir comments as follows, defending Marlowe
against possible charges of misogyny:

Considered in isolation, as they often are,
these remarks do suggest a man with a revulsion
for the opposite sex. But such an interpretation
neglects the circumstances surrounding the scene.
Just prior to his encounter with Carmen, Marlowe
has come from one roughly parallel with Carmen's
sister Vivian, who has also attempted to use her
sexuality on him to extract the information and
cooperation she desires. [She wants to know if
her father has hired him to located Rusty Regan,
her missing husband.] And this is not the first
time Marlowe has found Carmen nude and up to her
own games of sexual coercion. . . . And finally,
it is at about this point, halfway through the
novel, that Marlowe is beginning to perceive that
that this sort of sexual gamesmanship was at the
root of one of the book's essential puzzles, the
disappearance of Rusty Regan. [Carmen has
murdered Regan for rejecting her sexual advances;
Vivian has arranged with Eddie Mars to have the
murder covered up in order to protect her sister.] At
the end, of course, his suspicions prove
absolutely accurate.

Though the novel does derive a certain amount
of its tension from the strife between the sexes,
it is an oversimplification to call this
"conventional woman hating." Marlowe does, in
fact, develop a certain sympathy for Carmen at the
novel's end where he dares to suggest that "she
might even get herself cured." [He also fails to hand her over to the police, arranging with Vivian to have her institutionalized, instead.] (112-13).

Near the end of the novel, however, Marlowe meets a woman who is indeed worthy to become his colleague, a woman who doesn’t make him sick. This is Mona Grant or Mona Mars, Eddie Mars’ common-law wife with whom Rusty Regan is rumored to have run away. Marlowe meets her at a hideaway in the foothills when he wakes up bound and handcuffed, having been knocked unconscious by Lash Canino, Mars’ gunman. Mona is described as "so platinumed that her hair shone like a silver fruit bowl," with a "small firm chin," and eyes "the blue of mountain lakes" (178-79). Marlowe initially fails to see her strength of character and mistakenly views her as a victim. He first says, "I thought they were keeping you a prisoner," and her reaction is one of amusement (179). Then, when she reveals she’s wearing a wig and "her own hair was clipped short all over, like a boy’s," Marlowe asks, "Who did that to you?" (182) again assuming she’s been victimized. But Mona is nobody’s victim. She tells the astonished Marlowe that she had her hair cut that way herself, "to show Eddie I was willing to do what he wanted me to do--hide out. That he didn’t need to have me guarded. I wouldn’t let him down" (182). This, then, is a woman with the same
kind of loyalty and honor Marlowe has. Knowing that
the thugs intend to kill him, she cuts him loose so he
can escape, and he tries to undermine her faith in her
husband, by telling her how Lash Canino, one of Eddie's
gunmen, murdered a man earlier that evening. But when
he insists, "You're going with me, Silver-Wig," she
refuses, bravely asserting, "I'm not afraid of Canino."
As she tells him good-bye and good luck, he kisses her,
but the description of their kiss is enigmatic: "Her
face under my mouth was like ice. She put her hands up
and took hold of my head and kissed me hard on the
lips. Her lips were like ice, too" (184-185).

When Canino returns, Marlowe is crouching outside
in the dark, and Mona/Silver-Wig, a gun in her back and
her own life in danger, exhibits her cunning and
courage by tricking the gunman and saving Marlowe's
life:

[T]he house door opened. . . . A figure showed in
it cautiously, something white around the neck. It
was her collar. She came out on the porch
stiffly, a wooden woman. . . . Canino came
crouched methodically behind her. . . .

She came down the steps. . . . She started
towards the car. A bulwark of defense for Canino,
in case I could still spit in his eye. Her voice
spoke through the lisp of the rain, saying slowly,
without any tone: "I can't see a thing, Lash.
The windows are misted."

He grunted something and the girl's body jerked
hard, as though he had jammed a gun into her
back. . . . I could see him behind her now. . . .
The girl stopped rigid and screamed. A beautiful
thin tearing scream that rocked me like a left
hook.
"I can see him!" she screamed. "Through the window. Behind the wheel, Lash!"
He fell for it like a bucket of lead (188).

Marlowe kills Canino, and later he and Mona/Silver-Wig report the incident to the authorities, with Marlowe "telling the story . . . . [T]hey were listening quietly and Silver-Wig sat in a shadow with her hands folded in her lap, looking at nobody" (194).

Marlowe’s brief encounter with this loyal, intelligent, and courageous woman seems to have turned his head, for at the end of the novel, we find him longing for her. After Marlowe has solved the case, has seen to it that Carmen will be sent away where she can do no further harm, and has commented cynically on the inescapable eventuality of "the big sleep," he leaves the Sternwood mansion, where "the knight in the stained-glass window still wasn’t getting anywhere untying the naked damsel from the tree" (195). As he heads for his office he tells us, in the novel’s epilogue:

On the way downtown I stopped at a bar and had a couple of double Scotches. They didn’t do me any good. All they did was make me think of Silver-Wig, and I never saw her again (218).

Early reviews of The Big Sleep focused on its violence. Durham quotes two that compare Chandler with Hammett:

The New Yorker thought it a "pretty terrifying story of degeneracy in Southern California by an
author who almost makes Dashiell Hammett seem as innocuous as 'Winnie-the-Pooh.'" And Time commented, "Detective Marlowe is plunged into a mess of murderers, thugs and psychopaths who make the characters of Dashiell Hammett and James Cain look like something out of Godsy's Lady's Book" (Streets, 34)

Such unfavorable response may have caused Chandler some trepidation about his next novel. In August of 1939 he wrote to Blanche Knopf, president of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. (the company that published Hammett's novels and The Big Sleep), "If I could write another 12,000 words I should have a draft of a book finished. . . . The title, if you should happen to approve, is The Second Murderer. Please refer to King Richard III, Act I Scene IV" (Raymond Chandler Speaking, 210). By December, however, Chandler confessed to fellow crime fiction writer George Harmon Coxe, "I had to throw my second book away, so that leaves me with nothing to show for the last six months and possibly nothing to eat for the next six. But it also leaves the world a far far better place. . . ." (Selected Letters of Raymond Chandler, 13). Nevertheless, 1940 saw the publication of a second novel, Farewell, My Lovely. The book features the cop's daughter and amateur sleuth Anne Riordan, whom Durham calls "the kind of girl Marlowe would have married had he been the marrying kind" (Streets, 39). As Speir says:
Anne Riordan... is one of Chandler's strongest, most independent, most likeable female characters. Marlowe is clearly taken with her and, in one of Chandler's purpler passages, he lets go of her hand "slowly as you let go of a dream when you wake with the sun in your face and have been in an enchanted valley." But in what he calls "one of my rare moments of delicacy," Marlowe refuses her offer of overnight accommodations. Later he comments to Lt. Randall: "She's a nice girl. Not my type... I like smooth shiny girls, hardboiled and loaded with sin" (113).

But as we have seen, the knightly Marlowe has no interest at all in "girls... loaded with sin," and Speir rightly identifies this remark as "simply an attempt at a macho camaraderie with the Lieutenant" (113).

When the detective first meets Anne Riordan, she has arrived at the scene of the murder of a man he was supposed to be bodyguarding. She initially holds a gun on Marlowe, commanding "Move and I'll drill you!" (59). Soon realizing Marlowe is not the killer, she helps him examine the victim:

"Hold the flash on him," I said, passing it back to her. "If it doesn't make you sick."
She took it and held it without a word, as steady an an old homicide veteran (60).

A couple of pages later, Marlowe comments,

I liked the cool quiet of her voice. I liked her nerve... I put the light on her face and she blinked. It was a small neat vibrant face with large eyes. A face with bone under the skin, fine drawn like a Cremona violin. A very nice face.
"Your hair's red." I said. "You look Irish."
"And my name's Riordan. So what? Put that light out. It's not red, it's auburn" (62).
Marlowe later says of her, "You could get to like that face a lot. Glamoured up blondes were a dime a dozen, but that was a face that would wear. I smiled at it" (61). Anne Riordan functions as Marlowe's colleague in the novel, identifying herself as his assistant while she probes into the case, and bringing him information about the mysterious Mrs. Grayle (whose name suggests "grail," as part of a knighthood motif again; a character in The Little Sister bears the surname Quest). In the penultimate chapter Anne Riordan is very much the Watson figure, asking, "By the way, how did you know?" in answer to which he explains the thought processes he has used to unravel the mystery. At the end of this scene he suggests, "Let's go riding. After we've had another drink." A few lines of repartee follow, and "Anne Riordan said thoughtfully: "I'd like to 'be kissed, damn you!" But the chapter ends here, and we never find out if she gets her wish.

Anne is, by the way, a double for the book's "femme noire," another redhead named Velma Valento. But like the Sternwoods, Velma, though a killer, is viewed by Marlowe as less than totally evil. In the book's final chapter the police are blind to the human element of the case. But Marlowe defends the actions
of the now-dead Velma in a dialogue that displays his sense of the need for compassionate justice:

"She was a killer. . . . [But] maybe she saw a chance . . . to give a break to the only man who had ever really given her one. . . . I'm not saying she was a saint or even a halfway nice girl. Not ever. But what she did and the way she did it . . . [protected] an old man who had loved [her] not wisely, but too well."

[lieutenant] Randall said sharply, "That's just sentimental. . . ."

He didn't know what I was talking about (248).

Farewell, My Lovely received generally more favorable reviews than Chandler's previous book, and is regarded by many as the author's best work. But Chandler despaired over the novel's low sales, lamenting that if ten thousand copies had sold he "might have been kidded into the idea that I had a future" (Streets 42). The next year, 1941, saw the appearance of only one Chandler short story, but a third novel, The High Window, was ready for publication early in 1942. Yet Chandler wrote to Blanche Knopf in March, "I'm afraid the book is not going to be any good to you. No action, no likeable characters, no nothing. The detective does nothing" (Speaking 211). The novel was, however, received favorably, with The New York Times calling it "no mean achievement," and Time describing it as "among the best" (Streets 43).

In the summer of 1942 Chandler was in Hollywood during the filming of Farewell, My Lovely (released as
Murder, My Sweet in 1944). He was hired as a scriptwriter for Paramount in 1943, and by the end of that year, which also saw the publication of a fourth novel, The Lady in the Lake, he was saying, "Anyone who doesn't like Hollywood is either crazy or sober" (Streets 44). The films he worked on during his first year as a screenwriter included Billy Wilder's Double Indemnity, released in 1944 and nominated for an Academy Award for Best Screenplay the following year.16 The move to Hollywood brought Chandler his fortune and fame. His income tax payment for 1945 was nearly $50,000 (Streets 47). He received a second Oscar nomination in 1946 for his original screenplay, The Blue Dahlia, and that same year he saw the release of the film version of his first novel, The Big Sleep, directed by Howard Hawks, released by Warner Brothers, scripted by William Faulkner--because Chandler was bound by his contract with Paramount--and starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall.

The film was released at the height of the Bogart/Bacall popularity: the two had met while making To Have and Have Not in 1944 (Hawks's previous film, also scripted by Faulkner, from a novel by Ernest Hemingway) and had married in May of the following year. By 1946, audiences wanted to see a fictional
screen version of this well-publicized real-life romance. *To Have and Have Not* had included several witty and flirtatious scenes between Bogart and Bacall (such as the famous "You know how to whistle don’t you?" sequence), and Hawks saw such bits as part of the formula for a successful Bogart/Bacall sequel.

According to William Luhr:

Howard Hawks and Warner Brothers had had a major success with *To Have and Have Not*, shot in 1944 and released in January 1945. It starred Bogart and Lauren Bacall, a Hawks discovery, in her first film. Even before the film’s release, the word was out that the Bogart-Bacall star chemistry was remarkable, and Hawks prepared a follow-up for the team: *The Big Sleep* (122).

As a result, from the moment the opening credits of *The Big Sleep* begin, announcing the pair as the stars of the picture and showing them silhouetted in an intimate stance, this is a “couple’s film.”

Working from an impossibly complex novel, Faulkner reportedly had difficulty plotting the film. One oft-repeated story tells how Faulkner (or Bogart, or Hawks, depending on which version of the story one reads or hears) became confused about who murdered Owen Taylor (the Sternwood’s chauffeur and Carmen’s admirer, whose car is found floating in the bay with his dead body inside). A few years later Chandler recalled:

I remember several years ago when Howard Hawks was making *The Big Sleep*, the movie, he and Bogart got into an argument as to whether one of the characters was murdered or committed suicide.
They sent a wire asking me, and dammit I didn’t know either (Speaking 221).

In the novel The Big Sleep, Chandler had achieved a delicate balance between emphasis on plot and emphasis on character. The film version shifts attention away from plot and toward character so that, by the middle of the film, one is likely to give up worrying about who murdered whom, and to pay attention instead to Bogart and his relationships with the film’s female characters.

Chandler was very enthusiastic about the casting of Bogart as Marlowe. After the film’s release, he wrote:

Bogart, of course, is also so much better than any other tough-guy actor. As we say here [in Hollywood], Bogart can be tough without a gun. Also he has a sense of humour that contains that grating undertone of contempt. Ladd is hard, bitter and occasionally charming, but he is after all a small boy’s idea of a tough guy... Bogart is the genuine article... [A]ll he has to do to dominate a scene is to enter it (Speaking 216-217).

Faced with another hardboiled detective to portray, Bogart was in danger of playing essentially the same role in this film he had played in The Maltese Falcon, and it was thus up to Faulkner and Hawks to modify his portrayal of character. This was done in at least three ways, and one of these involved the addition of humor. The novel contains cynical humor but no comedy
per se; the film, on the other hand, is much funnier than the novel--one lilting musical theme suggests the picture's comic dimension--and the humor helps delineate the character of Philip Marlowe and his relationship to others, especially to Vivian.

Two comic scenes in particular, both of which are not in the novel, are important in establishing Bacall's Vivian Rutledge as the detective's equal. In the first of these, "they do some mischief on the phone with someone at the police station, recollective of the tricksterish Susan [Katharine Hepburn] in Bringing Up Baby [Hawks's film of 1938]," says Branson (161). In Marlowe's office, Vivian, bluffing, telephones the police, but before she can speak to them Marlowe grabs the phone:

Marlowe: Hello, what do you want please?
Policeman (over the phone): I don't want a thing.
Marlowe: What?
Policeman: You called me!
Marlowe: I called you?
Policeman: That's right.
Marlowe: Say, who is this?
Policeman: This is Sergeant Reilly at headquarters.
Marlowe: Sergeant Reilly? Well, there isn't any Sergeant Reilly here.
Policeman: I know that! Now look, brother--
Marlowe: Wait a minute. You'd better talk to my mother.
[He hands the phone to Vivian.]
Policeman: I don't want to talk to your mother! Why should I want to talk to your mother? She didn't call me--
Vivian: Hello, who's this?
Policeman: This is the police!
Vivian: The police? Well, this isn't a police station.
Policeman: I know that!
Vivian: Well, if you know it, then why don't you--. Look, this is not a police station. What was that you said? My father should hear this! [She passes the phone back to Marlowe, and the comedy continues.]

The scene establishes the tough and solemn Vivian's sense of humor and shows her as Marlowe's equal in ad libbing and outwitting the policeman (two traits essential to detective work).

In a second comic sequence loaded with sexual innuendo, Vivian again proves herself as Marlowe's counterpart. They are seated in a restaurant or cocktail lounge, and Marlowe has just commented that he likes to play the horses (this scene is very likely that of Faulkner, an avid horseman, although Jules Furthman and Leigh Brackett also worked on the script):

Vivian: Speaking of horses, I like to play them myself. But I like to see them work out a little first. See if they're front runners or come from behind. Find out what their hole card is, what makes them run.
Marlowe: Did you find out mine?
Vivian: I think so.
Marlowe: Go ahead.
Vivian: I'd say you don't like to be rated. You like to get out in front, open up a lead, take a little breather in the back stretch, and then come home free.
Marlowe: You don't like to be rated yourself.
Vivian: I haven't met anyone yet that could do it. Any suggestion?
Marlowe: Well, I can't tell until I've seen you over a distance of ground. You've got a touch of class, but, uh, I don't know how far you can go.
Vivian: A lot depends on who's in the saddle.
Solomon comments on this scene:

[T]heir relationship manages to develop because Marlowe respects her character and her style. The restaurant sequence, in which Vivian and Marlowe inform each other of their mutual attraction, uses the slang of the racetrack... It is challenge dialogue—two people establishing their conditions for a possible future romance, speaking overtly yet obliquely so as not to commit themselves while in the process of bargaining and fixing their demands. Neither can trust the other at all, and so they cannot talk openly until the very end (221).

Another difference in the presentation of Bogart as Marlowe as opposed to Bogart as Spade is identified by Branson: "Bogart/Marlowe's short stature is emphasized in the film" (159). Indeed, practically the first words spoken to Marlowe are Carmen's remark, "You're not very tall, are you?" (in the novel she says, "Tall, aren't you?"). This may be another Faulknerian touch—Faulkner himself was 5'5"—but rather than trying to make the relatively diminutive (5'7") Bogie appear tall (as seems to have been the case in other films), The Big Sleep uses his stature to its advantage, pitting the short detective against the film's central villain Eddie Mars, who stands a half a head taller. Bogart's Marlowe also has even more reason than did the book's Marlowe to identify with the pint-sized detective Harry Jones, whom Branson identifies as "his shadow run into." Jones is also literally Marlowe's shadow in that Jones has been
following him. (Interestingly, Jones is played by Elisha Cook, Jr., the same actor who also followed Bogart in *The Maltese Falcon* as Gutman's gunsel, Wilmer.) Branson asserts, "It may be significant that both men are small. They are . . . 'doubles.'" (162). It is Jones's murder, both in the novel and in the film, that motivates Marlowe to unravel the case, and not only does Marlowe identify with him, he seems to feel a personal responsibility for Jones's death, having been in the next room when he was murdered. Finally, Marlowe deeply respects, both in the novel and in the film, the fact that Jones was loyal to his girlfriend Agnes and only pretended to betray her when threatened with death. For Marlowe, loyalty to one's beloved would seem to be the highest requirement of his chivalric code: Mona/Silver-Wig's appeal centers around her loyalty, however misplaced, to Eddie Mars, and Velma's desire to protect "the only man who had ever really given her [a break]" prompts Marlowe's sympathy for her. As Branson says, "Jones's murder sets Marlowe into such angry motion that he singlehandedly defeats the Mars gang. In this, Marlowe comments that Jones was 'a funny little guy. Harmless. I liked him" (163).

A third way in which Bogart as Marlowe differs
from Bogart as Spade is, of course, in his relationship to the film's women in general and to Bacall's Vivian in particular. In the film version of *The Maltese Falcon* the importance—as well as the appeal—of Spade's female admirers Effie Perrine and Iva Archer was minimized, but Bogart's Marlowe seems literally surrounded by women in this film. He is, of course, pursued by Carmen from the minute she lays eyes on him. But he is also the object of flirtation from a librarian, the second bookstore clerk (whose role is expanded in the film from that in the novel—she shares a flask with him then longingly watches him leave at the end of the afternoon), a female cab driver, twin hostesses at the gambling casino, a waitress who admiringly lights his cigarette while he makes a phone call, Jones's girl Agnes (who is also the first bookstore clerk and who is portrayed with a bit more sympathy in the picture than in the novel), Mona Grant (whose role in the book fuses, in the film, with that of Vivian), and, most important, Vivian herself. As Luhr puts it, "Marlowe is simply established as having virtually unlimited sexual opportunity. Almost every time he turns around, another attractive woman is smiling longingly at him" (133).

In the film, Vivian is not married to the missing
Rusty Regan, but is the divorcee of someone named Rutledge who never appears in the movie and is only mentioned once. Thus Vivian Rutledge, unlike Vivian Regan, is "available," for in being divorced she is both single and nonvirginal. Where Marlowe's code of honor would prevent him from being involved in adultery or deflowering a virgin, there is nothing in the film to stand in the way of a relationship with Mrs. Rutledge. Vivian Regan oozes sexuality in her first appearance in the novel; she is lying on a chaise longue in her bedroom with her slippers off, displaying her legs clad in sheer silk stockings and visible up to and above her knees. In the film, however, it is Carmen who shows off her legs in an exceptionally short skirt, while Vivian Rutledge wears a demure pants outfit that covers her from neck to wrist and ankle. Her sexuality is merely suggested by the mise-en-scene: "We see them [Vivian and Marlowe] framed against a large and luxuriously ornate bed," Luhr observes (126).

Vivian Rutledge is tied in with gangsters, is a gambler and a heavy drinker, but she is ultimately neither as corrupt nor as sexually manipulative as Vivian Regan; hence, she is a potential colleague and lover for Philip Marlowe. Solomon gives a particularly apt description of their relationship:
The *Big Sleep* projects a classic love story in which the hero rescues the heroine from encroaching degradation; in turn, Vivian offers some hope to the cynical Marlowe, who engages in the detective's usual search for truth but never expects to find it embodied in a person. . . .

Thus, when Marlowe meets Vivian Rutledge, the spoiled "wild" (Marlowe's impression of her reputation) daughter of a wealthy man, they can address each other only in ironic tones, sounding each other out indirectly—but at the same time establishing the grounds for their mutual attractions: cynicism, toughness, and overt disbelief in each other's honesty. Actually, Marlowe is immediately interested in her, appreciating the female counterpart of his own nature (220-21).

The issue of trust and of his belief in her essential goodness is central to their relationship, and as in the novel he asks repeatedly, "What's Eddie Mars got on you?" without getting an answer. For her part, Vivian, terrified that "his detective skills will destroy her family" (Solomon 221), lies to him, tries to buy him off, and asks the district attorney to order him off the case, but he perseveres, not only out of a professional dedication to solving mysteries and a personal motive to avenge the death of Harry Jones, but also because of his interest in saving her from the "encroaching degradation" of being linked to racketeers.

Since Vivian functions as Marlowe's love object, her character in the film replaces that of Mona Grant, who makes but a brief appearance in the hideaway scene
then disappears. As in the novel Marlowe admires Mona's loyalty, asking Vivian, "I wonder if you'd do what she did for a man?" to which Vivian responds, "I was wondering that myself." The hideaway scene is especially important to the love relationship, for here Vivian proves her cunning and courage as did Mona in the book. When Marlowe says, "I'm gonna leave you in a tough spot," Vivian bravely answers, "It's all right with me." She fools the predatory and aptly named Canino with the same trick Mona used in the novel, then hardly flinches as Marlowe pumps three shots into him. Marlowe comments that if Eddie Mars finds out what has happened, "There'll be plenty of trouble. You'll be in it as much as I am." "I don't mind as long as you're around," replies Vivian.

As they head back into town Marlowe compliments her gutsiness, and they declare their mutual love:

Marlowe: I didn't have a chance to thank you for what you did back there. You looked good. I didn't know they made them like that anymore.
Vivian: I guess I'm in love with you. . . .
Marlowe: Will you go to the police with me?
Vivian: I can't. . . .
Marlowe: I'm not even gonna ask you how you got into this mess. . . .
Vivian: Why are you doing this?
Marlowe: I guess I'm in love with you.

In an ending very different from that of the novel, the two meet Mars for a final showdown, and the depth of their intimacy is suggested when the hardboiled Marlowe
can admit to her, "I'm scared, angel." She is by now firmly established as his colleague, watching the back of the house for him as Mars and his hoods arrive. The film suggests that Mars, jealous over Regan's attraction to his wife, either killed Regan himself or arranged for Carmen to murder Regan, and either case establishes Carmen, as well as Vivian, as victims of the evil racketeer rather than corrupt in and of themselves. At the conclusion, after Mars has been gunned down by his own men, Marlowe tells Vivian that she'll have to send Carmen away. The film's last lines underscore the theme of how "the hero rescues the heroine from encroaching degradation" (Solomon 220):

Vivian: You're forgotten one thing. Me.
Marlowe: What's wrong with you?
Vivian: Nothing you can't fix.

The ending of the film suggests that in spite of "a very sinister, very perverse, very mysterious world, charged with eroticism, uncertainty, and death" (Luhr 137), the two have created an ongoing and lasting partnership. In the Philip Marlowe novels, too, a lasting relationship is finally established. The knightly Marlowe is celibate in the books until he meets Linda Loring in *The Long Goodbye* (1954), but he insists that a marriage between them "wouldn't last six months" and she leaves for France by the conclusion.
In the final chapter of Chandler's next and last complete novel, *Playback* (1958), the detective receives a call from Loring in Paris. She asks him to come to her, to marry her (they are married by the beginning of *The Poodle Springs Story*, Chandler's final, unfinished novel), and offers to send him a plane ticket, but he refuses, insisting he will send her a ticket. As he hangs up the phone, Marlowe says with romantic optimism:

I looked around the empty room—which was no longer empty. There was a voice in it, and a tall slim lovely woman. There was a dark hair on the pillow in the bedroom. There was that soft gentle perfume of a woman who presses herself tight against you, whose lips are soft and yielding, whose eyes are half blind.

The phone rings again, and he hangs up on the obnoxious lawyer who is his client. The book's final lines suggest Marlowe's utter happiness, as well as the fact that he is better able to deal with the sordid side of his career now that he has committed to a partnership with a woman: "the telephone started to ring again. [His arrogant client is probably calling him back.] I hardly heard it. The air was full of music" (168).
CHAPTER IV
WOMEN IN SELECTED WORKS BY KENNETH MILLAR
(ROSS MACDONALD)

The hardboiled tradition was carried into the 1970s primarily by Kenneth Millar, who published most of his Lew Archer detective novels under the pseudonym Ross Macdonald. Writing in 1980 (three years before Millar’s death), David Geherin summarized the history of the genre as follows:

Dashiell Hammett introduced the Continental Op in *Black Mask*, and for the next decade, in the figure of the Op and, more importantly, in the character of Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*, he gave shape to the image of the tough, cynical detective that was to serve as the model for all later private eyes. Hammett was followed by Raymond Chandler, who began contributing to *Black Mask* in 1933; from his first novel, *The Big Sleep*, published in 1939, until his last, *Playback*, in 1959, Chandler’s character of Philip Marlowe broadened the outlines of Hammett’s hero and brought new popularity to the hard-boiled detective novel. Then came Ross Macdonald who, in the three decades since Lew Archer’s initial appearance in *The Moving Target* in 1949, has become the dominant writer in the genre, enjoying enormous critical and popular success. These three were certainly not the only writers of detective fiction. However, their contributions have been so significant, their influence so pervasive, their heroes so well known, that when one thinks of the private detective, one automatically thinks of Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe, and Lew Archer, whose names are virtually synonymous with the popular image of the
private eye. . . .
Since Chandler's death in 1959, Ross Macdonald has almost had the field to himself as the unchallenged master of the form (1-2).

For his part, Millar was quick to acknowledge his legacy, admitting, "I made an all-out effort to bend the bow that Hammett and Chandler . . . had strung for me, and to hit the difficult target of my own life,"
"[T]he work of writers like Hammett and Chandler was . . . my heritage," and "Most popular writers seem to begin, as I did, by imitating their predecessors" (Self-Portrait 8). But Millar was more than an imitator, and from the time his Archer novels began to appear, critics and reviewers identified the importance and uniqueness of his contribution. As Anthony Boucher observed in a 1949 review of The Moving Target, "Just at the time that the tough genre in fiction needs revitalizing, Macdonald turns up. . . . Macdonald and his Lew Archer . . . have given the tough 'tec a new lease on life" (cited in Brucoli, Ross Macdonald 35).

Millar was interested in the genre from his schoolboy days; as a child he enjoyed "Falcon Swift the Monocled Manhunter" in Boy's Own Magazine, and at the age of sixteen he read Hammett's The Maltese Falcon and wrote a Sherlock Holmes parody for a high-school literary publication. His professional writing career began out of financial necessity when he was twenty-
three in 1939: his earliest works included Sunday school stories for children, poetry, and humor. By 1940 his wife Margaret was also writing professionally, and her humorous mystery novel, *The Invisible Worm*, was published in 1941; she wrote another four books in the next three years and Millar, who helped edit her work, later acknowledged that his role as Margaret's first reader and editor taught him how to write novels.

Meanwhile, as a graduate student at the University of Michigan, Millar had enrolled in a course with visiting professor W. H. Auden, himself a lover of detective fiction. Millar subsequently credited Auden with being "the most important single influence on my life" (Brucoli 11); the exposure to Auden "legitimized" the detective genre for Margaret and for Kenneth, who recalled:

> Both Margaret and I were writing mysteries at this time. He [Auden] was most encouraging to us. That kind of push is unbelievably important to a young writer. . . . It gave us a shove in the direction in which we were going anyway. . . . It marked a point in my life where I chose to become a fiction writer. . . . (Brucoli 12-13).

In 1943, two years after meeting Auden, Millar wrote his first novel, *The Dark Tunnel* (1944). Millar was doing course work in Ann Arbor toward a doctorate in English at the time, and the book is a wartime spy thriller with an academic setting. (Millar's doctoral
dissertation, The Inward Eye: a Revaluation of Coleridge's Psychological Criticism, was completed at the University of Michigan in 1951.) The main character, Robert Branch, is an English professor and not a professional detective, but he nevertheless becomes embroiled in the mysteries surrounding the deaths of his best friend and a distinguished colleague; eventually he himself comes under suspicion and must solve the murders to clear his name. Branch's female counterpart in the novel is the beautiful green-eyed redhead Ruth Esch, a German woman from Branch's past who suddenly arrives on his college campus right before the first murder occurs.

Millar seems to be dealing directly with issues surrounding women's roles in general and male/female relationships in particular at several points during the novel. Branch knows Ruth from six years earlier when he was doing research in Germany; significantly, they first meet as she rescues him from an angry group of Nazi citizens he has accidently offended. She's an actress and performs that evening in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida. Branch comments on the play and her performance:

It is one of the least popular of Shakespeare's plays because it handles love and honor with gloves off, and calls a spade a dung-fork. Achilles is a treacherous and perverted boar, Troilus a love-sick fool, Helen of Troy an
international courtesan, Cressida a two-bit floozie. But Ruth played Cressida with an understanding that gave the play a quality I did not know it had. Her Cressida was a brainless, warm-blooded girl who could not resist the flattery of a handsome lover. She didn't try to gloss over Cressida's weakness with tragic effects, but gave her a certain pathos as a victim of environment and her own character. . . . [She] was the image of feminine grace without dignity, and affection without consistency or restraint (26).

Throughout the novel there is significant tension between Branch's intellectual belief in female equality and his emotional tendency to be suspicious of women; his analysis of the play suggests how apt he is to categorize and jump to conclusions about people and how difficult it is for him to trust. His comment on Ruth's acting talent, "[W]ith a girl who could act like that, you'd never know where you were at" (26), points to a suspicious nature that becomes central to the plot later on when he believes her to be a Nazi spy and the murderer.

In another chapter Millar directly equates anti-feminism with Nazism. Branch is arguing with Peter Schneider, the son of a distinguished university colleague from Germany.

"You seem to share Hitler's prejudice against women," I said. . . . "I believe that Mr. Schneider was about to expound an old Turkish doctrine regarding the inferiority of women."

"Ach, women," Peter said. . . . "Their legs are pretty, of course. But why should they be treated as equals? Would you give equal civil rights to a race-horse?"
"If it had equal intelligence and other human qualities."
"Are women equal in intelligence to men?"
"Not if they're not educated. The Middle Ages proved that."
"Why attempt to educate them? Women can perform their natural functions without education. Most of them are hardly more complicated than a child's puzzle. Press three buttons in the proper sequence and the gates open. The gates of Aulis and the gates of hell. Abandon hope all ye who enter here."
Suddenly I could contain my anger no longer and it boiled over. "I abandon the argument. Your political and social ideas have the fascination of the horrible as far as I'm concerned. . . ."
What Peter said had convinced me that if he wasn't a Nazi intellectual he had missed his calling (52-53).

Branch, however, for all his intellectual fidelity to the ideal of female equality, has a side that agrees with Peter Schneider (who is, incidentally, the villain in the novel). After the murder, as he begins to believe that Ruth is the killer, Branch comments:

Perhaps Ruth Esch killed him. I was beginning to suspect her. A man will trust another man further than he'll trust a woman--women are a different kind of animal. I wanted to find out if she had an alibi, too (119).

Yet he is fully aware of how his lack of trust is destroying both the relationship and himself. When he calls the attention of the authorities to her as a possible suspect, he knows he is acting in the role of the worst kind of betrayer:

"Look, Sergeant," I said. . . . "Will you help me get some information?"
"What information?"
"Information on the movements of a woman who could have killed Alec Judd. . . ."
"Where would her alibi be?"
"She's registered at the Palace Hotel. It should be easy to find out if she was there at midnight."
"What's her name?"
"Ruth Esch. E-S-C-H." I shifted my feet and the coins in my trousers pocket rattled. They clinked like thirty pieces of silver (122-23).

The plot turns on the fact that Ruth's brother, a delicate-looking homosexual who is one of the killers, has disguised himself as a woman and has been mistaken for his sister by the visually impaired Branch. One ramification of this is that Ruth's heterosexuality— and hence another aspect of her love for Branch—becomes questionable when Branch, trying to establish Ruth's alibi, converses with the detective at Ruth's hotel:

[H]e pushed his face towards me and said in an earnest whisper:
"Listen, friend, is this girl your wife?"
"No. Just a friend."
"A girl-friend like? . . . "
"More or less," I said. "Why?"
"Because . . . you take it from me that that dame's poison with a red label and you keep clear of her. She's got the skull and crossbones on her."
"What do you mean?"
"She's a dike. . . ."

I said, "Good night," in a weak voice and walked out of the hotel. The stars fell down and rattled at the bottom of the sky. . . . (128).

The theme of the sexual infidelity of women continues with a conversation Branch overhears in a bar:

One of the young men said, "Yeah, but when I went into the bedroom she was in bed and this guy was standing there with just the tops of his pyjamas on. That's gotta mean something."
The other said, "They're all whores. Especially the frigid ones."

The first one wept brokenly in a high drunken voice, "She's a whore. She's a whore. And I loved her so truly" (155).

No matter how convinced Branch becomes of Ruth's guilt, however, his feelings for her remain. The ambiguity of Branch's feelings about Ruth reflect his feelings about women in general, as can be seen in the following passage, where Branch tries to hold in his mind an image of Ruth's face:

When the mind is held awake on the point of sleep, an imagined face will take a hundred shapes, changing like a movie fadeout and fadein from beauty to ugliness, from gracious intelligence to idiot evil and back again to virtue and beauty. A goddess, a leering devil, a Victory of Samothrace, a sexless imbecile, a sweet young girl, a gross hag. The obscene amorphous masks changed constantly behind my eyes and cold sweat ran down the back of my neck. I sat and watched Ruth's face change all night (230-31).

Branch's conflicting feelings about women, his chronic inability to trust Ruth, and his ready willingness to name her as a murder suspect all suggest Branch is not simply an innocent victim caught up in the nefarious machination of murderous spies. Peter Wolfe has noted:

One unresolved issue is Branch's capacity for evil. Branch and Peter turn up in many of the same places. . . . Peter's evil shadows Branch so closely that it looks like a part of him. The ending, where the two men fight, looks like a routing of Branch's evil side, even though Branch is less wicked than unready (75).

With the exception of the flashback to the love
affair with Ruth in Germany, the novel's central female character is kept offstage for nearly all of the action of the novel; indeed, when the two are reunited at the end, it is the first time they have seen each other in six years. Although Branch finally learns of Ruth's innocence and speaks to her briefly while she lies recovering in a hospital bed, his disparate feelings about women are never untangled. Hence at the conclusion he merely has a vision of Ruth "waiting with hair as bright as sunlight" at the end of a "warm, dry tunnel" (247). The mystery is resolved, but his issues about women and trust are not. And without such a resolution of his conflicting attitudes, no union of the hero and heroine is possible. Wolfe comments:

[I]n the book's symbolic last paragraph, the moist menacing tunnel warms and dries, and Ruth stands waiting for him in the sunlight. Yet the real Ruth lies unconscious in a raw mining town . . . bracing for a long, heavy winter. Branch's relationship with Ruth is an open question. . . . [T]he book avoids a romantic finale. War is more pressing than heterosexual or filial love. The German prison camp lies close by, both night and winter draw on. . . . Branch's final vision of Ruth in sunlight is wish-projection. The reality is war, death, and the coming winter (74-75).

The issue of trust between men and women resurfaces in Millar's second book, Trouble Follows Me, published in 1946 and later (1955) promoted as a "race novel" because of the importance to the plot of several black characters. Another wartime spy story, its
action begins in the Pacific, where Millar was stationed with the Navy. This time the spies are working for the Japanese, and narrator Sam Drake is a young naval officer. In a reversal of The Dark Tunnel Drake fully trusts his girlfriend Mary Thompson, but it is she who is revealed as the spy and murderer in the end. Curiously, in this book that foregrounds issues of racial prejudice, women seem left out of the equality plea. None of the female characters has any redeeming qualities or any heroic potential; indeed, all of them are morally questionable. Wolfe observes:

Sue Sholto is an adulteress and communist sympathizer. . . . Bessie Land divides her energies between alcohol and prostitution: Miss Green, the enemy spy, runs a brothel . . . ; Drake's sweetheart, Mary Thompson, turns out to be an adulteress and a bigamist, a traitor and a killer. . . . The moral identity he [the author] foists on his women is as shabby as the political identity he accuses the white establishment of foisting on blacks (82).

Wolfe comments that Mary is a "mismanaged character" (84). Throughout the novel we, like Drake, have had few if any reasons to suspect her. She functions as Drake's colleague, travelling with him across the country as he gathers clues and attempts to solve the case. With the protagonist's lover being revealed as the murderer at the conclusion, the novel bears similarities to The Maltese Falcon, but through most of the book Mary appears essentially wholesome.
Brigid on the other hand lies, uses three names, has peculiar acquaintances, and so on; hence she is cloaked in an aura of mystery, where Mary is not. The reader is unprepared for Mary's confession as spy and murderer in the final chapter; the sudden revelations of her poor and delinquent and sexually promiscuous childhood appear out of nowhere and lack credibility as the motives and background for her crimes. And we are led to feel that in this novel the sexual misconduct of which nearly every female character is guilty is a greater sin than murder or treason. As Wolfe puts it:

The only clue to her [Mary's] villainy comes from her author's angry sexual Puritanism. Sex is the giveaway. . . . To poison our hearts against her, Ross Macdonald piles on the sexual misdeeds. . . . The moral inference is clear; no decent girl would ask a man to her bed (84).

In Millar's third novel, Blue City (1947), he redeems himself somewhat from Wolfe's charge of "angry sexual Puritanism." This time, the debt to Hammett is even more obvious: an outsider arrives in a corrupt town determined to clean up the corruption. Instead of Red Harvest, the title is Blue City; instead of being a private eye investigating the death of a tainted millionaire's son, the main character, John Weather, is the son himself. Brucoli describes the book as follows:

Blue City might well have been dedicated to Hammett; it is Millar's first hard-boiled novel
and shows the influence of Hammett's *Red Harvest.* A tough discharged soldier returns to the Midwest of his boyhood to see his estranged father, the political boss of the city. But his father has been murdered and the crooks have taken over. Functioning as a lone redresser—much like Hammett's Continental Op—John Weather solves the murder (with the help of a good whore whom he rehabilitates)... (18).

Instead of Dinah Brand, the central female is Carla Kaufman, a young girl who has turned to prostitution after abandonment by her gangster boyfriend. Like Dinah, Carla is "frankly greedy," commenting on Weather's reluctance to buy her a drink, "You're the damndest cheapskate I ever sat down with" (62). But she is much more vulnerable than Dinah, as Weather reveals when he analyzes her life as follows:

"You make me mad," I said. "You look like a nice girl, and you talk like an honest one. But once upon a time you let a dimwit with sideburns take advantage of you. You woke up from love's young dream with a hangover... You knew damn well you were a romantic sap, so you set out to prove the opposite. You'd been too soft, so now you'd be too hard. You'd been tumbled once, so now you'd get yourself tumbled ten or twelve times a night. All to show yourself, and your dimwit with the sideburns, that you're a hard girl and can take it... You talk like a hard little bitch," I said. "But you're a worried girl, and you don't like yourself very much..."

Suddenly she spread her hands over her face, ran blindly across the narrow room, and fell full length on the bed. The... sobs that struggled up out of her chest shook her whole body (70-71).

She has barely finished her crying fit when they make love, and although she subsequently paints herself up for her next customer, she becomes Weather's colleague,
one of the few people in town he trusts. When he's on
the lam from the town's corrupt officials (he is
suspected of murder), it is to her apartment that he
runs. For her part, she acts courageously—"She was
frightened, but she did her best to hide it from me"
(151)—and cunningly, setting up a trap by inviting one
of the bad guys to a rendezvous so that Weather can
ambush him. Weather, who is falling in love with her,
shows he is far beyond Millar's previous characters—
and Hammett's and Chandler's characters, too—as far as
self-knowledge and being in touch with his feelings are
concerned: his fear of intimacy is obvious when he
reminds, "Women had so many emotional strata, you were
always breaking through a layer you thought you knew
and finding yourself in an atmosphere that was hard to
breathe, a situation that was quite new and a little
frightening" (164). Yet by the end of the novel he is
fully committed to Carla, who has risked her life to
help him, and he announces in the final chapter, "I'm
going to marry her, see?" (212).

Millar's fourth novel, and the one immediately
preceding The Moving Target, is a psychological
thriller and represents his first attempt at the third-
person point of view. Called The Three Roads (1948),
the novel takes its title from a line in Oedipus Rex
that Millar provides as an epigraph: "For now am I discovered vile, and of the vile. 0 ye three roads, and thou concealed dell, and oaken copse, and narrow outlet of three ways, which drank my own blood. . . . "

As Bruccoli observes: "The Three Roads thus announces the central myth of Millar's major work" (24).

Although Blue City and The Moving Target both focus on an Oedipal quest of the child for the parent, in The Three Roads a character's failure to seek the truth about his mother is partly the cause of the anguish he suffers.

The novel is the first book Millar dedicated to his wife Margaret, and it features Paula West, one of the strongest, most determined, and most independent of his female characters. The early part of the novel focuses so much on her that she functions at times as the central figure of the story. A twenty-nine-year-old divorcée who earns a very good living as a Hollywood scriptwriter, she is described as:

tall and brown-haired and well made. She was one of the women who without relinquishing their female quality had entered into man's estate. Her body was as streamlined as a projectile, but she did not use it to advance her interests or excuse her errors. Europe had had its share of women who lived their own lives and asked for no quarter, but they were the exception rather than the rule. In Los Angeles there were scores of thousands of such women living boldly by their wits, self-contained and energetic atoms in a chaotic society (38).
The plot involves a Navy officer named Bret Taylor who has amnesia following the murder of his wife Lorraine. Paula is his fiancée who dutifully visits him at the hospital and consults with his psychiatrist; she is a stabilizing force in his life. Taylor becomes obsessed with tracking down his wife’s killer, but Paula does not function as a colleague here: as the psychologically stronger of the two characters, she assumes the role of protector instead. Wolfe comments, "As often happens in Ross Macdonald, the woman protects and the man rebels" (93). In fact, throughout much of the novel Paula is Taylor’s antagonist, working against rather than with him in his attempts to find the murderer: she even gives money to a key witness, Miles, and asks him to leave town. The result is that, once again, the issue of trust is central to the male/female relationship. Bret Taylor (and the reader as well) begins to suspect Paula of the murder—Paula hated Lorraine and considered her a rival. The final chapter reveals that on the night of the murder Taylor discovered his wife in bed with Miles and killed her; Paula, knowing the truth, has been paying Miles blackmail and has been trying to protect the psychologically frail amnesiac Taylor from the police and from learning the truth about himself.
The "three roads" of the title relates to the three women of Bret Taylor's life. Taylor's mother was unfaithful to his father and deserted the family when Bret was a child. The young Bret, who had discovered the adulterous couple, was told that his mother had died; he has believed this until Paula coincidentally meets the mother and learns the truth. Wolfe describes Bret's relationship with Lorraine as follows: "Taylor had met a slattern of nineteen or twenty in a San Francisco bar, got drunk with her, spent the night, and still drunk, married her the next day" (93). Taylor's Oedipal fixation and mental blurring of his unfaithful mother and unfaithful wife Lorraine--Bruccoli notes, "Millar's favorite doubling device is employed" (24) -- are at the heart of the murder. These first two love-object options of mother and wife are clearly unpleasant, but Paula as the third "road" represents a desireable alternative: a woman who is loyal and strong and who cares about him. As the book ends, "Bret Taylor, like Oedipus, has found that the man he was looking for is himself" (Speir, 24); Taylor's problems are not all resolved--indeed, they are just beginning--but with Paula as the symbol of the road to recovery, the conclusion is essentially an optimistic one.

Millar's first Lew Archer novel, The Moving Target
(1949), was initially poorly received by his publisher. The Knopf reader's report called it a "boringly mediocre work," and Alfred Knopf himself wrote, "It is a big comedown for Kenneth Millar, not only from *The Three Roads* but even from *Blue City*" (Bruccoli, 27-28). Millar told his agent, "I doubt that I'll be doing any more straight mysteries" (28), and when the novel was published, with revisions, under a pseudonym, Millar commented, "I am relieved that it is not going to be published under my name" (Bruccoli, 28). Millar began using a pseudonym at this point in his career for at least two reasons. One reason had to do with Knopf's low opinion of the novel and Millar's fear that it would damage his literary reputation. The other reason stemmed from the fact that Millar's wife, Margaret, was a writer of "straight mysteries": by 1949 she had nine books to her credit, and Millar wanted to avoid the appearance of using her name to gain success.

Millar's original *nom de plume* was "John Macdonald" in honor of his father, John Macdonald Millar. In okaying the choice, Millar's agent and publisher checked book indexes to establish that no other person was writing under the name, but they failed to check indexes for magazine authors. In fact,
a writer named John D. MacDonald (capital D) had been publishing fiction in pulp magazines as well as in more reputable periodicals such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Esquire* for nearly three years. As John D. MacDonald tells the story:

> We were living in Mexico where the living was cheap. . . . My parents were living in Utica, New York. So a letter from my mother went from 9 Beverly Place to 8 Jacarandas, saying, in effect, "What a wonderful surprise! Somebody saw your first book in Grant's Book Store and we read it and I liked it so much I bought a dozen copies and we've given them to all our friends, telling them you'll sign their copies when you come back home."

> She didn't tell me the title, *The Moving Target*, because I had to know it, right? ("Namesake," *Sipper* 71.)

MacDonald legally could have restrained Millar from using the name, but he and their agents and Knopf agreed that Millar would change the name slowly, to John Ross Macdonald for several books, and finally to Ross Macdonald. Millar has said, "I don't know where the 'Ross' came from. It's a Scottish name and I come from Scottish people on my father's side" (*Self-Portrait* 39). The nomenclature of the detective-hero Lew Archer is also complex. Brucoli writes, "The name Archer is also borne by [Sam] Spade's partner, Miles Archer, but Millar has said that the tribute was unconscious. (Millar was a Sagittarius.)" (31).18 Commenting many years after his detective's initial appearance, however, Millar
suggested that the name choice was conscious: "Archer in his early days, though he was named for Sam Spade's partner, was patterned on Chandler's Marlowe" (Self-Portrait 36). When The Moving Target was made into a film in 1966, the title and the detective's name were both changed to Harper. Brucoli claims (32) this was done to satisfy Paul Newman who, having previously appeared in the tremendously successful The Hustler (1961) and Hud (1963), felt that titles beginning with H were lucky. (The year after Harper was released, he appeared in Hombre.)

The debt to Chandler is clear in the opening chapters of The Moving Target. Like Marlowe, Archer has been summoned to the home of a millionaire. Like Marlowe, he is ushered in by a servant to meet his employer who is crippled, withered, uses a wheelchair, and basks in heat. Like Marlowe, he is tempted by the employer's daughter. And as the book progresses, Archer, like Marlowe, will search for a missing person who has been murdered, and in solving the case will be torn about whether to turn in the killer to the police. Brucoli notes, "Like Marlowe, Archer is a knight-errant, a free lance with a highly developed system of morality; but he is less romantic than Marlowe and, at the same time, more introspective in this first
The family that has hired Archer is dominated by a crippled matriarch, and the family name, Sampson, suggests emasculation; the father has disappeared and is missing, the only son has been shot down in his plane and killed in the war. Not quite taking the places of missing father and brother are two men, Albert Graves and Alan Taggert, who have an ambiguous status with the family. Both are essentially employees, one being a lawyer, one a pilot. But both have been treated as if they were more than servants: Ralph Sampson, the missing father, wants to make sons of them by adopting the pilot Alan and by marrying the lawyer Albert to his daughter. The family structure is weakened, twisted, and ambiguous, and symbolic of this corruption is the fact that both Alan and Albert betray the family, one by kidnapping the father, and the other by killing him. Significant, too, is the fact that not only are the two men part of a love triangle—"It was a triangle, but not an equilateral one," says Archer (16)—with the daughter Miranda, both men are involved in "Oedipal" relationships with women of inappropriate ages: Miranda is twenty years younger than Albert Graves, whom she eventually marries, and Alan is half a generation younger than his drug-addict girl friend and
co-conspirator, Betty Fraley.

Like Marlowe, Archer seems surrounded by women in the novel. There is, first of all, his client, the crippled but iron-willed Elaine Sampson (again, years younger than her husband), "very lean and brown, tanned so dark that her flesh seemed hard" (2), who readily admits that she will not divorce her husband even if he has run off with another woman:

I want to make it clear at the start that divorce is not what I want. I want my marriage to last. You see, I intend to outlive my husband [in order to inherit his wealth]. . . . Just tell me where he is, and with whom. I'll do the rest myself" (3-4).

Another corrupt female is Ralph Sampson's alcoholic astrologer friend and fading movie star, Fay Estabrook, who is involved in an illegal scheme to smuggle Mexican farm workers into the country. Archer is partly repulsed by her, but he does remark sympathetically, "She'd had a long journey down from a high place, and she knew what suffering was" (41). He spends an evening cozying up to her on a pub crawl as he tries to gain information. The experience leaves him disgusted with himself, and he thinks about how he is "[a]lways willing to lend a hand to help a lady fall flat on her face in the gutter" (46); later, when questioned about whether he ever judges himself, he comments, "Not when I can help it, but I did last night. I was feeding
alcohol to an alcoholic, and I saw my face in the mirror" (83). A third example of female corruption is Taggart’s girlfriend, Betty Fraley. Much slyer than Fay Estabrook, on first meeting Archer she outwits him and sees through his act immediately as he pretends to be an admirer of her musical talent:

"You heard my records, maybe?"
"Who hasn’t?"
"Were they like I said?"
"Marvelous! I’m crazy about them."
But hot piano wasn’t my dish, and I’d picked the wrong words or overdone my praise.
The bitterness of her mouth spread to her eyes and voice. "I don’t believe you. Name one."
"It’s been a long time."
"Did you like my Gin Mill Blues?"
"I did," I said with relief. "You do it better than Sullivan."
"You’re a liar, Lew. I never recorded that number. Why would you want to make me talk too much."
"I like your music."
"Yeah. You’re probably tone-deaf. . . . You could be a cop, you know. You’re not the type, but . . . [y]ou got cop’s eyes. . . ." (56).

Moments after this, without any feeling or mercy, she siccs a thug named Puddler on Archer, ordering, "Take him out and work him over." (57). Not only does she mastermind the Ralph Sampson kidnapping, Betty Fraley murders her own brother Eddie, who has previously informed on her to lighten his own prison sentence. But Millar elicits some sympathy for her when she is tortured by the smugglers then nearly killed by Eddie’s girlfriend Marcie. And when she and Archer meet again,
their conversation reveals something of her tragic past: "I'm not a virgin, if you're talking about that. I haven't been since I was eleven. Eddie saw a chance to turn a dollar" (164). The reader's pity for Betty grows as Archer tells her that her boyfriend Alan Taggert is dead and is at first skeptical of her love for him:

"We were crazy about each other."

"If you were so crazy about him, why did you drag him into a thing like this. . . . I won't buy love's young dream from you, Betty. He was a boy, and you're an old woman, as experience goes. I think you sucked him in. You needed a finger man, and he looked easy."

"That's not the way it was." Her voice was surprisingly gentle. . . . "I fell, and it was the same with him. . . ." Her voice cracked. It was humble and small when she spoke again. "I didn't do him any good. I know that, you don't have to tell me. I couldn't help myself, and neither could he. . . . I wish I could see him--once more."

The words came softly out of a dark dream. In the silence that followed, the dream spread beyond her mind and cast a shadow as long as the shadows thrown by the setting sun (164-66).

The Moving Target is, like most detective novels, a book about corruption; it is also a book that focuses on the female as a source of that corruption. In the presence of Fay, Marcie, and Betty, the three criminally evil women of the story, Archer apparently feels surrounded by the three Gorgons and comments, "It seemed to me then that evil was a female quality, a poison that women secreted and transmitted to men like
disease" (159). Jerry Speir comments on Millar's
treatment of women:

    Archer's most obvious "incompleteness" is his
inability to relate meaningfully to women. The
problem may well be one of form. We should
consider Macdonald's statement that "the main
trouble with Archer, and it's also his saving
grace . . . [is that] he doesn't become so
involved . . . that he's used up by a book."
Since Archer is a reappearing character, he can
not establish relationships that must be carried
from book to book. The form virtually demands an
isolated, singular protagonist; it reflects the
alienation of an age and appears to the
sensibilities of an alienated reader who, perhaps,
views him- or herself as an isolated resolver of
the mysteries of the world. . . (118).

Speir goes on to remark, "The [Lew Archer] novels have
consistently demonstrated that a lack of love is one of
the basic maladies besetting the modern world" (121).
In The Moving Target, this lack of love is pervasive.
Elaine Sampson uses her husband for his money, Albert
Graves marries Miranda and kills her father for the
same reason. Dwight Troy refers to wife Fay Estabrook
as "a bag of worms" (51) and is not the least bit
jealous that Archer has brought her home. Betty Fraley
plots a kidnapping to get money to run off with her
lover Alan Taggert, and Marcie encourages Betty's
torturer to kill her for murdering Marcie's beloved,
saying "I swear I'll kill her if you don't" (156). In
addition to all of this, Archer himself is a loser at
love, for the novel refers to him as presently
separated and going through a divorce.

Ralph Sampson’s daughter Miranda serves as a foil for the corrupt female figures of the novel. Archer comments, on seeing her for the first time, that she is "the kind who developed slowly and was worth waiting for" (8), and he later remarks that, for Albert Graves, "Miranda was everything he’d dreamed about—money, youth, bud-sharp breasts, beauty on the way" (17). Miranda is the only character in the novel who seems earnestly to want Ralph Sampson to be found; entering the bar where Archer is snuggling up to Fay Estabrook, she is livid that he seems to be neglecting the case: "Miranda turned on me. ‘I don’t understand this. You’re supposed to be looking for Ralph’" (43). Elaine confides that Sampson is "much closer to Miranda than he is to me" (5), and the girl later flies into a fury when she overhears Elaine’s snide remarks about Ralph: "You dare to say that about my father!" (70). Archer comments that she is "young and vulnerable" (70), but she shows tenacity and courage in doing what she can to help Archer on the case.

Functioning as a colleague, she takes Archer to Sampson’s mountain hideaway, which he has given to a religious charlatan named Claude. Rapport is established between Miranda and Lew as they drive along the highway:
From the summit of the pass we could see the valley filled with sunlight like a bowl brimming with yellow butter, and the mountains clear and sharp on the other side.

"Isn't it glorious?" Miranda said. "No matter how cloudy it is on the Santa Teresa side, it's nearly always sunny in the valley. In the rainy season I often drive over by myself just to feel the sun."

"I like the sun."

"Do you really? I didn't think you'd go in for simple things like sun" (81).

There is none of the Chandleresque smart-aleck banter between them, but Archer opens up to her, explaining that he drives ninety miles an hour because, "I like a little danger" (82) and relating how and why he came to be a private detective. When she implies that he drives the way he does out of a death wish, he senses her intelligence and her strength, and seems to feel threatened. He asks:

"Do you drive fast?"

"I've done a hundred and five on this road in the Caddie."

The rules of the game we were playing weren't clear yet, but I felt outplayed. "And what's your reason?"

"I do it when I'm bored. I pretend to myself I'm going to meet something--something utterly new... a moving target in the road."

My obscure resentment came out as fatherly advice, "You'll meet something new if you do it often. A smashed head and oblivion."

"Damn you!" she cried. "You said you liked danger, but you're as stuffy as Bert Graves."

"I'm sorry if I frightened you."

"Frightened me?" Her short laugh was thin and cracked, like a sea bird's cry. "All you men still have the Victorian hangover. I suppose you think a woman's place is in the home, too?" (84).
Arriving at the mountain hideout, she asserts herself to Claude, the false mystic. She begins by stating directly, "I came to see Ralph, if he's here," and when the charlatan begins his mumbo jumbo proclaiming, "I am an old eagle communing with the mountains and the sun," she interjects, "An old vulture!" (86). Moments later she declares boldly, "All this is nonsense. We're going in to look. I wouldn't take your word for anything, Claude," and Archer remarks, "She brushed past him disdainfully. I followed her..." (87).

Miranda symbolizes goodness, innocence, and naiveté in the story. She is one of the few to have any devotion to family, caring deeply about her father. In love with Alan Taggert (a love that resembles a naive schoolgirl crush), she is a "good" double for the "bad" Betty Fraley: like Betty, Miranda has lost a brother, and like Miranda, Betty drives too fast, dying in an auto accident at ninety miles per hour. Miranda's purity is such that she is devoid of the greed and sordid sexuality that permeate the novel. Early on, she confesses, "I used to think I was lucky, with all of Father's money behind me... But I've learned that money can cut you off from people" (73). And by the end of the book she says, "I wish I had no money and no sex. They're both more trouble than
they're worth" (182). In the final chapter, she is married to Albert Graves but is still a virgin: the murderer Graves is unable to face her innocence, and declares, "This is our wedding night, the night that I've been waiting for for years. And now I don't want to see her" (176). As Graves confesses to Archer, hoping the detective won't turn him in, Archer challenges:

"You're a man who married a girl and killed her father the same day to convert her into an heiress. What was the matter, Graves? Didn't you want her without a million-dollar dower? I thought you were in love with her."

"Lay off." His voice was tormented. "Leave Miranda out of it."

"I can't. If it wasn't for Miranda, we might have something more to talk about" (178).

At the conclusion, the goodness symbolized by Miranda totters, but seems to triumph. Either exposure to Miranda's essential goodness has touched her new husband, or the fact that Miranda chose him suggests that he can't be all bad: he confesses to the district attorney. Archer tells Miranda, "You've had terrible luck with two men. I think you're a strong enough girl to take it." And as Wolfe puts it, "Miranda, who has lost a lover, a father, and a husband within a day, emerges stronger..." (108).

*Harper*, the 1966 film version of the novel, was directed by Jack Smight and starred, in addition to
Paul Newman as detective Lew Harper, Robert Wagner as Alan Taggert, Arthur Hill as Albert Graves, Shelley Winters as Fay Estabrook, Julie Harris as Betty Fraley, and Pamela Tiffin as Miranda Sampson. An additional brilliant bit of casting placed Lauren Bacall in the role of the crippled Elaine Sampson, establishing another point on the continuum from Huston’s *The Maltese Falcon*: Bogart as Sam Spade, Bogart as Philip Marlowe and Bacall as Vivian Sternwood Rutledge, Bacall as Elaine Sampson. Solomon has commented on this casting as follows:

> Twenty years after Philip Marlowe entered the hothouse of General Sternwood’s mansion and embarked on his exploration of the links between moral corruption and wealth, Lew Harper, a descendant of the archtypal Marlowe, discovers the same world and the same links but ends up without the sense of personal satisfaction of his predecessor. Marlowe at least helped Sternwood’s daughter Vivian to move through her shield of decadent cynicism and emerge in a condition of hope. But twenty years later she has lapsed back into her debilitating decadence. (That is, Lauren Bacall—who also played Vivian Rutledge in *The Big Sleep*—appears in this film as the wealthy Mrs. Sampson, who, learning at the end of her husband’s murder, cannot contain her glee as she calls for her [step-daughter] to announce the death and enjoy the girl’s sorrow.) (223).

Millar once described *The Moving Target* as “a story clearly aspiring to be a movie” and added, “when Warner Brothers made it into one . . . they were able to follow the story virtually scene by scene” (*Self-Portrait*, 36-7). This is mostly true, but the film
version differs from the novel in three main ways: in the presentation of the character Miranda, in the addition of the detective's estranged wife (Susan Harper, played by Janet Leigh) as a participant in the story, and in the morally ambiguous ending that follows from the first two differences.

In the film, Miranda is a bimbo. When we first see her, she is scantily clad in a two-piece bathing suit and is dancing go-go style on the diving board of the family pool. Her behavior combines snottiness and seductiveness, and she is a good deal more like Carmen Sternwood of The Big Sleep than the Miranda of The Moving Target: reclining on the bed in her father's hotel suite she purrs, "Let's relax some, Harper," and slides a pillow beneath her hips. She and Harper establish no rapport. On the way to the mountain retreat he refuses to answer her questions about why he drives so fast and why he is going through a divorce. In reply to her query about his career, he responds with mock patriotism:

Lew: So long as there's a Siberia, you'll find Lew Harper on a case.
Miranda (confused): Are you putting me on?
Lew (sarcastically): Jeez, I don't think so.

Predictably, on arriving at the mountain lodge she is cordial to Claude, and it is Harper who barges onto the premises.
Lew's wife Sue is only alluded to in the novel, but she makes three appearances in the film as part of a subplot concerning his attempts to forestall his divorce. The first thing Harper does after speaking to Elaine Sampson is to telephone his wife. She is waiting at a lawyer's office, hoping, as she says, "We were going to get everything settled today." "She'll understand," Lew tells the attorney, but she replies:

No. No, I don't. I've been trying to get this divorce thing settled for too long now and I have lately been running low on understanding. . . . [T]he last time we were going to meet something came up, too. . . . He's just trying to stall because he thinks I'm going to change my mind about this. . . . You hear me, Lew. I don't love you.

Lew's second conversation with Susan is also held by telephone. He calls her late at night from the pay phone of a men's room in a bar; disguising his voice, he pretends to be offering free "frug" lessons from a dancing school. She recognizes the gag as he lisps, "Think how pretty you'll feel next time you and your husband try frugging," and she replies:

My husband is dead. . . . His death did nothing but serve the cause of mankind. . . . He was a degenerate's degenerate. . . . He used to call me up on the phone sometimes pretending to be other people. He actually thought it was funny.

They share a laugh, and her tone suddenly changes:

Susan (softly): Lew?
Lew (hopefully): Yeah?
Susan (softer still): Lew?
Lew (full of expectation): What is it?
Susan: Kiss off!
The third encounter occurs after Lew has been beaten up and nearly killed. He pounds on her door in the middle of the night:

Susan: Why did you come here?
Lew: You know why.
Susan: I can't help you, Lew. I can't.
Lew: (Forces his way into the house.)
Susan: We're not going to get involved.
Lew: We are involved. . . . Hold me, Susan.
Susan: Get out, Lew.
Lew: I need you.

He promises he'll give up his investigating career and leads her into the bedroom. Next morning, she is cheerfully frying eggs for their breakfast as he enters the kitchen, announcing he's leaving to continue work on the case and saying, "Forget what I said last night." Commenting under her breath, "An infinitely lingering disease," she stabs at the skillet with her spatula, breaking the yolks of the eggs. Solomon notes:

Harper is the first notable detective in many years to be married and to be preoccupied with a personal problem. The problem, which is usually associated with the police genre and almost never with private detectives, is the discontented wife who wants her husband to give up his career. Since Harper refuses to do so, she is in the process of divorcing him, while he keeps arguing for another chance (224-25).

Solomon does Susan an injustice, however, in stating, "[H]er inability to comprehend her husband's vocation presumably dooms their relationship" (225), for it is
Lew's selfishness, frivolity, and morally ambiguous behavior that doom the marriage.

The failure of the Lew/Susan relationship mirrors the failure of all other relationships in the film. Even the love of Miranda for her father--the only pure love present in the novel--is undercut here by the fact that Miranda is both snotty and stupid. In the film, Albert Graves has not married her; thus, even if she were the sweet Miranda of the book, there is no union with her through which he can be redeemed. The one meaningful relationship in the film is that between Harper and his friend Graves. Asking for Albert's confession as they drive to the Sampson estate, Harper emphasizes that they are not in a court of law, instead they are "a couple of buddies out for an evening spin discussing the events of the day. . . . Only don't lie to me, Albert." Graves defends his murder of Ralph Sampson by saying, "When it came to cruelty, he could be incredibly versatile," and then the issue of their friendship is raised:

Albert: Gonna turn me in?
Lew: Got no other choice, buddy boy.
Albert: You don't have to. Got a better friend than me?
Lew: I haven't got many friends, Albert. But none better than you.
Albert: He was scum, Lew. I swear it. . . . You were hired by a bitch to find scum.
Solomon summarizes the conclusion of the film as follows:

They muse on the failed hopes of their youth—Albert to become governor, Harper to become a great prosecuting attorney. Albert suggests that there is no point in turning him in, that the matter should be left alone for the sake of friendship and human fallibility. . . . The film ends with a thoroughly ambiguous image in which the worldweary detective leaves Albert in the car and pauses on the threshold of the Sampson mansion. . . . [T]he film ends with a frozen shot of the detective, hands half-raised in an ambiguous gesture (226).

Since Graves has not married Miranda and thus will not profit financially from the murder, the equivocation of the ending is less offensive here than it would have been had it occurred in the novel. But nonetheless the conclusion compromises the detective. We as viewers have not seen Ralph Sampson for ourselves, and Graves gives no concrete reasons for killing him, only the generalization that he was "scum"; thus Graves appears to have acted as judge, jury, and executioner, and we have no way of knowing whether he made the right decision. And neither does Harper, who also has never met Sampson. Harper is therefore morally suspect in letting Graves go free, but his behavior fits with the film in general, which offers no positive characters as foils for its evil ones. The picture also has no female colleague or partner for the detective except his estranged wife Susan,
and his treatment of her is appalling. He is too busy with his career to spend time with her, yet he won’t let her divorce him. He lies to her, making promises he has no intention of keeping. And he shows up on her doorstep in the middle of the night, wanting to use her for sex.

In a sense the film predates Newman’s later "buddy films" with Robert Redford--and William Goldman, who wrote the script for Harper, also wrote Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969)--for all that Newman’s character is capable of here is a masculine friendship with an outlaw figure. Without positive foil characters and without positive relationships, the closing scene is necessarily pessimistic in tone. The two men are so corrupt and so resigned to their corruption that both can only comment, "Aw, hell" at the film’s dismal conclusion.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF THE GENRE

In the past two decades, the American detective in film and literature has become progressively less hardboiled and less isolated than his predecessor of the thirties and forties. He has grown more capable of relating to others in meaningful ways, more domestic, more attached to his family, and more likely to be in love. This change is immediately apparent in TV detective series of the past twenty years. Colombo made repeated references to his wife; McMillan and wife worked together on police cases; Rockford had a close relationship with his father and had a girlfriend named Beth who was a lawyer; Magnum had a surrogate family in the form of his employer, Higgins, and two dependable and ever-present buddies, Rick and T.C.; Simon and Simon are two brothers close to their mother; Dave and Maddie of Moonlighting consummated their relationship and declared their feelings for each other. From the sarcastic tough guy of the earliest examples of the genre, the American detective has evolved into a sensitive man unafraid of intimate
involvements. Three films of the seventies are especially revealing of this direction that the genre has taken: *Klute* (1971), *Chinatown* (1974), and *The Late Show* (1977).

*Klute*, like *Harper*, takes its title from the name of the detective. But in *Klute* (directed by Alan J. Pakula), the central female figure is of primary importance. Bree Daniels (played by Jane Fonda in an Oscar-winning performance) is a New York City call girl struggling vainly to change her life, to give up prostitution and establish a career as an actress. An executive from Tuscarora, Pennsylvania, who appears to have been one of her clients, disappears; a provincial private eye and friend of the missing man comes to New York to solve the case and becomes involved in Bree's life. When we first see John Klute (Donald Sutherland), we hear the rationale for choosing him over a big city detective: "He's interested, and he cares." Klute, as a small-town investigator, differs considerably from Spade or Marlowe or Archer: he is not jaded, he lacks the cynicism and biting wit the others seem to need to survive amid cosmopolitan greed and corruption, and he is a caring individual capable of interpersonal relationships.

Bree initially appears to be his opposite. As a
New York whore, she’s seen life at its most degraded and debauched:

And what’s your bag, Klute? You a talker? A button freak? You like to have your chest walked around with high-heeled shoes? Maybe you like to have us watch you tinkle? Or do you get it off wearing women’s clothes?

She is utterly cynical and sarcastic: "What the hell," she cracks, "It’s their money... I’ll swing from a shower rod and whistle ‘Maytime.’" Not an uncaring person, she defends one of her elderly clients, saying, "He’s seventy years old. His wife is dead. He’s been cutting garments since he was fourteen. He’s maybe in his whole life had a one-week vacation, ... and he never lays a hand on me!" But she has a great deal of trouble relating to men in any capacity other than that of prostitute. As she tells her analyst:

When you’re a call girl you control it... Someone wants you... and I know I’m good... and they’re usually nervous, which is fine because I’m not—I know what I’m doing. It’s an act. That’s what’s nice about it. You don’t have to feel anything. You don’t have to care about anything. You don’t have to like anybody... You just lead them by the ring in their nose in the direction they think they want to go in.

Solomon comments:

The complexity of Bree’s story to some extent obscures the generic structure of the film, but this is really just a problem of first appearances. Underneath, the genre form is still holding everything together, as the competent detective traces through the moral morass that has stopped the police cold (231-32).
Structurally the film is incredibly complex, weaving together the stories of the search for the killer, the journey through the moral wasteland of New York, the developing relationship between Bree and Klute, and the repeated attempts by Bree to learn to trust and to establish an identity as something other than a call girl. Here is a reversal of the usual pattern in which the cynical detective is unable to trust the female figure. Bree, the cynical one, is unable to believe that Klute cares about her for herself; at one point she says to her analyst incredulously: "He’s seen me horrible! He’s seen me ugly. He’s seen me mean. He’s seen me whorey. And it doesn't seem to matter. And he seems to accept me."

Klute is indeed utterly accepting of her: at a market he sees her shoplift a piece of fruit, and instead of reprimanding her he merely smiles. And even after she stabs him in the shoulder with a pair of scissors, he still won’t abandon her to her corrupt world.

The two work as colleagues to solve the case. Early in the film, Klute realizes his limitations, having never been in New York or worked on a missing person case before. He comes to Bree and enlists her aid in finding another call girl: "I can't find Arlyn Page without your help," he admits. Together they
visit a series of Bree's acquaintances to find Arlyn Page and to gain information. It is Klute who proves himself Bree's equal in the film. She moves easily through the seediness of New York and relates with equal ease to a penthouse madame or a wretched heroine addict in abject poverty. Klute, technically a rube from Tuscarora (she contemptuously refers to his hometown as "Cabbageville"), proves he can work competently within Bree's world and not be dragged down by it. When she sneers, "Tell me, Klute, did we get you a little, hunh? Just a little bit, us city folk? The sin, the glitter, the wickedness?" he answers quietly, "That's so pathetic." The film ends ironically, with Bree in a voice-over, saying to her psychiatrist:

> What could ever happen for us? I mean, we're so different. I mean, I know enough about myself to know that whatever lies in store for me, it's not going to be setting up housekeeping with somebody in Tuscarora.

Yet as she speaks, she and Klute embrace, and in the film's final scene the two of them are moving her out of her apartment, carrying suitcases and heading obviously for Tuscarora. The viewer is left with the impression that by leaving behind the infamy of her life in New York, Bree will be able to realize her full potential as a human being with a man who totally accepts her for herself.
Of Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974) Solomon notes:

It is, of course, the same old journey through the vile dregs of life that all the private investigators since *The Maltese Falcon* have undertaken. . . (237).

As in *Klute*, however, the detective figure (Jaake Gittes, played by Jack Nicholson) is naive compared to the central female character (Faye Dunaway as Evelyn Mulwray) who knows more of the seamy side of life.

Schatz remarks:

[T]he new detective of the '70s inhabited a milieu he was unable to understand or to control—even in a period film like *Chinatown* where that milieu is depicted as late-'30s Los Angeles. No longer a hero-protector, the detective in more recent films is himself the ultimate victim (149).

Indeed, the hero's lack of understanding is repeatedly emphasized in the film. The locale referred to by the title becomes a metaphor for inscrutable evil. Images of blindness—broken glasses and sunglasses, a smashed auto light, a flaw in the iris of Evelyn's eye, and her death after being shot through the eye socket—permeate the film, suggesting the detective's inability to see the true nature of corruption. And throughout the film, the detective's own words repeatedly suggest his naiveté. A character says to Jake early on, "You may think you know what you're dealing with, but believe me, you don't," and Jake laughs, responding, "That's
what the district attorney used to tell me in
Chinatown." Later, he tells Evelyn Mulwray that when
he worked for the D.A. in Chinatown, a major problem
was "You can't always tell what's going on"; to this
he adds a remark that foreshadows the end of the film,
"I was trying to keep someone from being hurt, and I
ended up making sure that she was hurt." As Solomon
puts it:

In the tradition of recent . . films, this one
does not present an absolutely unerring
investigator. . . . Gittes is capable of
mistaking the situation—in fact, he makes a few
mistakes that are indeed costly (238).

Schatz goes a step further:

Perhaps the clearest image of the contemporary
hardboiled detective's ineffectuality appears in
the closing moments of Chinatown. . . . The
film's plot eventually leads Gittes back to
Chinatown where his client-lover (Faye Dunaway as
the femme noire) finally is killed and the villain
(John Huston, director of The Maltese Falcon)
gains control over the community (149).

Jake may be successful as a private eye, with a
secretary and two assistants, fashionable clothes, and
an expensive car, but he is not as slick as he thinks
he is. Not only is he easily fooled at the beginning
of the film by the phoney Mrs. Mulwray, but he later
allows himself to be cornered and maimed by two thugs
and then by a family of orange farmers, he barely
escapes a second attack from the thugs, and he
mistakenly believes that Evelyn is lying to him and has murdered her husband.

Like call-girl Bree Daniels, Evelyn Mulwray has first-hand experience of the depths of depravity: although living a life of fabulous wealth, she is an incest survivor who at fifteen had run away to Mexico and borne a daughter by her own father, who happens to be the murderer. Like Brigid (a killer), Vivian (the protector of and sister to a killer), Miranda (who marries a killer), or Bree (who has had sex with a killer), Evelyn (daughter of the killer) is intimately connected with corruption and has an awareness that the detective lacks of the vileness of society. She says to Jake of Noah Cross, the wealthy political boss who is her father and who is at the heart of the film's corruption, "My father is a very dangerous man. You don't know how dangerous. You don't know how crazy."

Because of her awareness of evil, she is able to function with great adeptness as Jake's colleague. She comes to get him after he is beaten in the orange groves. She readily slips into the role of Jake's wife and convincingly pretends to be the daughter of a potential nursing-home patient when the two visit the Mar Vista Rest Home. And she daringly swoops up in her Packard to rescue him from another beating at the hands
of the thugs. But she is reluctant to reveal to Jake her sordid past, and this reluctance causes him to distrust her. Trust between a man and a women is a central issue in this film; indeed, Chinatown's opening shot is of photographs of a wife betraying her husband. As a detective for whom "matrimonial work" is "my metier," Jake has little confidence in honesty. "Please trust me," Evelyn begs at one point in the film, but he can't. And with additional pressure from the authorities, who are ready to charge him with extortion and to revoke his license, he does the very worst thing he can do in an utterly corrupt social system: he calls in the police, and the results are disastrous.

Solomon comments:

Polanski's one major generic innovation in the film occurs at the very end. The hero has made the traditional trip through the underworld of depravity, culminating in his belief that the woman he is attracted to is a murderess whom he must turn over to the police (similar to the Spade-Brigid relationship in The Maltese Falcon . . . ). But just before the police arrive, a switch occurs, uncommon to the genre but hardly a new possibility: the woman turns out not to be a murderess after all, but indeed has an excellent justification for her dishonesty throughout the film (238-39).

All of the film's central characters arrive for the final scene in Chinatown: Evelyn, the sister/daughter whom she is trying to protect, her father the murderer,
Jake, his partners, and the police lieutenant who is his antagonist. Jake's fatal flaw is that his trust is misplaced: he has been unable to believe in Evelyn. but he is willing to try to work with the police officers. In this respect he differs from Philip Marlowe, who realized that "the system" was not the best solution for Carmen Sternwood, and from the morally questionable Lew Harper, who felt likewise concerning Albert Graves. Jake is actually relieved when the police arrive; he frantically tries to explain that Evelyn's father is the killer, but the lieutenant won't listen. When Evelyn draws a gun on her father, Jake shouts, "Evelyn, put that gun away. Let the police handle this!" to which she replies knowingly, "He owns the police!" As she attempts to flee, the lieutenant and his men fire on her, killing her before the very eyes of her sister/daughter; this innocent young girl is then led away by the murderer, who will presumably repeat his incestuous behavior. The villain thus escapes and is apparently unassailable. Evil triumphs. Sam Spade's lack of faith in Brigid was appropriate and was ultimately his salvation, but here Gittes is dazed and spiritually destroyed, realizing how much his failure to trust has cost him. Yet he has no recourse, no way to right
wrongs, to protect the weak, or to bring the evildoers to justice, and the futility of his situation is suggested in the film's closing line, "Forget it, Jake--it's Chinatown."

A third film from the seventies, The Late Show (1977), presents an offbeat but successful male/female relationship that could serve as a model for the inherent potential for love interest in the genre.²⁰

Unlike Chinatown, The Late Show (written and directed by Robert Benton) is set in the present, but it looks back to the past by presenting Ira Wells (Art Carney), an aging, retired private detective with thirty-one years in the business. Wells wears glasses and a hearing aid, and he has a bad leg, a perforated ulcer, and a possible heart condition; surviving probably on a social security pension, he receives medical care in a V.A. hospital, lives in a rented room for $42.50 a month, does his wash at a laundromat, and rides the bus. He is an image of what Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe might have become had they survived. The film oozes nostalgia for the detective stories of the past, from its yellowish cast that gives it the appearance of an old pulp magazine, to its direct references to The Maltese Falcon--the detective hero tells Laura, the female killer, "That's when you came
to me, hoping I'd play the sap for you"--and to *The Big Sleep*--the detective is looking for the man who killed his pal named Regan (played by Howard Duff, who did the voice of Sam Spade on radio in the forties).

The theme of the aging detective returning to his former glory is suggested by the theme song ("What Was," by Stephen Lehrner and Ken Wannberg) as the film opens:

What was
Is a memory to haunt you.
What was
Is a dream that comes to taunt you.
Teasing you, leading you
Back through the years.
But just when you reach out to touch
It all disappears...

Ira's personality as a sensitive tough guy is established at the outset as his former friend and colleague, Harry Regan, dies before his eyes: Ira's reaction combines anger and grief, and he's on the verge of tears as he says, "Damn you, Harry. Letting somebody drill you like that. Point Blank. Nobody can palm a forty-five... I'm sorry you're going off, pal." Following Harry's funeral he's approached by Margo Sperling; she wants to hire him on a friend's recommendation--"Ira Wells used to be one of the greats"--to find the cat her former boyfriend Brian has stolen from her. Wells, sharp as ever, quickly realizes a link exists between the boyfriend and
Regan's death, which he is determined to solve: "Harry Regan was a pal of mine close to twenty years. Whoever it was that killed him is going to be damned sorry."

When Ira agrees to take the case, his fee is that of detectives of the forties, $25 a day and expenses: "You're not talking to some low-rent gumshoe. I'm the best, and I get paid like the best." This is one of many indications that Ira is tied almost inextricably to his past, as the film's theme song suggests. He tells Margo:

Back in the forties this town was crawling with dollies like you. Good-looking coke-heads trying their damndest to act tough as hell. I got news for you--they did it better back then. This town doesn't change. They just push the names around. Same dames, screwing up their lives just the same way.

He's "still carrying around some of that lead" from "that dame--the one that almost nailed" him "back in fifty-three." When he needs information, he reveals he's out of touch with the present when he tells his friend Charles, "Call up Tom Lyman. He works out of the Bureau of Detectives downtown. Tell him I told you to call. He owes me a favor, anyway," and Charles responds, "Tom's dead. He's been dead almost six months." But Wells is not yet over the hill. When a murderer is fleeing the scene of the crime, he takes slow but perfect aim and expertly shoots out the tire
of a speeding car from a block away. He also uses excellent judgment, as when Margo sees the killer escaping and cries, "Hurry! He's getting away. Don't let him get away. Do something. Kill him! You could get--" and he replies:

I could get a heart attack, that's what I could get. Running all that way. How far do you think I'd get with this leg of mine? That's one. Two: whoever that guy is, he's no snob about how he kills people. That's a damned forty-five he's using. There's a lot of ways to play any game. I play mine on the house percentage.

Margo Sperling is an unlikely colleague and love interest for Ira. Years younger, she is a kookie Southern-California type who dresses in outlandish outfits she designs herself, lives in a studio decorated with beaded curtains, Indian bedspreads, and other trappings of the seventies' subculture, smokes pot, practices meditation, and works at a variety of free-lance jobs, ranging from actress to dress designer to talent agent. The gulf between them is suggested in the following conversation:

Margo: Brian's not very evolved. In fact, he's rather de-evolved. And I was talking to him and I'm very sensitive to the vibrations he gives out because I know what kind of kharma he has—
Ira (to Charles): What the hell is she talking about?

No stranger to crime since her former boyfriend is a thief, Margo repeatedly proves her fearlessness and her value as a colleague. When her ex-boyfriend Brian
arrives to talk to Ira and Ira draws a gun, she
remarks, "Oh, come on. Lighten up on this cops-and-
robbers stuff. I can handle this," and is about to
step out to meet Brian as the shooting begins. She
retains her composure in the face of death: when Brian
is dead on the ground, she looks down at him asking,
"Where's my cat, you creep?," and later when Charles is
shot and dying, she takes his arm and helps him to a
seat. She agrees to enter an apartment where she
believes a dangerous man with a gun is hiding. She
expertly drives her van to follow a gunman, then with
equal agility manages to outrun him when he turns,
begins shooting, and gives chase. And when a thug
turns on her after savagely beating another man, she
picks up a flower pot and challenges, "If you come one
step closer, I'm gonna break this right in your face.
you creep."

The Margo-Ira relationship develops slowly but
steadily in the film. When he first visits her
apartment, she tells him, "Mr. Wells, I don't want you
to get the wrong idea. I mean about me," and he
responds, "Doll, I'm not interested in your life
story." Later, however, as they spend more time
together, rapport and affection develop between them:

Margo: Do you know what I had to go through to
hassle up this dough. I laid off four ounces of
pure red Columbian for fifteen dollars an ounce.

Ira: You've got a lot of faith in me, hunh?
Margo: Oh, come on. This is just business.
Ira: How long you been pushing?
Margo: You think if I was a pusher I'd have a little empty purse like this. I'm only doing it until I get my shrink paid.
Ira: That makes sense.
Margo: I had a session with her today, and I told her all about you. (Pause.) Don't you want to know what I told her?
Ira: Not particularly.
Margo: I told her you were cute.

After she and Ira escape a dangerous gunman, they go to her apartment to celebrate, and although she unravels a particularly difficult part of the case, he still avoids getting too close to her emotionally:

Margo: Ira, I feel so high! Didn't I take care of business? I thought I did a great job. I swear to God I feel just like Nick and Nora. I'm going down to the police station and get a private detective's license. I mean, if we teamed up, we'd be great together!
Ira: That's just what this town has been waiting for--a broken-down old private eye with a bum leg and a hearing aid, and a fruitcake like you.
Margo: I don't know. You're not so old. I mean if you lost a few pounds and stopped wearing those baggy suits you'd look ten years younger. Anyway, we'd be a team! We'd be working together. The apartment next door is vacant! You could move right in there. We could have cards printed up.
Ira: Listen, doll. I'm a loner. I always have been a loner.
Margo: Ira. I'm a loner too.
Ira: Thanks a lot. I don't think it would work out.

By hiring him to solve one last case, however, Margo pulls Ira out of the past and into the present, which
she symbolizes with all her trendy seventies' trappings. She also manages to pull him out of his isolation, freeing him from his inability to express his feelings and to relate in a meaningful way. In the final scene he asks Margo, "That place next door to you, is that still empty?" Bothered by his tough-guy behavior and his emotional unavailability, she answers, "I don't know, Ira. I don't think I could take it. You just never say anything. . . . I want some feedback from you. I want to know what you think about things. I want to know what you think about me." To this he responds, "Look, would it kill you if once in a while you wore a damned dress?" and as the film ends, she smiles knowingly, aware that this is a start and that it's the best he can do at the moment.

Although some film critics claim, as does Schatz, "This return to the hardboiled-detective formula reached a peak in the 1970s" (147), the hardboiled detective genre is still alive and well in the eighties. In the past year or so, the large screen has featured hardboiled films including The Big Easy, No Mercy, Angel Heart, and Suspect, while the small screen has offered private eye series such as Moonlighting, Spenser for Hire, Simon and Simon, and Magnum, P.I. (The latter supposedly saw its last season in 1986
through 1987, was brought back by popular demand for a
final round, and survives around the country in
reruns.)

As for the detective in literature, in his study
of detective novels of the 1970s, David Geherin notes:

Within the past decade . . . three writers have
emerged who can lay claim to serious consideration
as fourth-generation successors to their
preeminent forgers [Hammett, Chandler, and
Macdonald]. The three [are] Robert B. Parker,
Roger L. Simon, and Andrew Bergman (2).

Of the three, Parker leads the field both in terms of
prolificness and popularity. His novel, A Catskill
Eagle, appeared on best seller lists for over two
months in 1985; his next book, Taming a Sea-Horse, did
the same in 1986, followed by Pale Kings and Princes in
1987. With sixteen books to his credit, and a prime-
time television series based on his character, Parker
is firmly established as the heir to the
Hammett/Chandler/Macdonald crown, and his detective
character Spenser (no first name) who appears in
thirteen novels and the television series is the
equivalent in the 1980s of Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe,
and Lew Harper.

Parker holds a Ph.D. in English from Boston
University, where he wrote a doctoral dissertation
entitled "The Violent Hero, Wilderness Heritage and
Urban Reality: A Study of the Private Eye in the
Novels of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and Ross Macdonald." In 1971, following the completion of his dissertation, he began work on his first detective novel, writing, according to Geherin, "[B]ecause Chandler was dead; he wanted another Philip Marlowe, and so created Spenser, his own private detective." For his first novel, *The Godwulf Manuscript*, like Millar he used an academic setting, but his detective hero was a professional investigator. The detective is hired to recover a missing medieval manuscript, and Spenser, like Marlowe, is a throwback to the chivalric age. Just as Marlowe's name perhaps suggests Malory (Mallory was the name of Chandler's first detective), Parker named his hero after Edmund Spenser. Indeed, Spenser seems more chivalrous than Marlowe, for through most of the novels Spenser is dedicated to his lady love, Susan Silverman. Spenser is, however, far from celibate: In *The Godwulf Manuscript*, he beds damsel-in-distress Terry Orchard, having slept with her mother in the previous chapter.21 The woman to whom Spenser is most attracted in the first novel is Brenda Loring, whose name evokes Linda Loring, the woman Marlowe meets in *The Long Goodbye* and eventually marries. Parker seems to be picking up where Chandler left off by ending *The Godwulf Manuscript* with a telephone
conversation between Spenser and Brenda, mirroring that between Marlowe and Linda at the end of Chandler's last completed novel, *Playback*. But in his second book, *God Save the Child*, he introduces the woman who is to become Spenser's colleague and consort, Susan Silverman. In the third novel, *Mortal Stakes*, Spenser is still courting both women, but it is clear that Susan has the edge when Spenser remarks that while Brenda is great fun to be with, Susan is the one he can talk to about the things that are important to him. Brenda eventually disappears from the series and, in a much later novel, Spenser receives an announcement of her wedding.22

Parker has said, "What I write more nearly resembles a Western than it does other detective novels" (*Colloquium on Crime* 198), and this is especially true in terms of Susan's role in the series. Solomon, in analyzing the Western as a film genre, asserts:

> [T]he function of women in the Western is to humanize the situation by providing a necessarily feminine role—not primarily as victims requiring masculine help, but as bringers of civilized thinking to a brutalized environment, especially through an insistence on the value of human life. Although they frequently offer tenderness, consolation, and devotion, women are only attractive to the Western hero when they prove to have an independent toughness of their own (14).
Susan begins as a school guidance counselor and eventually becomes a practicing psychologist (with a Ph.D. from Harvard). Her role is not only to "function as a modifying and humanizing influence on Spenser" (Geherin 45); she also uses her education and her knowledge of human nature and human behavior to help the detective understand the victims and criminals with whom he deals, and also to better understand himself: "The questions she raises about his actions force him constantly to reexamine the morality of his behavior, says Geherin (62). Geherin also notes:

By allowing Spenser to maintain a number of personal relationships [Spenser also has his very close friend Hawk and an adopted son named Paul, both of whom recur from novel to novel] . . . Parker avoids the gloomy air of loneliness that often haunts the Chandler and Macdonald novels and [he] gives the hero an anchor of stability and continuity in a world of loneliness and disorder (46).

Not only do Parker's women in general and Susan in particular function as humanizing forces who keep the hardboiled hero from becoming pathologically isolated and out of control, their presence makes his lot in life seem less depressing. Spade hands the woman he loves over to the police, Marlowe moans over Silver-wig, whom he never sees again, Archer discovers his best friend is a murderer: situations such as these do not bode well for human relationships and emphasize the
loneliness of the detective heroes. But Spenser is more psychologically healthy and less isolated; Parker comments, "[I]n my books, the relationships between the women and Spenser are progressively more substantial" (201), and this adds a dimension to the series that makes the novels more satisfying, for many readers, than the works of Hammett, Chandler, or Macdonald.

The roles in women in hardboiled film and fiction is but one aspect of a genre that, in general, deserves further study and academic attention. The detective novel has been fighting for serious consideration as literature for decades, and the fact that the two latest descendants of the Hammett/Chandler tradition, Kenneth Millar and Robert B. Parker, both hold Ph.D.'s in English argues for the literary potential of the form. A single example of the genre--Hammett's Red Harvest, say--is often rich enough in and of itself to be the subject of its own book-length study or dissertation, and yet few academic studies of the genre exist. A recent bibliography of the novels of Hammett, Chandler, and Macdonald (The Hard-Boiled Explicator by Robert E. Skinner) lists barely over one hundred book-length sources, and many of these are histories of the detective genre as a whole, rather than studies focusing on a single work, theme, or author.
In the academic world, courses dealing solely with detective fiction are rare, and it is rarer still for a novel such as *The Big Sleep* to be included along with works by Faulkner, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway in a course in twentieth-century American literature. Film classes and film studies in general, however, are less likely to ignore the genre. This is partly because of to the monumental contribution made by Alfred Hitchcock who frequently worked with the detective form; it is also due to the importance of *film noire* to a study of American cinema. Yet in literature, detective fiction remains outside the canon, and academics who do include works by Hammett, Chandler, or Macdonald in their courses are likely to do so reluctantly or apologetically. One tragic result of the failure to teach detective fiction in the academy is that many fine works go unread: indeed, Millar's novels are nearly all out of print, and his early books are rarely carried even by the larger university libraries.

Fans of the genre continue to argue for the legitimacy of the form, but perhaps mystery writer Joseph Hansen best sums up the problem:

I think the mystery's proper place is in the mainstream of English department programs. If Raymond Chandler's work cannot stand up as literature against, say, that of Wright Morris, then let comparisons and judgments be made in a classroom where both receive fair and thorough treatment. To rule, before classes even begin,
that Chandler may be taught only apart from other novelists of his time not only shortchanges Chandler, but the student as well, a more serious offense. . . . Scholarship in the detective novel has really only begun. . . . The form has tremendous potential to widen and deepen our understanding of ourselves and our times, if only we take it seriously (Colloquium on Crime (125-26).
ENDNOTES

1 Originally the Bow Street Runners were a reputable group, reporting directly to Fielding at his residence in Bow Street. They became increasingly corrupt over the next eighty years, and by accepting bribes some were able to amass considerable wealth. A sensational account of some of their adventures was published under the title Bow Street Runners in 1827. Sir Robert Peel established, in 1829, the better organized, more efficient, and more reputable London Metropolitan Police: they came to be nicknamed the "Peelers" and, later, "Bobbies." By 1842 Sir James Graham saw the need for a separate branch for conducting investigations, and a twenty-member plain-clothes Detective Department was eventually appointed. This organization became Scotland Yard. (Symons, Bloody Murder 45, and Murch 85-88).

2 The practice of making deductions from observations is raised to the level of an art form in the novels of James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), whose characters are able to survive in the American wilderness because they possess the qualities essential to later fictional detectives: acute powers of observation, the ability to make split-second decisions, an insight into how others have acted in the past and will act in the future, and so on. Robert B. Parker, creator of Spenser, the hero of a succession of detective novels and a television series, has argued in his doctoral dissertation (The Violent Hero, Wilderness Heritage and Urban Reality: A Study of the Private Eye in the Novels of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and Ross Macdonald) that the modern hardboiled detective must perform in a hostile urban setting just as pioneer heroes once performed in the American wilderness. The deductive powers of the three princes of Serendip are analogous to those of Cooper's characters. In addition, Conan Doyle on more than one occasion compared Sherlock Holmes to an Indian following a trail, and Holmes's explanations of his methods bear resemblance to Hawkeye's own explanations (Geherin 5-7, Murch 34 and 41).
3 Italian critic and novelist Umberto Eco included another version of the "lost camel" story in In the Name of the Rose (Il nome della rosa, 1980); his detective hero, an English monk named Brother William of Baskerville (tall and thin with a long nose and sharp eyes), uses his powers of observation and deduction to give an accurate description of an abbot's lost horse.

4 In England, since the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 and the founding of the official Detective Department in 1842, public respect for law enforcement authorities had grown. According to Julian Symons: It is impossible to understand the romantic aura which spread around detective departments and bureaus without realizing the thankfulness felt by the middle class at their existence. As they grew, the strand in crime writing represented by Godwin [and] Lytton . . . in which the criminal was often considered romantic and the policeman stupid or corrupt, almost disappeared. . . . The detective, as the protector of established society, gradually replaced the criminal as hero (Bloody Murder 45).

5 The displays of the detective's powers of observation are formulaic to the Holmes stories and have several important sources. As Murch says, "Sherlock Holmes's skill in following a trail is a legacy from the Three Princes of Serendip, inherited through Voltaire's Zadig, a novel which Conan Doyle acknowledged as one of his sources of inspiration. The same faculty characterised the Indian trackers of Fenimore Cooper . . ." (177). According to Symons, "A few stories, and more deductions, are derived from Poe and Gaboriau" (Bloody Murder 72). And as all Homes fans know, the real-life model for the great sleuth was Dr. Joseph Bell, the author's former teacher from medical school in Edinburgh, whose feats of observation and deduction used in diagnosis were a source of amazement to his students.

6 In 1901, a melodrama staged at the Lyceum Theatre in London was advertised as "a hitherto unpublished episode in the career of the great detective and showing his connection with the Strange Case of Miss Faulkner." The final scene of the play showed Holmes confessing his love to the heroine: "I suppose--indeed I know--that I love you. I love you. . . . I know that no such person as I should ever
dream of being a part of your sweet life! It would be a crime for me to think of such a thing..." The original draft of the play was penned by Conan Doyle himself, but it underwent much revision by others at the request of William Gillette, the actor who was to play the lead and apparently the one who came up with the idea of having the detective fall in love. The play "had a fine reception and a long run in America," and it was still being performed in England seven years after its Lyceum debut (Haining 41).

7 Nolan refers to the difficulty of knowing about Hammett's earliest publications: "Since there were no records kept of Hammett's early magazine work it is possible that several of his stories remain buried in obscure, non-indexed publications of the Tenties" (Dashiell Hammett: A Casebook 138). Those interested in Hammett's earliest work will find of interest the illustrations of magazine and book covers and title pages in Dashiell Hammett by Julian Symons.

8 It continued to be published until 1953 when it was absorbed by Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine (Nolan, Casebook 21).

9 The sullen, tough young female criminal is a feature of several Hammett works, among them the film city streets of 1931 for which he wrote the story and worked on the script. In a reversal of the usual formula, Nan Colley, played by Sylvia Sidney, is a gangster's daughter and member of a bootlegging gang who tries to convince her straight boyfriend (Gary Cooper) to join the gang so they can have enough money to get married. Nan is so hardened that, when caught in possession of a murder weapon, she sullenly refuses to inform on the real murderer and serves a stretch in prison for this refusal. Sydney brings an effective mixture of innocence and corruption to the part, and in the film, Nan seems a double of Hammett's other tough girl, Angel Grace. This film, by the way, was rumored to be Al Capone's personal favorite.

10 Symons, for example, calls it "the weakest of the five novels (52): Marling says, "In The Dain Curse Hammett seemed stumped about his hero's evolution and fell back on pure chivalric code" (71); Layman asserts, "The Dain Curse is an allegory of pure evil attempting to pervert innocence" (101); and Nolan agrees, "The Dain Curse marked a plateau, not an upward step in his career" (51).
The first movie adaptation, *The Maltese Falcon* (also entitled *Dangerous Female*) was directed by Roy Del Ruth in 1931 and starred Ricardo Cortez and Bebe Daniels; the second, released in 1936 and directed by William Dieterie, was called *Satan Met a Lady* and featured Bette Davis, Warren William, and Arthur Treacher; the third and best-known version, by director John Huston with Humphrey Bogart, Mary Astor, Peter Lorre, and Sydney Greenstreet, was released in 1941.

For Marling, "Iva Archer falls between Effie and Brigid" (79).

This anecdote exists in several different versions. Durham relates Shaw's difficulty was deciding "whether it was remarkably good or cleverly fraudulent" (*Mean Streets* 81); Speir asserts that the story "caused the editorial staff to wonder if this unknown man were a genius or crazy" (10).

Perhaps the best-known Raymond Chandler simile is the one on the first page of *Farewell, My Lovely*: "he looked about as conspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food."

Durham is often in error about the identities of the detectives in the short stories. In *Down These Mean Streets* he refers to "Smart-Aleck Kill" as "Chandler's second Mallory story," and assets "the third and fourth stories . . . both . . . use a nameless first person narrator" (82). The narrator is indeed nameless in the fourth story, "Killer in the Rain" (which Chandler later reshaped and combined with his eleventh story, "The Curtain" in writing *The Big Sleep*) and this detective may or may not be Marlowe, but in the third piece the detective's identity is clear when he tells us, "I went across and unlocked the door into my private office, lettered PHILIP MARLOWE . . . INVESTIGATIONS (Fear 94). Among the critics who follow Durham's erroneous lead is Jerry Speir who writes, "Philip Marlowe crackles to life on a cloudy October morning in the first paragraph of *The Big Sleep*" (19).

*Double Indemnity* was taken from the novel by James M. Cain, an author about whom Chandler once said: He is every kind of writer I detect, a faux naif, a Proust in greasy overalls, a dirty little boy with a piece of chalk and a board fence and nobody looking. Such people are
the offal of literature, not because they write about dirty things, but because they do it in a dirty way (Selected Letters 23).

17 The fact that the detective's colleague turns out to be the murderer would seem to violate Auden's dictum that "The detective . . . cannot possibly be involved in the crime" ("The Guilty Vicarage," in Allen and Chacko 406).

18 Brucoli adds, "Lew came from Lew Wallace, the author of Ben-Hur, because Millar like the sound of it" (31). In The Big Sleep, Marlowe pretends to be seeking a rare edition of Ben-Hur when he visits the bookstores.

19 Echoes of Chandler reverberate through The Moving Target. In Farewell, My Lovely, when Marlowe shares a pint of Bourbon with "a blowsy woman" named Jessie Florian in order to gain information, he berates himself as follows: "A lovely old woman. I like being with her. I liked getting her drunk for my own sordid purposes. I was a swell guy. I enjoyed being me. You find almost anything under your hand in my business, but I was beginning to be a little sick at my stomach" (26).

20 Not as well-known as the other films discussed in this study, The Late Show has a cult following. Whe Fritz Peerenboom introduced a late-night broadcast of the film in Columbus, Ohio, his words indicated the enthusiasm of the film's admirers:

An absolutely splendid movie. Everything done right. A terrific story. A cast that is absolutely brilliant: Art Carney, Lily Tomlin, Bill Macy. . . . Dialogue that is crisp and lean and moves well. Director is top drawer. Music, marvelous. Really everything that a good movie should be (January 17, 1987, 2 a.m., WBNS-TV).

21 After Susan Silverman appears in the series, his sex life is more or less restricted to her; he resists the advances of Pam Shepard in Promised Land and of Kathie Caldwell in The Judas Goat, but in A Savage Place, while on a case in California he sleeps with the woman he is bodyguarding, even though he still considers himself committed to Susan. The fact that the woman, Candy Sloan, is eventually murdered, however, relieves him of having to make any choices.
Susan is, it would seem, irreplaceable as part of Spenser's life. When Juanita Bartlett took over as producer of the television series, Susan's character was eliminated in the show's second season and replaced by a prosecutor named Rita Fiorini (who became important in Parker's novel *Ceremony* when Susan temporarily got involved with another man). Apparently this change was considered unsatisfactory; Rita disappeared and Susan was back again at the beginning of season three.
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