Reflections of Society and Era in Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction

Thesis

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Declaration:

I declare that I have worked on this thesis on my own and have only used the sources listed in the bibliography.

Zuzana Jalová
Acknowledgment:

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Zuzana Jalová
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. HISTORY OF DETECTIVE STORY</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 THEORY OF DETECTIVE FICTION</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 FIRST DETECTIVE STORIES</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 THE GOLDEN AGE</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 HARD-BOILED SCHOOL OF DETECTIVE STORY</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 RAYMOND CHANDLER AND DASHIELL HAMMETT</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LITERARY ANALYSIS</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 MODERNIST CONCEPTION OF DETECTIVE FICTION</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 LANGUAGE OF HARDBOILED DETECTIVE FICTION</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 INFLUENCE OF OTHER AUTHORS</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 THE TOUGH GUY</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 PHIL MARLOWE AND SAM SPADE</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ERA REFLECTIONS</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 CRIME AND SOCIETY</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 URBAN ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 GANGSTERS, RACKETEERS AND BOOTLEGGERS</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CORRUPTION</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESUMÉ</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Detective fiction is a genre that deals with crime, its detection, revelation of the criminals and their motives. The main hero is usually a detective, acting upon the rules of logic, often accompanied by a friend, a companion, who helps to reveal the culprit. It might be the rule of logic and ratio that attracts so many readers and makes detective fiction so popular. What more could make ordinary people feel better and more extraordinary than a feeling that they solved a mystery using their own brains? Detective fiction is based on readers’ feeling they are as intelligent as the detective. Such a feeling makes them extraordinary and leads them out of their grey ordinary lives.

The persisting popularity of detective fiction attracted me to investigate the genre. The ambivalence and ambiguity of approaches towards the genre made the research even more challenging. The investigation itself took over the role of detection and revealing a mystery. I focused generally on hard-boiled detective fiction as the formula is ignored by many academics even though it is as rich and valuable as any other literary formula.

In the present work I will try to make a clear and general overview of American detective fiction, together with the English influence. In my opinion, the importance of hard-boiled fiction and its influence on American society is disregarded and it should be retrieved. The central aim of my thesis is to analyze some novels of two chief representatives of hard-boiled school, Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. I will focus on modernistic features and the reflection of era distinct in the novels and on the influence of social changes. Furthermore, I will try to prove that even though popular literature is generally apolitical, hard-boiled detective fiction comments widely on social and political events.

Academics and literary critics in general are not much interested in popular literature. They consider it a marginal field of literature and therefore it is difficult to find some competent information and criticism. I tried to gather all attainable materials, but I often had to depend on Internet sources. All the used sources are listed in the bibliography.
1. HISTORY OF DETECTIVE STORY

1.1 THEORY OF DETECTIVE FICTION

Compared with other types of novels, detective fiction does not end with the climax, as usual, but it gives more explanations and rationalizations of the solution to prove it just and logic. Freeman calls such a layout “dual character” [Škvorecký 55]. Detective fiction does not consist only of a dramatic story, but it also contains a logical problem that does not need to be solved together with the story. That is why the detective presents the evidence and analyzes the solution. The detective story usually ends with confession of the criminal and it is not followed by the act of punishment or trial very often. A similar idea can be found in the work of Laura Marcus where she mentions that the literature of detection contains “its complex double narrative in which an absent story, that of a crime, is gradually reconstructed in the second story [the investigation]” [245]. She distinguishes two different stories within a novel, whereas Freeman distinguishes a story and a logical problem and its solution. In general, such a dual character or double narrative can be compared to “the Russian formalist distinction between sjuzet and fabula [‘discourse’ and ‘story’]” [Marcus 245]. The Russian Formalism distinguishes between fabula, the story, and sjuzet, the plot. The story is formed by a chronological sequence of events, whereas the plot can be formed in non-chronological order, i.e. in the sequence in which the events were presented in literary work [Liu “Russian formalism”]. To conclude, the story, the crime, is usually described in chronological order, but the plot, the discourse and the investigation can be described in non-chronological order to achieve more attractiveness to the reader.

Marcus also mentions the importance of Chesterton’s conception of detective stories [247]. It is a complex of signs and symbols concealing some secrets and waiting for the detective to reveal them. Chesterton defends the detective story when he claims that it “is the earliest and only form of popular literature in which is expressed some sense of the poetry of modern life.” [Marcus 247]. This idea is echoed in work of Raymond Chandler who excellently described the city of his time full of secrets and hidden symbols and the detective fighting alone against the evil and chaos.

The approach of academics towards detective fiction is rather negative. A British literary critic Nicholas Blincoe admits that “all the great crime writers are un-literary, at
least as far as the word ‘literary’ is understood in an academic context” [“The Criminal Heart”]. That is why any literary criticism concerning detective fiction and popular fiction in general is so rare. However, Blincoe, a crime writer as well, suggests in the same work a division between the whodunnits [or ‘cozies’ as he calls them] and ‘noir’ tradition of detective fiction. ‘Noir’ fiction means hard-boiled detective fiction as taken from the title *Black Mask*, a pulp magazine focused on the style. Blincoe tries to make clear why divisions and subdivisions of crime fiction are generally avoided by academics. “The division into cozies and noir is difficult to sustain when one contemplates the extraordinary variety of crime fiction produced in Britain.”

However, John Scaggs, a Lecturer in the Department of English at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, Ireland, tries to make a short subdivision of crime fiction. He focuses mainly on the Golden Age both in Britain and America and he distinguishes between the British whodunnit novel, together with the police procedural, and the American hard-boiled mode. Furthermore, Scaggs subdivides the whodunnit novel into several subgenres varying according to the setting: the locked-room mystery, the country-house mystery, the snow-bound mystery, or ‘murder afloat’ [51-4].

The approach of the readers of crime fiction and the fans differs. An internet source focused rather on readers and fans distinguishes several categories of crime fiction according to its content and procedure [“Crime Fiction”]. First, it is detective fiction which can be subdivided into two different categories, the whodunnit and hard-boiled fiction.

**Detective fiction** is a “form of fiction whose main structural characteristic is a reversal of the sequence of events: the catastrophe, generally a murder, is typically presented first, followed by the introduction of suspected criminals and of a series of clues whose significance the reader is not supposed to grasp until the story is ended by a climax of explanation, in which the detective hero shows how the crime was committed, the motives for it, and finally the identity of the criminal.” [Hart 197] Such a backwards construction of a story was analyzed in details by a famous American author Edgar Allan Poe.

**The whodunnit** [the 1920s to the 1940s] is one of the most popular subgenres of detective fiction which became famous mostly thanks to its main representatives such as Agatha Christie. The whodunnit is based on crime, usually a murder, and its investigation done by a detective. The investigation, following of clues and discovering
small details, leads to the revelation of the criminal and the background and motives of the crime.

**Hard-boiled fiction** [the 1920s to the 1940s] is another subgenre of detective fiction which is represented mainly by Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. Hard-boiled fiction differs from the whodunnit in the frequent use of violence and realistic descriptions of fights. The detective is tough, confronts the danger, is often brought in fights and very often works on his own, without any companion.

**Spy fiction**, a subgenre of crime fiction, became famous mainly for the series of novels about a British spy, James Bond, written by Ian Fleming. Spy fiction focuses mainly on spying, the heroes – spies, and the method of work of a spy. Spy fiction became most popular during the World War II and the Cold War as it described the ways of spying used during the wars and it used contemporary topics.

The **criminal novel** is told from the point of view of the criminal. It differs from detective fiction in the absence of detection, of the investigation. The novel is concerned with the psychology of the criminal who is revealed to the reader from the beginning. The criminal novel deals with the social-psychological development of the crime and it can be also used to comment on the society.

There are some more subgenres of crime fiction but, as Blincoe suggested, within the variety of crime novels and stories the subdivisions blur.

### 1.2 FIRST DETECTIVE STORIES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Era</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18th century</td>
<td>Gayot de Pitaval in France</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bow Street Runners in England</td>
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<td>1773 – 1830s</td>
<td>Newgate Calendar stories</td>
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<td>Early 19th century</td>
<td>Sûreté in France</td>
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<td>1828</td>
<td>The Metropolitan Police Act in England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. F. Vidocq’s <em>Memoires</em> in France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840s</td>
<td>E. A. Poe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860s</td>
<td>E. Gaboriau in France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn of 19th century</td>
<td>W. Collins in England, first detective novel</td>
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<td>Sir A. C. Doyle</td>
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First detective stories started to arise in England and France, so a great important influence of English detective literature on American is prominent. The first attempts of crime stories, according to John Scaggs, can be retraced back in 1770s in London when the Newgate Calendar was issued [1773]. It was a collection of tales from Newgate prison full of descriptions of criminals, their work and punishment [13]. The collection kept its influence and so called Newgate Calendar stories arose celebrating the thief as hero. The influence remained remarkable until the 1830s when another influential document appeared in France. A former bandit and a successful policeman Eugene Francois Vidocq published his Memoires [1828], which meant a shift “from the robber hero to the policeman as hero” [Scaggs 17].

The detective genre as a literary work originated in the work of a famous American writer Edgar Allan Poe [1809 – 1849]. In the 1840s he created first detective short stories that influenced the development of all subsequent detective stories and novels. Poe used a backwards construction of a story so as to keep the reader’s attention till the end. He explained this method in his work “The Philosophy of Composition” where he emphasized that the backwards construction does not mean to write first and then analyze. He explained that “nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its denouement before anything be attempted with the pen” [31]. Poe claimed that any author should consider the effect of narrative first, only then they can use elaborate elements to attract the reader. “It is only with the denouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.” [31] The backwards construction is similar to the original work of the police which is first to discover a crime and search the crime scene and only then to start the investigation, look for the clues and reveal the motives and the culprit. Such a narrative was determined to inspire in the real work of the police and detectives so as to be attractive and successful.

Poe created the first great literary detective, C. Auguste Dupin, who became the archetype for all subsequent detectives. Dupin was a great detective, ‘Chevalier’, which means he was a knight in the Légion d’honneur, a French order established by Napoleon Bonaparte. Dupin fought against crime, he investigated particular crimes and via analysis and deduction he revealed the culprit. Poe introduced his detective in his three detective stories, The Murders in the Rue Morgue [1841], The Mystery of Marie Roget [1842] and The Purloined Letter [1844]. Scaggs informs that the second story was
based on a real crime, the murder of Mary Rogers in New York, and Poe tried to solve the case via his narrative [21]. Poe was influenced by romanticism when he created the personality and character of his detective. Dupin was a knight, helped the oppressed and punished the culprits. One of his main features was the eccentricity. He was intelligent, erudite and, it could be said, a genius. Poe used the method of deduction and common sense together with his experience.

Another typical sign of Poe’s detective is his companion, a friend who helps him to find the culprit and who is usually the narrator. In this case, the reader is not revealed the name of Dupin’s friend. Scaggs introduces three functions of the first-person narrator in the detective story: “…they act as a contrast to the abilities of the detective, emphasising in the detective’s genius a difference in degree, rather than a difference in kind; they act as recorders, not only of the story, but also of the physical data upon which the detective’s analytic ability depends; and they embody the social and ideological norms of the period” [21]. The feature of companion/narrator is repeatedly used in many other detective narratives such as Doyle’s Holmes and Watson or Christie’s Poirot and Hastings. The companion is usually not as clever as the detective. Such a feature can be called the principle of contrast between Don Quijote and Sancha Panza as Škvorecký mentioned in his work [17].

Scaggs suggests a French detective story writer, Emile Gaboriau [1832 – 1873], to be an important link between Poe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Gaboriau introduced his first detective novel, L’Affaire Lerouge, in 1866 and, thus, he introduced his main hero, a police officer and a detective amateur, Monsieur Lecoq. Gaboriau tried to bring trustworthiness back to police when he used a police investigator as hero. Gaboriau echoed Vidocq in his hero, both in his character and name. Moreover, he introduced the use of ambiguity of morality which was later used not only by Doyle but also by Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. Gaboriau used “presentation of murders which have been committed to prevent the revelation of some scandalous past action or indiscretion, and … the frustrating failure of the hero to bring the criminal to justice due to the class difference between detective and suspect” [Scaggs 22-3].

Wilkie Collins [1824 – 1889] was the author who created the first detective novel written in English. He wrote several detective novels and novellas but his most famous novels are The Woman in White [1859] and The Moonstone [1868]. Collins’s novels became popular and they introduced the main hero, a detective Sergeant Cuff. The character follows some of the features created by Poe, and it is the eccentricity. Cuff
was deeply fond of roses. Collins used a policeman but also a detective amateur as hero. He tried to carry on Gaboriau’s effort to show the police trustworthy. People ceased to trust the police as the police officers very often did not succeed in arresting the criminal. People always desired the absolute justice, even when we look back at the folk stories of Robin Hood. As Škvorecký suggests, the absolute justice cannot be ensured by human factors, i.e. the police, because everything human is also fallible. That is way the authors, to satisfy the readers, created private investigators, detectives, who became symbols of the absolute justice, the infallible force [23].

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle [1859 – 1930] was influenced by work of both Gaboriau and Collins. He published his first detective novel A Study in Scarlet in 1887 and introduced his great detective, Sherlock Holmes, and his close ‘not-so-clever’ friend, Dr. Watson. Scaggs suggests that it is possible to find some elements of Poe’s Dupin and elements of Vidocq in Holmes. Dupin, similarly as Holmes, was an analytic eccentric genius, and Vidocq was “a man of action and a master of disguise” [25]. Doyle’s creation of Holmes’s characteristics, especially the character of detection, reminds of naturalism. The influence of natural sciences and scientific methods is prominent [Procházka 126]. Procházka claims that within naturalism writing was “based on observation and experiment” [126]. The same can be depicted in Doyle’s style of detecting the culprit. Škvorecký masterly shows the shift from Poe’s literary intellectualism to Doyle’s scientific logic [35-9]. He compares two similar extracts from Poe’s The Murders in the Rue Morgue and Doyle’s The Sign of Four and shows the evident influence of Poe on Doyle and his detective. Where Dupin uses his previous knowledge of literature, Holmes uses his faultless ability of observation and logical deduction. As Procházka said, “scientific, progressive, and, above all, moral human being has become a substitute for God” [127].

The popularity of Doyle’s narratives is striking. When we look at Sherlock Holmes, we can see an ordinary man living in a shabby flat, a lonely odd fish living in a dreary foggy world whose only way out is cocaine. An ordinary middle-class reader projects their romantic dreams of becoming famous and interesting, of becoming a sort of a knight to the detective. The detective is exactly what the ordinary reader dreams about, ordinary but genius and brave.

It is difficult to understand why Doyle did not like his hero. Škvorecký tries to explain the fact in his work [33-4]. Doyle wanted to be the author of high literature but he excelled in writing detective novels. He continued in writing detective fiction only to
earn enough money. Doyle hated his hero so much that he killed him in his short story *The Adventure of the Final Problem* [1893]. Škvorecký goes even further when he tries to depict the problem of getting rid of the hero in other detective stories. Dorothy L. Sayers got rid of her Lord Peter by a marriage. Erle Stanley Gardner wanted to get rid of his hero, Perry Mason, in the same manner as Sayers, but he finally changed his mind. Raymond Chandler wanted to kill Marlowe as well but after reconsidering his business success he quit it. Doyle also realized he is able to earn money only thanks to Holmes and that is why he turned back to Sherlock Holmes adventures and let Dr. Watson become the narrator of his memories. This is evident in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* [1902]. But the readers were not satisfied and Doyle finally had to bring Holmes back in *The Adventure of the Empty House* [1903], which is one of the short stories collected in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* [Škvorecký 33-4].

The rise of detective stories was significantly influenced by the rise of forms of police power in England and France. In the 18th century a Paris lawyer Gayot de Pitaval put together famous cases in Paris under the title *Nouvelles Causes Célèbres*. This document became an important source for detective writers such as Collins or Dickens. They used the real sources of real crimes and, thus, brought the formula of realistic descriptions of the setting to detective fiction [Škvorecký 28]. In the early 19th century the policeman Vidocq took over the role of source of real crimes. Moreover, he became the first chief of French police force called Sûreté and later established first modern detective agency, Le Bureau des Renseignements [Scaggs 17]. In the 18th century in England, London, the first organized police force was also established. The rise of police organizations was caused mainly by the rise of crimes. Scaggs suggests that it was the Industrial Revolution that started more frequent crimes. As people moved from rural areas to urban areas, the growth of unemployment rose and, thus, the growth of criminality rose as well [17]. The first organized police force in London was established by the magistrate and novelist Henry Fielding. They were called Bow Street Runners as the headquarters was at Bow Street. Scaggs informs that they were “freelance ‘thief-takers’”, which unfortunately caused many occasions for corruption. Thus, The Metropolitan Police Act was passed in 1828 to establish the first municipal constabulary in the world. They were organized by Sir Robert Peel and they were first called ‘Peelers’, later became ‘Bobbies’ [18]. As Bow Street Runners disintegrated, some of the members set up private detective agencies and wrote their memoirs, e.g. Williams Russell known as ‘Waters’ who published *Recollections of a Detective Police*
officer in 1856 [Škvorecký 29]. The memoirs became another source of real crimes for detective narratives.

1.3 THE GOLDEN AGE

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1840s – 1890s</td>
<td>dime novels in America</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>A. Christie introduces Poirot</td>
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<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>D. L. Sayers introduces Lord Peter</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>S. S. Van Dine introduces Philo Vance</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>Van Dine’s “Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories”</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Detection Club in England</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Knox’s rules of fair play</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Ellery Queen is introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>N. Blake introduces Nigel Strangeways</td>
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The Golden Age dates in the inter-war years, 1920s and 1930s. It developed mainly in England, however, several representatives can be found in the USA as well. Furthermore, American detective writers created their own different style, the hard-boiled mode. An internet source cites Ian Ousby’s The Crime and Mystery Book [1997] and characterizes the classic Golden Age detective novel by the happy innocent point of view and the narrow vision of society. The detectives are two-dimensional and the stories are full of conventions and clichés [“Golden Age”]. The detective narratives usually have the form of whodunnits and the authors obey particular rules of detection.

Scaggs suggests that the Golden Age originated in England in 1920 when Agatha Christie [1890 – 1976], a famous British detective writer, published her first detective novel The Mysterious Affair at Styles. He can see her influence on the detective genre in “the development of the country-house murder which is synonymous with the whodunit” [26]. Christie created her ‘great’ eccentric detective Poirot who is accompanied by his ‘not-so-clever’ friend, Hastings. The eccentricity of Poirot lies in his hypochondriasis and his relish for chocolate and delicious food. Christie also created a first female detective Miss Marple.

Dorothy L. Sayers [1893 – 1957] is another famous representative of classic detective novel. She introduced her “cultured, aristocratic, but slightly distracted”
Scaggs notes that Lord Peter became a model for some future detective characters, and even for their parodies [27-8]. Sayers’ detective “develops as the series progresses” [Scaggs 26], which means that the author focused mainly on the main character and this could be the reason why Lord Peter inspired so many detective writers. Raymond Chandler focused on his detective as well and brought a more elaborate style that was also followed and developed.

**Anthony Berkeley** [1893 – 1971] contributed to the detective genre not only by his detective novels but also by the foundation of the Detection Club in 1928. The members were major authors of Golden Age and they swore to obey rules of ‘Fair Play’ that were established first by S.S. Van Dine in 1928 and a year later summarized and reduced by Father Ronald Knox, a Catholic priest and detective story writer [Scaggs 27-8].

**Nicholas Blake** [1904 – 1972] is another Golden Age detective fiction representative. His real name is Cecil-Day Lewis, an Anglo-Irish poet, and he used his pseudonym to present his detective novels. He introduced his detective Nigel Strangeways in his novel *A Question of Proof* in 1935 [Scaggs 27].

The Golden Age in America is represented mainly by J. D. Carr, Ellery Queen, S.S. Van Dine and Rex Stout. **John Dickson Carr** [1906 – 1977] continued in the British tradition of whodunnit in America. Scaggs claims that Carr focused mainly on the locked-room mystery. Carr created his detective Dr Gideon Fell who is most famous from Carr’s novel *The Three Coffins* [1935].

**Ellery Queen** is a pen-name of two cousins from Brooklyn, Manfred B. Lee [1905 – 1971] and Frederic Dannay [1905 – 1982]. They also focused on writing whodunnits, obeying the rules of fair play, and created a detective called same as their pseudonym, Ellery Queen. The detective was introduced in a novel *The Roman Hat Mystery* in 1929 [Scaggs 28].

**S. S. Van Dine** [1888 – 1939] is a pseudonym of Willard Huntington Wright, an American journalist, art critic and later also a classic detective fiction writer. Van Dine first formulated the rules of detection in 1928 in his work “Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories”. He created his detective Philo Vance and introduced him in his first detective novel *The Benson Murder Case* [1926]. Philo Vance is an upper-class detective amateur who is characteristic for his elegant, extravagant, even snobbish and dandyish approach [“S. S. Van Dine”].
Rex Stout [1886 – 1975] is considered to be a link between the whodunnit tradition and hard-boiled mode. He created a detective Nero Wolfe who follows the Holmes tradition, moreover, he added “a tough, street-smart assistant, Archie Goodwin” [Scaggs 28-9]. Stout introduced them in his first novel Fer-de-Lance [1934] and, thus, suggested a connection between the two schools.

To understand the rise of popularity of detective genre in America, it is necessary to look back to the 19th century. Popular fiction of 1840s to 1890s appeared in many different forms. Michael Denning distinguishes three formats in his work “The Figure of the Dime Novel in American Culture”; it is the story paper, the dime novel and the cheap library [82]. Denning claims that “the story paper was an eight-page weekly newspaper, which cost five or six cents, and contained anywhere from five to eight serialized stories, as well as correspondence, brief sermons, humor, fashion advice, and bits of arcane knowledge” [82]. The dime novel was “a pamphlet of about 100 pages each known as ‘yellow-backs’” [Denning 83]. The cheap library was a “series of nickle and dime pamphlets …, consisting of either 16 or 32 pages of two- or three-columned print” [Denning 84]. From the beginning the dime novels [all three formats in general] consisted mainly of frontier and western stories but later on they became rather detective stories. Denning suggests that the “shift in the dime novel from western themes to urban themes is believed by the tremendous popularity of the ‘mysteries of the city’ in the 1840s” [87]. The shift was also suggested by the change of society, from rural country workers to urban factory workers. The dime novels became more and more popular and in the 1890s they converted into more expensive quality magazines, so called ‘pulp’ magazines.

1.4 HARD-BOILED SCHOOL OF DETECTIVE STORY

Hard-boiled detective fiction developed in the early 1920s and its popularity continued in the 1930s as well. Scaggs notes that hard-boiled fiction is “distinctively American sub-genre” [29], even though some representatives and followers could be found also in England. Scaggs reasons his statement by three typical characteristics of American style. It is the “Californian setting”, “American vernacular” and “the portrayal of crimes that were increasingly becoming part of the everyday world of early twentieth-century America” [57].
Škvorecký tries to distinguish the difference between action story and hard-boiled story [94-5]. **Action story** uses very fast pace of events and movie drive. It resembles movie scenes and their fast changing and reversing. Action stories are full of short and fast dialogues and thrilling actions. But they lack the use of excessive violence. **Hard-boiled story** contents similar features as action story but it is based on the physical violence and tough guys with tough and witty talks. Hard-boiled story and action story have a lot in common but action story will never be included in hard-boiled story. One of hard-boiled authors, Erle Stanley Gardner, kept writing also for pulp magazines but his works cannot be considered hard-boiled as they are action stories. They describe the criminal environment and the trial but they lack the physical violence.

The most important technique used in hard-boiled fiction is the movie drive, the fast scenes and short dialogues. The main heroes usually use their wit when speaking to their enemies, they use so called wisecracks. The main heroes are tough, not soft, they are not afraid of violence, being beaten and they usually get into several fights. They usually meet an attractive woman but they never have an affair with her. Some of the heroes talk openly about sex but they usually remain cold and resist the woman. Hard-boiled story is not only full of violence but also full of organized crime. No longer plays a common criminal the important role. These are the gangsters who took over the role of the representatives of crime. The main hero is more often a private investigator, a private eye, who does not follow the rules of detection so strictly. The private eye mostly encounters the criminals accidentally and, literally, steps on or falls over a corpse. And there is not generally only one corpse. The task of the private investigator is not only to use logic and reason; it is rather to monitor the environment, the society and its problems, mainly the corruption, and so to come across a murder. The murder is no longer the central concern, it is the society and the political intrigues. Škvorecký calls the shifted concern social significance [75].

The emphasis on objectivity of writing and social concern was taken over from previous authors, journalists, called muckrakers. They used muckraking as the central technique, i.e. “the practice of searching out and telling unpleasant stories, …, about well-known people” [Longman Dictionary 893]. Procházka explains that the naturalists began as journalists, **muckrakers**, and that they focused mainly on details of social life and revealing corruption in business and politics [130]. They appeared in the late 19th century. Procházka mentions H. L. Mencken as a representative of muckrakers [130] and Cawelti compares hard-boiled style of writing to the style of another muckraker
Lincoln Steffens [155]. Cawelti gives an example of Steffens’ work *The Shame of Our Cities* to illustrate the resemblance between hard-boiled and muckraking style. The objectivity in writing means strict description of events without any comments or emotions. The aim is to write what they see.

Hard-boiled detective stories were first published mainly in ‘pulp’ magazines, i.e. cheap magazines printed on cheap poor quality paper. Scaggs defines *pulp magazines* as “inexpensive, weekly publications with lurid and garish covers intended to catch the attention of a reading public weaned on the sensational stories typical of the ‘dime novel’” [56].

The first pulp magazine was published in 1896 by Frank Munsey and its title was *Argosy Magazine*. It was cheap, cost about ten cents, and to preserve the price the magazine had neither color cover nor illustrations. Its successor, *The Popular Magazine*, was published by Street&Smith in 1903 and exceeded its predecessor by using attractive color covers. The cover art became vitally important as the readers were first attracted by the cover. It was presumed that some of the covers were designed first, then showed to the authors and they were supposed to write a story that would suit the cover [“Pulp Magazines”]. As the pulp magazines became so popular Street&Smith started to publish various magazines specialized on single genres. These magazines were most popular in 1920s and 1930s.

*Black Mask* was first published by H. L. Mencken and G. J. Nathan in 1920 and it is considered the birthplace of the hard-boiled detective story. *Dime Detective* was also concerned with detective fiction and it was first published in 1931. It is very similar to *Black Mask* and it combined the authors of hard-boiled detective fiction and action stories, such as E. S. Gardner, C. J. Daly or J. A. Dunn. Another magazine involved in detective fiction is *Spicy Detective* that was first published in 1934 and it was characteristic for a bit tougher and more ‘spicy’ stories by e.g. R. L. Bellem or A. Wallace. More pulp magazines existed and they dealt mainly with science fiction or fantasy, such as *Amazing Stories, Oriental Stories, Weird Tales, Marvel Tales, Planet Stories, Startling Stories or Unknown*. There were also pulp magazines concerned with supernatural and horror, such as *Horror Stories or Thrilling Wonder Stories* [“Pulp Magazines”].

*Black Mask* was the most important magazine that introduced the new genre of hard-boiled and tough detective fiction, as an Internet source devoted to *Black Mask* informs [Deutsch “Black Mask magazine”]. When it was first published by H. L.
Mencken and G. J. Nathan in 1920 it offered more genres, such as adventure stories, romances, love stories or stories of the occult, together with mystery and detective stories. Later, in 1926, a new editor came to the magazine and discovered the greatness of the tough detective stories. It was Joseph Shaw who himself was an unsuccessful adventure story writer and perhaps his previous experience helped him to reveal the secret and to predict the importance of hard-boiled detective fiction.

The first tough detective stories, as Deutsch notes in his website, were “Three Gun Terry” [1923] by Carroll J. Daly and “The Road Home” [1922] by Dashiell Hammett, written under name Peter Collinson. In 1923 E. S. Gardner wrote his first tough detective story, “The Shrieking Skeleton”, published in Black Mask under his pen-name Charles M. Green. In 1927, in his editorial, Joseph Shaw expressed his passion and the importance of tough detective stories and since then he gave priority to them and subsequently dropped other genres. Hammett opened a new dimension of the tough stories as he created three dimensional characters. This was extended and even improved by Raymond Chandler whose first tough story, “Blackmailers Don’t Shoot”, was first published in Black Mask in 1933 [Deutsch “Black Mask magazine”].

**Carroll John Daly** [1880 – 1958] is considered the founder of hard-boiled detective fiction. In his short story “Knights of the Open Palm” [1923], he introduced his main hero, a tough guy, **Race Williams** [Haining 31]. Daly, according to his short stories, could be considered the author who surpassed the genre of western and cowboys and mixed it up with the toughness of the private investigator. Scaggs notes that Daly invented a prototype of a hard-boiled detective, “a large, tough, violent man” that was used and broadened by many authors [55].

**Dashiell Hammett** [1894 – 1961], on the contrary, “set the foundation for [hard-boiled] type of fiction” [Scaggs 55]. Scaggs names the characteristics of the genre; it is “the centrality of the character of the private eye, the existence of a client, along with the detective’s evident distrust of the client, an urban setting, routine police corruption, the femme fatale, an apparently ‘neutral’ narrative method, and the extensive use of vernacular dialogue” [58]. In his short stories he used an anonymous detective from Continental detective agency [Haining 65] and gathered features later used in his most popular hero, **Sam Spade**.

**Raymond Chandler** [1888 – 1959] is one of the leading authors of hard-boiled detective fiction. He accomplished the style created by Hammett and added more deep and philosophical features. Chandler introduced several private eyes. In his sort story
“Trouble Is My Business” Johnny Dalmas is described as the tough type of a private detective; or in “Nevada Gas” Johnny De Ruse is introduced, who, in fact, is not a detective but a gambler who accidentally took over the role of the detective amateur. Nevertheless, **Philip Marlowe** remains his most outstanding private eye. It is possible to follow the process of creation and birth of Philip Marlowe, the deepest character of detective fiction.

**Ross Macdonald** [1915 – 1983] is a pseudonym of Kenneth Miller who created his detective hero, **Lew Archer** [Haining 132]. Macdonald’s style resembles Chandler’s and Hammett’s style and Scaggs even notes that Macdonald “broadened Chandler’s horizons” [29]. Lew Archer is another tough guy who accidentally finds corpses and is beaten loads of times.

**Robert Leslie Bellem** [1894 – 1968] is more controversial author of detective stories and he contributed mainly to *Spicy Detective*. His private eye, the Hollywood detective **Dan Turner**, is much more tough and rude not only towards men but also towards women. He also talks more openly about sex.

**W. R. Burnett** [1899 – 1982] created a new style of hard-boiled detective stories, or rather a new point of view from which we look at the stories. His main heroes are mainly the criminals and gangsters. In his short story “Traveling Light” Burnett uses a not-so-important criminal who meets two tougher criminals or gangsters and experiences various adventures with them. Unfortunately, the hero is mixed up with more serious crime committed by the two gangsters.

**Mickey Spillane** [1918 – 2006] is the most controversial American author of hard-boiled detective fiction. Spillane followed the hard-boiled style created by Hammett and Chandler, but in contrast to Macdonald, he “narrowed the formula to its barest essentials” [Scaggs 29]. He created a famous detective, **Mike Hammer**, who broke the bounds of hard-boiled private eyes and represented someone very brutal, violent, outrageous using rude and sexist talks.

The popularity of hard-boiled detective stories came also to Britain. British authors tried to write similar detective stories as well and **Peter Cheyney** [1896 – 1951] can be considered the most outstanding representative of English hard-boiled style [Haining 207]. Cheyney chose a slightly different environment and hero when he started to write about secret cops and agents. His most famous secret agent is **Lemmy Caution** who is not afraid of pretending to be a criminal so as to catch some feared criminal or gangster. Cheyney describes the criminal environment with perfect sense of accuracy and details.
It is interesting to look closer at some hard-boiled pulp heroes introduced in detective short stories. Daly’s Race Williams resembles a cowboy who accidentally got into a hard-boiled detective story. He protects ‘weak’ women but remains cold so as not to start an affair. Above all, he is honest. In “The Egyptian Lure” (1928) simplified and even humorous and foolish descriptions of fights are used by Daly and they may resemble spaghetti western. The fights are not so real and credible. Moreover, there is far more shooting than physical fights. When we look at the denouement where two gangsters ‘accidentally’ shoot each other, we can see it is too simple and easy. It is evident Daly was the pioneering author of hard-boiled detective fiction.

However, in “Traveling Light” [1935] Burnett gives his hero, Johnny, some features that are shared by Daly’s Race Williams. Johnny is a criminal, indeed, but he is given cowboy-like behavior as well. He is honest and helps ‘weak’ women. We could say he is innocent. Moreover, there is a mention about a sheriff who wears two guns and resembles a cowboy. ‘Všimli si, že kromě pistole na stehně má ještě velký revolver v podpažním pouzdře. „Chlápek s dvěma kanónama, ten nás šerif, co?“ řekl Zrzek a usmál se. „Bejvávalo,“ odpověděl šerif. „Pamatuji si doby, kdy se chlápci před spaním ovívali pistolema. …“ [Burnett in Haining 262].

Macdonald’s Lew Archer resembles more the style of Hammett and Chandler. The description of fights is more ‘real’ and credible; it is described without any emotions, as objectively as someone being beaten can describe it. Shooting is reduced and the detective rather ‘collects’ guns from his enemies. Famous wisecracks are also used. Macdonald’s Lew Archer stories differ in the presence of complicated relationships between parents and their children. The generation gap can be also found in “The Singing Pigeon” [1953] when a lost daughter, Ella Salanda, comes back home to her father but brings crime and gangsters with her. Lew Archer shows to be sympathetic and helps the daughter and her father to get closer again.

Bellem’s Dan Turner and Spillane’s Mike Hammer could also be compared. Dan Turner seems like the predecessor of Mike Hammer, being less outrageous and misogynic. Bellem uses naturalistic descriptions and scenes right from the beginning of his “Dead Man’s Head” [1935] where he starts with the description of a head cut off a dead body. „Otevřel jsem balíček a do klina se mi skutálela lidská hlava. Mužská hlava – s dirou po kulce mezi očima.“ [Bellem in Haining 116]. Turner even brings a woman to the head and shows it to her as it was something common. Both Bellem and Spillane use rude comments towards women in their short stories and their detectives do not
bother with remaining cold. More than one love affair and sexual scene appears in their stories.

1.5 RAYMOND CHANDLER AND DASHIELL HAMMETT

Both Hammett and Chandler got to writing after various job experiences. Chandler, for example, experienced the work of a clerk, shop assistant, accountant, soldier or work at an oil syndicate [Hiney 40-55], where he gathered a lot of appealing experiences. It is absurd that two greatest authors of hard-boiled detective fiction started their career as authors of fiction only in their late thirties. Hammett experienced many various kinds of jobs but one that influenced his later literary work most was his job at Pinkerton detective agency [Škvorecký 69]. He experienced the work of a detective and that probably led him to describe the process of detection in so many details and in such a realistic way. This is his use of detailed and exact description of searching a flat, proving Hammett’s knowledge of police work:

In the girl’s apartment he switched on all the lights. He searched the place from wall to wall. His eyes and thick fingers moved without apparent haste, and without ever lingering or fumbling or going back, from one inch of their fields to the next, probing, scrutinizing, testing with expert certainty. Every drawer, cupboard, cubbyhole, box, bag, trunk – locked or unlocked – was opened and its contents subjected to examination by eyes and fingers. Every piece of clothing was tested by hands that felt for telltale bulges and ears that listened for the crinkle of paper between pressing fingers. He stripped the bed of bedclothes. He looked under rugs and at the under side of each piece of furniture. He pulled down blinds to see that nothing had been rolled up in them for concealment. He leaned through windows to see that nothing hung below them on the outside. He poked with a fork into powder and cream-jars on the dressing-table. He held atomizers and bottles up against the light. He examined dishes and pans and food and food-containers. He emptied the garbage-can on spread sheets of newspaper. He opened the top of the flush-box in the bathroom, drained the box, and peered down into it. He examined and tested the metal screens over the drains of bathtub, wash-bowl, sink, and laundry-tub. [MF 87-8]

It is obvious that Hammett was familiar with the police procedure. He describes in details were exactly to look and what and how exactly to examine. Such exactness is rare among other hard-boiled authors.

Raymond Chandler’s first literary ambitions were solely poetic and intellectual. Hiney informs that he was greatly influenced by his stay in Britain and especially by his studies at a public school near London called Dulwich College. He started his studies there in 1900 and studied classic literature among other subjects. He was greatly
influenced by his headmaster, A. H. Gilkes, who taught him to esteem tradition, mainly British tradition, discipline and morals [20-22]. Such features can be depicted in his most famous character, Philip Marlowe.

Chandler’s literary style completely changed its character due to the First World War. Hiney informs that Chandler joined the Canadian army and fought in France where, in June 1918, he experienced and survived bombing in trenches. He sustained concussion and great physical pain [47-8]. This experience changed both his personal life and his writing. He started drinking which appeared in his stories and novels very often. Hiney shows Chandler’s description of his experience with alcohol: “Jako mladý muž v RAF jsem se někdy zlinkoval tak, že jsem do postele musel dolézt po čtyřech, a ráno jsem se v půl osmé probudil s lehkou myslí jako ptáček a hulákala, kde mám snídaní. …” [48]. As the author of Marlowe’s novels Chandler seems even less open and naturalistic: “Then he picked the glass up and tasted it and sighed again and shook his head sideways with a half smile; the way a man does when you give him a drink and he needs it very badly and it is just right and the first swallow is like a peek into a cleaner, sunnier, brighter world.” [HW 1068]

The bombing Chandler experienced naturally influenced his literary style and he later used detailed and naturalistic descriptions of fights. Hiney shows how Chandler first described the bombing:

Dělostřelecký případ

We can see that despite the horror of his experience Chandler keeps his distance and uses humor and focuses rather on details. Later Chandler used his experience to describe fights between Marlowe and his enemies, e.g. in his short story “Trouble Is My Business”:

I looked back at her with a leer. That was a mistake. He was wild, probably, but he could still hit a wall that didn’t jump. He hit me while I was looking back over my shoulder. It hurts to be hit that way. He hit me plenty hard, on the back end of the jawbone.
I went over sideways, tried to spread my legs, and slid on the silk rug. I did a nose dive somewhere or other and my head was not as hard as the piece of furniture it smashed into.

For a brief blurred moment I saw his red face sneering down at me in triumph. I think I was a little sorry for him – even then.

Darkness folded down and I went out. [528]

Chandler keeps using hyperboles in order to make the fight less serious and perhaps to make the reader less sympathetic with Marlowe. It is Marlowe’s fate to be beaten up loads of times. Moreover, Marlowe blacks out very often which resembles the terrible Chandler’s experience of bombing. It also shows us how shocking and unforgettable the experience was for Chandler.

Chandler’s first literary experience with fiction was in *Black Mask* where he first published his hard-boiled detective stories. He considered writing such stories good way of earning some money and he appreciated the literary style at the same time as he mentioned in his letter to Hamish Hamilton: “… This was in the great days of the *Black Mask* [if I may call them great days] and it struck me that some of the writing was pretty forceful and honest, even though it had its crude aspect. I decided that this might be a good way to try to learn to write fiction and get paid a small amount of money at the same time. …” [1040-1]. Chandler took his writing seriously and he understood it as a process of learning that must be improved on every occasion. He was greatly inspired and influenced by the work of Hammett and Gardner.

However, the style of Chandler and Hammett differs in many ways. Hammett focused mainly on the objectivity and detailed and realistic descriptions of the setting, characters and the process of detection. He laid the foundations of a new literary style but it was Chandler who embellished and accomplished the new style. Chandler was a talented writer whose ambitions were to write high literature, poetry [Hiney 31-2]. But despite all this he excelled and became famous thanks to his detective fiction which was considered low literature. He used his talent for writing and added deeper features. Chandler introduced more detailed and poetic descriptions, more elaborate and sophisticated characters, he even focused rather on the main hero than on the action and plot.

Moreover, as Škvorecký suggests, Chandler put philosophical dimension into the tough stories [80]. He let Phil Marlowe utter his philosophical reflections about life usually at the end of the novel, together with his solitary denouements: “What did it matter where you lay once you were dead? In a dirty sump or in a marble tower on top
of a high hill? You were dead, you were sleeping the big sleep, you were not bothered by things like that. Oil and water were the same as wind and air to you. You just slept the big sleep, not caring about the nastiness of how you died or where you fell. Me, I was part of the nastiness now. …” [BS 164] At the same time he explains the title of the novel, The Big Sleep, as well. The big sleep is the death.

Yet, Hammett’s and Chandler’s novels have also a lot in common. Both authors use wisecracks all the time. Chandler embellished them thanks to his talent for poetics:

“‘Two coffees,’ I said. ‘Black, strong, and made this year.’” [BS 104] He used black humor as well. Chandler’s wisecracks used in his later novel, The High Window, are a bit tougher, more sarcastic and more oriented on the criticism of cops: “‘You boys are as cute as a couple of lost golf balls,’ I said. [Marlowe to cops]” [1113]

When we look at Hammett’s and Chandler’s novels we notice the presence of amorality of their private eyes. We cannot be sure whether the detectives are going to stay at the right side of the law or whether they switch over to the side of crime. In Hammett’s novel The Maltese Falcon his detective, Sam Spade, pretends to join the gangsters but he is not really sure whether he should have turned back to the right side. Finally, he renders the criminal to police but we can follow his doubtful thoughts. Škvorecký notes that it may resemble Mickey Spillane’s style and his detective Mike Hammer [77-8]. Hammer’s and Spade’s roughness and determination to take the law in their own hands is something that joins them. Hammett shows the amorality of the detective in his short story “The Golden Horseshoe” where his anonymous detective finally sends the criminal to prison for something he did not commit. Detective’s solution is based on the fact that the criminal committed crimes he cannot be convicted of.

Spillane brings the idea of amorality further and, according to Škvorecký, develops so called literary American fascism [92-3]. Something similar but not so strong can be found again in Hammett’s fiction and in Chandler’s novels as well. Dennis Porter calls it moral ambiguity [99] and he means the unfinished end of the novels. Porter mentions Hammett’s Red Harvest and the denouement which is not so clearly and unambiguously solved: “Although the Op has accomplished his mission of cleansing the town of the goons and hoodlums who had originally been brought in as strike-breakers, the corrosive political power of the mine-owner himself has not been broken.” [Porter 99]. Similar ambiguity can be found in Chandler’s short story “Trouble Is My Business” where the ‘head’ that led the murderer to kill, old Mr. Jeter, is not accused as he has a
stroke and goes mentally disabled. When we look at Chandler’s novels, e.g. *The High Window*, the denouement can be considered ambiguous as well. Marlowe reveals that one of the murderers is his client’s son, Mr. Murdock, but conceals it as it would not be loyal of him. Murdocks are kept out of the investigation and police.
2. LITERARY ANALYSIS

2.1 MODERNIST CONCEPTION OF DETECTIVE FICTION

The best examples of popular literature are hard-boiled detective fiction, science fiction and romance. To be able to understand the principle of hard-boiled fiction it is necessary to distinguish the difference between popular and high literature. **High literature** is analyzed by numerous literary critics and is considered valuable, intellectual and artistic. To grasp the message it is very often necessary to be well-educated, particularly in literature, and to analyze the text properly. High literature is usually understood after decades, but it lasts for centuries. On the other hand, **popular literature** provides information without complicated codes and symbols, the message is perfectly available and it has direct effects. Popular literature does not experiment. It uses well-proven stereotypes and popular happy endings. It asks questions and also gives answers, whereas high literature does not give answers and it is the reader who has to answer the questions. Moreover, popular literature is available and affordable for the readers as it is printed on cheap paper and published in cheap magazines and paperbacks. However, sometimes it is possible to mix up popular and high literature by using specific literary features as e.g. in Chadler’s novels.

Hard-boiled school of detective fiction is connected mainly with modernist movement. Professor John Lye points out some **modernist attributes** in this kind of fiction [Lye “Some Attributes of Modernist Literature”]. Stylistic innovations used to break traditional conceptions influenced the basic conception of hard-boiled fiction. It originated by violating traditional conception of detective fiction and it violated the traditional rules of detection as well. The attribute of references to earlier literature is also the basis of hard-boiled fiction as it uses the stereotypes. ‘Perspectivism’ used in modernism refers to individualism that differentiated hard-boiled fiction by the use of the first person. No longer is it the narrator who tells the story, but it is usually the main hero. The private detective usually introduces himself to the reader in order to become more familiar and trustworthy.

It was about eleven o’clock in the morning, mid October, with the sun not shining and a look of hard wet rain in the clearness of the foothills. I was wearing my powder-blue suit, with dark blue shirt, tie and display handkerchief, black brogues, black wool socks with dark blue clocks on them. I was neat, clean, shaved and
sober, and I didn’t care who knew it. I was everything the well-dressed private detective ought to be. … [Chandler, BS 3]

The reader experiences the scene from the detective’s point of view and they can follow his thoughts and emotions as well.

Another attribute of modernism is impressionism, focus on the process of perception and the impressions that follow. Raymond Chandler used impressionism in a way by which he distinguished himself from other hard-boiled authors. He focused mainly on his private eye, his thoughts, emotions and impressions and expressed them in sarcastic and sometimes even cynical way. Marlowe’s description of a private club taken from The High Window is remarkable:

A lot of light and glitter, a lot of scenery, a lot of clothes, a lot of sound, … You could just manage to walk on the carpet without waders. … At the entrance to the dining room a chubby captain of waiters stood negligently … He had the sort of face that can turn from a polite simper to cold-blooded fury almost without moving a muscle. [1082-3]

The conception of language is an important feature taken from modernist movement, as Professor Lye highlights. It is complex, ‘thick’ and it involves various forces, which can be understood as the use of varieties of English as well as the use of ambiguities, insinuations or wisecracks.

The attribute of inner psychological reality could be found in the private eye himself and it goes back to impressionism with hero’s thoughts and emotions. Chandler intellectualized hard-boiled fiction when he gave Marlowe philosophical questions about the sense of life and his own existence. Marlowe’s ambiguous feelings of loneliness and persistence of his job’s results in The High Window are straightforward when he ‘cured’ young Merle and brought her back to her family: “I had a funny feelings as I saw the house disappear, as though I had written a poem and it was very good and I had lost it and would never remember it again.” [1174-5] This is one of the moments when popular and high literature mix up and create something new, valuable and lasting.

The attribute of use of psychology draws the attention to psychoanalysis. It is used many times when the private detective analyzes the character of the culprit in order to reveal and capture them. The attribute of the existence of open or ambiguous endings is striking particularly in Hammett’s Red Harvest, or Chandler’s short story “Trouble Is My Business” or novel The High Window.
The last attribute of modernism worth mentioning is the critique of the traditional cultural values that could be shifted to the critique of American dream. However, it is not the privilege of hard-boiled fiction.

Popular literature is specific for its use of two types of stereotypes. First, stereotypes borrowed from high literature. Second, stereotypes created within each specific genre. Primarily, I would like to look closer at the stereotypes of high literature. Popular literature took some borrowings from different literary movements and forms. Such a borrowing of different forms is also called ‘pastiche’. It is one of the used devices of modernist literature. Romantic stereotypes influenced especially the description of hero. In romanticism it is the individual that is focused. It is the self and the feelings that are highlighted in the stereotypes. The main hero, i.e. the self conception, is lonely; the reader can follow his feelings. He is very often an outsider, he has no or few friends, no family, no love affairs and he is perceived and understood only via his work. The conception of love is romantic as well. The stereotype of platonic love is taken from romanticism but hard-boiled fiction goes further. Authors use tough and straightforward hints with sexual hidden meaning; however, the hero keeps romantic formula and mostly resists attractive and sexy women. The private detective could be compared to a knight. He fights, literally, for justice, for the truth, he protects the weak and hunts the bad, which sometimes means the rich. Marlowe in *The High Window* even helps a weak and abused woman. Chandler explains Marlowe’s job’s aims and compares them to the aims and results of the work of police:

‘Until you guys own your own souls you don’t own mine. Until you guys can be trusted every time and always, in all times and conditions, to seek the truth out and find it and let the chips fall where they may – until that time comes, I have a right to listen to my conscience, and protect my client the best way I can. Until I’m sure you won’t do him more harm than you’ll do the truth good. Or until I’m hauled before somebody that can make me talk.’ [1072]

Other important stereotypes were taken from realism. Most influential is the conception of place, time and language. Hard-boiled fiction is notable for the description of place, the real world around us, exterior world. It focuses on detailed description in order to make the narrative as real and credible as possible. It specializes entirely on the West coast of the United States and its urban environment of big cities. In the description of Hollywood and its atmosphere Chandler depicts both realistic focus on real details and romantic distortion of reality by detective’s feelings:
The rushing sound of the traffic had died a little and the air from the open window, not yet cool from the night, had that tired end-of-the-day smell of dust, automobile exhaust, sunlight rising from hot walls and sidewalks, the remote smell of food in a thousand restaurants, and perhaps, drifting down from the residential hills above Hollywood – if you had a nose like a hunting dog – a touch of that peculiar tomcat smell that eucalyptus trees give off in warm weather. [HW 1055]

Chandler never forgets to add a hint of sarcasm and wit. The use of time is chronological, as the process of detective’s work follows. Realistic approach made use of common language of common people. The same can be applied to hard-boiled fiction. As the private detective is a prototype of a common middle-class man, he uses common language, vernacular and great amount of slang expressions.

Regionalism, branch of realism, is also reflected in hard-boiled fiction. West coast is typical in hard-boiled fiction and some authors, among them Chandler, focus mainly on Los Angeles. Chandler describes not only the general atmosphere, but also real names of streets and districts. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between a real name of a street and the fictitious one. “4212 Cabrillo Street, Montemar Vista” [193] is the place where Lindsay Marriott lived and “615 Cahuenga Building, Hollywood” [237] is the place where Marlowe had his office, both in Farewell, My Lovely. As Alan M. Pavlik [“Just Above Sunset”] claims, the latter address is actually the address of the Pacific Security Bank.

Another common feature of regionalism and hard-boiled fiction is that the stories are set in contemporary time and the speech is that of common people. The following extract proves the contemporaneity of Chandler’s novel The High Window as it shows the date when the novel was written: “‘Vannier’s been blackmailing you for about eight years, hasn’t he? On account of something that happened on April 26th, 1933?’” [1155] When we add the mentioned eight years of blackmailing to 1933, we get 1941, which is probably the year when Chandler was writing his novel as it was published in 1942.

Naturalism also brought some of its features to hard-boiled fiction. Naturalistic stereotypes of using people from the bottom of society as the heroes can be followed in every hard-boiled detective story. Criminals, gamblers or alcoholics are the most frequently used characters. The most disgusting character is a drunken woman alcoholic, Mrs. Jessie Florian, in Farewell, My Lovely: “Her eyes stayed on the bottle. Suspicion fought with thirst, and thirst was winning. … I poured her a slug that would have made me float over a wall. She reached for it hungrily and put it down her throat.
like an aspirin tablet and looked at the bottle.” [184-5] Chandler also used a lot of lurid detailed descriptions of human nastiness and murders. “He stuck his little finger in his ear and worked it around and brought it out with a little dark wax on it. He wiped it off casually on his coat.” [HW 1032] Naturalism also brought the idea of violence used and particularly described in details.

Finally, it is likely to go back to one of the modernist stereotypes, the use of psychology and especially psychoanalysis. The basic and vital feature of detective fiction in general, the denouement and revealing culprit’s heart, is one of the psychoanalytic devices, the “re-narratization of a person’s life” [Lye, http://www.brocku.ca/english/courses/4F70/psychlit.html]. At the end of every detective story the detective comes out with the solution and he usually reveals the culprit’s motives. It is another psychoanalytic feature, the focus on motives, particularly on hidden ones. Surprisingly, interpretation of dreams also appears in some hard-boiled detective novels. In Chandler’s Farewell, My Lovely Marlowe, who has been forced to take drugs, falls into his world of dreams and describes his vision of being “a pink-headed bug crawling up the side of the City Hall” [353]. The comparison to a bug appears in the novel at least three times and it is left up to the reader to realize what hidden meaning could be revealed.

Professor John Lye [“Psychoanalysis and Literature”] claims that psychoanalysis deals also with poetic and literary elements, such as metaphor and metonymy. Metaphors are widely used by Chandler, which is also influenced by his literary and poetic talent. He describes smoke as “a grey web woven by a thousand spiders” [280] in Farewell, My Lovely.

The specific genre stereotypes of hard-boiled fiction are mainly urban environment, contemporary time together with social criticism and the fact that the authors stemmed from the objective journalists, muckrakers. The most frequently used literary devices are technology of film cut, objectivity, action and tough plot and language. The most frequent topics are violence, alcohol, political and police corruption and organized crime.

Finally, I would like to focus on an issue identified by Škvorecký [89] and, of course, by Chandler himself, the dilemma of realism, which was described in Chandler’s The Simple Art of Murder.

I suppose the principal dilemma of the traditional or classic or straight-deductive or logic-and-deduction novel of detection is that for any approach to perfection it
demands a combination of qualities not found in the same mind. The cool-headed constructionist does not also come across with lively characters, sharp dialogue, a sense of pace and an acute use of observed detail. The grim logician has as much atmosphere as a drawing-board. The scientific sleuth has a nice new shiny laboratory, but I’m sorry I can’t remember the face. The fellow who can write you a vivid and colorful prose simply won’t be bothered with the coolie labor of breaking down unbreakable alibis. [979-80]

Chandler tries to explain that in order to make detective story both credible and attractive, it is necessary to use just the right ‘amount’ of logic and realism as well as vivid description of atmosphere and characters. When the author fabricates the story with too much imagination, they could spoil it by making the story incredible and the plot breakable. Škvorecký suggests to use ‘Dickens realism’ which is a mixture of critical realism and romantic illusionism [137]. When Hammet introduces the real critical realism, Chandler uses his poetic talent and adds the romantic illusionist dimension which makes his novels unforgettable. Hammett defends his realistic point of view in his Suggestions to Detective Story Writers where he insists on writers’ learning at least something about the subject they are writing about [910]. Chandler not only defends Hammett in his essay The Simple Art of Murder but he also sketches the ideal detective and the world realistic writer should write about [991-2].

### 2.2 LANGUAGE OF HARDBOILED DETECTIVE FICTION

The hard-boiled school of detective fiction is influenced by some realistic stereotypes and that is why the authors use real language of common people. The most famous style of using and forming language into so called wisecracks was primarily introduced and flourished by Raymond Chandler. Such clever witty remarks are usually uttered by Phil Marlowe. However, it does not mean other hard-boiled authors do not try to use wisecracks. Dashiell Hammett makes an attempt in his novel The Maltese Falcon: “People lose teeth talking like that.” [91] Sam Spade differs from Marlowe in many ways and one of them is his manner of speaking. Spade is not so witty, he is much harder. Marlowe keeps his wit and frivolity even though he has been attacked: “All right,’ I yelled. ‘I’ll go up with you. Just lay off carrying me. Let me walk. I’m fine. I’m all grown up. I go to the bathroom alone and everything. Just don’t carry me.”’ [FML 169] Sometimes, Chandler chooses narrative report instead of direct speech to express Marlowe’s thoughts and feelings: “I felt as if I had been through a meat grinder.” [FML
Such wisecracks are usually used to lighten the situation, the violence and to
amuse the reader as well.

Chandler uses witty remarks to express Marlowe’s attitude towards women as well:
“… She’s a charming middle-aged lady with a face like a bucket of mud and if she has
washed her hair since Coolidge’s second term, I’ll eat my spare tyre, rim and all.”

To defend Chandler I should add that the lady is a middle-aged widow
alcoholic. However, a cop reacted on such words in following way: “‘Skip the
wisecracks.’” Another wisecrack used to describe an old curious neighbor,
Marlowe called her ‘Old Nosey’, shows Marlowe’s attitude towards women he did not
like for some reason. “I left her laughing. The sound was like a hen having hiccups.”

However, Chandler also showed some more positive attitude towards
women, even though it was done rather from man’s point of view: “He stared at me and
his left hand began to edge towards the gun. He belonged to the Wandering Hand
Society. The girls would have had a time with him.” Again, he used
wisecracks to lighten the situation of incoming fight. Moreover, Marlowe spent few
days locked in a building being beaten up and forced to take drugs. Yet, he keeps his
humor. Finally, it is necessary to mention that Chandler does not use wisecracks only
for Marlowe’s expressions but also to describe the atmosphere: “The coffee shop smell
was strong enough to build a garage on.”

This is why Chandler’s novels became so popular. He does not offer only a complex plot full of danger and toughness;
he also offers something to amuse, to laugh at.

Chandler’s style is enriched with elaborate wisecracks and also with his specific use
of poetic style and metaphors. He usually uses such style to describe a place or
situation in more interesting way than just realistic, the way people see it. He thus
creates his specific atmosphere: “The smoke hung straight up in the air, in thin lines,
straight up and down like a curtain of small clear beads.” Chandler’s talent
to see things and places in different, more poetic way built his own specific style. He
could describe a common view of e.g. ‘Bay City’ at night in a way resembling
supernatural: “Scattered points of light drew together and became a jewelled bracelet
laid out in the show window of the night. Then the brightness faded and they were a soft
orange glow appearing and disappearing over the edge of the swell.”

Simile is another frequently used linguistic form. Chandler uses them usually to
lighten the situation and to bring in wit. The effect is thus very similar to the one of
wisecracks. Chandler uses splendid simile e.g. in his short story “Trouble Is My
Business”: “I felt terrible. I felt like an amputated leg.” [533] It demonstrates that Chandler uses all the specific linguistic forms both in his short stories and novels. The example of simile taken from Chandler’s novel *The High Window* demonstrates also something more, and it is a kind of social commentary: “He sat there peacefully, with the half-smoked cigarette dead between his lips and the gaudy brown and yellow band on his hat looking as quiet as a cigarette ad on the back page of the Saturday Evening Post.” [1027]. It evokes that a cigarette ad in the newspapers was something common and not striking.

Chandler uses **irony** to express Marlowe’s character, such as in *Farewell, My Lovely*: “The house itself was not so much. It was smaller than Buckingham Palace, rather grey for California, and probably had fewer windows than the Chrysler Building.” [249] The novel is told in the first person and Marlowe himself is the narrator. All the mentions and descriptions of places and situations are expressions of Marlowe’s attitude, feelings and character.

The use of varieties of English, vernacular and slang expressions is the most distinct feature common for most of the hard-boiled authors. First, I will focus on the use of **varieties of English** in Chandler’s novels. He was interested mainly in the African American English, term used by Lisa J. Green [27], probably because there were lots of Afro-Americans working in services. He used Afro-American characters both in his novels and short stories. In *Farewell, My Lovely* Marlowe enters a club devoted mainly to Afro-Americans, called ‘a coloured joint’. The Afro-American ethnic group is perfectly recognizable from the text: “‘Velma you says? No Velma heah, brother. No hooch, no gals, no nothing. Jes’ the scram, white boy, jes’ the scram.’” [170] In Chandler’s short story “Nevada Gas” a similar use of African American English can be depicted. It is a doorman at a club giving some information to De Ruse, and he is not afraid of taking money for that: “‘What time he leave?’ ‘He leave ’bout six-thirty, Ah reckon.’ ‘Drive his blue Lincoln limousine?’ ‘Shuah. Only he don’t drive it hisself. What for you ask?’” [161] The typical feature of the variety of English is the specific use of grammar, which is evident from the extract.

Another use of ethnic background can be distinguished in Chandler’s novel *Farewell, My Lovely*. There is an Indian who works for a psychiatrist Amthor and his specific use of language is remarkable: “‘Huh,’ he said. ‘Come quick. Come now.’ … ‘Come where?’ I said. ‘Huh. Me Second Planting. Me Hollywood Indian.’ … ‘He say come quick. Great white father say come quick. He say me bring you in fiery chariot.
Chandler’s period stereotype used in the description of Indian’s language can be recognized. In the same novel Chandler used another character of different nationality, an Asiatic woman, who is a secretary of Amthor. Her language is specific as well: “‘Ah, Meester Marlowe, so ver-ry good of you to come. Amthor he weel be so ver-ry pleased.’” [266] Her use of language differs mainly in the accent and pronunciation of some of English words. Another character of different nationality can be depicted in Chandler’s novel *The High Window*. It is an Italian businessman, Palermo, who is very likely to be a member of mafia:


Chandler uses various examples of different nationalities to portray the multi-cultural feature of the twentieth-century American society. He also obeys the modernistic formula and uses stereotypes of the nationalities rather than the real types. He does so especially in his portrayal of Indian in *Farewell, My Lovely*.

**Slang expressions** are widely used in hard-boiled detective fiction and I will focus on their use by Raymond Chandler. A short list of some slang expressions mostly used in hard-boiled fiction and translated into formal English is available on the internet. [Collins “Hard Boiled Slang Dictionary”] Slang expressions frequently used are e.g. the expressions denoting money and the sums of money, such as ‘dough’, ‘buck’ or ‘grand’. There are usually various expressions used for guns, e.g. ‘gat’ or ‘rod’. Of course, there is an expression for alcohol, especially whisky, such as ‘hooch’. The name of Chandler’s short story “Nevada Gas” is very interesting. It contains slang expression in itself. ‘Nevada gas’ is the expression for cyanide, which is the central point of the plot. Finally, the use of slang addressing is also specific. In *Farewell, My Lovely* various addresses are used by common low-class people, such as ‘laddy’, ‘bo’ or ‘pal’. [333-4]

Chandler was devoted to the study of slang expressions. Hiney even adds that Chandler collected slang expressions and made a list of common slang expressions he heard in the streets [75]. It was Chandler’s talent and sense of language that challenged him to attend to various specific uses of English. No other hard-boiled author could master such aim in such an exemplary way.
2.3 INFLUENCE OF OTHER AUTHORS

Raymond Chandler, the greatest author of hard-boiled detective fiction, excelled at writing and creating his own literary style. He was influenced by many literary styles and authors. However, two authors of hard-boiled detective stories influenced his work most. These were his colleagues from Black Mask, Dashiell Hammett and E. S. Gardner. They brought him towards the criminal environment and Hammett, besides, showed him the way of using common tough language from the streets. It is important to underline the influence of his contemporary Ernest Hemingway [1899 – 1961] and his short stories as well.

Both Hemingway and Chandler were influenced primarily by the work of muckrakers and their use of objectivity. However, more similarities between the work of Hemingway and Chandler can be depicted. When we look at the formal structure of their narratives, they both use a narrator, i.e. they tell the story in the first person, I-narrative. In Hemingway’s short story “Fifty Grand” the narrator is Jerry, the trainer and best friend of the main hero, Jack, a boxer. On the other hand, Chandler usually uses the main hero as the narrator, such as in Marlowe’s novels. They use objective style and it is obvious that they know perfectly well what they write about. Hemingway sets his short story in boxing environment and he shows great knowledge of the process of the matches. He describes in details weighing of boxers before the match, the process of preparing before the match and also the way of bandaging boxers’ hands: “Jack puts his thumb through the slit in the bandage and then wrapped his hand nice and smooth. I taped it around the wrist and twice across the knuckles.” [FG 139] It could be compared to the way Chandler, Marlowe, reconstructs how things could happen:

I looked across to the lighted beach club. From its upper windows a man with a good night glass could probably cover this spot fairly well. He could see a car come and go, see who got out of it, whether there was a group of men or just one. Sitting in a dark room with a good night glass you can see a lot more detail than you would think possible. [FML 207]

Hammett’s ability to describe criminal work in details is showed in his The Maltese Falcon when his private eye, Sam Spade, searches a flat.

When we focus on the use of linguistic forms, we find out Hemingway uses common language of common people as well. He uses similar slang expressions, such as ‘dough’, ‘grand’ or ‘buck’, same as Chandler. Hemingway uses simile as well but not in such a great amount as Chandler. Above all, his similes used in “Fifty Grand” are not
so witty as the Chandler’s: “‘He’s stale as poorhouse cake.’” [121] or “Jack was as safe as a church…” [141]. The beauty and wit of simile was brought only by Chandler himself. Another linguistic form that was eternalized by Chandler is wisecracks. It is very interesting to look at a form used by Hemingway which could be considered an attempt to create a wisecrack: “Walcott was bleeding bad and leaned his nose on Jack’s shoulder so as to give Jack some of it too, …” [FG 141] Readers could hesitate whether it is an attempt at wisecrack or not, but definitely it is a kind of emotionality brought into Hemingway’s brief, objective style [unfortunately not much successful]. Hemingway’s simple and brief style of writing may resemble rather Hammett’s literary style, without poetic insertions, or in Porter’s words ‘chandlerisms’ [105].

Both Hemingway and Chandler focus mainly on the middle class, sometimes with exceptions such as in Chandler’s The Big Sleep with the Sternwoods. This could be also considered the influence of realism and the focus on common people. Characters are most often ordinary workers, barmen and drivers, private detectives with few clients and also gangsters and other criminals. Both authors use also different nationalities to show the real structure of inhabitants of the United States. In their fiction there are usually Afro-Americans, called ‘niggers’, and in Hemingway’s “Fifty Grand” there is even an Irishman, the main hero, and a mention of Jews, called pejoratively ‘kikes’ [116]. Chandler’s novels are full of gangsters and various gamblers or racketeers. Hemingway in his “Fifty Grand” depicts two gangsters, Happy Steinfeld and Lew Morgan, who own a pool-room and try to ‘double-cross’ their boxer [125].

Finally, the main characters, male usually, behave in masculine way and are called macho by Hemingway and private eyes or tough guys by Chandler and Hammett. They are strong, brave, drink a lot, like women and they are not afraid of fight. Chandler distinguished his detective when he changed his general attitude towards women. Marlowe resembles a new tough knight. He keeps his tough attitude and talk, but he hurries to rescue a weak woman, when she deserves it. Such an example can be found in The High Window when Marlowe rescues Merle from exploitation by Mrs. Elizabeth Bright Murdock. Marlowe is described by a doctor as a “shop-soiled Galahad” [1136], who was in fact a knight of King Arthur’s Round Table. Marlowe helps Merle who looks a bit like “an anaemic person” and whose “whole face had a sort of off-key neurotic charm that only needed some clever makeup to be striking” [990]. Female characters, who are not usually worth rescuing and who very often become murderers or at least the cause of murder, are pretty, well-dressed, wear make-up and they are first of
all sexy and cute. Hemingway’s female characters are pretty, well-dressed and sexy as well, but they are also frivolous and independent, both in drinking and sex. Hemingway was able to use tough talks as well, especially in his short story “The Killers”, which is, as the title suggests, based on tough guys, criminals, gangsters or ‘killers’.

Hemingway has a lot of features in common with Chandler, but there are also some differences that are obvious at first sight. It is mainly the structure of Hemingway’s narratives. He uses great amount of fast dialogues, direct speech, and he avoids descriptions of environment, situation and plot in general. Such a structure is sometimes confusing and the reader is lost in the trap of dialogues. Few descriptions are oriented particularly on the action and on the plot as well. Any detailed portrayal or poetic depiction is absent: “We rode down in the elevator and went out through the lobby, and got in a taxi and rode around to the Garden. It was raining hard but there was a lot of people outside on the streets.” [FG 137] The description is simple, brief and dry. It lacks emotions and describes only one action after another. A similar approach can be also depicted in Hemingway’s description of a fight, boxing, where he shows action after action without any subjective comments: “Walcott came toward him and thy touched gloves and as soon as Walcott dropped his hands Jack jumped his left into his face twice. There wasn’t anybody ever boxed better than Jack.” [FG 140] The reader learns nothing about the boxer’s feelings, fears and thoughts. Moreover, the reader is not even amused with any witty remarks. Hemingway strictly obeys the rules of muckrakers and focuses rather on the art of fast dialogues.

Chandler shows ambiguous feelings towards Hemingway, particularly in his novel Farewell, My Lovely. Chandler uses the name Hemingway as a swear-word. Marlowe calls a cop Hemingway, and he characterizes the cop as “the kind of cop who spits on his blackjack every night instead of saying his prayers” [274]. When Marlowe is asked what kind of person is “this Hemingway”, he answers: “A guy that keeps saying the same thing over and over until you begin to believe it must be good.” [278] I suggest Chandler refers to Hemingway’s use of repetition. On the other hand, Chandler seems to get inspired by Hemingway’s repetitive style. In Farewell, My Lovely Chandler uses repetition as well:

I thought of dead eyes looking at a moonless sky, with black blood at the corners of the mouths beneath them. I thought of nasty old women beaten to death against the posts of their dirty beds. I thought of a man with bright blond hair who was afraid and didn’t quite know what he was afraid of, who was sensitive enough to know that something was wrong, and too vain or too dull to guess
what it was that was wrong. I thought of beautiful rich women who could be had. I thought of nice slim curious girls who lived alone and could be had too, in a different way. I thought of cops, tough cops that could be greased and yet were not by any means all bad, like Hemingway, ... [329]

Chandler could also be compared to another great author of the twenties, Francis Scott Fitzgerald [1896 – 1940]. As Dennis Porter suggests the most striking resemblance can be found in The Great Gatsby and Farewell, My Lovely [107]. Both novels are tales “of old-fashioned romance” where the main character, Nick Carraway or Moose Molloy, longs for and quests for his love, Daisy or Velma, who does not deserve it. In Chandler’s story the denouement is further more dramatic as Velma shoots Molloy and then, to save her present husband, shoots herself. Daisy had no such love in herself. When we compare the work of Fitzgerald to the work of Chandler, a common theme can be revealed; it is the American Dream. Fitzgerald describes American Dream fulfilled within the high class and also the dark side of it, whereas Chandler focuses on the dark side of American Dream within the middle class and its negative impact. Fitzgerald wrote his novels in the twenties and Chandler started to write his novels at the end of the thirties, which definitely influenced their points of view.

Though the influence of Chandler’s contemporaries is remarkable, he created his own specific literary style and in many ways exceeded his colleagues. Above all, it was the influence of era and the important historical events that formed such great author of hard-boiled detective fiction. Nevertheless, Chandler remains the white crow that links high and low literature in such an excellent way.

2.4 THE TOUGH GUY

A new type of hero was introduced by hard-boiled authors. He is called a tough guy and his main features and characteristics are greatly analyzed in Chandler’s essay The Simple Art Of Murder. The private eye “is not himself mean, ...[he] is neither tarnished nor afraid. ... He is the hero ...” [992]. When the private eye becomes a real hero of the story, he becomes the most important character. This is Chandler’s point of view. He focuses mainly on the private eye and develops his character and personality. Moreover, as we follow the novels, we follow the process of development of the hero. Such a hero
is no more static. This is the specific feature of Chandler’s novels. Other hard-boiled authors change their heroes very often. Chandler keeps his only fictional detective, Phil Marlowe. Chandler also comments on the language his private eye uses: “He talks as the man of his age talks, that is, with rude wit, a lively sense of the grotesque, a disgust for sham, and a contempt for pettiness.”[SAM 992] In other words the hero is no more set in indefinite time. He belongs to his age, to the real time.

Dennis Porter devotes a whole chapter to the phenomenon of “The private eye”, which is the title of his work as well, and he claims that it is the time of a “disabused, anti-authoritarian, muckraking hero, who, instead of fleeing to Europe, like the sophisticates of lost generation fiction, stayed at home to confront crime and corruption on the increasingly unlovely streets of modern urban America” [96].

Chandler suggests that his private eye is a kind of an ideal: “If there were enough like him, I think the world would be a very safe place to live in, and yet not too dull to be worth living in.”[SAM 992] However, Will Hutton, writer and columnist for The Observer in London, shows a point of view of the classical utopian American ideal. It is to work hard, be resourceful, hard-working and flexible and, thus, to achieve the dreamy place in the sun. [“The Writing on the Wall”] Chandler’s ideal does not long for power and wealth. His goal is the “search of a hidden truth” [Chandler, SAM 992] and subsequently and perhaps unintentionally better world. Chandler wanted to point out that the world or the civilization brought murders and violence and that people silently agree: “It is not funny that a man should be killed, but it is sometimes funny that he should be killed for so little, and that his death should be the coin of what we call civilization.” [SAM 991]

Jim Cullen, a teacher at Harvard University, suggests a different point of view. In his work “The Firmament of Stardom” [2001] he depicts the American Dream as the ideal Americans want to achieve. He submits that more than one American Dream exists. It develops together with society and people. The dream of the 18th century had the form of statesmanship, whereas in the 19th century people dreamt about “the creation of grand industrial empires”. [204] The 20th century differs in the form of the dream as well as in its content. People dream about being popular, they are influenced by popular culture which impressed society. Cullen defines it as “the possibility of a poor girl from a small town becoming transformed into a Hollywood princess on the silver screen …” [204] The American Dream becomes more individualistic and also more superficial. It is still hunt for power and wealth but it contains a feature of fame
and popularity as well. People are self-centered and want to show off. Similar features of display can be depicted in tough guys. The use of witty wisecracks evokes display. The private eye wants to show off his wit and sagacity to his enemies.

Alexis de Tocqueville [1805 – 1859] analyzes the American Dream in slightly different terms in his work “Why the Americans are so Restless in the Midst of their Prosperity”. He understands it, even though in the 19th century, as a constant search for something that escapes again and again. He wonders why they do not enjoy what they possess. They are greedy and cannot be happy as they “… are forever brooding over advantages they do not possess.” [230] Such a point of view is still up-to-date. He claims that “besides the good things that he [the American] possesses, he every instant fancies a thousand others that death will prevent him from trying if he does not try them soon.” [230] This may resemble the aim of detective, especially Marlowe. He searches for the hidden truth without rest. He has no time to sleep, or eat. The only thing he does is his job, search, following clues, and consumption of alcohol. He cannot stop and relax. He must follow his hunt for the truth, ceaselessly, even though what he is looking for keeps escaping.

De Tocqueville detects that the American subsequently feels “anxiety, fear, and regret” [230] and turns to melancholy and “disgust of life” [232]. Marlowe, too, starts to be tired of the hunt and starts to be scared: “‘I’m afraid of death and despair,’ I said. ‘Of dark water and drowned men’s faces and skulls with empty eyesockets. I’m afraid of dying, of being nothing, …’” [Chandler, FML 338] Marlowe’s aim is to solve the mystery, the murder case, but whenever he does so, a new murder or crime appears. It is a strange resemblance between solving murder cases and fulfilling the American Dream. It is a never-ending process. De Tocqueville suggests that “death is often less dreaded by them [the Americans] than perseverance in continuous efforts to one end” [231]. Tough guys are not afraid of death either. They risk, provoke their enemies and shoot a lot. Still, they are not afraid of death. Chandler’s great contribution lies in his remark of presence of death. He reminds the reader death is something we should be aware of and we should rest for a while and think about what we have already achieved.

There are several reasons to be tough. Škvorecký suggests that the source of toughness lies in American history. [73-5] He talks about the period of the first settlers in America. The pioneers, the first scouts, had to fight against the tough environment and nature. Later, they had to fight even against the Native Americans, whatever reasons they had. The feature of toughness can be depicted in westerns as well.
Cowboys have to be tough to protect the weak from their enemies. Zane Grey illustrated real cowboys in his novels and he defined them as tough, but honest. In his novel *Nevada* Grey introduced a cowboy, Jim Lacy alias Nevada, who had to be tough to reveal the leaders of an evil band of Pine Tree even though his behavior hurt his friends and woman he loved. Cowboys, and subsequently private eyes, are tough only to fit their tough environment. Some of the hard-boiled authors, Daly in his “The Egyptian Lure” or Burnett in his “Traveling Light”, even used some specific features of cowboys, which is the visible influence of westerns.

Škvorecký suggests another reason for being tough. It is the experience of the Second World War [74]. American soldiers were tough, wearing heavy helmets, chewing their chewing gums and they were undisciplined. Škvorecký goes even further when he claims that their tough behavior was just a pose to cover their uncertainty [74-5]. Chandler drew from his experience of war, the First World War, too. He described real fights and violence, but he softened the effect using witty remarks. On the contrary, Mickey Spillane fully used naturalistic descriptions and it seems he enjoyed them: “The little guy’s face was a bloody mess. Between the puffballs of blue-black flesh that used to be eyelids, the dull gleam of shock-deadened pupils watched Dilwick uncomprehendingly.” [TT 9] The influence of war, the Second World War, is remarkable not only in Spillane’s detective’s manners and behavior, but also in his education which is “army basic training” [Sweney 198].

### 2.5 Phil Marlowe and Sam Spade

The different and common features of Hammett’s and Chandler’s private eyes are evident in their novels. I will focus on Hammett’s and Chandler’s approach towards describing the appearance and character of their detectives. We will look closer at their attitude towards the police and women. The level of emotions and chivalry showed in the novels will be discussed as well. Hammett and Chandler are contemporaries and it is obvious they influenced their work. However, it is interesting to look closer also at the work of Mickey Spillane and his conception of toughness and man’s character.

Hammett introduced his private eye Sam Spade in his novel *The Maltese Falcon*. It is remarkable how Spade differed from Chandler’s Phil Marlowe, as described in Chandler’s earlier novels such as *The Big Sleep* or *Farewell, My Lovely*. Their
appearance can hardly be compared as Spade is described from the point of view of a narrator whereas Marlowe uses his own words to describe himself. Hammett chose the means of narrator, which gave him greater freedom of dive into Spade’s character and resemblance.

Samuel Spade’s jaw was long and bony, his chin a jutting v under the more flexible v of his mouth. His nostrils curved back to make another, smaller, v. His yellow-grey eyes were horizontal. The v motif was picked up again by thickish brows rising outward from twin creases above a hooked nose, and his pale brown hair grew down – from high flat temples – in a point on his forehead. He looked rather pleasantly like a blond satan. [MF 1]

Chandler, on the other hand, chose the form of I-narrative, which gave him higher reliability, even though he could not dive so deeply into Marowe’s resemblance. Thus, Marlowe remained a kind of mystery until first movies were shot. “I was wearing my powder-blue suit, with dark blue shirt, tie and display handkerchief, black brogues, black wool socks with dark blue clocks on them. I was everything the well-dressed private detective ought to be.” [BS 3] The reader learns more about Marlowe from his thoughts and opinions. On the other hand, thoughts of Sam Spade are sometimes difficult to follow. His character seems to be unbalanced.

Marlowe’s attitude towards the police is rather lenient. Chandler wanted to show how useless cops are and how useful private detective is when he let Marlowe say: “‘Seventeen hundred and fifty cops in this town and they want me to do their leg work for them.’” [FML 196] Hammett was not so straightforward. He showed the readers that his private eye is not omniscient and that he sometimes needs some information from the police, a cop called Polhaus here, as well: “Polhaus’s shrewd small brown eyes studied Spade’s face. Spade exclaimed irritably: ‘I wish to God I know half as much about this business as you smart guys think I do!’” [MF 138]

Hammett proved unbalance of his literary talent when he created Spade with his unbalanced character. Spade gets angry and irritated very often and he also acts in violent manner. This sometimes causes violent reactions of people around him. In The Maltese Falcon Spade gets into struggle with cops mainly thanks to his violent temper. When he talks to the District Attorney, he reveals to be too self-confident, even rude: “‘My guess might be excellent, or it might be crummy, but Mrs Spade didn’t raise any children dippy enough to make guesses in front of a district attorney, an assistant district attorney, and a stenographer.’” [141]. When Chandler wants to depict Marlow’s self-confidence, he uses a kind of irony rather than rudeness: “A lovely old woman. I liked
being with her. I liked getting her drunk for my own sordid purposes. I was a swell guy. I enjoyed being me.” [FML 188]

Spade is generally tougher private eye. Hammett allows him to show his feelings and emotions, but only the tough ones. Spade gets irritated and too excited and he even curses after being hit by a cop: “Red rage came suddenly into his face and he began to talk in a harsh guttural voice. Holding his maddened face in his hands, glaring at the floor, he cursed Dundy for five minutes without break, cursed him obscenely, blasphemously, repetitiously, in a harsh guttural voice.” [MF 79] Chandler hides Marlowe’s emotions and covers them up with irony. Marlowe never gets as excited and irritated as Spade. When he finds out his client was doing harm to an innocent girl for long time, and wants him to conceal the facts from the police, he still remains calm and balanced: “‘I’m working for you,’ I said, ‘now, this week, today. Next week I’ll be working for somebody else, I hope. And the week after that for still somebody else. In order to do that I have to be on reasonably good terms with the police. They don’t have to love me, but they have to be fairly sure I am not cheating on them. …’” [HW 1100]

Spade’s and Marlowe’s attitude towards women differs as well. Marlowe is polite towards women that deserve it and tough towards ones that are tough as well, usually culprits. On the other hand, Spade is tough towards all women. In The Maltese Falcon reader discovers Spade has a lover, Iva Archer, who is his partner’s wife. Moreover, he gets involved with his client, Ms O’ Shaughnessy. Actually, they become lovers: “Spade’s arms went around her, holding her to him, muscles bulging his blue sleeves, a hand cradling her head, its fingers half lost among red hair, a hand moving groping fingers over her slim back. His eyes burned yellowly.” [MF 86] This is the limit Chandler never violates. Marlowe remains calm and never has an affair with any woman, especially his client. In The Big Sleep his client’s daughter tried to vamp him, but Marlowe used his irony to protect himself:

She took the photo out and stood looking at it, just inside the door. ‘She has a beautiful little body, hasn’t she?’
‘Uh-huh.’
She leaned a little towards me. ‘You ought to see mine,’ she said gravely.
‘Can it be arranged?’
… ‘You’re as cold-blooded a beast as I ever met, Marlowe. Or can I call you Phil?’
‘Sure.’
‘You can call me Vivian.’
‘Thanks, Mrs Regan.’
‘Oh, go to hell, Marlowe.’ [44]
Such a behavior could be connected with their level of honesty. Chandler describes his private eye as “a man of honor” [SAM 992] and makes Marlowe’s attitude towards women clear: “… I think he might seduce a duchess and I am quite sure he would not spoil a virgin; if he is a man of honor in one thing, he is that in all things.” [SAM 992] This may resemble the phenomenon of a knight and chivalry. Dennis Porter would comment on the terms of chivalry, as he says: “In private eye crime fiction, chivalry, toward a certain kind of woman at least, clearly has its limits.” [100] In Chandler’s novels Marlowe plays the role of a contemporary knight with tough manners and tough language. However, in Hammett’s novel *The Maltese Falcon* the private eye has an affair with his client, who turns out to be the murderer, and still he decides to reveal the truth and commit her to trial:

“Spades face was yellow-white now. His mouth smiled and there were smile-wrinkles around his glittering yes. His voice was soft, gentle. He said: ‘I’m going to send you over. The chances are you’ll get off with life. That means you’ll be out again in twenty years. You’re an angel. I’ll wait for you.’ He cleared his throat. ‘If they hang you I’ll always remember you.’” [207]

Hammett’s private eye is not so honest as Chandler’s Marlowe. Even though Spade becomes a lover of his client, he searches her flat to find out more about her and the case. He does not have so strong morals. This could be the reason why Hammett chose to give his private eye a secretary, Effie Perine. She is Spade’s conscience. When Ms O’Shaughnessy gets into trouble, Spade does not seem to be much interested. His secretary has to force him to go and help his client: “She beat his chest with her fists, crying: ‘No, no – you’ve got to go to her. Don’t you see, Sam? He had the thing that was hers and he came to you with it. Don’t you see? He was helping her and they killed him and now she’s – Oh, you’ve got to go!’ ‘All right.’” [MF 155] Spade’s attitude towards his secretary shows his unbalance as well. He can be nice and polite to her and after few pages he is rude and tough. Effie is something like his mother and Spade is like a spoilt child. He is excited and offensive. He lacks inquisitiveness and devotion.

The process of development of a private eye can be followed in works of Hammett, Chandler and Spillane. Hammett studied the style of detective work and wanted to bring reality to readers. Chandler focused rather on his hero, the private eye of his age, and studied mainly the variety of literary structures and forms, and the use of psychology as well. Spillane’s work was greatly influenced by the age and the Second World War. Spillane’s first novel was published in 1947 and it was set to new society and written for new readers. Sweney studies the influence of the society on Spillane’s work in his
work “American Homo Depraved: Mike Hammer as American Hero” [2005]. He highlights readers’ terrible experience of violence, ruthlessness and disgraceful death in the Second World War and the way in which it changed American readers [197]. Moral and honest Marlowe would not fit. Chandler understood the change and his Marlowe changed as well. Still, Spillane depicted the true violent atmosphere that fit best to those who experienced the war.

As the society and readers changed, the reasons of private eyes for being tough had to change as well. Spillane shifted the tough urban environment even further when he compared New York to jungle and life in it to an uncasing war [Sweney 201]. He explained it in his novel My Gun Is Quick: “… You have to be quick, and you have to be able, or you become one of the devoured, and if you can kill first, …, you can live and return to the comfortable chair and the comfortable fire. …” [in Sweney 201]. Sweney also analyzed the main differences between Marlowe and Hammer. Marlowe is honest, a kind of contemporary knight. Spade is not so honest, but Hammer is violent, brutal and full of hatred and desire for revenge. Sweney suggests that Hammer is a kind of crusader who leaves the people he meets dead around him [198].

The shift of Spillane’s hard-boiled fiction does not lie only in the presence of brutal violence, it also brings a change in detective’s character. The phenomenon of macho, brought by Hemingway, remains, but it transforms its shape. Hammer, according to Sweney, is:

… a man’s man, which means he drinks about four whiskeys and countless beers a day, his favourite meal is fried eggs, steak and coffee, has frequent casual sex, likes to taunt queers, has a pre-Christian moral code: an eye for a finger, a head for an eye, never apologizes, fears long-term female relationships, and dreads coming into the office. [200]

Such an image is much easier to follow and it is the reason why American men loved it. The image even overcame the new century and some men, not only in the USA, still keep it as their ideal.
3. ERA REFLECTIONS

3.1 CRIME AND SOCIETY

Hard-boiled detective fiction in general, and Dashiell Hammett’s and Raymond Chandler’s fiction in particular, comments widely on political and social changes in the twentieth-century American society. Nicholas Blincoe, English novelist and critic, admits that “crime fiction might be political” [“The Criminal Heart”]. Various examples of criticism of American democracy, materialism, political and social system and corruption in police and politics can be found in hard-boiled fiction.

Revolutionary and protest literature of the 1920s and 1930s was produced to “make art socially responsible to the economically and racially oppressive times” [Norris in Elliott 327] and it obviously effected and influenced Hammett’s and Chandler’s work. Raymond Chandler defines the world he lives in, in his *The Simple Art of Murder* [1944], and he explains:

The realist in murder writes of a world in which gangsters can rule nations and almost rule cities, in which hotels and apartment houses and celebrated restaurants are owned by men who made their money out of brothels, in which a screen star can be the fingerman for a mob, and the nice man down the hall is a boss of the numbers racket; a world where a judge with a cellar full of bootleg liquor can send a man to jail for having a pint in his pocket, where the mayor of your town may have condoned murder as an instrument of money-making, where no man can walk down a dark street in safety because law and order are things we talk about but refrain from practising; a world where you may witness a hold-up in broad daylight and see who did it, but you will fade quickly back into the crowd rather than tell anyone, because the hold-up men may have friends with long guns, or the police may not like your testimony, and in any case the shyster for the defense will be allowed to abuse and vilify you in open court, before a jury of selected morons, without any but the most perfunctory interference from a political judge. [991]

The world described by Chandler had its roots in the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which went into effect in 1920, and which “prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors” [Boorstin 77]. The era of Prohibition gave birth to many illegal activities first concentrating on the sale of liquors, but consequently concerning the increase in crime. Boorstin even notes that “no earlier piece of federal legislation, …, was so productive of widespread illegal enterprise …” [81]. The public was not satisfied with the legislation as its effects were only negative. Boorstin cites Franklin P. Adams’ poem “The Wickersham Report” [1931] that expresses the public opinion on Prohibition:
Prohibition is an awful flop.
We like it.
It can’t stop what it’s meant to stop.
We like it.
It’s left a trail of graft and slime,
It don’t prohibit worth a dime,
It’s filled our land with vice and crime,
Nevertheless, we’re for it. [78]

Chandler comments on Prohibition and its enforcement in his *The Big Sleep* when Marlowe describes Eddie Mars’s club, a kind of ‘speakeasy’ [an illegal drinking place]: “The law enforcement in this town is terrific. All through prohibition Eddie Mars’s place was a night club and had two uniformed men in the lobby every night – to see that the guests didn’t bring their own liquor instead of buying it from the house.” [105].

During Prohibition [1919 – 1933] and later in the wartime the power of the government became weaker and the “accommodation between government, business, and labor … [was] generally favorable to the interests of businessmen, who managed to fight off most serious challenges to their control of the production process” [Brinkley in Foner 134]. The existence of capitalist society can be also depicted in Scaggs’ reasoning of the rise and popularity of hard-boiled detective stories:

Such gangster stories, in which an individual from a disadvantaged background becomes rich and powerful from a life of crime, only to become a victim of the criminal world that created his success, sprang from the reality of the attraction of crime as an understandable career choice in an increasingly aggressive capitalist society. [29]

The attraction of crime is understandable when the political system allowed illegal enterprise all over the USA.

During the 1930s American society suffered from an economical and social shock when Wall Street Crash on the stock market came in 1929. O’ Callaghan informs that people took risks and kept buying shares on credit in the 1920s [96]. The Wall Street Crash caused that people became involved in debts and rise of unemployment and homelessness started. The situation meant a downfall of individuals who occasionally started to look for job and money by illegal means. Cawelti notes that hard-boiled detective fiction portrays “the downfall of an individual who had sought wealth and power by immoral and illegal means” [77]. Cawelti adds that the downfall of the individual led to the rise of collective power and organization [77], meaning the rise of organized crime. Scaggs utters supportive remarks about the rise of organized crime during the Great Depression [57].
Chandler notices the change of society as well when he comments on leisure time activities in Eddie Mars’s club in *The Big Sleep*: “It was still a beautiful room and now there was roulette in it instead of measured, old-fashioned dancing.” [97] Brinkley highlights “the expensive and inefficient Social Security system” [130] which was established in the 1930s. Chandler comments on the lack of safety in society in his *Farewell, My Lovely* when an elderly woman nicknamed ‘Old Nosey’ by Marlowe says: “‘Folks ain’t safe a minute in this town. When I come here twenty-two years ago we didn’t lock our doors hardly. Now it’s gangsters and crooked police and politicians fightin’ each other with machine guns, so I’ve heard. Scandalous is what it is, young man.’” [240]

Chandler made an attempt to criticize American democracy in his *The High Window* when he commented on the fact that employees of private clubs can carry guns and force the visitors to do what is required: “I looked at the gun strapped to his hip, the special badge pinned to his shirt. ‘And they call this a democracy,’ I said.” [1081] Brinkley provides opinions of some historians on modern America and the “decline of genuine democracy” and he highlights the increase in the power of private institutions, their growing influence over government and the declining ability of individuals to control their lives [122]. Chandler goes further in *The Big Sleep* and criticizes the way of executing criminals in the USA when Marlowe talks about the process of executing in gas chamber in San Quentin. Marlowe utters a comment: “‘And that’s what they call humane execution in our state now.’” [73]

Chandler tries to find a cause of crime in American society. Cawelti uses an extract from Chandler’s *The Long Goodbye* to explain the relation between crime and society: “‘Crime isn’t a disease. It’s a symptom. We’re a big rough rich wild people and crime is the price we pay for it, and organized crime is the price we pay for organization.’” [Cawelti 150] However, Chandler blames “American materialism and greed” [Cawelti 150] and focuses on the criticism of the rich high class. Škvorecký explains Chandler’s point of view and notes that the vice portrayed in Chandler’s novels is caused by bustling and often unreasonable and nonsensical dollar chase [88]. Chandler’s criticism of the rich is evident in his portrayal of the private eye who, according to Cawelti, “demonstrates that those who have achieved wealth and status are weak, dishonourable, and corrupt” [157].

In *The Big Sleep* Chandler portrays a wealthy high-class family, the Sternwoods, and he finally reveals that Carmen, the younger daughter, is a lunatic murderer, whereas
Vivian, the older daughter, is a gambler. In this way Chandler demonstrates how dishonourable and demoralized the rich can be. In *The High Window* Chandler portrays another wealthy family, the Murdocks, and finally he reveals that Leslie, the son, is a counterfeit and murderer and his mother, Mrs Elizabeth Bright Murdock, an exploiter and murderer as well. Chandler demonstrates the difference between the high class and middle class on the relationship between Mrs Elizabeth Murdock and her exploited secretary Merle. He might thus imply that the high class exploits the middle class. It is striking that Chandler was brought up in England at a private school and he felt class consciousness. However, as Hiney suggests, Chandler’s experience at trenches during the First World War eroded his class consciousness [50]. In *Farewell, My Lovely* Chandler portrays Bay City as a corrupted city for the upper classes:

Aster Drive had a long smooth curve there and the houses on the inland side were just nice houses, but on the canyon side they were great silent estates, with twelve foot walls and wrought iron gates and ornamental hedges; and inside, if you could get inside, a special brand of sunshine, very quiet, put up in noise-proof containers just for the upper classes. [247]

Racial issues were a very controversial topic in the 1930s. Brinkley notes that the New Deal of President Roosevelt had “modest record on racial issues” and that the administration failed “to take more active measures on behalf of racial equality” [129-30]. Tom Williams, *the Observer* [2006], notes that Chandler deliberately avoided racial issues [“It’s criminal…”]. In *Farewell, My Lovely* Chandler gets to the environment of Afro-Americans and his approach is rather contradictory. At the beginning of the novel Chandler uses such pejorative expressions as ‘coloured joint’ or ‘negroes’ [169]. On the other hand, he tries to suggest the inverted racism when Marlowe utters: “‘They won’t serve you. I told you it’s a coloured joint.’” [169] Chandler goes further and lets a black man in the pub say: “‘No white folks, brother. Jes’ fo’ the coloured people. I’se sorry.’” [170] Thus, it can be said that Chandler tries to adopt a neutral attitude. He uses pejorative expressions familiar for the readers and used in the streets, and he implies the existence of racism against ‘the white’ as well. Thus, Tom Williams’ suggestion could be accepted. Chandler tries to reflect the real situation in the streets and, at the same time, to adopt neutral stand-point.
3.2 URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The 1920s and consequently the 1930s in America meant a tremendous rise of new technology, new inventions and new lifestyle. People who lived in the country and rural areas started to move to the city and urban areas to get work. The shift of environment is evident also in literature. Hollywood and boom of film industry had a great influence on society as well. According to Brinkley the national social values were defined by “material abundance, the increasing availability of consumer goods, the pervasiveness of advertising, and the homogenization of mass culture” [126]. The 1920s highlighted “consumerism” and “personal fulfillment” [Brinkley in Foner 126] as the main interest of modern society. The 1930s were shaped by “urbanization and the growing political power of the city” [Brinkley in Foner 133]. The urban forces are evidently portrayed in hard-boiled detective fiction. The focus on tough urban environment and consequent tough behavior of citizens determined another name for hard-boiled fiction, ‘noir’ fiction.

However, the new modern culture and change of society did not pass without problems. Brinkley speaks about “a broad conflict between a new, secular urban culture, committed to cultural pluralism and modernist ideas, and an older rural America, wedded still to traditional values” [124]. Such a conflict can be found in some Chandler’s novels. Chandler excellently describes and characterizes the urban environment; on the other hand, he seems to adhere to traditional values. Marlowe’s character is the best example of such perseverance on traditional values, the values of a knight. Chandler’s traditional British education is recognizable in his style. He seems to have problems with the modernist idea of pluralism, i.e. “the principle that people of different races, religious, and political beliefs can live together peacefully in the same society” [Longman Dictionary 1030]. It could be the reason of Chandler’s elusive standpoint to racial issues. He might have felt lost in the new cracked world.

Scaggs opens another interesting topic. He speaks about ‘‘unreality’ of Chandler’s Los Angeles and Hammett’s San Francisco, which are characterized by imitation, artifice, insubstantiality, fakery, and facades” [71]. He does not mean unreal descriptions. He tries to draw attention to ‘unreality’ of the real world and modern society. In Farewell, My Lovely Chandler portrays Bay City and depicts the urban atmosphere:
Outside the narrow street fumed, the sidewalks swarmed with fat stomachs. Across the street a bingo parlour was going full blast and beside it a couple of sailors with girls were coming out of a photographer’s shop where they had probably been having their photos taken riding on camels. The voice of the hot dog merchant split the dusk like an axe. [330]

Chandler tries to depict the atmosphere of fakery in modern America. People wanted to be someone else, or to live somewhere else. Chandler describes the popularity of photographs and the fact that people preferred having photos taken as if from different country and time.

The modern urban American world was full of imitation, fakery and illusion. The boom of film industry, Hollywood, significantly contributed to the shift of society towards fakery. O’ Callaghan notes that Hollywood actors became famous stars and newspapers were full of their stories [94]. It probably influenced ordinary Americans and they dreamt about being stars. Chandler focused on description of architecture and its artificial features full of exotic elements. In The Lady in the Lake Chandler describes ostentatious place of Derace Kingsley full of exotic elements: “Their reception room had Chinese rugs, dull silver walls, angular but elaborate furniture, sharp shiny bits of abstract sculpture on pedestals and a tall display in a triangular showcase in the corner.” [3]

Chandler adopts slightly negative attitude and he chooses such words in order to highlight the illusion. In The High Window Chandler portrays a high-class club and he demonstrates the illusive picture of wealth, power and happiness:

The lobby looked like a high-budget musical. A lot of light and glitter, a lot of scenery, a lot of clothes, a lot of sound, an all-star cast, and a plot with all the originality and drive of a split fingernail. Under the beautiful soft indirect lighting the walls seemed to go up forever and to be lost in soft lascivious stars that really twinkled. You could just manage to walk on the carpet without waders. At the back was a free-arched stairway with a chromium and white enamel gangway going up in wide shallow carpeted steps. At the entrance to the dining room a chubby captain of waiters stood negligently with a two-inch satin stripe on his pants and a bunch of gold-plated menus under his arm. [1082-3]

Chandler uses his masterly instrument, irony and wisecracking. He tries to indicate the luxury and bad taste and, thus, moves to criticism of high class in general. Scaggs explains that “social climbers attempt to imitate the expensive bad taste of the wealthy” and he adds that “Marlowe’s eyes pierce these insubstantial facades with no great difficulty” [71]. Chandler describes the city of Camino de la Costa in Farewell, My Lovely and expresses the failure of imitating efforts: “We slid down a broad avenue
lined with unfinished electroliers and weed-grown sidewalks. Some realtor’s dream had turned into a hangover there.” [206].

The feature of imitation and fakery can also be applied to people and characters in hard-boiled detective fiction. Scaggs mentions Hammett’s The Maltese Falcon and the counterfeit [72]. Hammett’s private eye Sam Spade is hired by a client, Miss Wonderly alias Miss O’Shaughnessy to find a precious statuette, ‘falcon’. The reader learns the story of the falcon in the second half of the novel and, still, the true motivation and story of Spade’s client is not revealed. Brigid O’Shaughnessy lies from the beginning to the end of the novel. The falcon reveals to be a counterfeit at the end of the novel. Moreover, Spade himself lies to his enemies and pretends to be their friend. Hammett’s novel is full of lies, fake stories and fake identities. Carl D. Malmgren comments on the feature of Hammett’s The Maltese Falcon in his “The Crime of the Sign: Dashiell Hammett’s detective fiction” [1999]. Malmgren calls the lying ‘role-playing’ or ‘metamorphosis’ and he speaks about ‘ontological confusion’ [“The Crime of the Sign: Dashiell Hammett’s detective fiction”]. The metamorphosis can be followed in the character of Brigid O’Shaughnessy as she is introduced as a client, a young innocent girl, perhaps as a victim:

She was tall and pliantly slender, without angularity anywhere. Her body was erect and high-breasted, her legs long, her hands and feet narrow. She wore two shades of blue that had been selected because of her eyes. The hair curling from under her blue hat was darkly red, her full lips more brightly red. White teeth glistened in the crescent her timid smile made. [2]

Finally, she reveals to be a murderer. Hammett uses more than one name for Brigid to distinguish the changes in her character.

Malmgren’s ‘ontological confusion’ could be distinguished in Hammett’s portrayal of the relationship between Brigid and Spade. They start an affair and they are confidential to each other: “Spade combed her red hair back from her face with his fingers and said: ‘I’m sorry, angel. I thought you’d sleep through it. …’” [89]. On the other hand, they both lie and do not trust each other. At the end of the novel, the reader cannot be sure whether their relationship was real or just pretended. Spade loves her, but he decides to send her over to police. Malmgren explains the feature of Hammett’s fiction: “In a world of nonstop role-playing, it is often impossible to distinguish between acting and being. This confusion of appearance and reality opens up in
Hammett’s world a zone of cognitive indeterminacy.” [“The Crime of the Sign: Dashiell Hammett’s detective fiction”].

However, Chandler does not use the feature of ontological confusion in his novels. Though, his character of Carmen Sternwood in The Big Sleep might resemble the style of metamorphosis when she first appears as a young innocent ‘child’ and then reveals to be a lunatic murderer. All the same, Chandler gives his character such signs that the reader might presume she is evil or strange.

3.3 GANGSTERS, RACKETEERS AND BOOTLEGGERS

The 1920s and 1930s in America were years of widespread illegal enterprise, gambling and crime. In the 1920s people tried their luck at the stock market and, according to O’ Callaghan, they used to buy shares on credit and borrow money from the banks. Such a way of buying shares was called ‘on the margin’ and people became gamblers [96]. However, Boorstin goes further and tries to explain the origin of gambling in American society: “… there was an element of gamble in all American life, which made it hard to distinguish the prudent planner from the man who won by taking chances – on the fertility of unknown land, on the salability of half-known new minerals, on the prospects of unbuilt railroads and unpopulated cities.” [78] In other words, the American history of new life in a new world has always been full of chances and gamble. Prohibition of 1920 – 1933 reinforced the feature of American life and finally “made law-breaking a habit” [O’ Callaghan 95].

Boorstin points out that popularity of crime can be also proved from the American language which was full of new words concerning crime. He gives an example, the word ‘gangster’, “which in the last years of the nineteenth century had come into use to refer disparagingly to crooked politicians who formed gangs, [and] became obsolete in that sense and by about 1925 referred to criminals” [82]. Hiney also notes that the readers were fascinated with the fast growth of Italian and Irish gangs [86]. More new expressions developed, such as a ‘bootlegger’, i.e. someone who makes, carries and sells alcohol illegally [Longman Dictionary 136], or a ‘racketeer’, i.e. someone who uses “a dishonest way of getting money” [Longman Dictionary 1097].

Chandler gives some examples of various rackets in The Big Sleep: “She wasn’t living with Eddie Mars, didn’t like his rackets. Especially the side lines, like blackmail,
bent cars, hideouts for hot boys from the east, and so on.” [118]. Chandler also gives some examples of rackets of a doctor in *Farewell, My Lovely*: “My guess is that Sonderborg will have a record, not local, somewhere else, for abortion, or treating gunshot wounds or altering finger tips or for illegal use of dope.” [314]. Chandler not only gives examples of real rackets, he also expresses his opinion on the illegal enterprise [about Eddie Mars in *The Big Sleep*]:

> Once outside the law you’re all the way outside. You think he’s just a gambler. I think he’s a pornographer, a blackmailer, a hot car broker, a killer by remote control, and a suborner of crooked cops. He’s whatever looks good to him, whatever has the cabbage pinned to it. Don’t try to sell me on any high-souled racketeers. They don’t come in that pattern. [138]

Chandler shows an open criticism of that kind of getting money. He even deprives racketeers of any good character.

Cawelti discusses the possibility of relation between crime and government. He suspects that “there is a definite relation between the fascination with limitless criminal power in the new crime formulas and the public’s reluctant awareness of the uncontrollable power of violence in the hands of the government” [78]. He also mentions the ‘family’ and the fact that society moved its interest and confidence from the individual to the family, the organizations and organized crime. Cawelti suggests that “a ‘family’ of criminals might be more humanly interesting and morally satisfactory than a society of empty routines, irresponsibly powerful organizations, widespread corruption, and meaningless violence” [79]. That could be the dark message of hard-boiled detective fiction.

Boorstin speaks about the rise of organized crime in Chicago and he introduces Mont Tennes, the leader of gambling in Chicago, and mentions the first “war between rival gambling syndicates” in 1907 [79]. Chandler comments on the problem in *The Big Sleep* and he talks about the difficulty of stopping it: “‘You ought to stop some of that flash gambling,’ I said. ‘With the syndicate we got in this county? Be your age, Marlowe. . . .’” [44]. However, in *Farewell, My Lovely* [1940] Chandler expresses his opinion on gangsters, Brunette in the novel, and he seems to have a liking for them:

> ‘. . .These racketeers are a new type. We think about them the way we think about old time yeggs or needle-up punks. Big-mouthed police commissioners on the radio yell that they’re all yellow rats, that they’ll kill women and babies and howl for mercy if they see a police uniform. They ought to know better than to try to sell the public that stuff. There’s yellow cops and there’s yellow torpedoes – but damn few of either. And as for the top men, like Brunette – they didn’t get there by murdering people. They got there by guts and brains – and they don’t have the group courage
the cops have either. But above all they’re business men. What they do is for money. Just like other business men. Sometimes a guy gets badly in the way. Okey. Out. But they think plenty before they do it…” [340]

Chandler seems to be strongly influenced and inspired by the fate of Al Capone. Boorstin cites Al Capone’s defence of his ‘job’: “‘I make my money by supplying a public demand. If I break the law, my customers, who number hundreds of the best people in Chicago, are as guilty as I am. The only difference between us is that I sell and they buy. Everybody calls me a racketeer. I call myself a business man. …’” [84]. Resemblance between Chandler’s fiction and a real case is evident. However, Chandler makes clear that he can understand gangsters, but he does not approve of their ‘job’: “‘Don’t think I like these bastards,’ he said. ‘I hate their guts.’” [FML 341]. Al Capone took over the role of the leader of organized crime in Chicago in 1925 and in 1931 he was convicted and sent to prison. In 1939 he was “released because of poor health” [Boorstin 83-4] and only a year after that Chandler published his novel.

Chandler depicts the important features of gangster’s job, among them solving problems by murders. In The Big Sleep Chandler speaks about ‘trouble-shooting’: “… He does a job for Eddie Mars when Mars needs him – trouble-shooting. He’d bump a guy off between drinks. …’” [119]. In Farewell, My Lovely Chandler utters a remark about the way of murdering problematic people: “… My idea is that whoever did it is a dead man hours ago, with weights on his ankles, deep in the Pacific Ocean. …’” [231].

After the end of Prohibition organized crime carried on and, according to O’Callaghan, gangsters “used the money they had made as bootleggers to set up other criminal businesses” [95]. Chandler keeps the feature of organized crime in his fiction and in The Big Sleep he speaks about gangster Eddie Mars and his club, or in Farewell, My Lovely about gangster and mayor Brunette and his club and gambling ship in one. Boorstin comments on the devices used by gangsters, such as Tennes, and he says that “he [Tennes] used fire, dynamite, and sometimes the police themselves, to persuade other gamblers to use his service” [79]. Chandler portrays the use of the police in The Big Sleep: “… I know you, Mr Mars. The Cypress Club at Las Olindas. Flash gambling for flash people. The local law in your pocket and a well-greased line into L.A. In other words, protection. …’” [52].

A kind of resemblance could be depicted between Al Capone and Chandler’s gangster Brunette in Farewell, My Lovely. Boorstin informs that Capone “was careful to keep himself ‘clean’” and that he, “not to risk his own capital, allowed others to own the
speakeasies, the houses of prostitution, and the gambling casinos” [83]. Moreover, Capone had “large and loyal personnel with special qualifications” who were allowed by crooked cops to carry guns [Boorstin 83]. The corrupted relation between Capone and the police, or politicians, is explained by Boorstin: “Chicago’s Mayor Big Bill Thompson had helped Capone lay the foundation of all his enterprises. In the late 1920s some national political leaders were reportedly enlisting Capone’s aid in the management of federal elections.” [83]. Chandler’s Brunette in *Farewell, My Lovely* is a gangster and businessman as well. Chandler highlights many times in the novel that Bay City is Brunette’s town as “a mob of gamblers headed by a man named Laird Brunette elected themselves a mayor” [227]. Chandler goes further and defines the amount of money people pay to be elected and he names Brunette’s rackets: “‘Who runs this town?’ … ‘I heard a gambler named Laird Brunette put up thirty grand to elect the mayor. I hear he owns the Belvedere Club and both the gambling ships out on the water.’” [328].

Gambling ships meant a real problem in the twentieth-century America. Gambling Ship Act defines what a gambling ship means:

**§ 1082. Gambling ships**

(a) It shall be unlawful for any citizen or resident of the United States, or any other person who is on an American vessel or is otherwise under or within the jurisdiction of the United States, directly or indirectly—

1. to set up, operate, or own or hold any interest in any gambling ship or any gambling establishment on any gambling ship; or
2. in pursuance of the operation of any gambling establishment on any gambling ship, to conduct or deal any gambling game, or to conduct or operate any gambling device, or to induce, entice, solicit, or permit any person to bet or play at any such establishment,

if such gambling ship is on the high seas, or is an American vessel or otherwise under or within the jurisdiction of the United States, and is not within the jurisdiction of any State. [Humphrey “U.S. Gambling Ships”]

Brunette owns two gambling ships near Bay City and thanks to corrupted police he manages to get away with it. Chandler defines the condition under which gambling ships can exist: “‘Them gambling ships are supposed to be out beyond city and state jurisdiction,’ he said. ‘Panama registry. …’” [FML 328]. Hiney refers to the fact that Santa Monica where Chandler lived was a place where gambling ships existed and corrupted police and citizens approved of it [91]. Chandler used his experience with life in such a city and mocked Santa Monica by describing and criticizing Bay City.
3.4  POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CORRUPTION

Hard-boiled detective fiction widely comments on the status quo of the American society. Brinkley speaks about the 1930s and he claims that “most of the federal bureaucracy … was too small and inexperienced to be able to undertake large tasks” [131]. Such a stage inevitably led to the fact that most of the important tasks fell “into the hands of businessmen” and Brinkley illustrates it by the fate of the National Recovery Administration [131]. The situation might open the way to corruption. The political situation in the USA in the 1930s meant a change from the left to the right wing when in 1932 President Hoover, a Republican, was replaced by President Roosevelt, a Democrat [O’ Callaghan 98].

Various opinions of the political situation appeared in the hard-boiled fiction. Scaggs notes that “the ideological power of the hard-boiled mode is almost certainly one of the reasons for its appropriation on political grounds, …” [74]. He adds that “the political agendas, either overt or covert, that are evident in hard-boiled fiction range from the more right-wing paranoia and misogyny of Mickey Spillane to the increasingly liberal-reformist agenda of Ross Macdonald, …” [74].

Chandler’s point of view can be recognized in Farewell, My Lovely where Marlowe and a cop called Hemingway meditate over the system of government and politics. They mention that “‘Cops don’t go crooked for money. Not always, not even often. They got caught in the system…’”. When they want to explain the system they get to corruption. And Chandler’s solution to the vicious circle of corruption and need of money is that “‘… we gotta make this little world all over again…’” [325]. Such a solution seems to be radical. On the other hand, it is the only radical thought in the novel when compared to aggressive style of Mickey Spillane.

Hammett’s political views can be followed in The Glass Key which concerns the elections of the Mayor and all the corruption around. Hammett goes further and uses the real name of The Observer. He accuses the newspaper of being corrupted and bribed when a gangster O’ Rory decides to have lies about the Mayor printed: “‘I’ll have Hinkle – he’s the Observer guy – put the stuff in shape. You just give him the dope and let him write it…’” [79]. Hammett tries to explain the reasons of the journalist to be bribed. He refers to the Depression and need of money for a living:

‘You know a lot about it. Mathews is up to his ears in debt. The State Central Trust Company holds both mortgages on his plant – one on his house, too, for that matter.
The State Central belongs to Bill Roan. Bill Roan is running for the Senate against Henry. Mathews does what he’s told to do and prints what he’s told to print.’ [103]

Finally, Hammett summarizes the situation in his country: “‘Politics is a tough game, …, the way it’s being played here this time. The Observer is on the other side of the fence and they’re not worrying much about the truth…’” [103].

Cawelti suggests another point of view on hard-boiled detective fiction and its message. When he speaks about the criminal he notes that he “is commonly a person of considerable political and social influence” [143-4]. Cawelti thus reveals “the corrupt relationship between the pillars of the community and the criminal underground” [148-9]. Such a corrupt relationship can be found in both Chandler and Hammett. In *The Big Sleep* Chandler introduces a wealthy and powerful family, the Sternwoods, and finally discovers that both daughters are criminals. In *The High Window* Chandler introduces another powerful family, the Murdochs, and again discovers that the son is a criminal.

On the field of politics a similar corrupted relationship can be followed in Chandler’s and Hammett’s novels. In *The Glass Key* Hammett introduces Shad O’Rory who is a politician and a gangster as well. He owns a gambling club, however, he is never convicted: “‘Since the third time they knocked his place over – when the two coppers were killed – he’s been laying low, though they don’t seem to have a hell of a lot on him personally.’” [173]. Something similar can be depicted in Chandler’s *Farewell, My Lovely* where gangster Brunette is said to run a gambling ship and, at the same time, corrupts politicians and the Mayor: “‘So the town is as crooked as all that?’ I said. ‘It’s Laird Brunette’s town. They say he put up thirty grand to elect a mayor.’” [305]. Chandler evidently described a real event as Hiney suggests. Hiney informs that in 1933 the Los Angeles Mayor Shaw got money for his campaign from two gangsters and, moreover, in 1937 a detective Henry Raymond was seriously injured by a bomb in order not to testify against the Mayor’s officials [87].

Politics and politicians, thus, seem to be a hot issue in hard-boiled detective fiction. Hammett’s novel *The Glass Key* is the best example of criticism of the political situation and corruption. The aristocratic Senator Henry finally reveals to be the murderer of his son who was likely to scandalize his father’s reputation. Hammett explains the forces around elections and what politicians are able and willing to do in order to win the elections. Ned Beaumont is a political fixer for Paul Madvig, the Mayor, and he utters the explanation: “‘If he [O’Rory] can upset you this election he’ll
be fixed to square anything he has to do to win. … You’re using the police on him. He’ll have to fight back at the police and he will. That means you’re going to have something that can be made to look like a crime-wave. …” [69]. Hammett shows both sides of the problem. Not only O’ Rory is corrupted, but also the Mayor uses various twists and he harnesses from his connections. Beaumont advises the Mayor to “see that it comes up before the right judge – Phelps, say – and [they] can keep the Observer out of the fight – except on [their] side – till after election”’ [132].

The problem of bribing is also frequently discussed. Hiney informs about the history of Los Angeles from 1915 to 1923: “… sloužilo osm náčelníků policie čtyřem skandály sužovaným správám města. Během téhož let starostové, státní návladní a městští radní brali peníze na kampaně a někdy úplatky od majitelek nevěstinců, pašeráků a hazardních hráčů” [45]. Hammett portrays the situation in The Glass Key where he shows the price of won election: “I [O’ Rory]’ll give you [Beaumont] ten grand in cash right now if you’ll come in and ten more election-night if we beat Paul [the Mayor]’” [78]. Hammett also hints that there is an opportunity to cooperate with the police and to get protection: “After election I’ll stake you to the finest gambling-house this state’s ever seen and let you run it to suit yourself with all the protection you ever heard of”’ [77].

The corruption of the police is mentioned by Hiney as well. He describes a real case of C. C. Julian in Los Angeles in the 1920s. It is a case of a deceitful businessman who raised money from the citizens. Finally, the bubble burst and he fled. His accomplices were to be convicted but the District Attorney was corrupted and the investigation was a fake. In 1927 the Senator Gerald Nye commented the scandal that it is “výmluvným důkazem, že milion dolarů nelze ve Spojených státech usvědčit z trestného činu” [61-2]. Nearly the same statement can be found in Chandler’s short story “Trouble Is My Business” [1934]: “You can’t convict a couple million bucks of murder in this man’s town’” [567]. Hammett shows the corruption of the District Attorney in The Glass Key where the D. A. Farr is willing to stop the investigation in order not to cause problems to the Mayor: “Of course you know if you – if Paul – I mean if there’s any reason why I shouldn’t – you know – we can let it go at that.”’ [54].

Hiney demonstrates another example of the police corruption. In 1929 the Chief of Los Angeles Police Department James Edgar Davis discredited the critic of the police and his administration counselor Carl Jacobson in order to get him out of the way. Fortunately, the truth came out [67]. The absolute power of the police is evident in both
Chandler’s and Hammett’s novels. In *The Glass Key* Hammett uses the politician and gangster O’Rory and lets him discredit the Mayor, Paul Madvig, in terms of irresponsible charges. In *The Big Sleep* Chandler demonstrates the power of the police as well: “It’s obvious to anybody with eyes that that store is just a front for something. But the Hollywood police allowed it to operate, for their own reasons.” [81].

Chandler leaves a message in each of his novels. The urgent message of his two novels, *The Big Sleep* and *Farewell, My Lovely*, is that it is almost impossible to stay honest in the twentieth-century USA:

‘I’m a copper,’ he said. ‘Just a plain ordinary copper. Reasonably honest. As honest as you could expect a man to be in a world where it’s out of style. … Being a copper I like to see the law win. … You and me both lived too long to think I’m likely to see it happen. Not in this town, not in any town half this size, in any part of this wide, green and beautiful U.S.A. We just don’t run our country that way.’ [BS 145]
CONCLUSION

In my thesis I focused on popular literature and its subgenre hard-boiled detective fiction. I analyzed novels and short stories of two prominent representatives Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. Moreover, I discussed the modernistic features and the comments on the social and political events in their novels.

Popular literature in general and hard-boiled detective fiction in particular is considered by academics a marginal field of literature. However, I tried to prove that various literary items common to high literature are widely used in hard-boiled detective fiction. Thus, I made certain that the hard-boiled mode should not be disregarded and that it is as worth reading and criticizing as other literary genres.

Moreover, I proved that hard-boiled detective fiction comments widely on social and political events of the 1920s and 1930s. The proved facts concerning political situation, various scandals on social field and corruption among politicians, officials or police officers were identified in hard-boiled novels of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. Thus, I proved that hard-boiled mode of popular literature is genuinely political.

Even though hard-boiled school of detective story flourished mainly in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, its impact on modern American society is still recognizable. Hard-boiled mode can be distinguished in all action movies and modern detective series. The school of the 1920s was surpassed long ago, and still, the origins of nowadays tough aggressive style of arts date back to the time of hard-boiled boom.

Detective fiction as a distinctive genre of popular literature is one of the favorite genres read by ordinary people. The reason why detective stories are so widely read could be the fact that readers gain not only an easy source of entertainment but also an elaborate source of valuable literary satisfaction. It is remarkable how many detective series appear on television these days. People’s hunger for rewarding feed for their brains is, thus, evident.

The hunger for tough setting, tough characters and tough plot is evident as well. Today’s world changes from day to day and the persistent change could be compared to the immense change of world and society at the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus, we can say that the persistent popularity of hard-boiled detective stories can be
caused by the resemblance between today’s society and one of the early twentieth century.

People suppose that hard-boiled mode might be more likely to be read by men. Nevertheless, the tough manly point of view can be very impressive and instructive also for women. Reading hard-boiled tough stories and novels offered me a new point of view not only on men but also on American society. Hard-boiled features are still remarkable in many contemporary literary works and TV programmes as well. It could be the proof of the fact that hard-boiled mode and behavior is natural for us.

One may ask why people tend to read tough detective stories. The evident popularity of detective fiction could stem from the lifestyle of ordinary people and the need of relax. People’s lives are full of duties, charges and taboos. World and society is becoming more and more intellectualized. That might be the reason why popular literature is so widely read. People feel the need of a kind of escape from the grey reality. Such a feature is called escapism.
SUMMARY

In my thesis I focused on the feature of popular literature and the hard-boiled school of detective story. The aim of my thesis was to demonstrate that popular fiction in general and hard-boiled detective fiction in particular should be considered literary genre comparable to high literature. I made an outline of detective fiction in general. I devoted the first chapter to the development of detective genre in American and English literature with the emphasis on American hard-boiled mode. I not only gave the outline of detective literary works and their authors but I also presented a critical view of hard-boiled detective stories and novels.

I highlighted the modernistic literary features in hard-boiled detective fiction of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. I focused on the use of borrowings from high literature and their examples. I analyzed the use of varieties of English and highlighted the excellent skill of Raymond Chandler. In one section I concentrated on the type of hard-boiled hero and compared two accomplished private eyes of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler.

To prove that hard-boiled detective fiction comments widely on the political and social events, I demonstrated some real cases and events of the 1920s and 1930s and the way how they were reflected in the novels. I focused mainly on the urban environment of the twentieth-century America, the prosperity of crime and gangsters and the phenomenon of political and social corruption. Thus, I manifested the immense impact and influence on American society.

Key words: popular literature, detective fiction, hard-boiled detective fiction, pulp magazines, corruption.
RESUMÉ

Ve své diplomové práci jsem se zaměřila na populární literaturu a zvláště na ryze americký detektivní žánr drsné školy. Cílem diplomové práce bylo prokázat, že populární literatura a zvláště detektivka drsné školy by měla být považována za literární žánr srovnatelný s akademicky uznávanou literaturou. Pokusila jsem se vytvořit obecný přehled detektivní tvorby. První kapitolu jsem věnovala vývoji detektivního žánru v americké a anglické literatuře s důrazem na americkou techniku drsné školy. Pokusila jsem se nejen o přehled autorů a literárních děl detektivního žánru, ale také o kritický pohled na detektivky drsné školy.

Snažila jsem se vyzdvihnut modernistické prvky v detektivkách drsné školy a zaměřila jsem se na dva významné představitelé tohoto žánru, Dashiella Hammetta a Raymond Chandlera. Zaměřila jsem se na jejich použití vypůjčených prvků z jiných uznávaných literaturních žánrů. Pokusila jsem o analýzu různých prvků jazyka užitých v dílech Raymond Chandlera a tím jsem se snažila vyzdvihnut jeho úžasný cit pro jazyk. Dále jsem se zabývala typickými rysy hlavního hrdiny detektivek drsné školy a porovnala jsem dva nejznámější soukromé detektivy vytvořené Dashiellhammettem a Raymondem Chandlerem.

Abych dokázala, že detektivka drsné školy refektuje důležité politické a společenské události, snažila jsem se předložit co nejvíce skutečných případů z 20. a 30. let 20. století a jejich odraz v literární tvorbě. Zaměřila jsem se především na městské prostředí a rozkvět zločinu a korupce v Americe na počátku 20. století.

Oblíbenost drsného stylu v literární tvorbě a především v televizní produkci hojně sledované dnešní populaci dokazuje nesmírný vliv drsné školy nejen na americkou společnost, ale na lidskou společnost obecně.

Klíčová slova: populární literatura, detektivky, detektivka drsné školy, senzační plátky, korupce.
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March 27, 2007.  


APPENDIX

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