



State
ty

This is to certify that the
thesis entitled
**Visions and Values in the Action Detective
Novel: A Study of the Works of
Raymond Chandler, Kenneth Millar and John D. MacDonald**
presented by

Etta Claire Abrahams
has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for
Ph.D. degree in English

Russell B. Nye

Major professor

Date May 3, 1973

PN 043

~~MAY 15 '74~~

~~310~~

~~428~~
~~8132~~

~~MAY 11 '78~~

~~336~~

~~21416~~
~~MAY 25 '88~~

~~W~~
~~E~~

~~336~~

~~F412~~

~~MAY 16 '80~~

~~112~~

~~W-307~~

~~8-10-80~~
~~8-10-80~~

~~MAY 19 '81~~

~~003~~

~~MAY 19 '81~~

~~I 323~~

~~OCT 01 '86~~

~~K6~~

~~JUN 02 '87~~

~~198~~

~~5846443~~

ABSTRACT

VISIONS AND VALUES IN THE ACTION DETECTIVE NOVEL: A STUDY OF THE WORKS OF RAYMOND CHANDLER, KENNETH MILLAR, AND JOHN D. MACDONALD

By

Etta Claire Abrahams

This dissertation is a study of the attitudes, values and codes of three action detectives: Philip Marlowe, Lew Archer, and Travis McGee. Their creators, Raymond Chandler, Kenneth Millar (whose pseudonym is Ross Macdonald), and John D. MacDonald, span forty years of the hard-boiled tradition.

Hard-boiled detective fiction is perhaps the most widely read kind of popular literature both in America and abroad. A primary reason for its success is that it reinforces the values of society at large, and provides it with a modern day hero who will enforce these values. In order to understand the kinds of attitudes and values that action detective fiction reinforces, I have chosen three popularly and critically acclaimed artists of the genre. I have selected five major areas with which all three authors

concern themselves: the hero and his world; the law; villains and victims; violence and sadism; and social criticism.

The heroes of Raymond Chandler, Kenneth Millar, and John D. MacDonald are all outcasts of society. But their alienation is self-imposed, in part because of their dissatisfaction with modern society. Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer were once former Los Angeles policemen who found too much routinization and corruption in the police force and left it to impose their own order on society. Travis McGee sits back on his houseboat-yacht in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and views the chaos of modern America. The first chapter, then, focuses on the characters of the three detectives. What is it that makes them heroes? What personal values do they hold? And what is the code or order by which they live and which they impose on society? In order to answer these questions, an analysis of the worlds they inhabit is necessary, and this too is discussed in the first chapter.

The second chapter defines the detectives' relationships with organized law enforcement agencies. The law, that is, sanctioned law, is not often to be trusted by action detectives. Although there are good police officers in the worlds and three detectives inhabit, they are often incapacitated from carrying out their assignments by red-tape or internal corruption. This chapter examines the

nature of established law and order, the natures of the official law enforcers, and the reasons that the three detectives feel it is often necessary to work outside the law.

Chapter Three explores the roles and characters of the villains and victims as they are represented by each writer. Unlike the earlier dime western novel, villains and victims in the action detective novel are rarely all-evil or all-virtuous. Nor do they belong to any specific social group. Thus, an indistinct line is often drawn between villain and victim. The chapter studies the types of villains and victims with whom the three detectives deal, as well as the detectives' attitudes toward them.

Punishment and justice is studied in the fourth chapter, which concerns violence and sadism in the detective novel. When a detective drills a man in the heart, it's violence; when he shoots him in the belly it's sadism. This is a simple, but workable metaphoric distinction between violence and sadism. Violence is at once a way of life and deplorable to the three detectives. Sadism exists both explicitly and implicitly in the best of the action detective novels: explicitly in the kinds of punishments dealt to both victims and villains and in the descriptive passages about these punishments, and implicitly in the effect of these passages upon the reader, be it nausea or vicarious pleasure.

The final chapter demonstrates how the detective is a social critic. Why he is a social critic is rather obvious: he is an outsider, an outcast, and as such may view our world more objectively than we ourselves view it. But more important is the "what" of what he criticizes, for this raises the issue of popular taste. If one of the characteristics of popular fiction is that it reinforces the values of the society for which it is written, one wonders just how far a writer can go in criticizing the society while continuing to maintain his popular appeal. How the authors handle this tricky problem is one of the major thrusts of this chapter.

The dissertation is primarily a creative one in that few sources, other than the novels, were used. Until recently, little study has been done in the hard-boiled genre. For an introduction to hard-boiled fiction, I highly recommend Ron T. Goulart, editor, The Hardboiled Dicks, and David Madden, editor, Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties.

VISIONS AND VALUES IN THE ACTION DETECTIVE NOVEL: A
STUDY OF THE WORKS OF RAYMOND CHANDLER, KENNETH
MILLAR, AND JOHN D. MACDONALD

By

Etta Claire Abrahams

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1973

657740

© Copyright by
ETTA CLAIRE ABRAHAMS
1973

For My Parents

Frances Sherman and Herbert Norman Abrahams

With the love they taught me to give.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It's a special pleasure to acknowledge the people who so much contributed to the success of this dissertation, because my relationship with them has been a long and warm one; I am a Michigan State University "baby," nurtured through my Bachelor's and Master's degrees by many of these people. Professor Russel B. Nye directed my thesis with perception and sensitivity. He set me at ease, and made me feel that I could succeed, even in those last frantic moments of trying to meet a deadline. He is truly a gentle man. Professors Virgil Scott and Victor Howard read the dissertation with care and expedience. The creative moments I enjoyed while writing are due to the early guidance I received from Professor Scott when I was an undergraduate. Bernard Engel, Chairman of the Department of American Thought and Language at Michigan State, also deserves a word of thanks. He understood the difficulty of teaching full-time and writing full-time, and never pressured me.

There are friends, too, who must be thanked. Jeff Greenberg provided the inspiration for the anecdote at the beginning of the fifth chapter. He's a beautiful person. Jack Thrush shared late-night coffee, listened to my

ravings, and much more. The sisters in my rap group, and especially Marilyn Frost and Ann Howard, helped me to overcome the fear of success which is shared by so many other women. Most of all, I'd like to thank Herb Greenberg. He has given more than he has known, and is a loving and much-loved person. Like his son, he too is beautiful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
PREFACE	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE HERO AND HIS WORLD	18
III. THE TROUBLE WITH COPS IS	47
IV. VILLAINS AND VICTIMS	78
V. WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL LURKS: VIOLENCE AND SADISM	128
VI. WHERE HAVE ALL THE VALUES GONE: THE PRIVATE EYE'S VISION OF AMERICA	155
VII. CONCLUSION	188
BIBLIOGRAPHY	192

PREFACE

The action detective story was as much a part of the 1920's as prohibition, bathtub gin, and organized crime. While local law enforcement agencies accepted the bribes of big city gangsters and turned their backs on the man in the street, the private detective, a somewhat tarnished knight, emerged in the granite jungles as a source of hope. Through the use of guns, his fists, and pure cunning he fought both the gangsters and the police on his own terms. And he won.

Historically, the popular fiction hard-boiled detective has always been concerned with the social problems of his time. In the 1920's Dashiell Hammett's Continental Operative fought organized crime in Red Harvest. In the 30's, 40's, and 50's Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe found crime among the wealthy members of elite Los Angeles society, in the offices of doctors, dentists, lawyers, and more sophisticated crime syndicates. For Ross Macdonald (Kenneth Millar's pseudonym), crimes were and are concentrated among the wealthy, with greed, the shame of old skeletons in modern sliding-door closets, and mental illness as the motivators. Freudian analysts, high school guidance

counselors, and the current Hollywood hip scene are only a few of Macdonald's contemporary villains. And for John D. MacDonald, the dragons are real estate syndicates, psychopaths, the drug-youth culture, and middle-class America in general.

Hard-boiled detective fiction is among the most widely read kind of popular literature both in America and abroad. A primary reason for its success is that it reinforces the values of society at large, and provides it with a modern day hero who will enforce these values. In order to understand the kinds of attitudes and values that action detective fiction reinforces, I have chosen three novelists, Raymond Chandler, Kenneth Millar and John D. MacDonald. All three are critically and popularly acclaimed artists of their genre. I have selected five major areas with which all three authors concern themselves: the hero and his world; the law; villains and victims; violence and sadism; and social criticism. The dissertation will treat each of these themes separately and in the order in which they are listed above.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I am the lover wed to tears . . .
I am the cynic old and sage . . .
--Raymond Chandler

That the action (or hard-boiled) detective story did not blossom until the 1920's is, I think, significant. Because although its plot and characters are directly indebted to the western dime novels of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its themes and the codes of its heroes are products of the change in values and the resulting alienation wrought by World War I and its aftermath. It is therefore no coincidence that the codes of the Hemingway hero and that of the tough private eye are closely related.

The man most responsible for the success of the hard-boiled school was Joseph "Cap" Shaw. Shaw, a business man and World War I veteran with literary ambitions, succeeded to the editorship of Black Mask (one of three pulp magazines originally published by H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan in 1920), in November, 1926. He served

as editor for a full decade, and during that time changed the entire pattern of the detective story.

The ratiocinative tale was created by Edgar Allan Poe in 1841, developed by such British writers as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle through the Victorian period, later imitated with minor variations by Americans like Mary Roberts Rinehart and S. S. Van Dine. It included, in its established, not-to-be-deviated-from formula, a detective who, through the process of rational analysis, solves a crime that all others, including the police, are at a loss to explain. He then demonstrates to a friend the method he used--"Elementary, Watson"--and shows where the police went wrong.¹ The pattern, consistently followed into the 1920's, included obscure clues, mysterious puzzles in the form of cryptograms and anagrams, the locked room mystery, and foreshadowing, also referred to as the "had-I-but-known" story.

Poe began his brief career as a detective writer (although the word "detective" is never used for August Dupin) as a means of self therapy. The actions of madmen in his tales of horror and delusion were carefully interpreted and explained by the detached, totally rational Dupin in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), "The Mystery of

¹For a more complete description of the origins of the ratiocinative tale see Russel B. Nye, The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America (New York, 1970), Chapter X.

Marie Roget" (1842-43), and "The Purloined Letter" (1845). Poe's attempt to create order in his own mind was externalized by the detective who, through his solution of a crime which has disturbed the order of things, restores that order. Although Poe's effort to restore his own sanity was ultimately a failure for him, the new genre brought fame and fortune to his saner successors.

The formula was, and still is, successful and appealing. It describes a world set apart from the real world, a setting of gardens and gardeners, maids and butlers, manors and manners. The order which has been upset is a limited one, and therefore easy to restore; it does not extend beyond the lives of those directly affected. There are no snipers, no Richard Specks, no Charles Mansons.² No psychological explanation of motive is needed other than, say, a phrenological one or, in the case of the infamous Professor Moriarty, a chemical imbalance.

Captain Shaw, on the other hand, demanded realism, or at least the illusion of reality, from his writers. And he got it. He desired "simplicity for the sake of clarity, plausibility and belief," and "held that action is

²Critics have often speculated as to why Conan Doyle did not make use of the Jack the Ripper murders in London which took place while he was writing the Holmes stories. One suggestion is that he feared a loss of Holmes' credibility if the detective's solution to the crimes might be in error. Another is that the far reaching crimes could not be successfully handled within the confines of the formula.

meaningless unless it involves recognizable human characters in three-dimensional form."³ Don't tell the reader, he admonished his writers, ~~show~~ them, or better yet, let the detective show them by talking and acting for himself. Don't make the detective talk and act tough; let him do it for himself. Talk tough they did, sometimes to an extreme, as in the case of Carroll John Daly's Race Williams: "I shoved a butt into my face, gave it heat."

It was Dashiell Hammett who became the first standard by which Shaw measured quality in his hard-boiled writers. Hammett, a former Pinkerton Detective agent, began to turn his experiences into fiction:

Although he was credited with being the leader of the hard-boiled school of detective fiction, and although his hero had the basic characteristics found in the traditionally tough hero, it is no good trying to make Hammett all of a piece. . . . The good writers of Hammett's group, as do good writers in any group, experimented with writing techniques in order to determine what was most useful and effective for their own individual expression. They worked with plot, trying to keep it from becoming too obviously stereotyped; they created a character in their developing short stories who would later stand up in the longer works of fiction; they agreed on the theme of the rugged individualist righting wrongs; they tried both the third and the first person to see which would make the style more objective; and they concentrated on their hard-boiled style, hoping to make it as action packed as possible.⁴

³Philip Durham, "The Black Mask School," in Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties, ed. by David Madden (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), p. 53.

⁴Durham, pp. 58-59.

A relative latecomer to Hammett's group was Raymond Chandler. Born in Chicago in 1888, Chandler moved to England with his Ireland-born mother, Florence, when his parents were divorced. He was eight years old. There, under English law, his mother became a British national. Chandler, however, remained an American citizen. He was educated in England's public schools, and upon graduation took the Civil Service examination in which he placed third out of six hundred.

His success on the examination was rewarded with a position in the Admiralty, but he found the atmosphere stuffy and the work tedious, and after six months he resigned. He then moved to Bloomsbury where he began to learn to write. His first poem, which he said was written in the bathroom, was published when Chandler was nineteen. He continued to publish poetry as a freelance writer in such magazines as The Westminster Gazette, The Academy, and The Spectator.⁵

In 1912, Chandler decided to return to the United States. He borrowed money from a British uncle, arrived in New York, and began his journey to Los Angeles. In Los Angeles he worked at anything he could find--on an apricot ranch, stringing tennis rackets. When America

⁵Philip Durham, Down These Mean Streets A Man Must Go: Raymond Chandler's Knight (Chapel Hill, 1963), Chapter I. Much of the information of Chandler's life has been gleaned from this book.

entered World War I, he went to British Columbia and enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces, where he served from 1917 to 1919.

Returning to California in 1919, Chandler went to work for an English bank in San Francisco. However, he disliked the stand-offishness of the English who, he said, "don't live in England, don't want to live in England, but bloody well wave their Chinese affectations of manner and accent in front of your nose as if it was some kind of rare incense instead of a distillation of cheap suburban snobbery, which is just as ludicrous in England as it is here."⁶ He shortly left the firm and returned to Los Angeles, where he began his career as an accountant for the Dabney Oil Syndicate.

Early in 1924, Chandler's mother died. A few weeks later he married twice-divorced Pearl Cecily "Cissy" Hurlburt. Chandler was thirty-five and she was fifty-three. The marriage, a loving one, lasted for thirty years, until Cissy's death.

Things went well for Raymond Chandler in the 1920's. He was promoted to assistant auditor and subsequently to vice president of three companies in the Dabney Syndicate: South Boon Oil Company, Dabney-Johnston Oil Company, and Herndon Petroleum Corporation. Yet in 1933, at the age of

⁶Durham, p. 15.

forty-five, Chandler decided to leave his successful career and return to his first love, writing.

His first story, "Blackmailers Don't Shoot," appeared in the December, 1933, issue of Black Mask. His original private eye was named Mallory, and from 1933 until 1939, he appeared in twenty stories, under ten different names, and in different occupations (detective lieutenant, narcotic squad undercover man, hotel detective).⁷ Through these years Chandler carefully polished his detective and his style, paying strict attention to minute detail and terse description. His efforts were appreciated by "Cap" Shaw, who used Chandler's writing as an example to would-be hard-boiled authors. He would hand the writer a blue pencil and a Chandler paragraph saying, "Would you cut that somewhere. Just cut a few words."⁸ Chandler's paragraph, of course, could not be cut; it was too cleanly written.

The result of Chandler's early efforts drove up to Colonel Sternwood's Los Angeles mansion one morning in 1939. He was tough, tall, handsome, and thirty-three. His name was Philip Marlowe and he was "everything the well-dressed private detective ought to be. I was calling on four million bucks." The novel was The Big Sleep, and although Chandler

⁷Durham, "The Black Mask School," p. 76.

⁸Durham, p. 54.

said that it was "just another detective yarn that happens to be more interested in people than in plot,"⁹ the critics highly praised it.

After Chandler's first novel, he wrote six more, all with Philip Marlowe, the Los Angeles policeman-turned-private-detective as the hero. They were Farewell, My Lovely (1940), The High Window (1942), The Lady in the Lake (1943), The Little Sister (1949), The Long Goodbye (1953-54), and Playback (1958). His novels and short stories were almost simultaneously published in London (The Long Goodbye was released in London before it was published in America), and have been translated into Italian, Portuguese, German, Danish, Japanese and Swedish. Furthermore, three of his novels were made into films: The Big Sleep, starring Humphrey Bogart, Farewell, My Lovely, starring Dick Powell, and most recently, The Long Goodbye with Elliot Gould as Philip Marlowe.¹⁰

Of the detective genre, Chandler wrote:

[The] peculiar appropriateness of the detective or mystery story to our time is that it is incapable of love. The love story and the detective story cannot exist, not only in the same book--one might almost say in the same culture. Modern outspokenness has utterly destroyed the romantic dream on which love feeds. There is nothing left to write

⁹Durham, Down These Mean Streets . . . , p. 33.

¹⁰Chandler also wrote for the screen. His greatest personal triumph was the screenplay for James M. Cain's Double Indemnity, with Fred MacMurray and Edward G. Robinson in the leading roles.

about but death, and the detective story is a tragedy with a happy ending.¹¹

The honesty with which Raymond Chandler wrote of modern California specifically, and modern America in general, did not go without recognition. The Head of Special Collections at the University of California, Los Angeles, requested that he donate his manuscripts to its library. Although he was hesitant to do so at first (he thought them of little significance to scholars), he finally agreed. The Raymond Chandler Collection at UCLA is of much importance to the student of the detective novel, of California, and of Raymond Chandler. He was also honored by his peers. He received the coveted Edgar Award from the Mystery Writers of America for the "Best Mystery Novel" of 1954 (The Long Goodbye). In February, 1959, he was elected to the presidency of the Mystery Writers of America.

Raymond Chandler's last years, however, were not happy ones. In December, 1954, Cissy Chandler died. On February 22, 1955, two weeks after what would have been their thirty-first anniversary, a depressed and broken Chandler made a melodramatic attempt at suicide.¹² An old

¹¹Durham, p. 3.

¹²Durham suggests that Chandler's devotion to women (he had lived solely with his mother until her death, and immediately married after she died), his gallantry and reverence of them, and his need to take care of them, were responsible for his depression and loneliness after Cissy died.

drinking habit returned and for long periods of time he would go on binges, suffering guilt and depression afterwards.

In early March, 1959, Chandler attended a cocktail party in New York to celebrate his election to the presidency of the Mystery Writers of America. It was a cold, snowy, dreary day. After the party he took ill, and instead of continuing to England, where he had planned to retire, he flew home to La Jolla. On March 26, 1959, he died of bronchial pneumonia. Seventeen persons attended his funeral.

Raymond Chandler left a legacy of force, of style, of toughness, of character and a sense of social commitment to his followers. Among those who followed in the Chandler tradition is Kenneth Millar, a devourer of Black Mask fiction in his youth. Of Raymond Chandler, Millar says, "He wrote like a slumming angel."

Kenneth Millar, or Ross Macdonald as he is known to his readers, was born in California in 1916.¹³ His parents, like Raymond Chandler's, were divorced when he

¹³To avoid confusion between Ross Macdonald and John D. MacDonald, I will use Kenneth Millar, the author's name in private life, throughout the dissertation. Millar wrote under his own name, but thought it would confuse readers, since his wife was also publishing mystery fiction. He tried John Macdonald and John Ross Macdonald. He gave up the "John" after John D. MacDonald's mother bought twelve of Millar's novels, thinking they were authored by her son.

was quite young, and Millar and his mother went to Canada where they lived with different relatives. Millar says that "The year I graduated [from high school], 1932, I counted the rooms I had lived in during my first sixteen years and got a total of fifty."¹⁴

It is not surprising that Millar became a writer. His grandfather and father were both journalists, and there were writers on his mother's side of the family as well. Although he began to write when he was at a boys' boarding school in Winnipeg at the age of twelve, his first story, a parody of Sherlock Holmes, did not appear until he was sixteen. The publication was the Kitchener Collegiate Institute's Grumbler.

In the same issue, a first effort by another writer also appeared. Six years after graduation, Millar once again met his wife, Margaret. They confessed to each other their desire to become writers. In June, 1938, they were married.

The Millars went to the University of Toronto in the fall of 1938, and Kenneth prepared to become a high school teacher. The following year he began to publish stories, poems, and humorous anecdotes. His main publishing source was the Toronto weekly, Saturday Night:

¹⁴Kenneth Millar, in his "Introduction" to Matthew J. Bruccoli, compl., Kenneth Millar/Ross Macdonald: A Checklist (Detroit, 1972), p. xii.

"Payment was just a cent a word, but the early joys of authorship were almost as sweet as sex."¹⁵

Millar taught high school in Canada during the winter and attended the University of Michigan summers, while Margaret wrote promising gothic novels. The success of her work permitted her husband to give up his high school teaching and accept a full-time fellowship at the University of Michigan where he earned a doctorate in English.

His first novel, The Dark Tunnel (1943), was written while he was at Ann Arbor. A somewhat clumsy attempt at spy-murder fiction (a Nazi spy is loose on the campus), it was nevertheless an important effort for Millar. "Part of the terror that permeates the book," he declares, "was my own terror, I think, at the act of committing myself to a long piece of writing."¹⁶ After serving in World War II, two other novels appeared, Blue City and The Three Roads (both written in 1946, but published in 1947 and 1948, respectively).

His first hardboiled detective novel, with its hero, Lew Archer, was published in 1949. For those who would ask why he chose to write detective fiction rather than straight fiction, Millar responds:

¹⁵Millar, p. xiii.

¹⁶Ibid.

I had less choice than the reader may suppose. My one attempt to write a regular autobiographical novel about my unhappy childhood turned out so badly that I never showed it to my publisher. . . . The deadly game of social Snakes and Ladders which occupied much of my youth had to be dealt with in another form, more impersonal and objective.¹⁷

But Millar's reason for writing crime fiction goes beyond personal, psychological necessity. For he sees in the detective developed by Hammett and Chandler, a continuation, in an urban society through a popular and democratic literature, of the "masculine and egalitarian traditions of Natty Bumppo and his nineteenth century descendants."¹⁸ Thus, Lew Archer, in post World War II America, shares similarities with the nineteenth-century frontiersman. However, he "is not so much a knight of romance as an observer, a socially mobile man who knows all the levels of Southern California life and takes a peculiar wry pleasure in exploring its secret passages."¹⁹

Three thousand miles from California, on the seemingly more civilized and peaceful Atlantic seaboard, Travis McGee sits aboard his houseboat-yacht, the Busted Flush. He sips his Plymouth gin as he chats with his economist-friend, Meyer. McGee is the creation of John Dann MacDonald, best-selling paperback author of over

¹⁷ Millar, p. xv.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. xvi.

sixty novels, thirteen of them in the Travis McGee series. McGee's relatively carefree Ft. Lauderdale existence (in contrast to the driven Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer), reflects MacDonald's own normal childhood.

Born in Sharon, Pennsylvania in 1916, his family moved to Utica, New York, when he was twelve. He received a B.S. from the University of Syracuse in 1937, and a M.B.A. from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration in 1939. He followed the wishes of his father, a financial officer for the Standard Tank Car Company and Savage Arms Corporation, and entered the business world as a consultant.²⁰

Unlike Raymond Chandler and Kenneth Millar, MacDonald had no early literary ambitions. He had always been an avid reader, but his main hobbies were stamp collecting, model airplanes, golf, skiing and archery. He himself suggests that had his business career not been interrupted by World War II, he might never have begun writing.

MacDonald joined the army in 1940 and served until 1946, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Since war-time censorship prohibited him from writing long descriptive letters to his wife, Dorothy (whom he had married in 1937), he wrote a short story for her enjoyment. His wife

²⁰ Much of this biographical information has been obtained from Len and June Moffat, comps., The JDM Master Checklist: A Bibliography of the Published Writings of John D. MacDonald (Downey, California, 1969).

submitted it for publication, and eventually sold it to Story Magazine where it appeared in the July-August, 1946, issue as "Interlude in India."

When he returned from the service, MacDonald, encouraged by his initial success, continued to write. He literally barraged the pulp magazine industry with his stories, selling so many of them that the magazines were often compelled to publish fiction under house names such as John Farrell, John Wade Farrell, Robert Henry, John Lane, Scott O'Hara, Peter Reed, and Henry Rieser. Since other writers also published under these names, checking for MacDonald's fiction is sometimes difficult.

In his first full year of writing, 1946-1947, John D. MacDonald sold one short story each to Esquire, Liberty, and Cosmopolitan. Although these magazines were certainly prestigious, MacDonald was not so much interested in place of publication. He just tried to sell them wherever he could, and he soon became popular in all types of pulp magazines--science fiction, sports, western, adventure, and mystery.

MacDonald's approach to writing fiction is similar to that of a businessman making money. He has a large office, works a nine-to-five day, and composes on an IBM Selectric typewriter (unlike Kenneth Millar, who writes on the back of torn-off calendar pages). His goal is sales rather than prestige, and he has rarely published in the

hardcover industry, preferring, instead, the paperback originals. Prestige, however, has been given him. He was one of the first--if not the first--paperback original authors to be elected to the presidency of the Mystery Writers of America.

His business sense is carried into the Travis McGee series. Each McGee novel has a color in its title (Pale Gray for Guilt, Nightmare in Pink, The Quick Red Fox, etc.), thus making it easy for the consumer to distinguish between those novels he's read, and those he hasn't. Furthermore, the characters and plots of the Travis McGee series also reflect MacDonald's continuing interest in big business. McGee's lifestyle and that of his friend, Meyer (whose own boat is named the John Maynard Keynes), resembles that of the successful, early-retired executive. His sleuthing is an avocation, rather than a profession, and the plots of the novels often involve intricate big-business swindles and double-swindles.

The choice of these three novelists, Raymond Chandler, Kenneth Millar, and John D. MacDonald, is, I think, significant. Chandler represents the beginnings and the development of the Black Mask short story detective into a more intricately characterized Philip Marlowe in the longer novels. Kenneth Millar has expanded upon the character, adding further objectivity and more insight about his past and what drives him, to the character of Lew Archer. John D.

MacDonald demonstrates how the formula of the hard-boiled story may be varied. Travis McGee, however, although he operates out of a houseboat in Florida, still retains many of the characteristics of his California counterparts. How these characters relate to their society, how they are similar and how they differ, will be discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

THE HERO AND HIS WORLD

When the American cowboy hero in those famous early western movies rode into the sunset, where did he head? Geographically, he headed West. In our imagination we can still see him, straight-backed and square-shouldered, a solitary shadow against the brilliance of the setting sun. If we extend our vision we can see this cowboy, this loner, squatting by his campfire, speculatively smoking his hand-rolled tobacco, sleeping under the stars with his saddle for a pillow, his gun next to him for protection against night enemies. In the mornings he rises early and continues on his way, under the glaring heat of the sun and the dust of the prairies, forever moving West through the last decades of the nineteenth century.

On his journey he encountered foes with whom he was trained to deal: rattlesnakes, hostile Indians, outlaws. His guns and his fists were his weapons. In the small new towns where he occasionally stopped, he met others: lawmen good and bad, women of high and low moral virtue. With these too he could cope. He dealt with them with primitive, common-sense psychology. His reward was an inner satisfaction that justice had been done and that he had had a

part in it. Stolidly he continued his trek, alone and lonely, hoping perhaps, that at the end of his journey he would find peace, contentment, something to fill the void inside him.

Instead, in California, there was nothing. He reached the Pacific Coast and what he found was the treacherous and indifferent roar of the ocean as it slammed against the weathered, craggy cliffs. The ocean echoed the life in the large coastal cities, a life of treachery and indifference, as unpredictably cruel as the ocean, and far less majestic.

The hero had reached his Promised Land and found it somewhat less than promising. But he had come so far, and the way had been so hard, that he decided to stay. He settled in the city, and as the years passed he traded his chaps for a suit, his horse for an automobile, his morning cup of coffee for a shot-glass of whiskey, his bed under the stars for a cramped apartment. He swapped his romantic idealism for romantic cynicism. And although he still had the urge to see justice done, he rented an office and charged for it. He kept his gun and his fists and his primitive psychology. And he remained alone.

This metamorphosed cowboy, the twentieth-century hard-boiled detective, is the one we meet through the persons of Philip Marlowe, Lew Archer, and Travis McGee. They are the literary outgrowths of the cowboy heroes of dime western

novels. All three are loners, and all are outcasts of the society. Their alienation, however, is self-imposed, in part because they have become disenchanted with American society. Philip Marlowe, Raymond Chandler's hero, was a former police detective who found too much corruption in the Los Angeles police force and left it to impose his own order on society. Lew Archer, Kenneth Millar's character, is also a former Los Angeles police officer who has struck out on his own. He is divorced, and the loneliness of his profession is often intensified by this fact of his existence. Travis McGee, John D. MacDonald's detective is also removed from society. From his house-boat yacht moored in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, he sits back and views the chaos of modern America. Although not a detective by trade, McGee feels compelled to help those who are in need.

Of the three, Phillip Marlowe, the detective of Raymond Chandler's series, is the first to arrive on the Los Angeles scene. It is significant that Los Angeles serves as a base of operations for California-born Marlowe. Los Angeles in the 1930's provided a panacea for all the ills caused by the Great Depression. While millions of Americans starved, Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire waltzed their way through The Gay Divorcee (1934), and Busby Berkley musical extravaganzas assured the world that nothing was so bad it couldn't be mended with a tap dance by Ruby Keeler and a hug from Dick Powell. Crime in the cities?

Certainly. But James Cagney in Public Enemy (1932), and Edward G. Robinson in Little Caesar (1931), proved that it just doesn't pay.

Los Angeles itself participated in this fantasy. Movie kings and queens erected their castles in Hollywood and Beverly Hills, and they were much like the ones they inhabited on the movie sets. Wilshire Boulevard and Sunset Strip took on the same fairyland air as the Warner Brothers lot. Yet all was not well in Camelot. Inside its walls, hidden from the public eye, the new kingdom was already crumbling. It took the private eye of Philip Marlowe "by seeing beyond the brightly colored facade and by going down the mean streets in the rear"¹ to bring the reality of Los Angeles into focus. George P. Elliott, in his essay "Country Full of Blondes," observes: "If you want the feel and aspect of Los Angeles and vicinity during the thirties, forties and early fifties, you hardly do better than to read [Chandler's] fiction."²

A romantic who has had his idealism tempered by reality, Marlowe neither chooses to submit entirely to that reality, nor to submerge himself in a rose garden fantasy. Instead, his relationship with the city is much

¹Philip Durham, Down These Mean Streets a Man Must Go: Raymond Chandler's Knight (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 49.

²George P. Elliott, "Country Full of Blondes," The Nation, April 23, 1960.

like that of a lover who is secretly aware of the indiscretions of his mistress, and who therefore balances his tenderness towards her with a cynical objectivism:

It was one of those clear, bright summer mornings we get in the early spring in California before the high fog sets in. The rains are over. The hills are still green and in the valley across the Hollywood hills you can see snow on the high mountains. The fur stores are advertising their annual sales. The call houses that specialize in sixteen-year-old virgins are doing a land-office business. And in Beverly Hills the jacaranda trees are beginning to bloom.³

It is not until The Long Goodbye (1954), the next-to-last Chandler novel, that Marlowe becomes sufficiently disillusioned with Los Angeles to move from his city apartment to a house in the Laurel Canyon district. It is in this novel, too, that the ageing Marlowe begins a romance with Linda Loring, a romance which is culminated with his proposal, and her acceptance of marriage in Chandler's last novel, Playback (1958), the major setting of which is removed from Los Angeles to the wealthy resort of Esmeralda, a city with Oz-like overtones, if only in name.

Marlowe's final commitment to a romantic future, however, is established when he is in his mid-forties and tired of too many lies, too many superficial relationships with both men and women, too much violence, and too many years of living the life of a loner. Age and loneliness

³Raymond Chandler, The Little Sister (New York: Pocket Books, 1949), p. 1. Although originally published by Houghton Mifflin Co., all quotations from The Little Sister will refer to the Pocket Books edition.

have crept upon him, and we may forgive him his dreams (although Chandler's critics, among them Kenneth Millar, did not), when we consider that dreams are all he has when all cause for dreams is gone.

Yet it is not the mellowed Marlowe of Playback to whom we are first introduced in The Big Sleep (1939), the first full-length Marlowe adventure, but to the young, aggressive, wisecracking, romantic-cynic, who brought Raymond Chandler and his hero, Philip Marlowe, to the attention of action-detective novel critics and fans. Marlowe's raison d'être becomes evident in the opening page of the novel:

The main hallway of the Sternwood place was two stories high. Over the entrance doors, which would have let in a troop of Indian elephants, there was a broad stained-glass panel showing a knight in dark armor rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn't have any clothes on but some very long and convenient hair. The knight had pushed the vizor of his helmet back to be sociable, and he was fiddling with the knots on the ropes that tied the lady to the tree and not getting anywhere. I stood there and thought that if I lived in the house, I would sooner or later have to climb up there and help him. He didn't seem to be really trying.⁴

In Millar's The Chill (1964), Lew Archer sits on a bench as he is tailing a subject, and reads from a book about Heraclitus: "All things flow like a river, he said; nothing abides. Parmenides, on the other hand, believed

⁴Raymond Chandler, The Big Sleep (New York: Pocket Books, 1939), p. 1. Although originally published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., all quotations from The Big Sleep will refer to the Pocket Books edition.

that nothing ever changed, it only seemed to. Both views appealed to me" (p. 161). This ambivalence in Archer is typical of the way he views his southern California world. It is a world of "short hairs, and longhairs, potheads and acid heads, draft dodgers and dollar chasers, swingers and walking wounded, idiot saints, hard cases, foolish virgins" (The Instant Enemy, 1968, p. 201).

In his office, pin-ups of "killers, embezzlers and con men" stare down from the walls "with unabashed eyes" (The Zebra-Striped Hearse, 1962, p. 3). Driving to a hospital in Pacific Point, Archer recalls another time he visited there, and reveals the daily tedium of his work: "It was a rambling place of bilious yellow plaster, and the sight of it depressed me. My client's wife had died of [an overdose] of sleeping pills. All that he really wanted was a divorce" (The Way Some People Die, 1951, p. 7).

"Nothing abides." People are born, they live well or poorly, and they die--sometimes too early, sometimes too late, often violently. Los Angeles is their city of last resort. Some survive it, many do not. The pieces of flotsam and jetsam of Archer's world rush past him in the river or sewer that is Los Angeles. They are there for a moment, only to disappear suddenly from his life. The moment of their passing is too fleeting for Archer to grasp, to hold on to, to make sense of, until a future date. Then, after he has sorted and assimilated the chaos of the

world in which he lives he may make his second statement:
 "Nothing ever changed. It only seemed to."

The disease that is modern America stretches its tentacles beyond Los Angeles proper into California's suburban valleys. For Chandler, the rotten odor of decaying success is Bay City; for Archer it is Santa Theresa. Once in a while Archer may meet someone like Stella Carson, in The Far Side of the Dollar (1965), of whom he can say she is "one of those youngsters who make you feel like apologizing for the world" (p. 40). More frequently, however, he confronts people like beautiful, wealthy, multi-murderess Elaine Hillman (in the same novel) who has been caught "in a malign world where even things no longer cooperated and even men could not be bought" (p. 216).

In Millar's most recent novel, The Underground Man (Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), only purification by fire, in this case a raging forest fire, can solve a kidnapping, a fifteen year old murder, a murder only a few hours old, a lost father and a missing son. As the fire spreads, consuming not only the forest, but the homes of the rich, decadent Santa Theresans, the ageing Archer searches for Ronnie Broadhurst, a small boy to whom Archer's commitment is personal: they had fed blue jays together that morning. In a perceptive review of The Underground Man (in the New York Times Book Review, February 14, 1971), Eudora Welty states that

from the time he fed the blue jays with the little boy, [Archer] never had a choice. There is the maze of the past to be entered and come out of alive, bringing the innocent to safety. And in the maze there lives a monster; his name is Murder.

Bringing the innocent to safety is Archer's mission. Sometimes, as in the above case, he is successful. Other times he fails. But it is always to the innocent that Archer is committed. Like Holden Caulfield, he too is a catcher in the rye, attempting to protect the innocents from plunging into the abyss of a society gone mad.

Solutions are important, but salvation is crucial to the three detectives. They are the protectors of society's abused, of society's misfits. The problems of the misfits take precedence over their clients, over established law and order, over their personal lives. Archer can be almost tender to a mental institution escapee in The Doomsters (1958), or to a mixed-up, violent teenager, Davy Spanner, in The Instant Enemy (1968). Marlowe delivers a mentally abused secretary to her parents in Kansas in The High Window (1942), and shows genuine compassion for the plight of unloved murderer Moose Malloy in Farewell, My Lovely (1940). Travis McGee in almost every episode saves at least one woman or man who has been physically or psychologically defeated and nurses them back to health. Having witnessed the rotten fruits of social Darwinism, the detectives have committed themselves to saving the

rejects, those who by society's warped standards are not the fittest.

Ponce de Leon went to Florida in search of the Fountain of Youth. He did not find it. Others also went to Florida, and sometimes their search paralleled de Leon's: retired widows and lonely widowers in search of a new life; older couples from the northern, crime-ridden cities, in search of a place to await the reaper in peace and sunshine; college students hoping to have their last real fling before entering the tedium of adulthood. Sometimes it was the search for a quick buck that drew them. The 1920's Florida land scandals, the hotel and restaurant entrepreneurs, the controlling hand of organized crime, are just a few of the more unpalatable, although sometimes lucrative lures of Florida.

John D. MacDonald captures a sense of Florida through the eyes and ears of Travis McGee and through the words of his other characters, a mildly bizarre combination of showgirls, intellectuals, gangsters and good-time Charlies, concentrated in and around the Ft. Lauderdale-Miami Beach area. The amazing accuracy of MacDonald's perceptions is validated in a recent article in The New York Times Magazine (July 9, 1972), entitled "Report from Convention City." In it, author J. Anthony Lukas interviews a collection of Miami Beach residents who might easily appear, mouthing the same phrases, in any Travis McGee novel:

There's no Mafias in here, no Sinatras in here. . . . My accountants can tell you that, my lawyers can tell you that. I built this whole thing with my blood and sweat (Ben Novack, founder and board chairman of the Fountainbleau Hotel, p. 9).

Frankly, honey, I'm not looking forward to [the Democratic and Republican conventions] Those politicians are just uncouth. At the Republican convention back in '68 I picked up this delegate from Louisiana. I got him to my apartment and gave him a daiquiri to get started. And would you believe it? He threw up all over my white rug (Sally, a hooker, p. 9).

The hooker, Sally, could be found as one of the prostitutes in MacDonald's Darker than Amber. She could also appear as the villain in The Long Lavender Look, or the whore with a heart of gold in A Deadly Shade of Gold. McGee's attitude toward her might be whimsy or nausea depending upon the degree of her involvement in the current crime. His response to her up-chucking client would be a mixture of pity and antipathy in any case. But she would be there, included in one guise or another in almost any Travis McGee novel.

Another MacDonald character found frequently in McGee novels is Chookie McCall, a tough woman with a warm heart. She is a dancer in a Ft. Lauderdale nightclub, and is very popular. Her common sense philosophy and her somewhat tongue-in-cheek view of the world is echoed in the words of this retired Miami Beach stripper:

I drive a Rolls-Royce. I live in a \$110,000 houseboat--a custom-made Sea View Floating home. . . . Not bad for an old stripper, eh? (Zorita, former stripper, now owner of Zorita's Go-Go Girlie Revue, p. 37).

It is interesting to note that like Zorita above, Travis McGee also relishes the idea that he lives on a houseboat-yacht and drives a Rolls-Royce, albeit a vintage one turned into a pickup truck.

McGee's own vision of Florida is also found in this article. A defender of, among other things, nature, he casts a jaundiced eye, the eye of the native Floridian, upon the hotel owners and gimcracky dives crowding the beaches. Another Floridian expresses it similarly:

They've built their big swimming pools and sundecks virtually up to the water line and the rest has been eroded away so there's almost no beach left. It's kind of shocking what people will do to a beautiful thing (Bevlin Friedson, owner of a barber supply business in Miami Beach, p. 10).

"Certainly we've got an image problem," says Hank Meyer, Miami Beach public relations director. "People think of Miami Beach as gaudy, garish, vulgar, a city without substance or purpose" (p. 44). Is this not also the view we have of Hollywood and Los Angeles, operations base for Marlowe and Archer? How different these cities are from relatively staid New York with its long-established tradition of men in gray flannel suits, its Wall Street heritage, its stage theatres and Metropolitan Opera. Or how different from Chicago, the home of serious-minded men (even Al Capone was a serious businessman), the meat-packer of the world. Instead, in Florida and California there is a rootlessness, a transient quality which appeals to

rootless, transient men like Marlowe, Archer and McGee. A little less rootless than the others, yet still afflicted with modern man's homelessness, they are somewhat at peace in their cities.

By the standards of Los Angeles, however, the world of Travis McGee seems relatively simple. First, he lives in a resort town, Fort Lauderdale. Second, he doesn't really live in it, but anchors his fifty-two foot houseboat-yacht, the Busted Flush, in Bahia Moor. Here he passes his days listening to jazz and classical music, devouring succulent steaks, sipping Plymouth Gin, playing chess with his friend Meyer, and entertaining wealthy, intelligent women in his king-sized bed. Third, he is not a detective by trade, but a wreck salvager.

But danger lurks in this peaceful world, too. McGee doesn't have to go far to seek it; it comes to him. Usually, an old friend, or a friend of a friend seeks his help. The crime has already been committed and often the crime is not one that could be called illegal; it is generally legal swindling involving large sums of money or jewels or an inheritance. Over his own protestations, McGee agrees to help--for fifty percent of whatever is recovered.

Archer and Marlowe rarely leave California. McGee, however, travels quite widely. The action of Nightmare in Pink (1964), takes place in New York City; A Purple Place

for Dying (1964) is set in Texas; The Quick Red Fox (1964), shuttles him from Florida to New York to California. Often, however, the novel's action takes place in Florida, a land of sun and surf, of happy tourists and unscrupulous real estate brokers, of college nymphs on vacations and hardened prostitutes, of muscle boys and muscle men.

Florida is also tropical, and in this paradise the world has gone awry. Bodies are found rotting in lagoons (Bright Orange for the Shroud, 1965), or are buried alive in hot asphalt (A Tan and Sandy Silence, 1971). Homicidal sociopaths roam the streets as freely as any retiree down from the North for the winter. Hookers hook wealthy, lonely men, dump their bodies overboard, then return to bask in the warm Florida sun (Darker Than Amber, 1966).

What McGee defends is a time that, perhaps, never existed. A time when man was not embroiled in society, a time before machines and computerized love and men in gray flannel suits. McGee takes careful aim at the targets of his dissatisfaction: modern music, automobile manufacturers, race relations, higher education, the polluted environment. John D. MacDonald, in a Newsweek interview about Kenneth Millar and other detective novelists (March 22, 1971), observes rather wistfully, "I can whip a lot of dead horses."

That Marlowe sees himself as a modern errant knight, and that Travis McGee is often referred to on the series' jackets as "the thinking man's Robin Hood," is no mere

coincidence. For cynical about the world as he may be, the tough detective cannot be a hero unless he has a cause, a personal sense of commitment to a code. Sheldon Norman Grebstein, in an excellent essay, "Hemingway and His Hard-Boiled Children," suggests three criteria or tests that the detective hero must meet in order to prove his toughness: (1) Physical stamina and the ability to take punishment; (2) Control over personal feeling and natural appetites, especially in a professional situation; and (3) The power to confront death without morbid pessimism or specious piety.⁵

Although the three detectives to be studied here pass the toughness test in their first novels, it is a test which is repeated in each successive novel. It is necessary for the knights to prove themselves over and over again. In order to examine the ways in which the three heroes achieve knighthood, let us study three representative novels: Chandler's The Big Sleep; Millar's The Moving Target (1949); and MacDonald's Darker Than Amber.

The first of the three criteria is physical stamina, a test which each of the heroes passes with ease. In The Big Sleep, Marlowe is brutally beaten by Lash Canino and Art Huck, two goons who work for racketeer Eddie Mars.

⁵Sheldon Norman Grebstein, "Hemingway and His Hard-Boiled Children," in Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties, ed. by David Madden (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), pp. 23-7.

When he awakens he discovers that "handcuffs held my wrists behind me and a rope went down from my ankles and then over the end of the brown davenport on which I sprawled. The rope dropped out of sight over the davenport . . . it was tied down" (p. 176). Yet when his ropes are cut, Marlowe stands up and decides "I could still walk. I could run, if I had to" (p. 181).

Indeed, Marlowe can do more than run. Still handcuffed, he uses his wits as well as his skill to lure the vicious Canino (described in the novel's cast of characters as "a tough guy who looks at people as if they were meat") into a death trap by feigning his own violent death: "I let the gurgle die sickeningly. . . . It was nice work. I liked it. Canino liked it very much. I heard him laugh" (p. 186).

In The Moving Target,⁶ Lew Archer, investigating the disappearance of oil millionaire Ralph Sampson, is ambushed in an alley behind the Zebra Room nightclub by a goon named Puddler. Although knocked out by Puddler-- "I had time to run, but I lacked the inclination. Three runouts were too much in one day. I went to meet him and took the sucker punch" (p. 57)--and savagely beaten while still unconscious, Archer's strength and stamina

⁶Kenneth Millar, Ross Macdonald (pseud.), The Moving Target (New York: Bantam Books, 1949). Although originally published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., all quotations from The Moving Target will refer to the Bantam edition.

return and he continues his quest: "My lips felt puffed. . . . It was just as well I couldn't stand on one of [my feet]. I would have kicked the man on the pavement [Puddler] and regretted it later--several years later" (p. 58). When asked where he wants to be driven, Archer's "brain was a vacuum for an instant. Then anger surged into the vacuum. 'Home to bed, but I'm not going'" (p. 59). Later in the novel, Archer and Puddler meet again, but this time it is the detective who is victorious, at the cost of the goon-villain's life.

Travis McGee in Darker Than Amber,⁷ displays a grudging admiration for Griff, the strongarm who knocks him down: "I could see how neatly he had taken me. He had been . . . perfectly content to wait [in ambush] . . . knowing it was the only way out" (p. 104). Nauseous as he is made by the blow from Griff's Luger, which hit him "briskly and solidly over the right ear," and "with echoes of the first red and white explosion going off in [his] head" (p. 104), McGee maintains his detective calm. When Griff is about to execute him on a lonely strip of beach, McGee uses the familiar ploy of asking for a last cigarette, reaches into his slacks' pocket and uses his Bodyguard pistol (Griff hasn't frisked him), to shoot and kill his foe.

⁷ John D. MacDonald, Darker Than Amber (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1966).

It is only after McGee buries Griff in the sand: "Like a nightmare bulldozer I crawled around the area, shoving the board with two hands like a bulldozer blade, covering him over . . ." (pp. 108-9), that his tension is revealed: "I walked back to the car. I had to think out the normal automatic motions of walking, lift of the foot, bend of the knee, swing and placement of the foot, and the alternate procedure with the other leg" (p. 109).

McGee's own horror of his murderous act, however justified, is echoed by Archer's reluctant victory of his drowning of Puddler in The Moving Target--"I was afraid of what was behind me in the water" (p. 107)--and by Marlowe's hysterical laughter after he kills Canino: "I began to laugh like a loon" (p. 189). This human aspect of the detectives' personalities is what primarily differentiates them from Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer, and adds to their credibility as genuinely compassionate men who inhabit a real and personally terrifying world. Grebstein suggests a difference between those detectives who kill to survive, "and the others who kill either for profit, politics, or out of blood lust" (Grebstein, p. 38). Contrast the reactions of Archer, Marlowe and McGee to their murders of relative strangers against that of Mike Hammer after he shoots his villainous fiancée in I, the Jury:

There on the table was the gun, with a safety catch off and the silencer still attached. Those loving arms would have reached it nicely. A face that was

waiting to be kissed was really waiting to be splattered with blood when she blew my head off. My blood. When I heard her fall I turned around. Her eyes had pain in them now, the pain preceding death. Pain and unbelief.

'How could you?' she gasped.

I had only a moment before talking to a corpse, but I got it in.

'It was easy,' I said.⁸ (*Italics mine.*)

Hammer performs as voyeur, removed from his act, hard, uninvolved except for a sadistic bent. That he deliberately tortures his victim--"But I got it in"--no matter how villainous she is, is further evidence that he is devoid of human emotions.

Although it is proper for the detective to feel, too much expression of his feelings is considered sloppiness, and may deter him from the successful completion of his assignment. Thus we come to Grebstein's second criterion for toughness, control over personal feelings and natural appetites, especially in affairs of the heart. This criterion, then, must be tempered: if the hero becomes involved with a woman, there must be affection, need and emotional rapport.

Philip Marlowe is approached by two women in The Big Sleep, Carmen Sternwood and her sister, Vivian Regan. Carmen is coarse and obvious. She is a nymphomaniac who, in the concluding pages of the novel is discovered to be the psychopathic murderer of her brother-in-law, who has rejected her advances. Marlowe too rejects Carmen, and

⁸Mickey Spillane, I, the Jury (New York: Signet, 1947), p. 174.

his revulsion toward her is shown when he discovers her in his bed:

. . . this was the room I had to live in. It was all I had in the way of a home. In it was everything that was mine, that had any association for me, any past, anything that took the place of a family. Not much. . . . Nothing. Such as they were they all had my memories.

I couldn't stand her in the room any longer. . . .

The imprint of her head was still in the pillow, of her small corrupt body still on the sheets.

I put my empty glass down and tore the bed to pieces (146-47).

Vivian Regan is a bit more difficult to cope with. She is a beautiful, sensuous woman, corrupted by blood and wealth. Men exist to be manipulated, and Vivian attempts to manipulate Marlowe. Marlowe, however, retains a certain respect for General Sternwood, Mrs. Regan's father. Because of his respect, and because he feels attracted to her out of animal desire alone, Marlowe somewhat gracelessly retreats from her overtures, although he deems her worthy of an explanation: "Kissing is nice, but your father didn't hire me to sleep with you," he tells her. When she curses him, he confesses, "Don't think I'm an icicle. . . . I'm not blind or without senses. I have warm blood like the next guy." Pride in his work affords him his final excuse: "The first time we met I told you I was a detective. Get it through your lovely head. I work at it, lady. I don't play at it." When Vivian responds to

his explanation with bitterness, Marlowe's reaction is an ironic "You won't be a sister to me?" (pp. 141-2).

Marlowe's cutting irony, his cynicism, is what saves him from becoming entangled in a relationship based on sexual attraction alone, devoid of any human warmth and understanding. To sleep with Carmen Sternwood would be a repudiation of any Self, any goodness he has within him. To sleep with Vivian Regan would be a lonely experience, and would emphasize his aloneness, his need, to a degree he might not be able to stand. Marlowe's toughness here, then, is a protective device.

Fay Estabrook, one-time queen of silent films, and Miranda Sampson, daughter of missing oil millionaire Ralph Sampson, are two women with whom Lew Archer becomes involved in The Moving Target. Mrs. Estabrook is a pitiful character with "eyes like dark searchlights" (p. 37) and a penchant for hard liquor and heartless men. Archer, aware of her weakness, preys upon it to glean information concerning the missing Ralph Sampson. He is successful in winning her over, and he does so without sleeping with her, but his calculated phoniness sickens him. Catching his image in a barroom mirror as he tries to smile at her, Archer observes:

The wrinkles formed at the corners of my eyes, the wings of my nose; the lips drew back from the teeth, but there was no smile. All I got was a lean famished look like a coyote's sneer. The face had seen too many bars, too many rundown hotels and crummy love

nests, too many courtrooms and prisons, post-mortems and police lineups, too many nerve endings showing like tortured worms. If I found the face on a stranger, I wouldn't trust it (p. 41).

Archer takes Fay home, but not before he has gotten her sufficiently drunk so that she will pass out, thereby allowing him both to gracefully disentangle himself, and to search her house.

Miranda Sampson, on the other hand, is a beautiful girl-woman. In love with World War II flyer hero Alan Taggart, and wooed by Bert Graves, forty-year-old lawyer who, we are to learn, is her father's murderer, Miranda tries to use Archer in an attempt to evoke Taggart's jealousy. However, Archer is not to be fooled. In character as a Dutch uncle, he reprimands her and calls her play for him "Sophomore stuff. You should be able to think of better ways to fascinate Taggart" (p. 74).

In the same scene, however, Archer grabs Miranda and passionately embraces her. After she yields to him he gives his reason for kissing her: "It salved my ego" (p. 75). There is a kind of wistful yearning here for Archer. Miranda, young, lithe, beautiful emphasizes his own sordid life history. What Archer thinks of Bert Graves might well serve as a description of himself: "A little weary and old to tame a filly like Miranda" (p. 80).

Lew Archer's Dutch uncle style is not unique to him. Travis McGee also plays this role. Although he has sexual relations with women far more frequently than either

Archer or Marlowe, sex for McGee is rehabilitory in nature. Usually, the woman McGee chooses for sex has been sexually abused, or has a history of frigidity. It is McGee's mission, if she is a "good" person, to cure her. Generally he achieves his goal, but since it is his fate by choice to remain a loner, the woman either is killed (The Deep Blue Good-By; A Deadly Shade of Gold; The Long Lavender Look), dies of some disease (Pale Gray for Guilt), or they drift apart because of basic irreconcilable differences (A Purple Place for Dying; The Quick Red Fox; One Fearful Yellow Eye).

In Darker Than Amber, McGee is tempted by Vangie, a prostitute and accomplice to murder whom he rescues from death by drowning, but who is later brutally killed. Vangie, aside from her seamy past, is basically a good woman; that is, she is tough, open and honest, and has a healthy laugh. She also has healthy sexual desires. Travis cannot sleep with her, however. He expresses his feelings:

I was a prude in my own fashion. I had been emotionally involved a few times with women with enough of a record of promiscuity to make me vaguely uneasy. It is difficult to put much value on something the lady has distributed all too generously. I have the feeling there is some mysterious quota, which varies with each woman. And whether she gives herself, or sells herself, once she reaches her own number, /once X pairs of hungry hands have been clamped tightly upon her rounded undersides, she suffers a sea change wherein her juices alter from honey to acid, her eyes change to glass, her heart becomes a stone, and her mouth a windy cave from whence, with each moisturous gasping, comes a tiny stink of death.

I could not want her on any terms. But I could like her. And wish her well (p. 51).

A bad woman is Del, a mindless golddigger who "gives off a tangible aroma of rot" (p. 189). She sees no wrong in luring lonely, wealthy men to their brutal deaths. McGee uses her to trap a gang of murderers and to avenge Vangie's death. In order to gain Del's confidence, however, he must pretend sexual interest in her. To his dismay he discovers that he is drawn to her:

Maybe everybody at some time or another feels the strong attraction of something rotten-sweet enough to guarantee complete degradation. I wanted to pull her down and roll into that hot practiced trap which had clenched the life out of fourteen men. And there was the big shiny rationalization. It's the way to make her trust you, fella. Go right ahead and lull the broad (p. 156).

However, he retreats at the last moment. "Who'll know the difference?" he asks himself. "You will, McGee. For a long, long time."

At the conclusion of the three novels each detective remains alone. Philip Marlowe stops at a bar for "a couple of double Scotches," after leaving the Sternwood estate. But "they didn't do me any good. All they did was make me think of Silver-Wig [gangster Eddie Mars' beautiful, sensitive wife], and I never saw her again" (p. 214). Travis McGee sits on the sundeck of his yacht and dreams of a relationship destined to be transitive. It is Lew Archer, however, whose thoughts most movingly and accurately depict the ultimate aloneness of the detective-hero:

As we rolled down the hill I could see all the lights of the city. They didn't seem quite real. The stars and the house lights were firefly gleams, sparks of cold fire suspended in the black void. The real thing in my world was the girl beside me, warm and shuddering any lost.

I could have put my arms around her and taken her over. She was that lost, that vulnerable. But if I had, she'd have hated me in a week. In six months I might have hated Miranda. I kept my hands to myself and let her lick her wounds. She used my shoulder to cry on as she would have used anyone's (p. 184).

In The Big Sleep, Marlowe discovers the corpse of Rusty Regan, Vivian Regan's missing husband, in the sump, "a horrible, decaying thing" (p. 212). However, Marlowe's view of Rusty's death seems rather detached:

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 (pp. 213-14).

Grebstein believes that the third criterion for achieving toughness is the most crucial because "only the hero who is tough enough to stare death down, but not so tough as to be totally immune to its grim appearance is indeed heroic" (p. 30, italics Grebstein's). Since part of the detective's trade must be to confront death continually, either his own or that of others, he must be hard and objective about it. But if he is not moved by death, if he scoffs it, viciously enjoys it, or belabors it, he cannot be heroic. Thus, although Marlowe gives us a clinical description of death, the Sternwood estate now

has "a haunted look, as though small wild eyes were watching me from behind the bushes, as though the sunshine itself had a mysterious something on its light" (p. 213). Furthermore, Marlowe discovers that alive, he is "part of the nastiness now. Far more a part of it than Rusty Regan was" (p. 214). Finally, we must take into account the title of the novel, which is derived from the last lines of the text. It is almost as if Chandler, in this first Marlowe novel, is himself putting his knight through Grebstein's three tests for toughness, the culmination of which is the test of "the big sleep."

When Albert Graves kills Alan Taggert in The Moving Target, Archer immediately gives a description of the corpse:

I caught Taggert's limber body as it fell, and laid it out on the grass rug. The dark eyes were open and glistening. They didn't react to the touch of my fingertips. The round hole in the right temple was bloodless. A death mark like a little red birthmark, and Taggert was thirty dollars' worth of organic chemicals shaped like a man (p. 141).

Although his description is concise and objective, the fact that he employs the adjective "limber" to describe the young Taggert's body at the beginning of the paragraph, and concludes that "Taggert was [now] thirty dollars' worth of organic chemicals shaped like a man," implies Archer's sharp awareness of the ironies of human existence. Furthermore, that Archer not only avoids specious piety himself, but dislikes it in others, is evident when Graves delivers

a lengthy speech about how men like Taggart inevitably come to a bad end. Archer bends down, closes the corpse's eyes, and says to Graves, "We're becoming very elegiac. Let's get out of here" (p. 142).

Graves' sentimentally sloppy language is in contrast to Archer's terse, clean observations about death. Furthermore, Archer is critical of Graves' method: "I don't like to quibble. But I wish you'd shot the gun out of his hand or smashed the elbow of his gun arm" (p. 141). Killing, to Archer, is not always a necessity.

The murder of the prostitute Vangie, whom Travis McGee had rescued from a previous attempt on her life, is what motivates him to avenge her death in Darker Than Amber. Like Marlowe and Archer, McGee also views death with seeming detachment as he observes her body in the morgue:

I imagine they had left the eye open to aid identification. The other side of her head and the other side of her face could be identified as having probably been of human origin. From the waist down it was not a woman-shape under the sheet, just a lumpiness like a bed carelessly made up to resemble someone sleeping there, and the shoulder on the bad side of her was pushed in in a curiously sickening way.

I looked at that eye. An eye which had dried has an oddly dusty look. Like a cheap glass eye in a stuffed owl. It was the color I knew it would be. Darker than amber. With green flecks near the pupil (p. 64).

Yet the latent necrophilia of the morgue attendant who stares at Vangie's breasts, McGee's attempt to reconstruct Vangie's feelings at the moment of her death, and his memory of rescuing her the first time from the ocean reveal a deeper

concern: "You feel good to do a thing like that [save Vangie's life]. And then when they take what you saved and see how high they can splash it against a stone building, you get annoyed" (p. 67).

Later, planning his mode of operation in a motel room, McGee ponders the ironies of life and death. His vision of death here, culminating with a stanza from W. H. Auden's "The Aesthetic Point of View," is similar to that of Archer and Marlowe:

The strange fragments of reality make patterns in your head sometimes. They form a collage that is static for a few moments, giving you the feeling that you are on the edge of some perception that might make all the rest of it a little more meaningful. The elements of this design were Vangie's dry amber eye, the yelping children at play [in the motel's pool], the barely perceptible weight of the gun, the slack underlip of the morgue attendant. . . .

Very probably all perceptions are second hand.

. . . And now this composite scene brought up from memory one of Auden's irreverent perceptions:

As the poets have mournfully sung,
Death takes the innocent young,
The rolling-in-money,
The screamingly-funny,
And those who are very well hung (p. 73).

Travis McGee has passed the final test.

The errant knights have emerged from their tests victorious, although a bit more tarnished for wear. But there is no King Arthur to welcome them. There are no fair ladies to strew flowers in their paths nor trumpets blaring. Instead there is a lonely bar, a dusty office, a cramped

apartment. And although they have exposed thieves and uncovered murderers, their work is meaningless to few but themselves.

What kind of gratification can the detective receive from his work, then, other than personal knowledge of a job well done? If the detective is merely a cynic, he can be content that his vision of the world has once again been proven accurate and will continue to be so. But he is not merely a cynic; he is also a romantic. Kenneth Millar's interpretation of the function of Lew Archer, serves Marlowe and McGee equally effectively: "He represents modern man in a technological society, who is, in effect, homeless, virtually friendless, and who tries to behave as if there is some hope in society, which there is. He's a transitional figure between a world that is breaking up and one coming into being in which relationships and people will be important."⁹ This, then, is the action detective.

⁹Kenneth Millar, in Newsweek, March 22, 1971, p. 108.

CHAPTER III

LAW: THE TROUBLE WITH COPS IS

When Edgar Allan Poe invented the detective story, he included in it the now-stock character of the ineffective police officer who was outdone by the intelligence, observations and skills of Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin. This character has been recreated in the pages of detective fiction of all types. There are Scotland Yarders Gregson and Lestrade of Conan Doyle fame; Inspector Cramer, foil for Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe; the myriad incompetents who face Agatha Christie's Miss Jane Marple and M. Hercule Poirot; and of course Lieutenant Arthur Tragg, Perry Mason's fool.

It is only natural that readers take sides with the detective against the police. In most cases, the detective story is told either from his point of view or, as in the cases of Nero Wolfe, Sherlock Holmes, and Auguste Dupin, from the point of view of a close friend and ally. We therefore look at the police through the private investigator's eyes and share with him feelings of frustration and hostility as law enforcement agents throw roadblock in the way of the detective's path to truth. "How can they after roadblock in the way of the detective's path to truth.

"How can they be so stupid?" we exclaim indignantly.

"Don't they see that they've arrested the wrong man?"

Perhaps we are too nearsighted about the police. We are so willing to despise him, so joyful at the detective's final victory over him, that we tend to ignore his major function: to serve as adversary. And an adversary must be worthy of his opponent. If the policeman were really incompetent, as we delude ourselves into thinking, we would be bored with the novel. Who would be left for the detective to be at odds with besides the villain? He would just go on his way blithely slaying dragons as they popped out on the road, and we'd all politely yawn.

The policemen are not incompetents. Subconsciously we must be aware of this, because if they were, our hero-worship of the detective would be somewhat impaired. They merely operate differently from the private detective. They have many cases under investigation at one time, while the detective usually has only one. They must operate within a complex system of rules and regulations while the detective is a relatively free agent. A policeman has more authority than a detective, and therefore commands more immediate respect, but he cannot exercise his authority without paperwork. In order to enter suspect premises, for example, a law officer must have a search warrant. A detective, on the other hand, may break into the house, or

if the residents are present, he may use charm, cockiness, lies, or physical strength to gain entrance.

The police have at their disposal many aids which the detective lacks. The first is manpower: a whole police force available for tailing several suspects at one time and for gathering special information. Nero Wolfe, supposedly, can sit in his brownstone and maintain his regular orchid-tending schedule because Inspector Cramer's men are on the job. The detective has only himself to rely upon, and he can't be in all places at one time.

The police also have a modern data-gathering system. They can quickly find out a suspect's previous record. Ballistics and fingerprint experts are near at hand. Autopsies are performed by professionals with speed and detached expertise. The detective relies on friends; the newspaperman with inside information, other detectives, paid informers, occasional leaks from police headquarters.

Why, then, one may justifiably ask, with all his knowledge, equipment, and expertise, does the policeman run a poor second to the private investigator? The foremost explanation is that because the detective has only one case to handle, he becomes a more acute observer and more perceptive interpreter of human nature. The policeman is under the pressure of expediency; the detective can take time to sit down and probe at length the inner feelings of his clients and their associates.

Because they are in a rush to justice, the police often overlook the obvious, or if they see it, they cannot put it in its proper perspective. In their interpretation of evidence they are blinded by routine. They manufacture motives where there are none, and they arrest people on the flimsiest of circumstantial evidence.

In addition to expedience, the policeman is often motivated in his investigation by hopes of promotion and public acclaim. Sherlock Holmes ironically notes that in the newspapers Gregson and Lestrade get credit for cases he has solved. Philip Marlowe cynically observes in The Big Sleep that the morning papers' accounts of murders "came as close to the truth as newspaper stories usually come--as close as Mars is to Saturn," and that "Captain Cronjager of the Hollywood Division got all the credit for solving the two slayings in his district. . . ." (p. 109). The private investigator has only his fee to protect, and as he becomes more enmeshed in his case, more closely involved with the people it concerns, his fee becomes secondary. Personal glory is a meaningless abstraction to him, and he does not pursue it.

Nevertheless, however we might rationalize the relationship of hostility that exists between the policeman and the private detective, we may only finally answer that it is, after all, a tradition, as old as the genre itself. That this tradition is also carried on by Philip Marlowe,

Lew Archer and Travis McGee, who often sidestep the law to achieve justice, should come as no surprise. But it is not only the incompetence of many police officials that turns Marlowe, Archer and McGee into out-laws. There are good police officers as well as bunglers, but they are entangled in the establishment red-tape and trivia.

Spillane's Mike Hammer gives his policeman-friend Pat Chambers his reason for striking out alone after the killer in I, the Jury: "You're a cop, Pat. You're tied down by rules and regulations. There's someone over you. I'm alone" (p. 8). Although the detectives in this study do not share Hammer's blood-lust, they too feel that the traditions of established law and order are stifling. Philip Marlowe, a former California policeman, left the force for this reason.

Lew Archer was also once a police officer. In The Way Some People Die (1951), we learn that he was forced out of the Long Beach, California police force because he wouldn't accept graft. Both Marlowe and Archer are suspicious of the honesty of the police because of their direct experience with them. Often, their suspicions are justified. Graft-taking on the part of the police appears in three of Chandler's six Marlowe novels: The Big Sleep, Farewell, My Lovely, and Lady in the Lake.

To dismiss the police as basically corrupt or incompetent, however, and to declare flatly the existence

of a natural adversary relationship between the police officer and the private detective on this basis, would be to do both a disservice. We have witnessed the loneliness and tedium of the detective's work in the previous chapter. Yet at the same time, the private detective remains an individual, tied to no code but his own. This is not true for the public police officer who must obey the System, who cannot choose with whom he comes in contact on a day-to-day basis, and who, through the routinization of his daily work, becomes dehumanized.

Such dehumanization is evidenced in Robin Moore's novel, The French Connection (1969), and in the excellent screen adaptation which demonstrates the long hours of often fruitless police detection. In the film, detective Eddie Egan, the police protagonist, concludes interrogation of his suspects with the question, "Do you still pick your feet in Poughkeepsie?" He badgers the suspect with this meaningless question until he finally capitulates and admits that, indeed, he still performs this act in the place mentioned, or anywhere that the policeman would have him do it.

Egan's question is less absurd when viewed in the light of another recent novel about police officers by Joseph Wambaugh, The New Centurions (1970). In this novel, which traces the lives of four policemen over a period of five years beginning with their early training, the Los

Angeles police continually refer to the citizenry as "assholes." What the users of "foot-picking" and "assholery" share in common is their contempt for the worth and dignity of human beings. To be viewed as an asshole is not to be viewed as a whole person. And the admission of foot-picking, ridiculous as the idea may seem, becomes just as humiliating to the "offender" as if he had confessed to child-molesting, incest, or sexual relations with his dog.

The police become dehumanizers in part because their work is alienating and dehumanizing. That they too are victims is exemplified by the chief of detectives in The French Connection who uses the Poughkeepsie line on Egan.

Raymond Chandler is the most perceptive of the three writers in understanding the causes for the often brutal and sadistic behavior of members of the police force. In The Little Sister (1949), Philip Marlowe makes his observations about the nature of the men in police work. He understands, but does not condone:

They had the calm weathered faces of healthy men in hard condition. . . . The dull ready-made clothes, worn without style, with a sort of contempt; the look of men who are poor and yet proud of their power, watching always for ways to make it felt, to shove it into you and twist it and grin and watch you squirm, ruthless without malice, cruel and yet not always unkind. What would you expect them to be? Civilization had no meaning for them. All they saw of it was the failure, the dregs, the aberrations and the disgust (p. 182).

The detective is not the only one to make observations about public crime fighters. Both Chandler and Millar often allow the police officers themselves the opportunity to explain the weaknesses of establishment law and order. In one instance, police captains in Millar's The Far Side of the Dollar (1965) and Chandler's Lady in the Lake (1943) parallel each other:

It isn't easy recruiting men at the salaries the supervisors are willing to pay. We can hardly compete with the wages for unskilled labor. And this is a tough job (Millar, p. 69).

Police business . . . is a hell of a problem. It's a good deal like politics. It asks for the highest type of men, and there's nothing in it to attract the highest type of men. So we have to work with what we get. . . . (Chandler, p. 164).

Both Kenneth Millar's and John D. MacDonald's criticisms of the police force are less frequent and intense than Raymond Chandler's. The police in their novels are usually fully developed characters in their own right and are just as much villainized or victimized as any other character in a novel. The concentration in a Millar or MacDonald novel, then, is on the psyche of the police officer as a person, more than as a functionary.

John D. MacDonald's The Long Lavender Look (1970) brings forth the policeman as person. Sheriff Norman Hyzer is the protagonist in this novel. A good sheriff, honest, intelligent and well-trained, Hyzer runs a clean county. However, he suffers from a mistake in his past

for which he has been punishing himself: he was making love to a woman at the same time his wife and small daughter were being crushed to death by a holdup getaway car.

The fruit borne of Hyzer's fleeting, frenzied affair is Lilo Hatch, a wild animal-woman, a sadist and a murderer. Although it is not until the end of the novel that Hyzer admits his fatherhood to Travis McGee, his guilt feelings over the affair flaw him as a law officer. He refuses to recognize Lilo for what she is. He ignores her obvious connection with a racetrack robbery. He sees her as merely a young girl sowing her oats.

Nevertheless, Hyzer is a good man, a man out of the old West now residing in a Florida swamp county. His entrance in the novel is coupled with a description of him that makes us remember Gary Cooper in High Noon:

He had dark hair and noble-hero face, expressionless. He kept his mouth pinched shut. The eyes were very blue and his examination of each of us was long, intensive, unrevealing (p. 22).

That Hyzer is flawed, however, becomes immediately evident. In his desire to overlook his illegitimate daughter's complicity in robbery and murder he casts about for anyone else to take the blame--in this case, McGee and his friend Meyer, returning from a friend's wedding. Ignoring their explanations, and unwilling to investigate their alibis, he tosses them both in jail. Here, Meyer

is beaten up by one of the sheriff's deputies, Lew Arnstead, and although Hyzer later suspends Arnstead, he describes Meyer's beating as an accident: "He was stepping into the issue coveralls when he lost his balance and fell, striking his face on the wooden bench in the shower room" (p. 33).

Yet Lew Arnstead's suspension is significant. With this act Hyzer begins to reclaim his dignity and self-worth. For Arnstead has been blackmailing Hyzer. Aware of Hyzer's affair and his parenthood of Lilo, Arnstead has threatened Hyzer with exposure unless he is given free-rein of a call-girl operation.

Lew Arnstead is another lawman whom MacDonald fully develops. Once a young stud-about-town, Arnstead had fallen deeply in love with a young innocent. But his guilt feelings about his former relationships caused him to become impotent. Defeated, he returned to his old haunts only to discover that his impotence remained. Then Arnstead raided the high school's locker room for amphetamines and found that with their aid he was once again potent. But they too had their side effects. He became erratic in his behavior. He sloughed off in his duties as a deputy, and he began to be violent towards women.

His hostility towards women provided him, however, with a means of making extra money to feed his habit. His position as a law enforcement agent and his hold over Hyzer made it easier for him. Arnstead would be called

in to investigate women who had overcharged their clothing or who were involved in petty theft. He threatened them with unrealistic prison sentences, then suggested that if they partied with a select clientele they might earn enough money to pay their debts. Arnstead, of course, would take his cut.

Arnstead meets his death at the hands of King Sturnevan, also a deputy, who sets out to avenge the death of Linda Featherman, one of Arnstead's call-girls, but a woman who had always treated Sturnevan with kindness. Sturnevan is an ex-fighter who cut too easily. A man who lives in past glories, he is obsessed with making it in the ring again. Not only does he shoot Arnstead, but he drowns Lilo Hatch after forcing her to tell him the location of the hijacked racetrack money. Sturnevan's rationale is simple: the money would have been his if he had had better trainers and had stayed in the ring.

Other policemen have minor roles in the novel. There is Deputy Billy Cable, basically a good and honest officer and family man who nevertheless has a quick temper. And there is the jailer, Mr. Priskett, a lover of words: "Plentitude! One rarely hears the good words around here, Mr. McGee" (p. 38). These men are controlled, however, by Norman Hyzer, and since the novel revolves around him, most comments about law enforcement come from his lips or from McGee's.

Unlike Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe who, as we shall see later, attacks the specific situation of law enforcement as it occurs in the immediate instance in the novel, Travis McGee's comments are often more abstract philosophical musings. Marlowe banters and wisecracks with policemen; McGee conducts internal monologues or classroom lectures:

The law, in its every dimension of the control of criminals, is geared to limited, stunted people. Regardless of what social, emotional, or economic factor stunted them, the end product is hate, suspicion, fear, violence, and despair. These are the weaknesses, and the system is geared to exploit weakness. Mr. Norm was a creature outside my experience. There were no labels I could put on him (p. 42).

or:

[Prostitution] is a useful and profitable sideline by venal, underpaid, crooked police officers in every urban area of the nation and the world where police administration leaves enough room for improvisation (p. 159).

Hyzer, on the other hand, cannot conduct internal monologues since the novel is written in the first person from McGee's point of view. A closed man about his profession and his life, we must depend upon Travis McGee for our insights into his nature: "His knuckles and wrists were soiled, and there was an edge of grime around the white collar of his shirt. . . . It did not match my prior observations of the fastidious officer of the law" (p. 150). When Hyzer is finally permitted to speak for himself it is because he has opened up to McGee: "He was asking for help of some kind. A man proud, thoughtful, and troubled" (p. 228).

We are afforded a glimpse of Hyzer's personal vision of justice. What we discover is a level of consciousness much like McGee's:

The guidelines are blurred. Are cops pigs? If I operate within a system where juvenile court cannot touch rich kids, where the innocent--meaning those presumed innocent because they have not yet been tried--are jailed with the guilty when they can't raise bail, where judicial wisdom is conditioned by friendship and influence, where there are two kinds of law, one for blacks and one for whites; then if I go by the book, I am a kind of Judas goat, and if I bend the rules to improve--on my terms--the structure of local law, I am running my own little police state. I'd better get out of it because I can't live with either solution (pp. 228-229).

That Hyzer does not leave his position, but overcomes his personal crisis and continues as a law enforcement agent is made clear. Several weeks later, McGee receives a check for twenty thousand dollars for his discovery of the stolen money. The check is sent by Hyzer.

Hyzer then, is not a stock policeman by any means. He is first a man whose chosen profession is law enforcement, who tries to carry out his job in a clean and honest way, who like many other men, becomes enmeshed in a situation over which he has little or no control, but who because of his inherent goodness must finally triumph.

Another policeman who triumphs over himself is Sheriff Brandon Church, the major character in Kenneth Millar's Find A Victim (1954). Church is sheriff of Las Cruces, a southern California valley city inhabited mainly by lower middle-class laborers, Mexicans, and a few members

of a dwindling California aristocracy. Like MacDonald's Sheriff Hyzer, Church also resembles the Gary Cooper cowboy:

The face under the hatbrim was long and lean like his body, and burned by the valley sun. Though he was young for the job, about my age, I could see the scars of old pain branching out from the corners of his eyes and bracketing his mouth. His eyes were deepset and dark like the windows of a haunted house (p. 10).

Brandon Church's "old pain" is in part the result of his long-suffering marriage to Hilda Meyer Church, a psychopathic murderer with a father fixation. Church married her, he tells Lew Archer at the novel's end, because "Some men have a need to be needed. I'm one of them" (p. 218). But Church found his role as father figure for Hilda--so well-developed, it seems, that she even calls him "Father" at the end of the novel--far from gratifying. Yearning for adult love and a healthy sexual relationship, he begins an affair with Hilda's younger sister, Anne Meyer.

His affair with Anne, although temporarily rewarding, causes him, finally, even more guilt and self-recrimination. He holds himself responsible for the murders of Anne, trucker Tony Aquista, and amateur racketeer Don Kerrigan, when in fact, it was Hilda's hand that committed the murders. Archer describes Church as "a man so deeply split that he didn't know himself" (p. 56). His description is more than accurate.

That Brandon Church is guilty is a fact. He had guilty knowledge, given to him by Kerrigan, of Hilda's

murder of Anne. By giving in to Kerrigan's threat of exposure unless he permits a truckload of hijacked whiskey to leave his county, Church is also indirectly responsible for the shootings of Aquista and Kerrigan. But it is precisely his feelings of guilt about what he has done that win Archer's support and admiration. "Naturally you feel guilty," Archer tells him. "You are guilty. You made some bad mistakes" (pp. 209-210).

It is not until the conclusion of the novel, however, that Church and Archer communicate. They are hostile enemies throughout, in part because Archer is a private detective, an outsider who inadvertently came upon Aquista, in part because Church knows that he has been neglecting his duties, and in part because he fears, quite rightly, that Archer will discover the truth. Church slugs Archer when he finds him searching Anne Meyer's apartment, and he later fights him to a bloody draw. When Archer suggests some moves Church might take in order to find Aquista's killer, Church snaps, "You seem to be instructing me in my duties," to which Archer retorts, "It seems to be necessary" (p. 89). Shortly thereafter, Church makes what Archer interprets as a veiled threat: "I can't assume responsibility for you if you keep throwing your weight around" (p. 90).

Archer's hostility towards Church is tempered by another arm of the law, District Attorney Westmore, a

"rising young lawyer who is using the office as a spring-board to higher office or richer practice" (p. 149), but an intelligent person who has known Brandon Church for a long time. "Brandon Church is a genuine practical idealist. If there's one man in the valley whose character I'm sure of, he's the man," Westmore tells Archer (p. 189). He also describes Church as a hard-worker who "works a sixteen-hour day for less money than I get. . . . He does what he thinks is right without regard for the consequences" (p. 158).

Westmore is so enamoured of Church that he overlooks some facts in the case in order to find an out for him. When Archer suggests that he has ignored evidence against Church which might give a different interpretation to the murders, Westmore coldly informs him that "there's a certain law of economy in the interpretation of evidence." Archer replies, "It's false economy if you don't cover all the facts" (p. 156).

Nevertheless, it is Westmore's blind faith in Church as much as any other factor that helps alter Archer's opinion of the sheriff. Instead of hostility Archer now views him with a compassion amounting to martyr-worship, and instead of a tired cowboy, Church now looks like "a ravaged saint stretched on El Greco's rack" (p. 210).

What brings about this change of attitude is Archer's confrontation with Church, and the pitiful sight of Hilda and Church relating to each other as Hilda fades

in and out of reality. That Church is willing to pay for his sins because he realizes that "I couldn't leave myself behind, that I'd have to go on living with myself no matter where I was" (p. 207), completely wins over Lew Archer who has also learned to live with himself and his own past:

My judgment of Church had been turned upside down in the last few minutes. He had broken some of the rules. His life had been disordered and passionate. But he was an honest man according to his lights (p. 209).

Like Travis McGee, Lew Archer is forced into the role of confessor, a man to turn to when all else fails except the truth. He listens to Church with compassion, and responds to him with brutal honesty: "You're the sort of conscience-stricken bastard who would get satisfaction out of public disgrace and maybe a term in your own jail" (p. 209). In the end, because he has confronted himself with the aid of Archer's amateur, but perceptive analysis, Church once again, or maybe for the first time, reclaims himself first as a man, and by extension, as a law-man.

Raymond Chandler, on the other hand, spends less time on individual analysis in general, and a greater time trying to find the underlying causes for all the bad things in the world--including the police force. Bay City is his microcosm. In this thriving Los Angeles suburb is concentrated all the corruption and decadence of a nation. In its internal erosion it is reminiscent of Poisonville (Personville) in Dashiell Hammett's Red Harvest, although

unlike the Continental Op, Philip Marlowe never quite succeeds at cleaning it up.

Farewell, My Lovely (1940), achieves the zenith of crime and corruption in Bay City. The rather unwieldy plot concerns an ex-felon, Moose Malloy, in search of his paramour, Velma (now rich and living under an assumed name in Bay City), who turned him in; the murder of a homosexual, Lindsay Marriott; the discovery of a dope-ring operated by pseudo-guru Jules Amthor; a phoney mental hospital really a hide-out for thugs; and a top-notch organization gangster, Laird Brunette. Drawing this and more all together, however, is Marlowe's infatuation with Anne Riordan, daughter of Cliff Riordan, Chief of Police of Bay City for seven years. Riordan was fired by Brunette and his fellow gamblers who elected their own mayor. The reason for his dismissal: his honesty. Assigned to a lesser position in the Bay City Bureau of Records and Identification, Riordan shortly died of a broken heart. Anne Riordan emerges as a rose surviving in the center of a cesspool, and it is really for her and to avenge the memory of her father, that Chandler's knight sets out on his quest.

In the course of his quest Marlowe turns over the rock that is Bay City and finds the maggots that thrive in their own dirt. There is John Wax, Chief of Police, brought in by the crime syndicate. Wax prefers to ignore

Marlowe's complaint that he has been beaten up by two Bay City policemen: "His eyes now were the eyes of a man who has other thoughts," Marlowe observes when he confronts him (p. 186). A man who is elegantly dressed--too much so for a police officer--Wax still has "small, hungry, heavy-lidded eyes, as restless as fleas" (p. 184). His grammar is poor: "I don't have no eastern windows. . . ." (p. 185) and he is a man who sees Bay City the way he wants you to see it:

I look out of my northern windows and I see the busy bustle of Arguello Boulevard and the lovely California foothills, and in the near foreground one of the nicest little business sections a man could want to know. I look out of my southern windows, which I am looking out of right now, and I see the finest little yacht harbor in the world, for a small yacht harbor. I don't have no eastern windows, but if I did have, I would see a residential section that would make your mouth water. No sir, trouble is a thing we don't have a lot of on hand in our little town (p. 185).

Marlowe notes that Wax doesn't mention "the two gambling ships that were hull down on the brass waves just beyond the three mile limit" (p. 185).

The fascist aspect of the Bay City police is presented to us early in the scene, when Marlowe first enters the office. He observes that "A stained wood desk was set far back like Mussolini's, so that you had to walk an expanse of blue carpet to get to it, and while you were doing that you would be getting the beady eye" (p. 184). This is definitely enemy territory for the little man with no money, and even Philip Marlowe cannot bully his way into

Wax's confidence until he drops the name of his wealthy client. Then he receives not only cooperation, but a couple of comradely shots of whiskey, followed by handfuls of cracked cardamom seeds.

Marlowe's complaint is that while conducting a private investigation of Jules Amthor, psychic consultant, he has been beaten up by two Bay City police officers, Galbraith and Blane. The scene in which Marlowe is abused, although rather bloody, contains a great deal of wit. Chandler's dialogue is so self-consciously suggestive of Ernest Hemingway's "The Killers," that Marlowe, in his agony, is forced to comment upon it:

'Give me back my gun.'

He leaned forward a little and thought. I could see him thinking. It hurt his corns. 'Oh, you want your gun, pally?' He looked sideways at the one with the gray mustache. 'He wants his gun,' he told him. He looked at me again. 'And what would you want your gun for, pally?'

'I want to shoot an Indian.'

'Oh, you want to shoot an Indian, pally.'

'Yeah, just one little Indian, Pop.'

He looked at the one with the mustache again. 'This guy is very tough,' he told him. 'He wants to shoot an Indian.'

'Listen, Hemingway, don't repeat everything I say,' I said.

'I think the guy is nuts,' the big one said. 'He just called me Hemingway. . . . 'My name ain't Hemingway' (p. 133).

. . . The big man said: 'Now that we are all between pals and no ladies present we really don't give so much time to why you went back up there, but this Hemingway stuff is what really has me down.'

'A gag,' I said. 'An old, old gag.'

'Who is this Hemingway person at all?'

'A guy that keeps saying the same thing over and over until you begin to believe it must be good.'

'That must take a hell of a long time,' the big man said (pp. 136-137).

The stupidity of Captain Galbraith is also rather pathetic. More pathetic, however, is his naively truthful comment about law and order:

Cops don't go crooked for money. Not always, not even often. They get caught in the system. They get you where they have you do what is told them or else. And the guy that sits back there in the nice big corner office with the nice suit and the nice liquor breath he thinks chewing on them seeds makes smell like violets, only it don't--he ain't giving the orders either. . . . A guy can't stay honest if he wants to. . . . That's what's the matter with this country. He gets chiseled out of his pants if he does. You gotta play the game dirty or you don't eat. A lot of bastards think all we need is ninety thousand FBI men in clean collars and briefcases. Nuts. The percentage would get them just the way it does the rest of us. You know what I think? I think we gotta make this little world all over again (p. 194).

The policeman too is the little man, worn, angry, frustrated, impotent. Nulty, a Los Angeles policeman who is assigned to the Malloy murder case when Malloy murders a black man, looks "poor enough to be honest, but he didn't look like a man who could deal with Moose Malloy" (p. 12). He says bitterly: "Shines. Another shine killing. That's what I rate after eighteen years in this man's police department. No pix, no space, not even four lines in the want-ad section" (p. 12). The police force does not pay much attention to black slayings. Only power, only money is important. Even the "good" cops fall prey: "Olson. Pickpocket detail. He's good too. Except once in a while he will lift a leather and plant it, to keep up his arrest record. That's being a shade too good. . . ." (p. 210).

These observations are made by Red Norgaard, an ex-Bay City policeman who helps Marlowe. Norgaard was framed and thrown off the force for being too honest. Devoid of bitterness, however, he understands the dishonesty of his fellow police officers:

I know how these boys figure. . . . The trouble with cops is not that they're dumb or crooked or tough, but that they think just being a cop gives them a little something they didn't have before. Maybe it did once, but not any more. They're topped by too many smart minds (p. 212).

There are, nevertheless, a few honest policemen left. Red Norgaard is one, although he is temporarily inactive on the force. Another is Lieutenant Randall from Central Homicide in Los Angeles, "a thin quiet man of fifty with smooth creamy gray hair, cold eyes, a distant manner" (p. 64). The relationship between Marlowe and Randall is one of mutual, although distant respect and admiration. Marlowe's admiration for him is open: "His eyes were going over my face line by line, corpuscle by corpuscle, like Sherlock Holmes with his magnifying glass, or Thorndyke with his pocket lens. . . ." (p. 164). "I was beginning to like him. He had a lot behind his vest besides his shirt" (p. 167). A loyal and intelligent law enforcement agent, Randall is embarrassed by the Bay City police force. When Marlowe suggests calling the Bay City force into action, Randall says nothing: "When I looked up at him his face was red and uncomfortable. 'For a cop,' I said, 'you're the most sensitive guy I ever met'" (p. 170).

At the conclusion of the novel, Randall has little to be embarrassed by in Bay City. With his aid, Marlowe has somewhat cleaned it up: Chief of Police John Wax has been fired, half the detective force has been demoted to patrolmen, and Marlowe's friend, Red Norgaard, is back at his job. Racketeer Laird Brunette, who has to face the Grand Jury, will probably get off scott free, but that's to be expected.

Yet for all his sensitivity about his role and the police force, Randall remains a "smart and deadly cop" who is "not free to do a clean job in a clean way" (p. 199). Once again, red-tape interferes. Furthermore, the years of frustrating red-tape have drained even a good cop like Randall of human compassion. He looks at the corpse of alcoholic Jessie Florian "with a wolfish baring of his teeth," and comments with sardonic detachment, "Brains on her face. That seems to be the theme song in this case" (p. 177). And when Marlowe suggests to him that the murderess, Velma, was not all bad, that at least she protected her husband, "an old man who had loved not wisely, but too well," Randall retorts sharply: "That's just sentimental" (p. 246). He fails to understand the difference between sloppy sentimentality and human compassion.

Sentimentality, of course, is a dangerous emotion for a policeman. It is dangerous for any professional who carries a gun. Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer operates out

of sentimental/patriotic feelings when he sets out to avenge the death of his World War II buddy in I, the Jury. In his search for revenge he becomes the inadvertent killer of several innocent people. Detective Degarmo of Chandler's Lady in the Lake (1943) turns into a murderer out of love and jealousy. Sheriff Ostervelt is corrupted by unrequited love in Kenneth Millar's The Doomsters (1958), and Sheriff Hyzer is eaten away by his wife's death in John D. MacDonald's The Long Lavender Look (1970).

Not only is sentimentality dangerous, but also one of the waves it rides on: Nostalgia. In a world gone mad, members of the police force would rather return to the simple solutions of the golden days of law enforcement--the rubber hose and kid glove method of forcing a confession--than confront the existing problems of law enforcement and seek causes and solutions. Captain Gregorius of Chandler's The Long Goodbye (1954), is one of these: "A type of copper that is getting rarer but by no means extinct, the kind that solves crimes with the bright light, the soft sap, the kick to the kidneys, the knee to the groin, the fist to the solar plexus, the night stick to the base of the spine" (p. 37). There is also Maglashan in Chandler's The Little Sister (1949), who carries a pigskin glove in his pocket: "I've known guys of the not so voluntary type that had to go to the can every fifteen minutes for weeks

after they got voluntary," Maglashan menacingly tells Philip Marlowe (p. 173).

Even the good policemen are confused. Sheriff Burgoon, who has just found some dead hippies killed by one of his own deputies in MacDonald's Pale Gray for Guilt (1968), asks simply, "What's going wrong with folks, McGee?" (p. 157). But when McGee tries to explain the world to him, Burgoon is incapable of understanding. Deafened by the thunderous arrival of a new and confusing society, he stumbles vaguely along his own way: "'Around here today,' he said sadly, 'it's beginning to seem to me like in my sleep last night I must have forgot half the English language'" (p. 157). Bernie Ohls, Marlowe's sometime policeman-friend, admits that he's an "old tired beat-up cop. All I feel is sore," in The Long Goodbye, and tries to put his finger on the causes and solutions to crime in America. Marlowe corrects him, however, with a lengthy sermon on the weaknesses of the law enforcers' point of view that, among other things, gambling breeds gambling:

You're a damn good cop, Bernie, but just the same you're all wet. In one way cops are all the same. They all blame the wrong things. If a guy loses his pay check at a crap table, stop gambling. If he gets drunk, stop liquor. If he kills somebody in a car crash, stop making automobiles. If he gets pinched with a girl in a hotel room, stop sexual intercourse. If he falls downstairs, stop building houses. . . . We don't have mobs and crime syndicates and goon squads because we have crooked politicians and their stooges in the City Hall and the legislatures. Crime isn't a disease, it's a symptom. Cops are like a doctor that gives you aspirin for

a brain tumor, except that the cop would rather cure it with a black-jack. We're a big rough rich wild people and crime is the price we pay for organization. We'll have it with us a long time. Organized crime is just the dirty side of the sharp dollar (pp. 309-310).

But Marlowe cannot say what's on the clean side of the sharp dollar. "I never saw it," he admits with resigned self-irony.

Police cliches such as "law and order," "we always get our man," or "the policeman is your friend" no longer serve. When Captain Cronjager suggests to Philip Marlowe that "a life is a life" in The Big Sleep, Marlowe cynically responds, "Right. . . . Tell that to your coppers next time they shoot some scared petty larceny crook running away up an alley with a stolen spare" (pp. 100-101). This dissonance between public law and private citizen continues--so much so, that the police have recently launched public relations campaigns to improve their image. These include meetings with the community members, mingling at rock concerts, "pig-freak" football games, and even posters of a kindly policeman bearing a small child in his arms, with the caption, "Some call him pig."

But even the publicity campaigns resulting in minor improvements in police-community relations do not soften the public's attitude toward law enforcement in general. "Dragnet," a radio program begun in 1949, and a television series that attracted a large viewing audience that

sympathized with its pat solutions to pat situations in the McCarthy '50's, is greeted in its current revival with scornful contempt and disbelief by its younger viewers, and merely as camp by its older ones. New York City residents were gleeful in 1971 when large scale graft-taking on the part of the police force was discovered (they always knew it existed, but now it was out in the open). Many followed with a vengeance the trials of policemen implicated in cold-blooded slayings in the 1967 Detroit riots. The Kerner Commission's report on the 1968 Chicago Convention riots which condemned police brutality was greeted with much enthusiasm by both young and old.

Police forces were originally established to protect the haves against the have-nots; to keep the have-nots from encroaching upon the property and advantages of the haves. In race riots they sided with the whites against the Chinese, the blacks, the Germans. In early labor-management feuds they took the side of management, clubbing and sometimes killing members of the working class. No wonder that there exists a We/They relationship between the law and the public, and the law is the much-feared, though little-respected They.

It is no wonder either that the private detective becomes the folk hero of the people instead of the man in blue. He is honest. He is not in uniform. He is concerned with more than "just the facts, ma'am." And most of all he is on his client's side; he cares.

When a client enters the offices of Lew Archer or Philip Marlowe or Travis McGee's houseboat, he comes of his own volition. He is not intimidated by the impersonality of a police precinct. "When you pass in beyond the green lights of a police station," Philip Marlowe observes, "you pass clear out of this world into a place beyond the law" (The High Window, p. 137). Abandon all hope seems stamped across the face of the building. But when one enters a detective's office, rather than the "remote, heartless . . . not quite human" atmosphere of a police room, he confronts a personality, a human being, reflected in his surroundings.

It is the detective's commitment to his client that most alienates him from the police. Although both the detective and the police officer are concerned with justice, the detective's first concern is the protection of his client at almost any cost. His client must, of course, level with him, but once she or he does, the detective is more understanding than the police. The detective understands, for instance, that guilty actions do not mean guilty deeds. He understands that words like "I'd like to kill you," must not necessarily be followed by actions. Words don't kill; people do. And he understands panic and flight.

Marlowe, Archer and McGee will go to prison rather than give the police information they may misinterpret at

great cost to their clients' welfare. That they will be imprisoned, that they won't give in, that they are untouchable, adds to the law enforcer's frustration with them. A circular relationship is established: the detective doesn't give the police the information because (1) he's committed to protect his client, and (2) because he doesn't trust the police. The policeman becomes infuriated with the detective's resistance. He threatens him with the loss of his license: "You didn't report it to us. . . . That wasn't smart of you, Archer, it wasn't cooperative, it wasn't even legal. It's the kind of thing that makes for license troubles" (Millar, The Way Some People Die, 1951, p. 115). He beats him: "Ostervelt raised the Colt and laid it raking and burning across the side of my head" (Millar, The Doomsters, 1958, p. 69). He jails him: "Immovable bunk and a thin hard mattress pad. Cement floor with a center drain. . . . No other way to see any other cell through the top half of the door which was of sturdy bars" (John D. MacDonald, The Long Lavender Look, 1970, p. 39). The detective is now justified in his hostility towards the police and continues to refuse to cooperate. The police, therefore, refuse to cooperate with the detective. "Their failure to co-operate suited me reasonably well. I felt justified in holding back some of the results of my own investigation," Lew Archer notes in

Black Money (1966, p. 111). The circle and the alienation is complete.

Can there be a reconciliation between the detective and the policeman? Philip Marlowe says that such a thing is possible, but only if the following terms are met:

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 (The High Window, p. 93).

These terms are met in Raymond Chandler's final Marlowe novel, Playback (1958). Captain Alessandro is an honest policeman who is not bullied by the rich or the poor. He is polite to Marlowe. Even his deputies are civil. His office is neat and clean.

When Marlowe speaks to Alessandro, however, we are disappointed. Because in the ageing detective's refusal to answer questions there is a plaintive note. Gone is the tough, wisecracking Marlowe:

Don't bully me, Captain Alessandro. I haven't done anything wrong. You've been very human so far. Please don't get the idea that I had anything to do with Mitchell's disappearance. . . . When I know why, I'll let you know or I won't. If I don't you'll just have to throw the book at me. It wouldn't be the first time it's happened to me. I don't sell out--even to good police officers (p. 164).

What is missing is the adversary relationship necessary to a good hard-boiled detective novel. The

.

police, like the villain, must be adversaries whom the detectives overwhelm. This does not mean that they must be stupid. On the contrary, the policeman must be worthy of the detective in order for the detective to remain a hero. But he must fumble at one or two essential points so that the detective can out-do him.

We are left with a battle between underdogs.

"Dragnet" producer and star Jack Webb, in an interview in the July 22, 1972 issue of T.V. Guide states: "I've always felt that the policeman has been the underdog of society; part of what he became was due to the indifference of the public" (p. 25). If indifference no longer exists on the part of the public, open hostility certainly does. And although the private detective does not meet with such out and out hatred, he is generally regarded as a snoop, an invader, or at best a nuisance. Nevertheless, the adversary relationship between official law and the private detective must continue its tradition in the pages of sleuth fiction. When the relationship ceases to exist, so will the detective novel.

CHAPTER IV

VILLAINS AND VICTIMS

"All murder is melodrama, because the real tragedy is not death, but the condition which induces it."¹
--Nero Wolfe¹

Once upon a time in our childhood, it was easy to identify villains. In westerns they wore black hats which came off in their fights with the heroes, who wore white hats which they never lost. They drank whiskey. They snarled. They were fat. They were stringy. In cartoon strips, heroines had wide blue eyes, soft blonde hair, and rounded bustlines; female villains had blue-black hair, slitty eyes, long red fingernails, and pointed breasts. Villains were either lazy ne'er-do-wells or men who "owned the town"--and the people who lived there. And they were all-evil, totally depraved.

Villains like these still exist. Children watch them on daytime T.V. cartoons, or in re-runs of the Lone Ranger. For children, the real world which smudges its black and white, villain or hero, into a muted gray, is

¹Rex Stout, The Red Box (New York: Pyramid Books, 1964), p. 177.

too complex. Either the guy is good or he is bad. There's just no in between.

Detectives, however, are of the real world. They recognize that there are fine lines, sometimes indistinguishable, between villain and hero and villain and victim. Thus Travis McGee in John D. MacDonald's Bright Orange for the Shroud (1965),² is told that he's like the animal-goon-villain: "Maybe . . . maybe he is you, gone bad. . . . Maybe that's why you can handle him" (p. 103).

This bit of pedestrian psychology, although significant, is by no means recent. We know, for instance, that Sherlock Holmes would have been just as brilliant a criminal as Professor Moriarity. We know that Sam Spade was no Philo Vancian angel: he had been having an affair with his murdered partner's wife in The Maltese Falcon. We are aware that Lew Archer often views himself in the mirror with disgust as he seems to take on the psycho-physiological qualities of a wolfish Mr. Hyde during the course of an investigation.

Perhaps this fine line within the detective hero himself is what makes Sherlock Holmes stories more enduring than prim and proper Philo Vance. It is certainly the reason that Lew Archer is more intrinsically interesting as a character than Mike Hammer. For Spillane's hero is

² John D. MacDonald, Bright Orange for the Shroud (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1965). All quotations will be from this edition.

all for the good. He never errs in his judgment or his behavior. And his criminals are all for the bad. They are flatly drawn. All we have to know, we are told, is that someone is a commie. We can easily fill in the rest: he hates children and dogs, he is a rapist, a torturer, he is physically abhorrent, he is an idiot. He is, in brief, complete anathema.

This is all rather corny and unbelievable. We know from our own experiences that the kindest people can be motivated to commit the foulest of deeds. We know, because we see these tendencies in ourselves. Most of us just don't act upon them. Furthermore, modern psychology tells us that criminals aren't all bad. And history teaches us that even the infamous Al Capone established soup kitchens in Chicago.

Raymond Chandler, Kenneth Millar, and John D. MacDonald are writers who share a profound awareness of this human condition. They use their knowledge of psychology and history to further our insight into the nature of human rather than merely criminal behavior. Therefore, although their characters are action detectives willing to use their guns and their fists where necessary, they rely more heavily on their understanding of people in order to discover the solution to a case.

Their understanding of people, however, does not mean that they demonstrate compassion toward felons. They

realize that there is, for most, a choice. Human beings can choose to live within the boundaries of social norms, or they can choose to live outside them at their own risk. Those who are treated with the least compassion are the ones who have had the advantages of society, but who have either refused to take advantage, or who have become too greedy: doctors, lawyers, big-time brilliant syndicate men.

Even victims are not automatically treated with compassion. Here again is that fine line of distinction. Victims may be complicit in their victimization, which often makes them, if not simultaneously, congruently villains and victims.

Simply, in this context, a villain is one who acts, and a victim is the one who is acted upon. And although the relationship between the two can be, as we shall see, a complex one, it can also be somewhat clarified. Done to, in the case of the victim, means put upon, abused, raped, swindled, or ultimately murdered.

Murder, with its finality, is not really looked upon as the major tragedy in the action detective novels under discussion. Certainly, one of the primary reasons we read detective novels is to find out "who done it," and by this we mean murder--not arson, not robbery (although these may be included), but killing. We are bored with a detective novel which doesn't include in it at least one

good murder. At the same time, although we may not consciously be aware of it, we also would be bored if motivation were omitted. The how and why of the crime is equally as important as the who.

The real victims of a murder are the ones who remain alive--and this includes the murderer--just as funerals are more for the mourners than the mourned. The ones who are left to pick up the pieces and pick at each other, to live in fear, to question their own guilt or the guilt of their loved ones; and then try to begin life all over again, with a new awareness of themselves and of the world in which they live.

The victims of action detective novels often exist in a symbiotic relationship with the villains or victimizers. This is a fact which the three novelists impress upon their readers again and again. To see how this relationship is developed in their novels, to study the role of villain and victim, let us examine three representative works: Raymond Chandler's The Long Goodbye,³ Kenneth Millar's The Far Side of the Dollar,⁴ and John D. MacDonald's Bright Orange for the Shroud.

³Raymond Chandler, The Long Goodbye (New York: Pocket Books, 1954). Although originally published by Houghton Mifflin, all citations will refer to the Pocket Books edition.

⁴Ross Macdonald (pseud, for Kenneth Millar), The Far Side of the Dollar (New York: Bantam Books, 1965). Although originally published by Alfred A. Knopf, all quotations will be from the Pocket Books edition.

The Long Goodbye, the next-to-last Chandler novel, is also his most compassionate. In it, Philip Marlowe establishes two deeply meaningful relationships, one of which is betrayed at the novel's end, and the other which is revived, with implications of marriage, in his final novel, Playback (1958).

In The Long Goodbye, Marlowe, who in middle age has moved from his cramped apartment in Los Angeles to a rented house in the Laurel Canyon district, meets Terry Lennox, a sometimes-alcoholic. The Marlowe-Lennox relationship begins when Lennox, drunk and almost destitute, passes out in front of a Los Angeles nightclub and is deserted by his ex-wife Sylvia Lennox, who drives away in her Rolls-Royce. Marlowe's reason for taking Terry home is rather unclear: "I'm supposed to be tough, but there was something about the guy that got me. I don't know what it was unless it was the white hair and the scarred face and the clear voice and the politeness" (p. 5). It is only because we know that the detective's mission is to save "lost dogs," as he refers to Lennox, that he is a humanist, that we can understand Marlowe's motives.

Terry Lennox is indeed a lost dog, albeit a polite one, and he is, ultimately, the major villain-victim of the novel. An ex-World War II hero who served in the British army and who saved the lives of two Las Vegas gangsters, Mendy Menendez and Randy Starr, Lennox appears

at a loss to know what to do with himself. For him, as well as for many others, the war has altered his values and left in him a void which cannot be filled. Captured by the Germans and disgusted with himself for what he let them do to him (just what, remains vague), he contents himself with leading a meaningless existence in, for him, a meaningless world. He weds multi-million dollar heiress Sylvia Potter Lennox, a six-times married tramp, and allows himself to be kept by her wealth.

Marlowe's first meeting with Lennox is followed by a second encounter several months later, just before Christmas, when he rescues the hungry, drunken, filthy man as he is about to be picked up by the police for vagrancy. Marlowe again takes Lennox home, cleans him and feeds him and suggests that if he needs a job he might contact his "friends" in Las Vegas who are indebted to him and who have promised him work. This second meeting ends with Marlowe putting Lennox on a bus for Las Vegas.

Disgustedly, a few weeks later, Marlowe reads that Lennox and Sylvia have been remarried in Las Vegas, and in March, Terry Lennox, now looking "older, very sober and severe and beautifully calm" (p. 14), turns up at Marlowe's office. The two begin to meet frequently for drinks at a quiet bar called Victor's, where Lennox introduces Marlowe to the gimlet--English style, no bitters. It is at Victor's that differences in attitudes toward life and inner morality

begin to crop up. Marlowe asks Lennox how he got on with Randy Starr in Las Vegas. "Down my street he's called a tough number":

"In Las Vegas he's a legitimate businessman. You look him up next time you're there. He'll be your pal."

"Not too likely. I don't like hoodlums."

"That's just a word, Marlowe. We have that kind of world. Two wars gave it to us and we are going to keep it. Randy and I and another fellow were in a jam once. It made a sort of bond between us" (pp. 15-16).

Marlowe, annoyed with Lennox's constant self-mockery and with his ironic detachment about being a kept man, decides that he "liked him better drunk, down and out, hungry and beaten and proud" (p. 18). However, like Travis McGee later, who suspects that he can love only weak women who make him feel strong, Marlowe questions his own disillusionment with Lennox: "Maybe I just liked being top man. His reasons for things were hard to figure" (p. 18).

Marlowe's last meeting with Terry Lennox at Victor's ends with Marlowe walking out on him. He is tired of Terry Lennox's self-depreciating remarks: "I'm a weak character without guts or ambition. I caught the brass ring and it shocked me to find out it wasn't gold. A guy like me has one big moment in his life, one perfect swing on the high trapeze. Then he spends the rest of his time trying not to fall off the sidewalk into the gutter" (pp. 19-20). He's tired of Terry's unwillingness to be assertive and to change his life. Perhaps Marlowe

is sickened by his own participation as listener in Terry's life of decadence. Perhaps Terry is speaking more openly, trusting and depending too much on his relationship with Marlowe. Marlowe struggles to remain a private, uncommitted man. He finally leaves. "You talk too damn much . . . and it's too damn much about you" (p. 20).

The two don't meet again until one month later at five o'clock in the morning when Terry shows up at Marlowe's house and asks him to drive him to an airport in Tiajuana. The reason, we are to learn later, is that Terry has found Sylvia dead in the guesthouse where she conducted her extra-marital affairs, her face smashed in, and he believes, quite rightly, that he will be accused of the murder. Marlowe, advising Terry not to tell him why he wants to be taken to Tiajuana, drives him there and later gets picked up by the police, spit upon, beaten and imprisoned, and finally released without ever in any way betraying Terry.

Terry, we discover, has first written to the police to confess to the murder, and then has committed suicide in Mexico after writing a letter to Marlowe asking him to "drink a gimlet for me at Victor's and the next time you make coffee, pour me a cup and put some bourbon in it and light me a cigarette and put it beside the cup. And after that forget the whole thing" (p. 73). In a poignant scene for the hard-boiled Marlowe, he follows Terry's request:

"I did what he asked me to, sentimental or not" (p. 74). Thus, temporarily, ends Marlowe's relationship with Terry Lennox.

If it seems that a great deal of time has been spent upon him, it is because he is integral to the plot as a whole, although he doesn't appear after the first seventy-five pages, until the end of the novel. Furthermore, it is to Lennox that Marlowe's long goodbye is addressed, the first time when he receives the suicide note, the second and last time when we realize that he is still alive. Finally, it is the victim Terry Lennox who turns out to be a villain. Had he stepped forward, had he not lived in fear, two deaths might have been prevented. For this weakness Marlowe cannot forgive him.

The rest of the story of The Long Goodbye centers around Eileen Wade and her writer-husband, Roger. An attempt is made by publisher's representative Howard Spencer to hire Marlowe to keep an eye on Roger Wade who, for some unknown reason (at first attributed to general writer's alcoholism) has been hitting the bottle. Marlowe refuses. It is not in his line of work to babysit for alcoholic writers. But when ethereally beautiful Eileen Wade calls him up to tell him that her husband has been missing for three days, Marlowe cannot resist her request.

Thus begins a story of villains and victims, of murder and madness. The first villains that Marlowe

encounters while working for the Wades are three doctors known to the detective trade as "barred-window boys." Simply, they are doctors who provide "cures" for their patients at private clinics, or who run a drug sideline out of their own offices. Marlowe checks them out because Wade has been to one of these men before, and because he has left an alcoholically cryptic note to a "Dr. V." at home.

The first doctor Marlowe sees is Dr. Verringer who runs a home for writers, now closed, in Sepulveda Canyon. Dr. Verringer is a cordial, mild-mannered man who has been acting as protector to a psychopath named Earl, a man-child who goes in for gaucho costumes and toy guns, but whose brass-knuckled fists can be brutal. Earl is smooth and handsome, an accomplished dancer and ladies' man, but suffers from sudden moments of violence, sometimes even directed against his benefactor. It is Verringer who is keeping Wade hidden, weakening him, feeding him narcotics, and trying to extort a sizeable sum of money from him. It is not until later, however, that we discover Wade's presence at Verringer's ranch. For the time being, Verringer does a near-perfect job of throwing Marlowe off his scent.

Verringer is, of course, a con-man. As a con-man he must present a believable appearance. Indeed he does. He is a man with "a strong beefy voice," with "meaty shoulders" (pp. 106-7). His speech is educated and polite.

He cannot be shaken, even when Marlowe snidely suggests to him that he's been running an illegal operation. His response and bearing cause Marlowe to think, admiringly, that "The guy had a kind of dignity, at that" (p. 108).

That Marlowe is capable of admiring a villain is a common occurrence in detective fiction. All three detectives--Marlowe, Archer, and McGee--respect their adversaries if their adversaries are worthy. Just as we have seen in the last chapter, that the detective respects his policeman adversary so he also respects a good, tough, suave criminal opponent. If all police were incompetent, the detective's battle against them would look ridiculous. If all villains were incompetent or psychopathic, the detective would need only his guns and his fists, not cunning and intelligence, to win his battle. If the conflict were only physical, any strong-arm might serve. But the conflict must be more than this. The psychopath Earl can be handled with quick acts of violence; to defeat men like Verringer one needs intelligence and skill.

The second doctor Marlowe interviews is Dr. Vukanich, an ear, nose, throat and hard-narcotics man. He operates out of a building "loaded with doctors, dentists, Christian Science practitioners not doing too good, the kind of lawyers you hope the other fellow has, the kind of doctors and dentists who just scrape along . . . tired, discouraged

men" (p. 112). Vukanich is not so suave as Verringer. A "thin-faced man with an uninteresting pallor," Marlowe suggests that he looks "like a tubercular rat" (p. 113). In the middle of Marlowe's interrogation of him, Vukanich leaves the room and returns "strolling happily." He has given himself a shot. He too is an addict.

Marlowe responds to Vukanich's threats that he has friends who "for a mere five hundred dollars . . . could put you in the hospital with several broken bones," by retorting "Shoot yourself in the vein, don't you, Doc? Boy, do you brighten up." He then leaves the office without heeding the receptionist's call to pay ten dollars: "The waiting patients looked at me with disapproving eyes. That was no way to treat doctor" (p. 115).

The third doctor Marlowe investigates is stronger. Dr. Amos Varley of Altadena, who runs a rest-home where lonely, aging people reside, is a man of dignity who, in personality and general charm, seems a composite picture of Ronald Reagan, Billy Graham, and Arthur Godfrey: "He was wonderful--and he was tough as armor plate" (p. 116). Varley smiles "benignly." His sadness is "a rich full sadness" (p. 117). He is, in brief, the perfect confidence man, replete with all the proper mannerisms. Although Marlowe admires his toughness, he finds his practices disgusting: he takes as patients only those who can't fight back. When Varley tells Marlowe that "Somebody had

to care for these sad old people," Marlowe replies, "Somebody has to clean out cesspools. Come to think of it, that's a clean honest job. So long, Dr. Varley. When my job makes me feel dirty I'll think of you. It will cheer me up no end" (p. 118).

Doctors and lawyers appear frequently as secondary villains in the novels of Chandler, Millar and MacDonald. We find villainous doctors in Chandler's The Little Sister and Lady in the Lake, and in Millar's The Far Side of the Dollar, Black Money, and The Goodbye Look. Lawyers are villains in John D. MacDonald's Pale Gray for Guilt, and in Bright Orange for the Shroud.

It is because doctors and lawyers have the trust of their clients that their crimes are looked upon by the detectives as particularly heinous. In a recent Gallup Poll, doctors and lawyers rated high on trustworthiness (plumbers, it might be noted, were on the bottom, second only to used car salesmen). It is these two professions about which the American public has the least knowledge: medicine and law. Doctors and lawyers are special, people to be revered. What they do is complicated and unclear, but we automatically trust them. We might complain about their fees, but we pay, for they must know a lot. Therefore, the doctors and the lawyers are most capable (some ministers might also be listed here) of fleecing the public. We have only to remember the disapproval of

Dr. Vukanich's patients--"That was no way to treat Doctor"--to understand the blind worship and gullibility of people towards this esteemed profession.

After Marlowe leaves Dr. Varley he returns to Dr. Verringer's ranch on a hunch, and rescues weakened Roger Wade. He takes him back to his wife. The only payment he receives is the one he takes: "I took hold of [Eileen Wade] and pulled her toward me and tilted her head back. I kissed her hard on the lips." Marlowe believes that Eileen Wade knew where her husband was all along, that she "just wanted to get me involved with him, tangled up with him, so I'd feel a sense of responsibility to look after him" (p. 132). Eileen denies the truth of this, but whether or not it is true is never made clear. What is clear, however, is that Roger Wade knew Sylvia Lennox and that he had an affair with her. What is more clear is Marlowe's fear of involving himself again, of liking someone too much, of feeling too responsible: "If I hadn't been a nice guy to Terry Lennox, he would still be alive" (p. 133).

Two weeks later Marlowe is invited to a cocktail party at the Wades' home where he meets Dr. Edward Loring, another villain, but a covert one, a "prissy-looking man in rimless cheaters [sic.] with a smear on his chin that might have been a goatee" (p. 150). Dr. Loring is a villain because he is a prude, a man lacking in warmth and compassion who is more concerned with his self-image than he

is with human suffering. Furthermore, like Ernest Hemingway's Robert Cohn in The Sun Also Rises, he is sloppy. He publicly accuses Roger Wade of having an affair with his wife, Linda Potter Loring. Wade responds with quiet dignity, earning Marlowe's respect. Loring slaps Wade across the face with his gloves, receiving in return only his wife's scorn:

"Dear God, what a ham you are, darling. Stop acting like a damn fool, will you, darling? Or would you rather stick around until somebody slaps your face?" (p. 155). When Loring is asked to leave the party he calls for his wife, but she refuses to leave with him. He has humiliated himself and leaves alone.

A week later when Wade, drunk, calls Marlowe for help and Marlowe discovers him passed out with a gash in his head, Loring is called in. When he enters the Wade home, he has the bearing and the "expression of a man who has been asked to clean up after the dog got sick." Instead of helping Wade, he states coldly, "As you know, I don't treat alcoholics." He refuses to help Marlowe carry Wade up the stairs. A contrast is shown between Dr. Loring and Marlowe:

Just a minute, Doc. Must be a long time since you glanced at that little piece of prose called the Hippocratic Oath. This man called me on the phone and I live some way off. He sounded bad and I broke every traffic law in the state getting here. I found him lying out on the ground and I carried him in here and believe me he isn't any bunch of feathers. The houseboy is away and there's nobody here to help me upstairs with Wade. How does it look to you? (p. 168).

Loring is unresponsive, however, and as he leaves Marlowe tells him, "As a professional man you're a handful of flea dirt" (p. 169).

Since Loring is a covert villain because he does not act, or because when he acts his responses are wrong, he must be punished differently from the master-mind villain or the psychopath villain or the goon-villain. Public humiliation is the only punishment that fits Loring, that will get to him. Thus we find at the end of the novel that he has been castigated by another doctor for prescribing too many demeral tablets--fifty at one time--for Eileen Wade. When he verbally tries to strong-arm the police into suppressing information, he is told, "Get lost, Jack" (p. 284). Finally, his wife humiliates him by leaving him and flying to Paris to get a divorce.

There are, of course, more overt villains than Dr. Edward Loring. Randy Starr, a Las Vegas big-time hood, is one, although we really never meet him. He is one of Terry Lennox's war-time buddies who comes to his aid in Mexico, helps fake his suicide, and arranges for plastic surgery to hide Terry's identity. He is, in a sense, the master-mind villain of the novel, the one in control. Marlowe's only contact with him is over the telephone, and we learn that "He had a quiet, competent, man-of-affairs voice" (p. 311).

Marlowe calls Starr for two reasons. The first is to let him know that he believes Terry Lennox (whose real name, it is discovered, is Paul Marston) did not commit suicide, that he was either murdered or is still alive. The second reason is to insure that Mendy Menendez, one-time ally of Randy Starr, gets back to Las Vegas alive.

Mendy Menendez is another Las Vegas gangster, a second to Randy Starr, although a somewhat rougher diamond. Menendez is a typical 1950's Mafia syndicate gangster. He is dapper, "tanned very dark," with "a hairline mustache." When we first meet him he is waiting in Marlowe's outer office, and his dialogue is the crisp, quick, semi-humorous language of the gangster: "He threw the magazine aside. 'The crap these rags go for,' he said. 'I been reading a piece about Costello. Yeah, they know all about Costello. Like I know all about Helen of Troy'" (p. 63).

Dropping Frank Costello's name gives Menendez credibility as a hoodlum high up in the rackets. What gives him more credibility, however, are Marlowe's remarks about him that "He was a guy who owned the place where he happened to be" (p. 64), and that he is "A dressy type. . . . But very tough behind it all" (p. 67). Menendez refers to Marlowe as "cheapie," and verbal one-upmanship begins between the two:

"Know who I am, cheapie?"
 "Your name's Menendez. The boys call you Mendy. You operate on the Strip."
 "Yeah? How did I get so big?"

"I wouldn't know. You probably started out as a pimp in a Mexican whorehouse" (pp. 64-65).

What is most impressive about Menendez as a villain in that he's both the stereotype of a big mob gangster, and a small time Damon Runyon hoodlum, à la Nathan Detroit. He carries a gold cigarette case and a gold lighter. He wears expensive, gaudy shoes. He is a family man: "I got a place in Bel-Air that cost ninety grand and I already spent more than that to fix it up. I got a lovely platinum blond wife and two kids in private schools back east." When Mendy asks Marlowe "What do you got?" Marlowe responds, "This year I have a house to live in--all to myself" (p. 65).

But Menendez for all his garishness and snappy, wiseacre talk, is devoted to Terry Lennox. It is for this reason that he comes to Marlowe to try to convince him not to investigate further Sylvia Lennox's murder and Lennox's suicide. And at this point we are given an insight into just why Terry Lennox is so special to Mendy Menendez and to Randy Starr:

A mortar shell plops right in the middle of us and for some reason it don't go off. Those jerries have a lot of tricks. They got a twisted sense of humor. Sometimes you think it's a dud and three seconds later it ain't a dud. Terry grabs it and he's out of the foxhole before Randy and me can even start to get unstuck. But I mean quick, brother. Like a good ball handler. He throws himself face down and throws the thing away from him and it goes off in the air. Most of it goes over his head but a hunk gets the side of his face (p. 66).

He is angry that in his hour of need Terry went to Marlowe, a "cheapie," instead of to his other friends.

Although Marlowe finally slugs Menendez--"Next time bring a gun--or don't call me cheapie" (p. 68)--he respects him as a man in touch with his world and with himself. He even calls Randy Starr later in the novel to insure that Menendez is not killed by Starr's men. Starr is upset with Mendy because a vice-squad cop who got too rough with Chick Agostino, Menendez's goon-bodyguard, was viciously beaten on his orders. Again, the law of gangsterdom is made clear: never kill or beat up a police officer, even one on the mob's payroll.

Removed from the world of guns, gangsters and Philip Marlowe, the Wades, Eileen and Roger, reside in elegant Idle Valley. It is the world of the rich, where skeletons are well-hidden in closets with well-oiled sliding doors. The skeleton in Eileen Wade's closet is her past marriage to Terry Lennox, then Paul Marston, in England during the war. Lennox/Marston was reported missing-in-action, and after several years, assuming that he was dead, Eileen married Roger Wade.

It is Eileen Wade who is the female villain-victim of the novel. Something inside her snapped after she lost Lennox. She is a fairy princess who lives in a fantasy past. Unable to have a healthy sexual relationship with her husband because of her commitment to a "dead" man, she remains cold and aloof. It is only Philip Marlowe, and only because he bears the same initials as her husband, Paul Marston, who is able to arouse her:

She called out a name, but it wasn't mine. . . .
"I always knew you would come back," she said
softly. "Even after ten years. . . . All these
years I have kept myself for you" (p. 185).

Marlowe discovers that he is "erotic as a stallion," and is saved from sleeping with Eileen only because the house-boy interrupts. Disgusted with himself, he descends to the Wades' livingroom and escapes by getting drunk:

The whiskey hit me hard and fast and I kept guzzling it until the room started to get hazy and the furniture was all in the wrong places and the lamplight was like wildfire or summer lightning. Then I was flat out on the leather couch, trying to balance the bottle on my chest. It seemed to be empty. It rolled away and thumped on the floor.

That was the last incident of which I took any precise notice (p. 186).

That Eileen Wade doesn't remember her actions during the preceding night, that she is obviously living in the past, should be enough to convince Marlowe that she is, at best, schizophrenic. It is not until she murders Roger Wade and attempts to make it look like a suicide, however, that Marlowe is finally convinced. There is no suicide note, as Wade, a prolific note-writer, would have left.

It is at this point that we learn that Eileen Wade had also murdered Sylvia Lennox shortly after her husband had been there, and that Wade, drunk, could not remember at the time if it was he who had killed her. Her murder of Wade is both self-protective and symbolic. She must protect herself against Wade's discovery that it was she, not he, who murdered Sylvia Lennox. Furthermore, by

having sexual relations with Sylvia, Wade has become a stand-in for Terry Lennox who Eileen believes has betrayed her by his marriage. By killing Wade, she kills a part of herself.

Marlowe traps Eileen into a confession of sorts:

"That suitcase you threw into the Chatsworth Reservoir-- was it heavy?"
 She turned and stared at me. "It was an old one, I said. Yes, it was very heavy."
 "How did you get it over the high wire fence around the reservoir?"
 "What? The fence?" She made a helpless gesture.
 "I suppose in emergencies one has an abnormal strength to do what has to be done. Somehow or other I did it. That's all."
 "There isn't any fence," I said.
 "Isn't any fence?" She repeated it dully, as if it didn't mean anything.
 "And there was no blood on Roger's clothes. . . ."
 (pp. 275-76).

Yet even with this knowledge of her guilt, Marlowe doesn't call the police. Instead, he permits her to go to her room where he knows that she will take her life by her own hand--with over forty demerol tablets. When Marlowe returns home he thinks of Eileen Wade:

She no longer seemed quite real. A murderer is always unreal once you know he is a murderer. There are people who kill out of hate or fear or greed. There are the cunning killers who plan and expect to get away with it. There are the angry killers who do not think at all. And there are the killers who are in love with death, to whom murder is a remote kind of suicide. In a sense they are all insane. . . .
 (p. 279).

Eileen Wade is this last, and although her life has been a kind of living death, and her murders a "kind of suicide," her own death is no longer remote. Her final words in a

suicide note to publisher Howard Spencer reflect a girl-woman, an inability to adjust to reality: "The tragedy of life, Howard, is not that the beautiful things die young, but that they grow old and mean. It will not happen to me" (p. 289).

It is not to Eileen Wade that we must bid our long goodbye, however, but to her former husband, Paul Marston/Terry Lennox. One month after Eileen Wade's suicide he appears in Marlowe's office, his skin dyed a deep brown, his hair blackened, plastic surgery done to his face, as Señor Maioranos. When Marlowe discovers his identity Lennox invites him to Victor's for a drink, but this time Marlowe will not be had. He accuses Lennox of being responsible, indirectly, for Roger Wade's death, for knowing that Eileen Wade killed Sylvia and for running away:

I'm not sore at you. You're just that kind of guy. For a long time I couldn't figure you at all. . . . You had standards and you lived up to them, but they were personal. They had no relation to any kind of ethics or scruples. You were a nice guy because you had a nice nature. But you were just as happy with mugs or hoodlums as you were with honest men. Provided the hoodlums spoke fairly good English and had fairly acceptable table manners. You're a moral defeatist. I think maybe the war did it and again I think maybe you were born that way (p. 331).

Lennox, who has turned into a fancy man with implications that he is a homosexual--"You've got nice clothes and perfume and you're as elegant as a fifty dollar whore" (p. 332)--tells Marlowe in his own defense of his dealings

with Starr and Menendez, "You're not the only guy in the world that has no price tags." But Marlowe confesses that

You bought a lot of me, Terry. For a smile and a nod and a wave of the hand and a few quiet drinks in a quiet bar here and there. It was nice while it lasted. So long, amigo. I won't say goodbye. I said it to you when it meant something. I said it when it was sad and lonely and final (p. 331).

Thus Marlowe says the final goodbye to Terry Lennox/Paul Marston/Señor Maioranos, a man wounded by the times in which he lives, by his own failure to establish a set of ethics to live by, to make sense out of chaos, a villain and a victim as empty as any of Eliot's hollow men.

If Philip Marlowe's mission is to save "lost dogs" who ultimately bite him, Lew Archer's mission is first to find and then to protect them. He does so in a number of his novels, although sometimes he is not successful in his protection. Two cases in point are Davy Spanner in The Instant Enemy (1968) who is inadvertently killed by his high school guidance counselor, and Carl Hallman in The Doomsters (1958) who is brutally shot, although not killed. Archer is more successful in finding and protecting young Ronny Broadhurst in The Underground Man (1971), and Tommy Hillman in The Far Side of the Dollar (1965), the novel to be discussed here.

A major theme that runs through Kenneth Millar's novels is the search for a missing or unknown father, and because of the age of the searchers (from small boy, to

teenager, to a young man in his early twenties), the stories usually take us back in time ten, fifteen, or twenty years. The past influences the present. "Life hangs together in one piece. Everything is connected with everything else," Archer tells his ex-mistress, Susanna Drew. "The problem is to find the connections" (p. 171). Millar implies that the past cannot be discarded. It must be dredged up and our feelings laid bare along with those old bones, in order for us to once again lead a relatively normal life.

Such is the case in The Far Side of the Dollar, a nightmarish novel about a lonely teenage boy in search of his parents and of his past. Tommy Hillman, seventeen-year-old son of Ralph and Elaine Hillman has run away--no, escaped--from Laguna Perdida School where he has been committed by his father after an alleged attempt on his mother's life. Dr. Sponti, director of the school, fearing that he will be sued by the boy's parents, hires Lew Archer to conduct a discreet investigation into Tommy's whereabouts.

It is not long, however, before Archer leaves the employ of Dr. Sponti, a "dark and florid and stout" person "with the slightly desperate look of a man who had to lose weight" and a hand that is "soft and chilly" (p. 2). Dr. Sponti and his staff care nothing about their charges, mostly deeply disturbed young people abandoned by their

wealthy parents. Money and discretion are their gods, and Archer, sensitive to the problems of youth, despises them.

At Laguna Perdida⁵ we meet the awful Mr. Patch, a Dickensian schoolmaster in name as well as behavior, with "a face creased . . . into a sneer of power which didn't go with his small, sensitive mouth" (p. 8). Patch cannot cope with the boys in any humane way. Before Tommy Hillman escaped the school, Patch had beaten him as a way of asserting his authority.

Not being able to cope with teenagers is the problem of most of the adults in the novel. Tommy's father, Ralph Hillman, cannot understand where he went wrong. "I spent a great deal of time with him. In fact, I deliberately reduced my work load at the firm several years ago, partly so I could enjoy Tom's growing up," Hillman says in bewilderment. But Archer understands: "His phrasing was a little strange, as if growing up was something a boy did for his parents' entertainment" (p. 20). Elaine Hillman, Tommy's mother, also cannot understand. Although "an aura of desolation hung about her, a sense of uselessness, as if she was in fact the faded doll she resembled" (p. 21), her removal from Tommy as a person is similar to her husband's: "What use is money," she says dully, "without a son to spend it on" (p. 23).

⁵"Laguna Perdida" means Lost Lake, or also "Lost Space." The meaning, I think, is intentional.

Stella Carlson, Tommy's girlfriend, is a young woman of sixteen of whom Archer says she "was one of those youngsters who make you feel like apologizing for the world" (p. 40). Yet her own parents are leery of her judgment, have forbidden her to see Tommy, and have lied to the police about him, saying that he stole their car, when in fact it was loaned to him by Stella. The Carlsons, Archer observes, are "three well-intentioned people who couldn't seem to stop hurting each other" (p. 151).

There are really few out-and-out villains in this novel. Dr. Sponti may be classified as one, a phony, a man living off the dollar and other people's problem children. Mr. Patch, an ego-maniac who should be portrayed with riding crop in hand, is another. The third is Mr. Harley, Sr., and the fourth is Otto Sipe, two men who will be discussed shortly. None of these, however, can be classified as masterminds, as men in control.

Victims of one sort or another run rampant in this novel: Tommy Hillman, a victim of his past and of his parents' deception; Stella Carlson, victim of her youth and of her own goodness; Susanna Drew, T.V. producer and one-time lover of both Ralph Hillman and Lew Archer, victim of an indiscretion she would rather forget; Carol Harley, Tommy's natural mother, a victim of her beautiful mother's coldness, of her own beauty, of the tinsel lure of Hollywood, of the brutality of her husband, and finally of Elaine

Hillman's knife; Harold "Har" Harley, Carol's pathetic brother-in-law, a victim of his own devotion to family at any cost, of good-hearted weakness, and of his father's ferocious religiousity; and Robert Brown, Carol Harley's father, victim of his human kindness to abused Mike Harley whom he took into his home and who repaid him by running away with fifteen-year-old Carol.

If victims abound, so too do villain-victims. There is Ralph Hillman, Tommy's real father who cares for him but who doesn't know how to show it. Hillman seems to prefer the company of Dick Leandro, a not-too-bright, clean-cut young man who crews for him on his sailboat and calls him Skipper in memory of his World War II days in the Navy. Tommy, on the other hand, likes playing jazz piano and reading books. There are Rhea and Jay Carlson, Stella's parents, who in their refusal to attempt to understand her almost lose her love. There is Mike Harley, Carol's husband who, beaten by his father in his youth is impotent in his adulthood, achieving erection only if he is spanked, who can relate to people best through violence, and who finally is killed by Elaine Hillman's knife. And there is Elaine Hillman who has been taught by her New England mother "always to suffer in silence" (p. 154), and who does so until the suffering overwhelms her and bursts her silence as she stealthily murders two people.

If, as Nero Wolfe intones, "the real tragedy is not death, but the condition which induces it," The Far Side of the Dollar is a powerful example of those conditions. In the case of the Hillmans it is their unwillingness to tell Tommy that he was adopted and Ralph Hillman's refusal to confront his wife with Tommy's parentage. He has carved out a niche for himself in a very exclusive corner of the California world, and it is in this corner that he tries to escape his past. When Hillman is finally forced to confront the fact that his son has been kidnapped, that indeed he may have been complicit in his own kidnapping, Hillman is hurt and confused:

We're prosperous and educated people, he seemed to be saying, first-class citizens: how can the world have aimed such a dirty blow at us? (p. 27).

It is Lew Archer who understands what may lurk on the far side of the dollar--what money tries to cover up. For the dollar, no matter how powerful, cannot completely hide the truth. It cannot purchase Elaine Hillman's sanity or Tommy's love. It cannot buy back Carol Harley's life or put warmth into the Hillmans' cavernous, impersonal home. It cannot bring back Ralph Hillman's romantic youth. Nor can it erase the physical and psychological scars caused by Mike Harley's father.

Mike Harley is perhaps the most interesting villain-victim in the novel, although what we know of his past and present is drawn for us by his associates and his relatives.

Texan Jack Fletcher, to whom Mike has lost all his ransom money in a high-stakes poker game, says, "He's a born loser," (p. 114) and his flippant remark is not far from the truth. His father, a "tall old man wearing overalls and a straw hat which brushed the rafters," with eyes that are "flat and angry," and a mouth that is "sternly righteous" (p. 117), is a man twisted by his angry worship of an angry God. He had beaten one son, Harold, into weak submission. Mike had been beaten until he fled his Idaho home, and although he demonstrated more initiative than his brother, the scars left upon him were deeper.

That Mike Harley's father had a villainous influence upon both his sons that lasted through their adulthood is made blatantly clear. Speaking to Archer, Harold Harley "covered the back of his neck with his hand as if he feared a blow from behind" (p. 97). He tells Archer that Mike's "got scars on his back where Dad used to beat him. I got some of my own." He shows Archer "white scars all up and down his back, like hieroglyphs recording history" (p. 98). Furthermore, when Archer finally meets Harley, Sr., on his Idaho farm, the man's fanaticism is obvious: "I get my instructions from a higher power. He gives me my instructions direct in my heart" (p. 117). And when he warns Archer off his property--"Get out of here. . . . I've been fighting the Devil all my life, and I know his cohorts when I see one"--the detective silently observes, "So do I" (p. 118).

It should not seem odd, then, that Mike Harley would completely rebel against his father by running away with fifteen-year-old Carol. No one except a trained psychologist could help him at that point, not even Carol Harley's father, Robert Brown, a sensitive man, a high school guidance counselor who tries to save him.

Ironically, salvation is not the answer for Mike Harley. His father's salvation-by-the-whip corrupts him. Mr. Brown's salvation by the kind word is so alien to him that he can only sneer. Instead, he takes up with Otto Sipe, a physical education teacher at his high school turned drunkard. It is Sipe's promise to Mike that he will make him a success in boxing that induces him to run to California with Carol--a promise that is never fulfilled. Instead, World War II intervenes and Mike Harley becomes a Navy man on a ship run, for a short time, by Ralph Hillman.

When the war is over and he is dishonorably discharged from the Navy for theft of government property, Mike resumes his relationship with Sipe, and twenty years later it is Sipe who is his partner in the "kidnapping" of Tommy Hillman. Mike Harley's life of violence and deceit becomes a progression toward his own violent death at the hands of Elaine Hillman who discovers him in Los Angeles.

Otto Sipe in 1965 is the drunken nightwatchman at the abandoned Barcelona Hotel, the hotel where Ralph

Hillman had his affair with Susanna Drew and where Hillman and Carol Harley conceived Tommy almost eighteen years before. At this same hotel Sipe was once a corrupt house detective who took candid photos of Susanna Drew and Ralph Hillman in flagrante and sold them to Mrs. Hillman. Sipe is a man with "a crude upturned nose, a bulging forehead, a thirsty mouth." His face is that "of a horribly ravaged baby who had never been weaned from the bottle" (p. 87).

With this man and at this hotel Tommy Hillman takes refuge. Again, the past and present meet in a macabre way. Tom, believing that Mike Harley is his real father, is determined to live with him even though the man is a down and out criminal.

This honesty and sense of commitment which young people like Tommy Hillman and Stella Carlson share is incomprehensible to their parents' generation. Archer suggests that honesty, no matter how brutal it may be, is the keyword of the day for Tommy and his friends: "No phoniness, I thought, was the code of the new generation, at least the ones who were worth anything. It was a fairly decent ideal, but it sometimes worked out cruelly in practice" (p. 189). It is the Hillmans' lack of honesty that is at the root of their problems. Stella's parents' deception of the police makes her distrust them. Both Tommy and Stella believe that it is the way of adults to lie. Stella's trust of Lew Archer is difficult to win because she has been lied to so much by older people.

In Stella and Tommy's openness, however, Archer witnesses a purity that he himself lacks. In a treehouse conversation with Stella, he suddenly sees himself as "a heavy hunched figure seen from above in the act of tormenting a child who was already tormented. A sense went through me of the appalling ease with which the things you do in a good cause can slip over into bad" (p. 38).

The good cause is finding Tommy. Even when Archer is on his own, with no employer to pay his investigation expenses, he continues his search: "I was doing what I wanted to be doing. . . . I wanted to find Tom" (p. 100). But things do slip over into the bad, and we are left at the end with four people dead--two by murder, one by accident, and one by her own hand--and the lives of the survivors radically changed.

Elaine Hillman is the killer. "A beautifully made thin blonde woman in her forties" when Archer first meets her (p. 21), as the novel progresses, Elaine moves back and forth between beautiful woman, aging hag, and little girl:

Her faded pretty face wrinkled up as if she could feel the physical pressure of torture instruments (p. 58).

The morning light was unkind to her parched blonde face. . . . She looked as if all the minutes in those forty-eight hours had passed through her body like knots in wire (p. 103).

She was well groomed and well dressed, in a tailored sharkskin suit which concealed the shrinkage of her body (p. 152).

She moved her head away from my pointing finger like a stage-shy girl. A stage-shy girl playing the role of an aging woman with monkey wrinkles and fading fine blonde hair (p. 215).

Her voice was high and childish in complaint. The little girl behind her wrinkles had been caught in a malign world where even things no longer cooperated and even men could not be bought (p. 216).

Elaine Hillman's schizophrenia is attributed to her Puritan heritage and a mother who taught her to abhor men. Ralph Hillman explains the reason for his affairs with Susanna Drew and Carol Harley: "I never could understand the Puritan mind, Ellie. You think a little fun in bed is the ultimate sin, worse than murder. Christ, I remember our wedding night. You'd have thought I was murdering you" (p. 216). "Stallion," she spits at her husband. "Filth." She kills Carol Harley because in discovering that Carol is Tom's real mother and that Ralph Hillman is his natural father, she sees herself as "just a fading ghost in the world, with only enough life left to strike back." She kills Mike Harley because he suspected that she'd murdered Carol and tried to blackmail her.

Elaine Hillman begs Archer, "Just let me sleep one more night in my own house." When Archer asks why, she answers, "I'll be frank with you. I've been saving sleeping pills for a considerable time--" But Archer is not as sympathetic to Elaine Hillman as Philip Marlowe is to Eileen Wade. He responds flatly, "You should have taken your pills sooner" (p. 217).

But Elaine is not to be defeated. As Archer heads for the front door to welcome the police, he hears Elaine sigh "behind me like a woman in passion." With a final sexual gesture, her only one it seems, she picks up her knitting and presses "both steel needles into her breast. She struck them into herself again before I reached her" (p. 218). The following day she is dead, her final wish fulfilled after all.

What will happen to Tom and Ralph Hillman is unclear. The father makes a gesture of love toward his son "with a hopefulness more grinding than despair," but Tommy evades his father's "outstretched hands," and Archer hears them "mounting the stairs, on different levels, out of step" (p. 217). The wounds will be long in healing.

Perhaps, finally, Lew Archer's words to Tommy Hillman offer the best solution:

I sometimes think children should be anonymous. . . . I have no plan. I'd just like to change the emphasis slightly. People are trying so hard to live through their children. And the children keep trying so hard to live up to their parents, or live them down. Everybody's living through or for or against somebody else. It doesn't make too much sense, and it isn't working too well (pp. 188-89).

There are neither lost teenagers nor missing parents in John D. MacDonald's Bright Orange for the Shroud. But there are, of course, villains and victims. Like many of MacDonald's other novels, the story here involves a quasi-legal real estate swindle. Also, as in his other novels,

the crime has already been committed, and it is up to Travis McGee to try to undo, as much as possible, the damage that has already been done.

MacDonald's victims are more physically and psychologically victimized, and the acts of his villains far more lurid than those of either Raymond Chandler or Kenneth Millar. However, villainous deeds are tempered with an immediate kind of poetic justice. That is, the punishment often fits the crime. Thus, an abuser of women is flayed alive from the waist down in Dress Her in Indigo (1969). In The Deep Blue Good-bye (1964) the villain, who is always grinning evilly, has his grin locked forever on the prongs of an anchor. In A Tan and Sandy Silence (1971), the psychopath who is about to bury McGee and his friend Meyer in hot asphalt is himself buried in it. And in Bright Orange for the Shroud, a rapist impales himself through the groin on a piece of rotting driftwood.

MacDonald's plots and cast of characters are also succinct. There are nine more-or-less major characters in this novel, as compared to nineteen in both The Far Side of the Dollar and The Long Goodbye. As for plot, the problem is simple. One-time acquaintance and near-millionaire Arthur Wilkinson staggers aboard McGee's houseboat-yacht, *The Busted Flush*, after having been bilked of his total inheritance and sexual potency by a sophisticated con-man operation. McGee agrees to get as

much of his money back for him as he can, taking a ten percent cut of whatever is recovered--his usual fee.

But McGee's commitment is deeper than a mere business relationship. He deplores women like Wilma Wilkinson, a sexy tramp with eyes the color of "Harvey's Bristol Milk" held up to the light in a clear wine glass, and with "just as much expression as still wine" (p. 9). Wilma is the contact for the confidence organization. She operates by luring and marrying wealthy, lonely men, involving them in a real estate scheme, and then cleaning out their bank accounts and disappearing. In this case, the dupe is Arthur Wilkinson. McGee ponders that he himself might have been lured: "Perhaps if she had come along a few years earlier--before I had seen and learned all the kinds of con, before I had found some of the sicknesses no clinic can identify. . . ." (p. 10).

For Raymond Chandler and Kenneth Millar it is the frigid woman who is the villain, those who are unable to give sexually or in any other way. For MacDonald, it is those women who take, who are insatiable, who drain men, that are the villains. A frigid woman needs only the sun, the surf, and McGee's understanding to make her whole. She is usually one of the victims of the novel and has been physically mistreated by a man.

Thus, Wilma Wilkinson who uses her sex for evil gain is a villain. Mrs. Mooney, former housekeeper for

the Wilkinsons before Arthur lost all his money, describes some of Wilma's tactics:

She had him waiting on her hand and foot, something that she wanted that was closer to her than him, he had to go get it and bring it to her. He brushed her hair, that real pale thin kind of hair, a hundred strokes, putting a little bitty dab of some kind of perfume oil on the soft brush every ten strokes, with her whining if he lost count. She had him oil her head to foot for going in the sun, and another sickening thing, I tell you, she had him run her little electrical razor, shaving the fuzz off her pretty legs, then she'd feel to see if he did it good, tell him where he missed, and pat him when he finished (p. 79).

In short, Wilma has emasculated Arthur.

That Arthur is a victim, a vulnerable man who with McGee's help regains his confidence, is obvious. But the person who helps him recover his manhood is Chookie McCall, a healthy dancer and friend to McGee. Chookie is also a victim. She is devoted to a third-rate gangster who is currently serving five years in prison. At the end of the novel, however, she rejects him and marries Arthur.

Early in the story, confused and hurt by Arthur's inability to have sexual intercourse with her, Chookie turns to McGee for reassurance that she is still desirable. But McGee rejects her, and in so doing reveals some of his own basic insecurity:

Maybe she was a little too much. She created a certain awe in the standard issue male. I had noted that fewer passes were made at her than she deserved. All that robust, glowing powerful vitality might actually have given me a subconscious block, a hidden suspicion that I might, in the long run, be unable to cope--an alarming

prospect for male vanity, of which I was certain I had my share. . . .

Maybe I could be stirred only by the wounded ducklings. Maybe I could respond best to the cripples I cut out of the flock, the ones who, by contrast, could give me a sense of inner strength and unity (p. 51).

McGee's self-analysis makes a good deal of sense. For in many of his adventures he "cures" stricken females. In The Deep Blue Good-bye he rescues Lois and sexually nurses her back to health, although she is finally murdered by the villain. He cures a professor of her frigidity in A Purple Place for Dying (1964), and rejuvenates a spoiled, cold artist in One Fearful Yellow Eye (1966). Oddly enough, in Bright Orange for the Shroud, McGee has only one sexual encounter, and it is with a healthy Hawaiian woman who is incidental to the action of the novel. However, if another woman, Vivian Watts, had lived, it is probable that McGee would have slept with her. Vivian Watts is the wife of Crane Watts, attorney for the swindlers. Now on the verge of alcoholism and financial disaster, he is deserted by the group. Vivian, on the other hand, is a strong, bright, athletic woman, referred to by members of her country club as "a darned fine girl" (p. 65).

An excellent and confident tennis player on her country club's courts, her confidence wanes when it comes to her marriage. McGee notes, however, that Vivian Watts is still devoted to her husband, "Still tied to him by

what remains of her security, and by all the weight of the sentimentalities and warmths remembered . . . [yet] aware of her own vulnerability. . . ." (p. 68). At the same time, though, she speaks her husband's name "with enough contempt for a month," and points out their unhappy relationship to McGee in the privacy of their home.

If a battle exists over who gets victimized the most in this novel, the "victory" belongs to Vivian Watts. Arthur Wilkinson regains a substantial portion of his money and marries Chookie McCall. McGee gets a bad blow on the head from goon-villain Boone Waxwell, but will survive. The body of Wilma Wilkinson has been fed to the alligators by Waxwell long before McGee enters the scene, and after what we learn of her activities, we really don't care too much about her fate. But Vivian Watts has done nothing. She is an innocent victim, the innocent bystander who is swept along in a nightmare involving other people, a nightmare that eventually overwhelms her.

It is Vivian who wears bright orange for her shroud, a bathrobe in which she carefully dresses before shooting herself. With her husband drunk and passed out, and the television set on, Boone Waxwell enters her home and repeatedly rapes her. But what is worst of all to Vivian is her purely physical reaction to the act:

"AAAAAAA," she said. And again. "AAAAAAA." It was not a sound of pain or of pleasure, of fright, of want, or of denial. It was simply the sound of sensation, purified, dehumanized, so vivid that I

could visualize her head thrown back, eyes wide blind staring, mouth wide and crooked (p. 150).

In the "trance state of the amateur murderer," she kills her husband who "had slept through too much," who could not respond to her cries for help while Boone was raping her (p. 159). Then Vivian Watts showers, applies makeup, and commits suicide.

Upon finding her body McGee reconstructs the thought pattern that Vivian might have gone through before she committed murder and suicide. Her rationalization may have been that many women have been raped and have somehow managed. She should call the police and turn in Waxwell. But if she does, she also accurately visualizes their interrogation of her:

Now let me get this straight, Mrs. Watts. Waxwell was there from ten something last night until two or three this morning? And you claim that during this time you were repeatedly raped, during that whole time your husband was sound asleep in front of the television set? And Waxwell was a client of your husband? And you had met him before? And he left his car parked at your house, a very conspicuous car, all that time? (p. 160).

Furthermore, she is appalled by her own behavior: "Had he taken her quickly, she could have merely endured him, been a helpless vessel for him. But he was so damned sly and knowing, so crafty and so patient that each time, even the last time, he had awakened the traitor body so that while the soul watched, the body gasped and strained to hungry climax, to dirty joy, grasping powerfully" (p. 160).

It is Travis McGee who turns in Boone Waxwell, not just for rape, but for double murder as well. He frames Waxwell by removing Vivian from the bathtub where she has committed suicide, and placing her back in her bedroom. He smears her carefully applied lipstick. He musses her hair, rips her orange shroud, destroys her confessional suicide note, and disposes of her gun. He makes her a silent promise: "Sorry they'll see you like this, Vivian. But you'll like the way it works out. I promise you, honey. They'll pretty you up again for burying. But not in orange. That's a color to be alive in. To be in love in. To smile in" (p. 162). Then McGee turns up the T.V. sound, makes an anonymous phone call to the police and gives them a description of Waxwell's car and his license number, saying he has seen it parked in the next-door driveway of the Watts' vacationing neighbors, and leaves.

Perhaps we should be dismayed by Travis McGee's act of vengeance in framing Boone Waxwell for a crime he didn't commit. But let us rationalize for a moment; let us give in to our real feelings. Had Waxwell not raped Vivian Watts, she would not have shot her husband and then committed suicide. Indirectly, Waxwell is indeed responsible for her death and that of her husband.

Boone Waxwell is the novel's arch-villain, a goon-monster who looms in Florida's swamps. He is swamp-folk, a kind of corrupted leftover from the early days of southern

feuds. His family is well-known, but not well-liked. There are Waxwells lurking everywhere in the swamps, and most of them are no-good. But Boone Waxwell is by far the foulest. Most local people fear him:

What he does, he comes smiling up, nice as pie, gets close enough and kicks a man's kneecap off, then settles down to stomping him good. A few times he's done it so good, he's had to go way back into the Park until things quieted down. A couple times everybody thought we'd be rid of him for a few years, but the most it ever turned out was ninety days the county give him. He prowls four counties in that fancy car he's got now, but around here he keeps to hisself, and that suits everybody just fine (p. 88).

Yet women are attracted to him: "Bogart, Mitchum, Gable, Flynn--the same flavor was there, a seedy, indolent brutality, a wisdom of the flesh. Women, sensing exactly what he was, and knowing how casually they would be used, would yet accept him, saying yes on a basis so primitive they could neither identify or resist it" (p. 89).

When McGee first meets Waxwell he is saying goodbye, for the time-being, to fifteen-year-old Cindy Ingerfeldt, who has spent the night with him. When McGee asks if her parents complain, Boone replies:

Maybe ten years ago it was, Cindy's daddy, Clete Ingerfeldt, him and me had a little talk about Clete's missus, and I pure liked to whip the ass clean off him. He got such a strong memory of it, I even say hello to him, his chin gets all spitty. I tell you, fat stuff got the hang of it a lot better than her old lady ever did (p. 93).

Waxwell's sexual prowess alone certainly doesn't make him a villain, nor does his brutal beating of Arthur

Wilkinson. These acts are only contributing factors. The local people describe him as "mean." Translated into psychological terms, however, Waxwell is a sociopath. He transcends all ethical judgment. To him, there is no right or wrong. One seeks one's own pleasures and concentrates on not getting caught. Thus, he does not deliberately murder Wilma in his own eyes. He puts his hand around her throat "kiddingly" to stifle her complaints that she has become bored in the swamps. But something inside her throat snaps. Although Waxwell feigns a kind of grief in telling the story, he really chalks up Wilma's death to accidental bad breaks and blithely proceeds to dump her body in an alligator swamp and to squander a great deal of his take and the gang's on large, expensive, and ultimately discarded toys.

Waxwell is the strong-arm of the novel. But he is too much a sociopath, and too uneducated to be the mastermind-villain. This honor goes to Calvin Stebber, a top-notch con-man, respected by all, including Travis McGee. With Stebber, a stalemate is reached:

He marched up to me and stared up at me, smiling, and I could feel the impact of his superb projection of warmth, interest, kindness, importance. You could be this man's life-long friend after ten minutes, and marvel that he found you interesting enough to spend a piece of his busy time on you. It was the basic working tool of the top grade confidence man (pp. 119-120).

Unlike Waxwell, who lives in a swamp hovel, Stebber resides in a cool penthouse with "Wall shelves built in,

with a collection of blue Danish glassware, and another, glassed in, with a collection of little clay figures of Pre-Columbian Latin America" (p. 119). Also unlike Waxwell whose taste in women is indiscriminating, Stebber has another built-in--Debra Brown, "never never Debbie." Debra is a cool, sophisticated call girl of wealthy background who is both Cal Stebber's secretary and mistress. Perfectly trained and groomed--"in walk and smile and gesture she had all the mannered elegance of a high fashion model"--Debra is totally at home in her surroundings.

What McGee wants from Stebber is assurance that he will not try to regain the money he has swindled from Arthur Wilkinson if McGee finds it. McGee also wants a theory of his own confirmed: that Wilma is probably dead, that she had most of the money, that she was supposed to hide out for a few days after deserting Wilkinson, and then meet Stebber with the money, and that she never showed up. All this Stebber agrees to and confirms.

Stebber, however, is not a pushover. The reason he goes along with McGee makes good business sense. He and Debra are involved in another scheme, and he is faced with the fact of having his cover lifted. Furthermore, Stebber checked on McGee with a fellow con-man whose name McGee gives him, and learns that "The old bastard sounds pretty shaky, McGee. He doesn't like you. One of the last scores he made, a little one, you got it back before

he could get out of range" (p. 123). Stebber also learns that McGee doesn't call in the police, but handles things himself, and that his methods can be more damaging than the law enforcers'.

With an agreement reached, McGee and Chookie McCall, who has accompanied him, leave Stebber's apartment:

They both walked us out to the elevator, all charm and assurance, convincing us we were lovely people who had stopped in for a lovely drink. As the elevator door closed, my final look at them showed their gracious smiles, the smiles of an elegant couple, tastefully appointed, mannerly. And virulent as coral snakes (p. 129).

Arthur, Travis, and Chookie find the money buried in jars in Waxwell's back yard and are celebrating on The Busted Flush when Waxwell, that other virulent coral snake, reappears. Hiding out in the swamps for three days from the police, he coincidentally boards McGee's houseboat. He overtakes McGee and Wilkinson and is about to rape Chookie, when they rush him, and he jumps overboard:

You expect a great splash. He stopped with a horrid abruptness, the waterline still a few inches below his belt. He remained right there, oddly erect, silent, head thrown back, cords standing out in his neck. I thought he had wedged himself into a shallow mud bottom. But then I saw he seemed to be moving back and forth, a strange sway, like a man on a treetop. He reached down to himself, putting his hands under the water, and he made a ghastly sound, like someone trying to yell in a whisper. He turned his head slowly and looked toward the three of us. He held his right hand out toward us, opened his mouth wide and made the same eerie sound once more. Then he bowed slowly to us, laid over gently, face down. Something seemed to nudge at him from below, nudge him and shove him free, and as he floated toward darkness, slowly there reappeared, with a

slowness that told of the length of it that went down through black water to the dead root system, just an inch or so showing above water, the dark rotted end of the stub, four or five inches thick, upon which he had burst himself and impaled himself (p. 187).

This is the gory end of Boone Waxwell, but not the end of the novel, for all the loose strings must somehow be joined. After a hamburger and champagne wedding celebration for Chookie and Arthur Wilkinson, Debra Brown unaccountably arrives to have a short-term affair with McGee. But he rejects her:

Perhaps for any man there can be something very heady about a woman totally amoral, totally without mercy, shame or softness. . . .

"Sweetie," I said, "you're a penny from heaven. And you probably know lots and lots of tricks. But every one would remind me that you are a pro, from Wilma's old stable of club fighters. Call me a sentimentalist. The bloom is too far off the rose, sweetie. I'd probably keep leaving money on the bureau. You better peddle it. Thanks, but no thanks" (p. 190).

Villains have no place in McGee's life-style, and his treatment of Debra is his kind of punishment for her, a punishment that works more effectively, although it is not as permanent, as an assassin's bullet.

Because there are so many villains and victims in the detective novels discussed here, two charts follow showing villains and victims. What is important to note in studying the charts is the similarity between Kenneth Millar and Raymond Chandler. Overlapping of villains and victims is quite common in their novels. With John D.

MacDonald, however, there is little overlapping. His villains and victims are quite distinct from each other. This should not be surprising. Travis McGee's ideas of morality and right and wrong are far more openly developed and stated than Lew Archer's or Philip Marlowe's. Furthermore, MacDonald's punishment is more consciously vindictive than Chandler or Millar, a subject to be pursued in the following chapter.

Thus, a pattern exists as to the nature of villains and victims. For McGee, for Philip Marlowe, for Lew Archer, crimes and villains and victims are a predictable recurrent in their lives. Boone Waxwell, Elaine Hilman and Eileen Wade will always have others to replace them. And there will always be victims, as well, for the detectives to try to save.

Villains	The Long Goodbye	The Far Side of the Dollar	Bright Orange for the Shroud
1. The Overt Villain (the man or woman in control; the master-mind).	Randy Starr Mendy Menendez	Otto Sipe Mr. Harley, Sr.	Calvin Stebber
2. The Mentally Disturbed Villain (the man or woman who cannot control his or her actions).	Eileen Wade Earl	Elaine Hillman Mr. Harley, Sr. Mike Harley	Boone Waxwell Wilma Wilkinson
3. The Go-Between Villain (an unscrupulous doctor or lawyer who acts as pawn for the mastermind villain, or a female assistant).	Dr. Verringer Dr. Vukanich Dr. Varley	Dr. Sponti Mr. Patch	Crane Watts Debra Brown
4. The Incidental Villain (the hired gun; the goon villain).	Chick Agostino	Otto Sipe	Boone Waxwell
5. The Covert Villain (often a member of society who means well, but who has lost touch with the real world of the detective).	Terry Lennox Dr. Loring	Harold Harley Ralph Hillman Rhea and Jay Carlson	----

Victims	The Long Goodbye	The Far Side of the Dollar	Bright Orange for the Shroud
1. The Unlikeable Victim (the murdered man or woman who gets what she or he deserves. We feel no pity).	Sylvia Lennox	Otto Sipe	Wilma Wilkinson Crane Watts Boone Waxwell
2. The Unknown Victim (dead at or shortly after the opening of the novel. What we know of him we learn from others).	----	Carol Harley Mike Harley	Wilma Wilkinson
3. The Swindled Victim (the victim who is disinherited or who is the victim of a financial swindle).	----	Ralph Hillman	Arthur Wilkinson
4. The Psychologically Abused Victim (a child or an adult who, through mental torture, has been dehumanized).	Eileen Wade Terry Lennox	Tommy Hillman Elaine Hillman Harold Harley Mike Harley	Vivian Watts
5. The Innocent Victim (a friend or lover of the detective or another character, who may have no direct relationship to the immediate situation of the novel--a bystander).	Roger Wade	Stella Carlson Susanna Drew	Vivian Watts Chookie McCall

CHAPTER V

WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL LURKS:

VIOLENCE AND SADISM

The ten-year-old son of a friend of mine was recently practicing at being dead. He stood in the middle of the livingroom until he was shot by an imaginary assassin. Then he staggered about and finally collapsed on the carpet in a position closely resembling a corpse in a casket: eyes shut, legs straight and together, hands serenely folded across his breast. There he rested for a few seconds, in complete peace. Suddenly he sat up and smiling, asked us brightly, "Could you see me breathing that time?" When we replied that we could, he arose, disappointed but undaunted, and repeated his performance.

During one short break I told him that no actor could really hold his breath, that if he noticed T.V. programs in which people were killed, the camera remained on the corpse only briefly then panned around the room or studied the faces of the survivors. My friend's son took no heed. Either he was enjoying his game too much, or he wanted to be the first one on his block not to move a muscle.

The childhood play abruptly ended as a result of the intrusion of adult reality. During one of the moments

he was resting corpse-like on the floor, I arose and went over to him. His eyes fluttered open unwillingly. "That's all right," I reassured him. "People can die with their eyes open." Somehow, my statement was too much for him to bear, and clutching his stomach for real now, he grimaced in disgusted disbelief. "Ugh. Ugh. That's awful. They don't really, do they, Dad?" He checked out the validity of my words with his father who silently confirmed what I had said.

After he had recovered from his initial repulsion, however, the boy was full of questions: "How come they don't close their eyes? Do the eyes dry up, or do they stay slimy? Does stuff get in them? Can dead people see? Do their eyeballs rot and fall out?" His quest for knowledge was innocent and honest, and as a child he did not know that he might be giving offense or that what he asked was sordid. But I, the adult who had caused the whole line of questioning in the first place, began to feel uncomfortable. I wanted him to end his gruesome questions while at the same time such not-nice associations about death as loss of sphincter control, putrification, guts spilling out, brains exposed by a bullet, passed through my mind.

What, one may well ask, has this anecdote to do with violence and sadism in general, and violence and sadism in the detective novel more specifically? The reply is, quite a lot. For human beings are both repulsed by

and attracted to violence, especially violent death. A case in point is what has become known as the Ann Arbor Murders. In the summer of 1969, the body of Karen Sue Beineman was discovered in a woods near Ann Arbor, Michigan. She was one of several coeds who, over a period of four years, had been mysteriously murdered. However, the discovery of her body led to the arrest and ultimate conviction of an Eastern Michigan University student, John Norman Collins.

What occurred after the discovery of Miss Beinman's body is rather disconcerting, although not unusual. Women locked their doors and asked for escorts in the evenings or walked in groups of two and three. The incidence of women hitch-hiking (Miss Beineman was last seen hitch-hiking) dropped temporarily. People who lived far from the scene of the murder telephoned the police to report suspicious-looking people in their neighborhoods. Several deluded souls confessed to the murder.

Of more profound interest is the reaction of many people to the secrecy in which the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti police cloaked their investigation. At first, everyone was horrified and frightened by the murder. Soon, however, the fear and horror were replaced with a combination of fascination and indignation. Newspapers were combed daily, and their accounts of what was going on were heatedly discussed at lunch time, dinner and during coffee breaks.

Armchair detectives collected clues from the newspaper stories and proposed, if not solutions, character profiles of the murderer. But they quickly became frustrated in their efforts. Indignantly they protested that the police were holding out too much. If the amateur detectives knew the minute details of the murder then they could be more accurate in their conclusions. As citizens they felt they had a right to intimate knowledge of the crime. With a kind of macabre glee they latched on to any information they could glean, true or false. Example: "The father of the girlfriend of one of my students is on the Ann Arbor police force. He told her (and she told my student) that the murderer had performed a perfect medical dissection of the Beineman body's right foot." "Ugh. Disgusting," was the first response. Then: "Really? And what about her breasts? Did he dissect them, too?"

More widely publicized, of course, was the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963. Today, almost ten years later, people are still indignant that the attending physicians' detailed reports about the condition of the President's body (specifically his head), are being kept from them. They excuse their ghoulish fascination as their right to know. Tom Wolfe, in an essay entitled "Pause, Now, and Consider Some Tentative Conclusions About the Meaning of this Mass Perversion Called Porno-Violence: What it is and Where it Comes from and Who Put the Hair

on the Walls" (Esquire Magazine, 1967), recalls a conversation he had with a friend shortly after the Kennedy slaying:

. . . we were in a cab in the West Fifties in Manhattan, at a stoplight, by a newsstand, and Harrison suddenly pointed at the newsstand and said, 'Look at that. They're doing the same thing that The Enquirer does.'

There on the stand was a row of slick-paper, magazine publications known in the trade as one-shots, with titles like Four Days that Shook the World, Death of a President, An American Tragedy, or just John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1921-1963). 'You want to know why people buy those things?' said Harrison. 'People buy those things to see a man get his head blown off.'

Are we a nation of voyeurs, prepared to peek, nay linger upon tragedy at the mere report of a rifle? Most of us would deny this, and if confronted with the actual sight of a man's brains blown out, would become physically ill. Yet, as Wolfe further points out, the suspense of Truman Capote's In Cold Blood depends not upon the committal of the crime itself, which occurs on page sixty of the book, but upon "the specifics, what happened, the gory details, [which] are kept out of sight, in grisly dangle, until page 244."

Our fascination with violent acts is great, and has become a subject of study for sociologists and psychologists. Yet their concentration has been upon the mass media, defined as television, radio, the movies, comic books, and magazines, rather than the one-to-one experience of a popular novel. One reason for this is that mass media

reaches more children than do adult novels. The effects of violence in children's literature is a continuing source of debate among professionals in the area. What effects either real or created violence has upon the individual is not the main thrust of this chapter, however. Rather, it is the nature of that violence and the context in which it is unleashed that shall be explored.

After correlating the data gathered in a number of questionnaires distributed to men concerning perception of violence,¹ a team of University of Michigan social scientists concluded that:

On the whole, Americans view violence as fierce, strong, unnecessary, avoidable and bad. One could infer that when behavior is seen as not having such qualities, it is not defined as violence. For example, when the police shooting looters is defined as not being violence by the majority of Americans, one can imagine that Americans might think of such police actions as fierce and strong, but neither avoidable nor bad, and certainly necessary. . . . If violence is committed by a legitimate power, it is not seen as violence (p. 84).

Furthermore, in studying the idea of retributive justice they discovered that "In response to the statement that 'it is often necessary to use violence to prevent violence' . . . 19% of all men agreed strongly with this view, and another 45% were somewhat in agreement" (p. 102).

¹ Monica D. Blumenthal, Robert L. Kahn, Frank M. Andrews, Kendra B. Head, Justifying Violence: Attitudes of American Men (Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1972).

Both observations can easily be applied to violence in detective novels. When Lew Archer, Philip Marlowe and Travis McGee commit acts of violence we rarely question the rightness or wrongness of their actions. We are immediately on their side, and their side is the side of right. Moreover, with these three detectives, the violence they commit is not always avoidable. If Marlowe doesn't kill Lash Canino in The Big Sleep (1939), he will be killed; if Archer hadn't drowned Puddler in The Moving Target (1949), he would have been drowned; and if Travis McGee hadn't shot first, he would have been killed by Griff in Darker than Amber (1966).

The idea of retributive justice--an eye for an eye or do unto him before he does unto you--is given sanctification in the detective novels of Mickey Spillane, where Mike Hammer takes no chances with anyone, but busts jaws first and asks questions later. This kind of action, the use of violence to prevent violence, is rarely found in the detective novels of Raymond Chandler and Kenneth Millar, and appears in more subtle psychological forms in those by John D. MacDonald. In A Deep Blue Good-bye (1964), for example, Travis McGee alternately scalds and freezes a man with bathtub water in order to glean information from him. Given the weak, self-serving character of his victim (besides being garishly nouveau riche he's also a bad father), and the fact that the information McGee extracts

will be used to apprehend a really despicable person and perhaps prevent another crime, his torture is looked upon as somewhat justified.

What distinguishes John D. MacDonald from Kenneth Millar and Raymond Chandler is just this idea of retributive justice. More of a moralist than either Millar or Chandler, MacDonald creates ends for his villains which will make the punishment fit the crime. We have seen in the previous chapter how rapist-murderer Boone Waxwell in Bright Orange for the Shroud (1965) is suitably impaled through the groin on a piece of rotting driftwood in the dark swamps he has inhabited. In yet another novel, The Deep Blue Good-by (1964), the villain is Junior Allen, a sociopathic thief and torturer of women. What most women remember with a shudder about Allen is his sadistic grin which is always in view whenever he abuses them. Thus, MacDonald creates for him a death suitable to his nature, and his grin is forever frozen in our memories:

Suddenly, as if to show off, as if to prove how well he had everything under control, [Allen] made a complete roll, exposing the metallic gleam of the anchor for an instant, then steadying again, face high, making little white bow waves that shot past his ears.

I could not move or think or speak. The known world was gone, and in nightmare I fought something that could never be whipped. I could not take the light off him. He rolled again. And then I saw what it was. His throat was wedged in that space between the flukes of the Danforth, and the edges of the points were angled up behind the corners of his jaw, the tension spreading his jowls into that grin. I got

to the cleat, and with nerveless stumbling hands I freed the line. He disappeared at once as the anchor took him down. I hugged the rail and vomited (p. 137).

A guillotine execution of sorts is suitable for sadistic Nazi escapee Fredrika in One Fearful Yellow Eye (1966). Even her final death throes are described with a kind of macabre humor, for MacDonald cannot permit this depraved mass-murderer the slightest dignity:

With a look of alarm she tried to reach for the pistol. I had lost my balance on the last hop and as I started to fall forward, I gave a final thrust and felt my head ram the softness of her belly, heard the air grunt out of her. . . .

Her brick-red head hit the window wall section perhaps two feet from the bottom. It punched a huge shard of glass out onto the grass, and ran diagonal cracks all the way up to the top corners. Small pieces sprinkled down onto the terazzo. She lay face down with her throat across the sill where the plate glass had been puttied in. The top section was suspended. It shimmied. It cracked. Pieces of dry putty fell, then suddenly the great plate of glass worked loose and fell like a great blade, straight down.

She humped her purple hips high and smacked them down. The final grind and bump. The falling glass had made an enormous sound. The brick-red hair did not go well with the spreading puddle of bright red blood (p. 210).

Dress Her in Indigo (1969) contains one of the most vivid descriptions of torture and subsequent death that MacDonald has ever written. Walter Rockland, a villain whom we never meet, has taken two college women, one of them the daughter of McGee's friend, to Mexico on a psychedelic horror trip. He fills them with drugs and turns them into animals who have sex on call, and who defecate in public. It is unclear who has killed Rockland

when McGee and Meyer finally discover his five-week-dead body in his camper (it is hinted that a band of outraged Mexican Indians are the torturers), but the job was performed with sickening precision and skill:

'Was he shot, or what?' Meyer asked.

'I don't think the question is material. I do not know everything that was done to him. But I think he was tapped on the head and then stripped, spread and wired in place and gagged. Then various things were done to him. The most impressive, perhaps, being a knife line drawn across the belly, then down the tops of the thighs, then across the thighs about six inches above the knees. Then the entire area thus outlined was carefully flayed, skinned like a grouper. I would guess that he was not blinded until a bit later on' (p. 182).

What is apparent is that in the above situations McGee is simply the observer, not the activator of the fates of the villains. Junior Allen falls overboard and is accidentally hooked on the prongs. Fredrika loses her balance after McGee stumbles into her as he is trying to get to a woman who is being tortured. Walter Rockland's body is discovered by McGee.

There are few situations in which Travis McGee is directly responsible for the death of a villain. One has already been mentioned: he shoots in self-defense in Darker than Amber. In A Tan and Sandy Silence (1971), villain Paul Dissat, who is about to kill McGee and Meyer by burying them in a torrent of hot asphalt, is himself buried when he falls into it after McGee has beaten him and he staggers into it. In The Long Lavender Look (1970),

McGee kills his would-be killer with the art of knife throwing learned from a dead friend in A Deadly Shade of Gold (1965).

Tom Pike, the mastermind villain of The Girl in the Plain Brown Wrapper (1968), has killed his lovely young wife by first driving her insane with drugs and then faking her suicide by pushing her out the window of a skyscraper during a business party. Her body lands on a terrace, however, and McGee finds it before anyone else does. With the cooperation of the police, he wraps the body in tarpaper (hence, the novel's title) and hides it in a phosphate pit. When Dave Broon, Tom Pike's confederate, realizes just how evil Pike is, he attempts to hang him. However, he is unaware that McGee and the sheriff are watching.

Pike does die by hanging, but it is because the sheriff and Travis McGee make no attempt to save his life. Although McGee does make one feeble effort he is stopped when the sheriff taps the back of his skull with his carbine, ". . . enough to sag me to a squat, knuckles against the turf, but not enough to spill me all the way" (p. 249). When it is definite that Pike is dead, Stanger asks, "How long would you say he's been dead, McGee? All things considered," and McGee responds, "I'd say he must have been dead by the time Broon started to drive away, Al. All things considered" (p. 250). Thus, McGee is an accomplice to Tom Pike's murder, as is Sheriff Stanger. Furthermore,

when Stanger apologizes for tapping him with a carbine barrel, McGee replies, "I guess it was the quickest way to stop me, Al." However, the fact that Tom Pike was allowed to die his horrible death because of the way in which he ruined his wife's life and the fact that he killed two other people (a doctor, and a nurse in whom McGee showed a transient interest), does not mitigate McGee's willing complicity in his murder. He admits that Stanger was right in stopping him from saving Tom Pike's life. McGee feels "just a little bit sick to my stomach," about what he has just witnessed, but "just a little bit."

In an interview in Newsweek (March 22, 1971), detective novelist Donald Westlake (The Hot Rock, et al.) stated:

"A friend of mine used to say that there's a difference between Mickey Spillane and violence used as art." Westlake quoted a line from Hammett: "I hit him with the door repeatedly," and pointed out, "The word 'repeatedly' is art. In place of that one line, Mickey Spillane would have given a page-and-a-half of gore. I'm trying for 'I hit him with the door repeatedly'" (p. 103).

John D. MacDonald offers his readers a page-and-a-half of gore, and although one might argue that a description of gore might also be artistic and there is certainly an aesthetic difference between Spillane's lengthy descriptions and MacDonald's, the gore remains. The truth is that Travis McGee is a bit of a sadist. He relishes those descriptions of groins impaled on driftwood, throats wedged between the flukes of a Danforth, rotting bodies which have

been flayed alive, and men futilely running from death even as the noose tightens around their necks until their eyes bulge and their skin changes color and they die.

McGee has a stock reaction to each event: he feels sick. It is a valid reaction. We all feel sick--or should. His sick feeling is used to demonstrate his human qualities. The ploy of feeling physically ill (or even emotionally drained), is there to show us that his years of experience with brutal violence have not calloused him; he still has feelings of revulsion. Perhaps McGee's response is a "better" one than Mike Hammer's glee. But just as Hammer can always be depended upon to enjoy each twist of the knife or the smack of a bullet as it contacts flesh, so McGee can always be depended upon to "feel sick." In the end, both responses become meaningless.

Yet one cannot place all the blame on Travis McGee. If McGee's hero is part sadist, his villains are all-sadist. Lovely Lilo of The Long Lavender Look (1970), relishes killing men as they are engaging in sexual intercourse with her. Boone Waxwell (Bright Orange for the Shroud) and Junior Allen (The Deep Blue Good-bye) use their brute strength and diabolic charm to make women succumb to them in every way. Certainly the description of Boone's rape of Vivian Watts in the previous chapter is a clear example of his sadistic bent. The men and women in Darker than Amber (1966) are sadists when they lure elderly, lonely,

wealthy men onto cruise ships and then murder them. Fredrika of One Fearful Yellow Eye (1966) is known to have tortured her young daughter. And Paul Dissat in A Tan and Sandy Silence (1971) murders his female accomplice by trussing her, burying her alive to her neck in sand, and waiting for the tide to come in and drown her. McGee's world is the world of the depraved, and the price of confronting it is that in the end, some of the depravity may rub off.

Raymond Chandler's descriptions of violence and sadistic acts are not as heavy-handed as John D. MacDonald's. In fact, Chandler achieves Dashiell Hammett's terseness of description while at the same time he communicates the horror of death--any death. Furthermore, Philip Marlowe is never in any way a sadist. In only one instance in The Big Sleep (1939), does he torture anybody, and it is verbal torture. But at the last moment Marlowe catches himself and instead of twisting the knife, condemns capital punishment:

Just lie quiet and hold your breath. Hold it until you can't hold it any longer and then tell yourself that you have to breathe, that you're black in the face, that your eyeballs are popping out, and that you're going to breathe right now, but that you're sitting strapped in the chair in the clean little gas chamber up in San Quentin and when you take that breath you're fighting with all your soul not to to take, it won't be air you'll get, it will be cyanide fumes. And that's what they call humane execution in our state now (p. 93).

Overt acts of violence are always in self-defense of one sort or another. Marlowe kills Lash Canino in The Big Sleep to save his own life and then in a mixture of horror and relief, laughs "like a loon." In the same novel he slaps murderer Carmen Sternwood, but it is in an attempt to awaken her to reality, a feat he cannot accomplish. In Playback (1958), he is attacked by a contract goon and smashes both his wrists (one hand is holding a gun) with a tire iron (p. 167). Yet even in this instance, Marlowe is able to feel compassion for his attacker: "Suddenly he crumpled. They're so goddamn tough when they hold the stacked deck. And they never know any other kind of deck. . . . The redhead had guts. He had managed to get into a sitting position against the wall" (pp. 168-69).

Usually, it is Marlowe who is the main target of violence, and he is vulnerable to all comers. He is beaten by Lash Canino in The Big Sleep. He is "slammed in the belly, kicked in the shoulder, forced to drink liquor under threat of bodily harm, threatened with a gun and struck with a black-jack while unarmed," by two policemen in just one scene in The Lady in the Lake (1943, p. 155). In the same novel he is beaten by the murderer and left unconscious to bear the blame for the rape and death of Muriel Chess (p. 189). Marlowe is doped with a cigarette and pricked with an ice-pick in The Little Sister (1949). And he is beaten by two police officers and an Indian goon,

and drugged by a corrupt psychiatrist in Farewell, My Lovely (1940).

Most of the violence done to Marlowe, however, has a purpose: to intimidate him; to make him discontinue his investigations. The goons who beat him up or who try to kill him have a job to do. There is little that is personal in their attacks upon him, and the only pleasure (and it is a rare pleasure) that they receive, is in seeing their job well done. Don Corleone's statement in The Godfather echoes the general philosophy of most of the goon-villains in Chandler's novels: murder is simply business. There is nothing personal in it. Thus, although Philip Marlowe despises gangsters as a general rule, he is able to show respect for them. They too must earn a living.

Sadists, those who take lingering pleasure in violence, do exist in Chandler's novels, although they are not nearly as large in number nor as magnificent in quality as John D. MacDonald's creations. Captain Gregorius, who beats up Marlowe in The Long Goodbye is a man who enjoys his power and brutality as a police officer. Carmen Sternwood, the depraved killer in The Big Sleep delights in seeking revenge on men who have rejected her advances. And Lash Canino, after poisoning smalltime gangster Harry Jones, comments, his voice "purring": "You ain't sick from just one little drink, are you pal?" (p. 162).

It is Dr. Lagardie, the villain of The Little Sister who is sadist supreme of Chandler's fiction. Perhaps it is because he is the only overt sadomasochist in the Philip Marlowe series that he looms so large and evil. Yet Chandler's characterization of him is superbly sensitive and one visualizes a Vincent Price performance in the screen role:

"I'm just talking," I said. "Waiting for something to happen. Something's going to happen in this house. It's leering at me from corners."

Dr. Lagardie licked another pearl of blood off his thumb.

I looked hard at him. It didn't buy me a way into his soul. He was quiet, dark and shuttered and all the misery of life was in his eyes. But he was still gentle.

"Let me tell you about the needles," I said.

"By all means." He picked the long thin knife up again.

"Don't do that," I said sharply. "It gives me the creeps. Like petting snakes."

He put the knife down again gently and smiled. "We do seem to talk in circles," he suggested (p. 144).

However, even in Dr. Lagardie there is a gentle quality, hidden and never to surface in our presence. In the end, he engages in a suicide pact with his lover; he is capable of love. Unlike John D. MacDonald who clearly defines the good, the bad, and the sadistically ugly in his novels, none of Raymond Chandler's characters are totally depraved. There is some good in everyone and there is a reason for everything.

In The Little Sister there are two ice pick murders. Philip Marlowe discovers both of them. His immediate reaction is revealing:

A brown army blanket was pulled up around his shoulders and the lower part of his head. He looked very comfortable, very calm. I stood over him and looked down. Something which was not an accidental fold held the army blanket away from the back of his neck. I moved it. A square yellow wooden handle was attached to the back of Lester B. Clausen's neck. On the side of the yellow handle was printed the words 'Compliments of the Crumsen Hardware Company.' The position of the handle was just below the occipital bulge.

It was the handle of an ice pick. . . . (pp. 31-32)

Marlowe assumes an air of detachment. If he were Travis McGee he would philosophize. He would become ill. Instead his response is, at first, more natural. His mind gives him a moment of respite from the gruesome scene. Irrelevancies are contrasted against hard fact: "Compliments of the Crumsen Hardware Company" is followed by "The position of the handle was just below the occipital bulge." The ironic yet innocent publicity statement for a hardware store becomes the indifferent epitaph on a lethal weapon.

Descriptions of the dead in Chandler's novels are not pretty. However, they are quickly dispensed with. Philip Marlowe's mission is not to dwell over the state of the dead person, but to discover who committed the deed. Unlike Travis McGee, he does not need to become outraged by a particularly ugly murder in order to give his full attention to apprehending the murderer. Whether it's a bullet through the heart (simple violence), or a head smashed in (simple sadism), Marlowe perceives his duty in the same way: find the villain.

On the other hand, Marlowe isn't totally immune to brutal murder. In The Lady in the Lake (1943), the decomposed face of Muriel Chess, whose corpse is found floating in a mountain lake is described as "A swollen, pulpy gray white mass without features, without eyes, without mouth. A blotch of gray dough, a nightmare with human hair on it" (p. 44). That night, Marlowe has a nightmare about the body:

I dreamed I was far down in the depths of icy green water with a corpse under my arm. The corpse had long blond hair that kept floating around in front of my face. An enormous fish with bulging eyes and a bloated body and scales shining with putrescence swam around leering like an elderly roué. Just as I was about to burst for lack of air, the corpse came alive under my arm and got away from me and then I was fighting with the fish and the corpse was rolling over and over in the water spinning its long hair (p. 87).

When he awakens from his dream he smokes a cigarette and returns to sleep. In the morning he showers, shaves, dresses and makes himself coffee, toast, and eggs. There is no further mention of his nightmare. His future sleep is calm. And there are no cries for vengeance, no oaths like "I'm gonna get the bum that did this to Muriel." He simply sets about his daily routine.

Lew Archer's daily routine also involves violence, and although Millar's detective often responds as feelingly to the victims as John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee, Kenneth Millar's descriptions of brutality are as concise as Raymond Chandler's. What is most notable about the Lew Archer

series, however, is the nightmare quality of violence, a quality which also permeates the novels in their most peaceful moments. Evil lurks everywhere, even in the pranks of schoolboys:

I found my way into the labyrinth of the downstairs dressing rooms. School was out by now and a gang of small boys were snapping towels at each other's legs and emitting shouts of menace and horrible laughter (Black Money, 1966, p. 31).

Concrete objects too, dissolve into horrors, like nightmare shoelaces which turn into snakes: The two barrels and the stock of a sawed-off shotgun, so-far unused, give Archer "an ugly moment: they were like the leavings of a major amputation" (The Instant Enemy, 1968, p. 27). The buildings of Laguna Perdida School in The Far Side of the Dollar (1965) lie "under the gray sky like scattered components of an unbuilt city" (p. 1). Artist Ellen Storm's home in The Underground Man (1971), has twin conical towers standing up against the night sky [which] made the house look like something out of a medieval romance." But as Archer nears it, "The illusion faded. . . . There was a multi-colored fanlight over the front door, with segments of glass fallen out, like missing teeth in an old smile" (p. 179).

The world of Lew Archer is the world of fragmented dreams, a place in which he battles formless fears with form, reminiscent of Brutus Jones in Eugene O'Neill's The Emperor Jones:

A dozen men came out. They were small and brown, moving quickly toward me. Their teeth flashed in the moonlight. They came on silently, and I was afraid of them. Because of that, or something else, I held my fire. The brown men looked at the gun and came on anyway.

I clubbed the gun and waited. The first two got bloody scalps. Then they swarmed over me, hung on my arms, kicked my legs from under me, kicked consciousness out of my head. It slid like a disappearing tail light down the dark mountain-side of the world (The Moving Target, 1949, pp. 117-18).

When Archer drowns Puddler in The Moving Target, the dream remains: "I was afraid of what was behind me in the cold water" (p. 127).

As in a nightmare, everything becomes distorted. The evil of Betty Fraley, a woman whose voice is "a flat caw," becomes the evil of all women:² "It seemed to me then that evil was a female quality, a poison that women secreted and transmitted to men like disease" (p. 159). The corpse of Ralph Sampson, tied in a chair and strangled, is made grotesque by "the bright plaid socks, yellow and red and green, on the thick dead ankles" (p. 169). Millar describes these scenes of violence with the lucid terror of a patient on the therapist's couch trying to analyze his dreams, yet frightened of the reality that too much probing might uncover.

²With this statement in his first Archer novel, Millar sets out on a course, perhaps sub-conscious, in which the vast majority of the evildoers in the Archer series are women.

In addition to the nightmare quality of the Archer novels, the fact that the majority of the mysteries include the exhumation of pasts and murders which are at least twenty years old, creates the aura of a horror movie. The twenty-three-year-old murder of John Brown in The Galton Case (1959), is a classic study in horror. All that is omitted is the actual haunting:

"To make a long story short, when they were clearing the land for the Marvista tract, a set of bones were unearthed. The local deputy asked me to look them over to see what I could learn from them. I did so. They were human bones, which had probably belonged to a man of medium height, in his early twenties."

"It's not unlikely, in my opinion, that they are John Brown's bones. They were found buried under the house he lived in. The house was torn down to make way for the new road. Unfortunately we had no means of making a positive identification. The skull was missing, which ruled out the possibility of dental evidence."

"It rules in the possibility of murder."

Dineen nodded gravely. "There's rather more than a possibility of murder. One of the cervical vertabrae had been cut through by a heavy instrument. I'd say John Brown, if that is who he is, was decapitated with an ax" (p. 58).

In one way, though, the ghost does exist: it festers in the present, creating problems for the survivors, the innocent as well as the guilty, until Lew Archer finally brings about a kind of justice and sets the spirit to rest.

It must not be assumed, however, that the violence is only a dream, unreal, from which we can awaken. It is real and it is ugly. In The Doomsters (1958), Archer

gently leads us from aging alcoholic Mrs. Gley who "looked like the wreck of dreams," and who "disappeared into the back recesses of the house," to young Carl Hallman, innocent victim, who is being rolled into a wire basket: "He had a leg wound, at least one chest wound, and one wound in the abdomen. That was bad, but not so finally bad as it would have been in the days before antibiotics" (p. 149). In The Way Some People Die (1951), a scene from Raymond Chandler's Farewell, My Lovely (1940), in which murderess Velma Grayle shoots her old boyfriend, Moose Malloy, is repeated:

Mario came into the doorway and leaned there for an instant with one raised hand gripping the frame. His chin had been smashed by something heavier than a fist. Blood coursed down his neck into the black hair that curled over his open shirt collar. There was death in his face. I wasn't sure he could see until he advanced on Galley. His smashed mouth blew a bubble in which the room hung upside down, tiny and blood colored.

She yelped once like a dog and fired point-blank. The slug spun Mario on his heels and flung him bodily against the wall. He pushed himself away from the wall with his hands and turned to face her. She fired again, the black gun jumping like a toad. Still her white hands held it firm, and her white devoted face was watching us both.

Mario doubled forward and sank to his knees. The indestructible man crawled toward the woman, leaking blood like black oil on her rug. Her third shot drilled the bandaged top of his head, and finished Mario. Still she was not content. Standing over him she pumped three bullets into his back as fast as she could fire (p. 174).

In the same novel, two other bodies are discovered. Actor Keith Dalling lies in a pool of his own blood which "covered

the floor from wall to wall. . . . At first glance I couldn't make out the hole through which the blood had wasted.

Leaning over, I saw the puncture in the far slope of his neck and the powder burns on his collar. He was dressed as I had seen him in Palm Springs, and he made a handsome corpse. Any mortician would have been proud of Dalling" (p. 48). Gangster Joe Tarantine's body, reclaimed from the ocean, "had been roughly used by the sea. . . . There was white sand in the curled black hair and white sand on the eyeballs. I peered into the gaping mouth. It was packed with wet brown sand" (p. 158).

Sadism is almost nonexistent in Kenneth Millar's novels. Lew Archer takes no pleasure at all in violence, except perhaps the dubious pleasure of winning a fight (a rare occurrence, however, since Archer usually is the one knocked out). The murderers in the series are not sadists, they do not enjoy their murders. Killing, for them, is not a pleasure, it is a psychological necessity, almost at times a religious act of passion, the enactment of their own black mass. Thus, when Gilley kills Mario, her face is described as "devoted," and when it is over, she sits in a chair, "her closed eyelids tremorless as carved ivory, her mouth closed and still" (p. 174).

In The Drowning Pool (1950), young Cathy Slocum, who has murdered her grandmother, tells Archer, "I felt as if I'd sold my soul to the devil, even before it

happened. . . ." (p. 214). When Archer asks multi-murderess Harriet Blackwell to tell him about the killings in The Zebra-Striped Hearse (1962), she replies, "I tried to tell the priest. My Spanish wasn't good enough. But you're no priest" (p. 216). And after she confesses to Archer, "Her arms fell limp at her sides. Her eyes went sleepy" (p. 217). Elaine Hillman in The Far Side of the Dollar (1965), crucifies herself with her knitting needles, sighing "like a woman in passion" (p. 218). Etta Marburg, in The Instant Enemy (1968), pats the head of her son and conspirator in murder, but "She didn't reach out to touch or comfort him. She sat looking down at him in the way I imagine the damned look down, with pity and terror only for themselves, into lower circles than their own" (p. 200). And Mrs. Snow, murderer of Leo Broadhurst in The Underground Man (1971), kills out of a wild religious fanaticism: "He deserved to die. He was a wicked man, a cheat and a fornicator." To Archer, "Her violence and malice appeared to her as emanations from the external world" (p. 248).

What sets Lew Archer and Philip Marlowe apart from Travis McGee is that their sense of justice for the victim also includes compassion for the villain. Thus Marlowe takes pity on mentally deranged Carmen Sternwood in The Big Sleep, and permits Eileen Wade time to commit suicide in The Long Goodbye. Archer's compassion, however, is demonstrated even more directly. He is father, priest

and therapist to the murderers, quietly listening to their private nightmares, offering them advice, giving them physical comfort, hearing their confessions:

"I don't want any of your phony sympathy. People always want to be paid for it. What do you want from me? Sex? Money? Or just to see me suffer?"

I didn't know how to answer her.

"Or do you simply want to hear me say it? Listen then, I'm a murderer. I murdered four people."

She sat and looked at the faded flowers in the wall-paper. I thought that it was a place where dreams could grow rank without much competition from the actual.

"What did you want, Mildred?" (The Doomsters, 1958, p. 156).

Dr. Fredric Wertham, in his book, A Sign for Cain: An Exploration of Human Violence (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966), states:

Modern literature is rich in sadism. That is also rationalized on pseudoclinical grounds. But the belief--often voiced--that representation of sadistic scenes prevents the execution of sadistic acts in life is superstition, not science. Fantasies in artistic form gain power over people. What authors who describe profusely the infliction of pain really give their readers has been put into words by one of the characters in a Mickey Spillane novel: "True violence isn't the deed itself. It's the contemplation and enjoyment of the deed." Some writers savor sadism, then call their treatment of the subject scientific. But their approach is more culinary than clinical (p. 348).

What Wertham ignores is the role of the detective. It is the detective's response to the violence and sadism that he encounters in his daily routine that colors and flavors the response of the reader. For it is through the

eyes of Philip Marlowe, Lew Archer, and Travis McGee that we witness the violence. And their reactions to it become our own reactions. Their contexts become our contexts. Philip Marlowe's response to it is to recognize the harsh reality of violence, to come to grips with it, to conquer it, and then to try to forget it with alcohol and chess. Lew Archer not only wants to see justice done, but he makes an attempt to understand the reasons behind the violence. And although Travis McGee takes pleasure in victory over the villains, we remain, with him, sick. Neither McGee nor his readers gleefully participate in the horrible ends that his victims and villains meet.

Wertham would like to do away with all violent literature. But violence and sadism in fiction are only mirroring the violence and sadism in life. Detective novels, with their necessary abundance of brutality, are one of the most moralistic forms of fiction: good must always triumph over evil, and it must triumph again and again and again. The back-cover blurb of Kenneth Millar's The Doomsters, summarizes the detectives' involvement with violence: "My job is to be tough because I have to be tough to do my job, but as I followed the killer's trail of blood, I could feel my stomach begin to turn. . . ."

CHAPTER VI

WHERE HAVE ALL THE VALUES GONE: THE PRIVATE EYE'S VISION OF AMERICA

There's an anti-pollution message being shown on television these days that's quite effective. An aging American Indian who closely resembles the one on the old Buffalo nickel paddles his canoe along a river bank. The going is rather difficult because the river is filled with muck of all kinds; bottles, rusty cans, dead fish. Finally the Indian docks his craft and climbs ashore. On land he silently surveys the ruin. Trees have been replaced by industrial smokestacks, wildlife by Mustangs, Mavericks and Cougars with V-8 engines, quiet trails by screaming super-highways. As he stands on the brink of modern civilization, one of the animal-autos zooms past and a human arm flings garbage out the window. The waste lands at the Indian's feet, spattering him. He remains silent, and his weathered face discloses nothing. But as the camera moves in, one tear falls and mutely makes its way down the crevices of the old Indian's cheek.

I never cried over polluted cities. As a matter of fact, I hardly noticed the pollution. Super-highways

were inventions that I took for granted, and the only time I reacted to them was when they were under construction and I was forced to detour; then I became angry and frustrated. Garbage was something the trashman collected at regular intervals, and unless a strike was underway, I really wasn't concerned about those tin cans and glass bottles that kept building up. If the sound level of a rock band in a local bar was too loud for my ears, I left. If traffic noise was too much for me as I drove through the rush hour, I simply blotted it out by rolling up the windows and turning on the car radio. You see, I'm used to all this: I'm part and parcel of modern industrial America. Why, then, was I so affected by that old Indian and his single tear?

Perhaps we should look at the character of the American Indian for the answer. The profile of the Indian on the Buffalo nickel, like the one in the advertisement, represents the noble savage, a romantic figure who silently stalks through forests, who lives quietly beside clear waters, and who is a lover of animals and nature. He is a gentle man whose thoughts turn inward; he masks his sufferings.

We know he is an outsider, and that his ways are different from ours. He is a stranger in our midst and we feel a little uncomfortable when he is in our presence. Our discomfort arises from our guilt at what we have done to this man and to his people: we have tortured him, slain

him, burned his villages and taken his land. We have done all this to him and yet he endures, even in a television message, a silent stoic commentator on the result of our lust for power, land, and machines.

Like the American Indian, the hard-boiled detective is also a stranger in our midst. A marginal man with one foot in the old West and the other in the twentieth century, he stands apart from the rest of American society and views the ruins. Since the detective novels are narrated by him, we as readers (just as we are viewers with the Indian) see the world through his eyes. The detective's eyes are dry, but he drowns his sorrow in whiskey. Yet unlike the American Indian, the detective does not remain silent. He tells us what is wrong, and sometimes even shows where it all began.

John D. MacDonald, Raymond Chandler, and Kenneth Millar criticize everything from popular music to popular sex. Nothing is too sacred for them to attack, perhaps because nothing is too sacred for Americans to destroy. Total destruction, however, is not their goal; they do not raze our cities and run to the suburbs. Instead, they remain in the eye of the hurricane and engage in an often futile effort to rebuild, to offer solutions.

The decadence, frustration and joylessness of modern society, with which Lew Archer, Travis McGee and Philip Marlowe are in daily contact, is not an urban phenomenon. It also exists in suburban Santa Theresa,

Idle Valley, Bay City and Ft. Lauderdale. Disillusion has extended its tentacles as far north as Ontario and as far south as Mexico City.

It's a pretty dismal picture of American society that these writers develop for us and we might very well ask why. After all, isn't the detective novel, like most popular fiction, "escape" reading, something the average person peruses on vacations, between airplane connections, or before he retires for the night? Why don't they just give us a good blood and guts story and leave it at that?

Would these questions be leveled at Ernest Hemingway? Might someone suggest to him, for instance, that A Farewell to Arms could really be a great war story if it wasn't cluttered with statements about chaos and false values? Or that Shakespeare's Hamlet is deficient as a story of intrigue because of that philosophizing about being and not being? It's doubtful. We expect a world view from "established" writers like Shakespeare, Hemingway, Joyce and Lawrence, but when it comes to detective novelists we prefer that they remain in a closet. What do they have to offer, anyway? The fact that the world views of Chandler, Millar and MacDonald are closely linked to Ernest Hemingway's is of little consequence. They come under that most distasteful of categories, "popular," a word associated with transient and faddish, and as such, must not be taken seriously.

Strangely enough, as evidenced merely by the sales of their books, the American public does not have an adverse reaction to detective novelists. Furthermore, the vast majority of detective novels used both in and as background for this dissertation were contributed by scholars in the English department at Michigan State University: students of Samuel Johnson, John Milton, and William Shakespeare. I also discovered detective novel enthusiasts among philosophers, sociologists, lawyers, anthropologists, linguists, librarians, and criminologists. Of course these people comprise a very small part of the total population, but their devotion to the detective novel helps to dispel the myth that popular fiction is read and enjoyed only by the great unwashed masses.

Yet in at least one way the detective novel is indeed escape reading. In identifying with the detective we flee our routine lives and become heroes. We enter worlds into which we would not otherwise dare to intrude: the mansions of the rich, the dens of devils. We are energized by fistfights, gunfights and all-night vigils, although our usual nine-to-five day leaves us enervated. We might be submissive to our spouses at home, or to our colleagues and superiors at the office, but as Philip Marlowe, Lew Archer, and Travis McGee we stand up to everybody.

There exists a paradox here, however. Since we view the world through the detectives' eyes, we also become outsiders. As outsiders, it is not we who contribute to pollution in our tedious and frustrating journey home from the office. It is They. Our lives are full; we aren't the lonely, alienated men in gray flannel suits with empty routinized existences. They are. Our children don't grow up to take heroin and LSD, they don't run away from home. Or if they do, it's certainly not our fault. It is They who are guilty, They who are to be pitied--not we. We are like the camera-laden, sunglassed Americans in Mexico who complain to each other that the place is over-run with tourists.

It is John D. MacDonald who at once both provides the reader with the easiest escape route from confronting his own value system, and makes him feel guilty if he does not confront it. The Travis McGee series is filled with lengthy passages of social criticism. McGee enters a situation, any situation, and immediately comments upon it, as in this examination of higher education in A Purple Place for Dying (1964):

Education is something which should be apart from the necessities of earning a living, not a tool therefore. It needs contemplation, fallow periods, the measured and guided study of the history of man's reiteration of the most agonizing question of all: Why? Today the good ones, the ones who want to ask why, find no one around with any interest in answering the question, so they drop out, because theirs is the type of mind which becomes monstrously bored at the trade-school concept (p. 40).

The passage, which runs almost two full pages in its entirety, has little to do with the plot of the novel, other than the fact that some of the action takes place on a college campus. Thus, one can easily skip the passage (and almost every other lengthy passage in the series) without losing much of the story line. However, one begins to feel guilty if he does this. First, some of MacDonald's finest writing is missed if these passages are overlooked. Second, one gets a further insight into Travis McGee and his values. Third, when one continually ignores these passages after having acquainted himself with others, he begins to feel uneasy and to question himself about why he is ignoring them. The answer, of course, is that he's trying to shun self-recognition, to avoid seeing himself and many of his own attitudes and actions demeaned by the hero he so much desires to resemble.

MacDonald is a guilt-maker. We read his passages and although we occasionally chuckle, we are vaguely aware that the people he's talking about are us. For instance, anyone who has succumbed to the T.V. syndrome can recognize himself here:

Ironsides retires to a chicken farm. Marshall Dillon shoots himself in the leg, trying to outdraw the hard case from Tombstone. The hatchet bounces back off the tree and cuts down tall Dan'l Boone. The American living room becomes silent. The people look at each other, puzzled, coming out of the sweet, long, hazy years of automated imagination.

"Where'd all the heroes go, Andy?"

"Maybe, honey, they went where all the others went, along time ago. Way off someplace. Tarzan and Sir Galahad and Robin Hood. Ben Casey and Cap'n Ahab and The Shadow and Peter Rabbit. Went off and joined them."

"But what are we going to do, Andy? What are we going to do?"

"Maybe . . . talk some. Think about things."

"Talk about what? Think about what? I'm scared, Andy."

But there's no problem really, because after the screens go dark and silent, all the tapes of the watchers selfdestruct in five seconds (The Long Lavender Look, 1970, p. 96).

However, MacDonald doesn't confine himself to attacks upon his readers and their values. He strikes out at everything, at those big and little happenings in our lives that make living just a trifle unbearable. A Deadly Shade of Gold (1965), for example, is chock full of annoyances. In this novel McGee comments on the following: anti-communism (Castro); anti-fascism; organized religion (he's against it); homosexuals (they're cute annoyances); city pollution; college education (it's too technological); phony liberals; the new beer can (he turns it upside down and uses a can opener); and the Ft. Lauderdale coeds (enjoy them now, at a distance, for tomorrow they'll turn to fat).

McGee's overall socio-critical stance can be seen in his statement on beer cans:

I always buy the brands with the pull tabs. You stare at the tabs, think deep thoughts about progress, advertising, modern living, cultural advances, and then turn the can upside down and open it with an opener. It is a ceremonial kind of freedom (p. 6).

Other kinds of freedom are having a phone which one can turn off at will, so only outgoing calls can be made, and throwing out mail without looking to see who it's from ("the ultimate test").

McGee desires a return to the past, and harbors inside himself a deep sense of nostalgia and old-fashioned morality. He rebels against modern society and its inventions which he sees as eventually consuming man--man the consumed, rather than the consumer. Just as violence takes on a nightmarish quality for Lew Archer, modern technology becomes a science fiction nightmare for Travis McGee:

People hate their cars. Daddy doesn't come proudly home with the new one any more, and the family doesn't come racing out yelling WOW, and the neighbors don't come over to admire it. . . . They may be named after predators, or primitive emotions, or astronomical objects, but in essence they are a big shiny sink down which the money swirls. . . . They give you a good chance of dying quick, and a better chance of months of agony of torn flesh, smashed guts and splintered bones. . . . Their billions of tons of excreted pollutants wither the leaves on the trees and sicken the livestock. We hate our cars, Detroit. . . . We buy them reluctantly and try to make them last, and they are not friendly machines anymore. They are expensive, murderous junk, and they manage to look glassily contemptuous of the people who own them (Pale Gray for Guilt, 1968, p. 15).

His protests against industry, progress and advertising, however, are futile ones. He cries out and no one hears him except the reader. His rebellions seem impotent: turning the beer can upside down is not going to deter the manufacturers from putting tabs on beer cans. His gestures

are largely symbolic and he recognizes them as such: "It is a ceremonial kind of freedom."

MacDonald is more effective as a social critic when his grievances involve offenses against human beings rather than the offensiveness of machines. Noreen Walker in Darker Than Amber (1966) is a black University of Michigan graduate who works as a Florida maid in order to conceal her militant activities as a regional director of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality). She is portrayed sympathetically because she's "what you might call a militant optimist. I believe that the people of good of both races are going to get it worked out" (p. 90). She is quite bitter, but the reason for her bitterness is justified:

In this state, my friend, a nigger convicted of killing a nigger gets an average three years. A nigger who rapes a nigger is seldom even tried, unless the girl happens to be twelve years old or less. Santa Claus and Jesus are white men, Mr. McGee, and the little girls' dolls and the little boys' toy soldiers have white faces. My boys are two and a half and four. What am I doing to their lives if I let them grow up here? . . . I don't want white friends. I don't want to socialize. You know how white people look to me? The way albinos look to you. I don't want to integrate. I just don't want to feel segregated. We're after our share of the power structure of this civilization, Mr. McGee, because when we get it, a crime will merit the same punishment whether the victim is black or white, and the hoods will get the same share of municipal services based on zoning, not color. And a good man will be thought a credit to the human race (p. 96).

Noreen Walker's stance is a semi-radical one. She wants change, but talks about it occurring in the future. And she wants to work within the System. She is acceptable

because she is educated, speaks white English, is attractive, is a mother, wants equal opportunity but doesn't wish to socialize with whites, and finally, to add a note of tragedy, is a widow whose husband died of cancer (not in jail or in a race riot). Furthermore, McGee's views of racial problems in America temper any threat to the reader that Noreen Walker's militantism might make:

They say Now, knowing that only fifteen percent of Negro America is responsible enough to handle the realities of Now, and that, in the hard core South, perhaps seventy percent of the whites are willing to accept the obligations of Now. . . . My intolerance is simply McGee-type. If they were people around colored green or bright blue, I would have a continual primitive awareness of the difference between us, way down on that watchful animal level which is a caveman heritage. But I would cherish the ones who came through as solid folk, and avoid the slobs and fools and bores as diligently as I avoid white slobs and fools and bores (p. 93).

McGee's statements are also tempered in The Girl in the Plain Brown Wrapper (1968). In this novel he also befriends a black maid who is more intelligent than she appears. McGee makes a hard-hitting statement about racism and wishy-washy liberalism, but in the end reverts to arm-chair liberalism himself:

And if the black man demands that Big Uncle take care of him in the style the hucksters render so desirable, then it's a sideways return to slavery. Whitey wants law and order, meaning a head-knocker like Alabama George. No black is going to grieve about some nice sweet dedicated uprejudiced liberal being yanked out of his Buick and beaten to death, because there have been a great many hard-working blacks beaten to death too. . . . And so, Mrs. Lorette Walker, no solutions for me or thee, not from your leaders be they passive or militant, nor from the politicians or the liberals

or the head-knockers or the educators. No answer but time (p. 153).

The result of McGee's philosophizing is that the reader is moved, but not offended. If he lives in the South, he can tell himself that it is thirty percent of the "hard core South" which is racist. He is not being asked to riot, march, or even to write a letter to his congressman. He is simply asked to understand.

This kind of social criticism is of the liberal middle class America cocktail party variety. It is appealing to middle-aged whites who wish to be "in" without seeming too far out. The only ones who would take issue with McGee, who would not view him as everybody's understanding friend, are "Freedom Now" young blacks and whites. For McGee is a patient man; he's a talker, not a doer, a loner, not a joiner.

That MacDonald writes for the white middle-class, middle-aged, is also evidenced in his comment on modern music in Pale Gray for Guilt:

Of course it is music, styled to accompany teen-age fertility rites, and thus is as far out of my range as "Rockabye Baby." FM radio was a great product when it was servicing a fringe area of the great American market. But it has turned into a commercial success, so they have denigrated the sound, and they have mickey-moused the stereo and you really have to search that dial to find something that isn't either folk hoke, rickiticky rock, or the saccharine they pump into elevators, bus stations and Howard Johnsons (p. 6).

This is not the Now generation speaking, it is the Then generation complaining. Although the prose is better than

that of most idle conversations on the subject, it is still just idle talk and idle daydreaming.

What is implicit in all of MacDonald's social criticism is a longing for order and simplicity and a life unadorned by the trappings of modern conveniences. There is a wistfulness to his criticism as McGee lambastes American lifestyles:

They yearn for security, but all they can have is what they make for themselves, chattering little flocks of them in the restaurants and stores, talking of style and adornment. . . . They have been taught that if you are sunny, cheery, sincere, group-adjusted, popular, the world is yours, including barbecue pits, charge plates, diaper service, percale sheets, friends for dinner, washer-dryer combinations, color slides of the kiddies on the home projector, and eternal whimsical romance--with crinkly smiles and Rock Hudson dialogue (pp. 101-102, The Deep Blue Good-by).

McGee wants to return to a time that perhaps never existed--a time when man was not entangled in his society; a time before machines and computers and gray flannel suits and commuters; a time when you were on a first-name basis with everyone in town; a time when you could choose your friends and trust your fellow man--or woman.

Travis McGee is the wish-fulfillment of all those who would wish to escape the problems and pains and complexities of modern life. Because he has escaped. He can loaf on the Busted Flush, fish and keep her in trim, drive his vintage Rolls Royce when and where he wishes. He has neither family nor bills. He is attractive, and has all

the voluptuous women he wants. He reads a lot, likes to play chess, and chooses his friends as he wishes.

Yet he also functions effectively in society when he needs to. He has money, enjoys traveling, knows how to dress for all occasions. He knows what wine goes with what course, and while he likes a good steak, he enjoys any good food. He has the best of both worlds and can operate well in each.

Philip Marlowe, on the other hand, is a tired, though cocky detective. Unlike Travis McGee, who speaks directly to the reader and often assumes that he shares the same views--"We hate our cars, Detroit"--Marlowe's social criticisms are either private observations or witty repartees. Thus, none of Marlowe's insights are as passion-filled as those of Travis McGee. Rather, they are tough, terse and cynical.

Philip Marlowe, at first reading, seems detached as an observer of human nature:

All I knew about the people was that they were a Mrs. Elizabeth Bright Murdock and family and that she wanted to hire a nice clean private detective who wouldn't drop cigar ashes on the floor and never carried more than one gun. And I knew she was the widow of an old coot with whiskers named Jasper Murdock who had made a lot of money helping out the community, and got his photograph in the Pasadena paper every year on his anniversary, with the years of his birth and death underneath, and the legend: His Life Was His Service (The High Window, 1942, p. 1).

Yet after reading the passage above we know what the detective thinks of women who pretend that there is no

dirt in their lives by hiring a "clean private detective," and old philanthropists who get rich from the community they are ostensibly serving.

There are no sacred cows for Philip Marlowe. He is too worn out, too disillusioned with life to care about what he says or to whom he says it. The most vicious attacks are made upon the rich, often those by whom Marlowe is employed. Of Carmen Sternwood, Colonel Sternwood's daughter in The Big Sleep (1939), Marlowe says, "A pretty, spoiled and not very bright little girl who had gone very, very wrong, and nobody was doing anything about it. To hell with the rich. They make me sick" (p. 58). In The High Window, Marlowe's identification with the underdog and his disdain of the wealthy is combined. He wishes to enter Idle Valley, a wealthy Los Angeles suburb seething underneath with gambling syndicates, but is stopped by a special policeman who must first call in to make certain Marlowe is expected:

I looked at the gun strapped to his hip, the special badge pinned to his shirt. "And they call this a democracy," I said.

He looked behind him and then spat on the ground and put a hand on the sill of the car door. "Maybe you got company," he said. "I know a fellow belonged to the John Reed Club. . . ."

"Tovarich," I said.

"The trouble with revolutions," he said, "is that they get in the hands of the wrong people."

"Check," I said.

"On the other hand," he said, "could they be any wronger than the bunch of rich phonies that live around here?"

"Maybe you'll be living in here yourself someday," I said.

He spat again. "I wouldn't live in here if they paid me fifty thousand a year and let me sleep in chiffon pajamas with a string of matched pearls around my neck."

"I'd hate to make you the offer," I said (p. 103).

It is at once evident that Marlowe understands that the man's hatred of the wealthy is founded in resentment and envy. If the policeman could afford it, he would certainly live in Idle Valley, contrary to his vehement protestations.

Idle Valley, now devoid of gambling casinos, appears again as a target for criticism in The Long Goodbye (1954):

Across the lake there was a blue haze against the hills. The ocean breeze had begun to filter through the low mountains to the west. It wiped the air clean and it wiped away just enough of the heat. Idle Valley was having a perfect summer. Somebody had planned it that way. Paradise Incorporated, and also Highly Restricted. Only the nicest people. Absolutely no Central Europeans. Just the cream, the top drawer crowd; the lovely, lovely people. Like the Lorings and the Wades. Pure gold (p. 218).

If Idle Valley is Sodom for the wealthy, Bay City is Sodom for the middle class. Like Idle Valley, Raymond Chandler also uses Bay City in two novels, Farewell, My Lovely (1940), and The Lady in the Lake (1943). In the earlier novel, Bay City is comparable to Dashiell Hammett's Personville (Poisonville, as it is called by the Continental Op) in Red Harvest. It is a city controlled by a corrupt

police department managed by Chief John Wax, who in turn is controlled by a gambling syndicate. Phony healers, marijuana pushers, brutal police and a hospital which fronts for escaped convicts make up the employment opportunities in Bay City. In this novel, Marlowe, with the aid of Los Angeles' Lieutenant Randall and Red Norgaard, a Bay City policeman dismissed from the force for being too honest, seems to clean up the city.

Yet only three years later, in The Lady in the Lake, Marlowe is back in Bay City, and nothing seems to have changed. He has been beaten up and framed by two of the city's finest and has been thrown in jail:

It was a very nice jail. It was on the twelfth floor of the new city hall. It was a very nice city hall. Bay City was a very nice place. People lived there and thought so. If I lived there, I would probably think so. . . . I knew a girl who lived on Twenty-fifth Street. It was a nice street. She liked Bay City.

She wouldn't think about the Mexican and Negro slums stretched out on the dismal flats south of the old interurban tracks. Nor of the waterfront dives along the flat shore south of the cliffs, the sweaty little dance halls on the pike, and marijuana joints. . . . (p. 156).

Bay City is basically unchanged. The gangsters have beaten the charges against them, and the strangely honest police captain can only apologize for his men.

One of the major pleasures one derives from reading Chandler's series is Philip Marlowe's cynical sense of humor. Much of Marlowe's criticism is centered around

Los Angeles and Hollywood, a plastic world in which everyone is expected to play a role. There is no such thing as a self in Hollywood, except that which exists on celluloid, in detective pulps, and later in the series, on television. In The Big Sleep, for example, Marlowe tells his employer, Colonel Sternwood, that "I'm not Sherlock Holmes or Philo Vance."¹ I don't expect to go over ground the police have covered and pick up a broken pen point and build a case from it" (p. 197). Vance is again mentioned in Farewell, My Lovely when Marlowe's girlfriend, Ann Riordan, pokes fun at him by suggesting that someday he can solve the murders by "sitting at the head of a long table, telling all about it, little by little, with your charming light smile and a phony English accent like Philo Vance" (p. 239).

Villains play their parts straight out of Little Caesar and Public Enemy. In The Big Sleep, gangster Joe Brody directs Marlowe to "Just come forward about two yards. You might grab a little air while you're doing that." Marlowe silently observes that "His voice was the elaborately casual voice of the tough guy in pictures. Pictures have made them all like that" (p. 72).

The police too play roles. In The Little Sister (1949), Marlowe's informant tells him:

¹Philo Vance, the creation of "S.S. Van Dine," (Willard Huntington Wright) was the first mail order detective. He was tall, good-looking, lofty in manner, and enjoyed using foreign phrases and multi-syllabic words.

"Steelgrave was under glass all that week. No connection at all. Your cop friend has been reading pulp magazines."

"They all do," I said. "That's why they talk so tough" (p. 104).

The pulp image of the detective as it appears in Philo Vance stories in the first novel, is criticized by Marlowe in The Long Goodbye. However, now the pulp is on television:

The action took place in a clothes closet and the faces were tired and overfamiliar and not beautiful. The dialogue was stuff even Monogram wouldn't have used. The dick had a colored house boy for comic relief. He didn't need it, he was plenty comical all by himself (pp. 86-7).

Marlowe's sympathy for and identification with the black man is implied in the above statement. Unlike Travis McGee, however, his respect is individual and is not shown in long passages which describe causes and cures. In Farewell, My Lovely Marlowe's contempt for policeman Nulty is evidenced when Nulty complains that all he ever gets to cover are "dinge killings." The murders of blacks are important to no one, and are rarely investigated.² In The High Window, Marlowe spends some time with a plaster black jockey which sits on the Murdocks' lawn. The jockey becomes symbolic of the patience and endurance of both the black man and the detective:

²The policeman as a target of social criticism is more fully discussed earlier in this dissertation. See "The Law: The Trouble With Cops Is . . ."

At the end of the walk, on a concrete block, there was a little painted Negro in white riding breeches and a green jacket and a red cap. He was holding a whip, and there was an iron hitching ring in the block at his feet. He looked a little sad, as if he had been waiting there a long time and was getting discouraged. I went over and patted his head while I was waiting for somebody to come to the door. . . . "Brother," I said, "you and me both" (pp. 1-2).

The Long Goodbye introduces the black intellectual. Amos is the Loring's chauffeur.³ At the end of the novel, he and Marlowe have a brief exchange which demonstrates their mutual understanding:

"May I ask Mr. Marlowe a question?"

"Certainly, Amos."

"'I grow old . . . I grow old . . . I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.' What does that mean, Mr. Marlowe?"

"Not a bloody thing. It just sounds good."

He smiled. "That is from the 'Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.' Here's another one. 'In the room the women come and go/Talking of Michelangelo.' Does that suggest anything to you, sir?"

"Yeah--it suggests to me that the guy didn't know very much about women."

"My sentiments exactly, sir. Nonetheless I admire T.S. Eliot very much."

"Did you say 'nonetheless'?"

"Why, yes I did, Mr. Marlowe. Is that incorrect?"

"No, but don't say it in front of a millionaire. He might think you were giving him the hotfoot."

He smiled sadly. "I shouldn't dream of it" (p. 313).

³It is interesting to observe that black intellectuals as portrayed both by Raymond Chandler and John D. MacDonald must mask their intellectualism in menial positions.

The institution that comes most frequently under attack is America in the guise of Hollywood. In Playback (1958), Chandler's last novel, Marlowe describes Esmeralda, his ideal town:

. . . it had no false fronts, no cheesy billboards, no drive-in hamburger joints, no cigar counters or poolrooms, and no street corner toughs to hang around in front of them. . . . Not everybody in Esmeralda was prosperous, not everybody drove a Cadillac, a Jaguar or a Riley, but the percentage of obviously prosperous living was very high, and the stores that sold luxury goods were as neat and expensive-looking as those in Beverly Hills and far less flashy. There was another small difference too. In Esmeralda what was old was also clean and sometimes quaint. In other small towns what is old is just shabby (p. 42).

In contrast, Hollywood is a world of gaudy and clashing values:

We curved through the bright mile or two of the Strip, past the antique shops with famous screen names on them, past the windows full of point lace and ancient pewter . . . past the handsome modernistic buildings in which the Hollywood flesh-peddlers never stop talking money, past a drive-in lunch which somehow didn't belong, even though the girls wore white silk blouses and drum majorettes' shakos and nothing below the hips but glazed kid Hessian boots. . . . (Farewell, My Lovely, p. 120).

Finally, with just one line in The Lady in the Lake, Marlowe sums up his microcosm for America: "Everything's for sale in California" (p. 31).

Kenneth Millar's *Lew Archer* strikes a happy medium between Travis McGee's purple passion of criticism and Philip Marlowe's tough semi-alooofness. A devoted environmentalist, Millar manages to weave his message into his

stories in his two most recent novels, The Underground Man (1971), and Sleeping Beauty (1973). In the former, a ranging forest fire destroys hundreds of acres of woodland. The fire was started by a dead man's cigarillo, dropped next to the grave of his murdered father. The fire consumes the land and at the same time lays bare the past as Archer, in its heat, begins a search for a missing boy, two missing teenagers, and the solution to an old and a new murder. In Sleeping Beauty, haunted Laurel Lennox Russo, heiress to an oil company, disappears after an oil-slicked grebe dies in her arms.

Lew Archer's concern with nature and with man's indifference to it is found in his first novel, The Moving Target (1949). As he drives into Santa Theresa, Archer watches men and women move in and out of shops and office buildings: "Nobody looked at the mountains standing above the town, but the mountains were there, making them all look silly" (p. 12). It is in these mountains that the fire blazes twenty-two years later, and the people are now certainly aware of them as the fire threatens and destroys their homes: the revenge of nature on an indifferent human universe.

In The Drowning Pool (1950), Archer tells us that although They had "bull-dozed super-highways through the mountains, cut down a thousand years of redwood growth, and built an urban wilderness in the desert," They

"couldn't touch the ocean. They poured their sewage into it, but it couldn't be tainted (p. 21). He further observes that he could smell "the source of the money when I slid down into the valley on the other side. It stank like rotten eggs." The source is the oil wells "from which the sulphur gas rose [and] crowded the slopes on both sides of the town. . . ." The wells had made the town grow enormously, "like a tumor" (p. 22). Twenty-three years later, the ocean is found to be as vulnerable as the red-woods in Sleeping Beauty. From a plane, the offshore oil platform looks "like the metal handle of a dagger that had stabbed the world and made it spill black blood," and Archer asks his Mexican flight steward, "what had happened to the ocean" (p. 1).

Archer's identification with nature is again demonstrated in The Galton Case (1959), this time in a humorous vein. As he tours Mrs. Galton's home he observes the paintings that hang on the wall. "Ancestor-worship art," he thinks, "portraits of Spanish dons, ladies in hoop skirts with bare monolithic bosoms. . . . The one I liked best depicted a group of top-hatted tycoons watching a bulldog-faced tycoon hammer a gold spike into a railroad tie. There was a buffalo in the background looking sullen" (p. 9).

Of the three detectives Lew Archer may be the one most closely identifiable with the American Indian

described at the beginning of this chapter. Both share a concern for wildlife and a horror of what man's technology has done to it and to himself. In The Far Side of the Dollar (1965), Archer, looking for evidence in an automobile junkyard, muses that "Somebody with an eye for detail should make a study of automobile graveyards . . . the way they study the ruins and potsherds of vanished civilizations. It could provide a clue as to why our civilization is vanishing" (p. 43).

Ecology, however, is only one of Kenneth Millar's concerns. It is something in which he deeply believes, though, and he joined picket lines in California in 1971 to protest the Pacific Point oil-spill disaster. Another concern is the youth of America, the misguided and the misunderstood.

Millar's empathy with both children and teenagers is related to his own lost childhood. His parents separated when he was three years old and Millar and his ailing, impoverished mother traveled through Canada, living off the good will of relatives. The search for a missing father is a major theme in Millar's works, and is its most autobiographical in Meet Me at the Morgue, an early novel not in the Lew Archer series.

Perhaps it is for this reason that Lew Archer so identifies with the young and that the young identify and open themselves to him, often to the chagrin of their

parents. Archer himself is known to have come up the hard way. In The Doomsters (1958) he states that had it not been for a tough but understanding policeman he would have become a criminal.

In The Way Some People Die (1952), we meet Ronnie, a minor character who dreams of being a top-notch prize-fighter. As Archer gazes down "sightlessly into [Ronnie's] empty hazel eyes," he generalizes about him:

There were thousands like him in my ten-thousand-square-mile beat: boys who had lost their futures, their parents and themselves in the shallow jerry-built streets of the coastal cities; boys with hot-rod bowels, comic-book imaginations, daring that grew up too late for one war, too early for another (p. 102).

It is doubtful, however, that Ronnie can ever be saved. Perhaps if Archer had time he could relate to him, but Ronnie, in this novel is just one of many people who must be interviewed. Archer thinks to himself that although Ronnie may become a good "fighting machine" for a few years, in the end he will probably "drop back onto the ghetto corner with the brains scrambled in his skull" (p. 17).

Archer's attempts to save the young are often thwarted. Sometimes he arrives in their lives too late to do any good. Such is the case with Davy Spanner in The Instant Enemy (1968), a novel which weaves together the search for Davy's father with murder, parents whose private problems make it almost impossible for them to relate to their children, and the Hollywood drug scene.

Archer is, himself, the instant enemy, simply because he is an adult in the "don't-trust-anybody-over-thirty" world of the late 1960's. "I was weary of the war of the generations, the charges and counter charges, the escalations and negotiations, the endless talk across the bargaining table," he sighs at the beginning of the novel (p. 4). Yet he quickly becomes involved as he hunts for a missing seventeen-year-old girl, Sandy Sebastian, and her young, emotionally disturbed boyfriend, Davy, "son of a migrant laborer, orphaned at three or four and institutionalized, then taken by foster parents; a violent dropout from high school, a wandering teen-ager, car thief, jail graduate, candidate for more advanced felonies, possibly somewhat crazy in the head" (p. 57).

The teenagers' charge that adults are not to be trusted is proven valid. Davy is shot to death by the guidance counselor with whom he has sought refuge. Sandy has been repeatedly raped by two men, one of them her father's friend. But it is Archer to whom Sandy finally reveals her gruesome tale.

Sometimes adults have to be trusted, and perhaps it is easier to trust Archer because he is not a parent himself, and therefore does not give ultimatums or pull rank. Furthermore, unlike most parents, he admits his mistakes in relating to teenagers, apologizes to them, and listens. This is the case in The Far Side of the

Dollar (1965), a novel in which teenager Tommy Hillman goes in search of his missing father only to discover that the one with whom he has been living is the real one after all, and has only been missing in spirit. Archer finally tells Tommy, "I sometimes think children should be anonymous" (p. 189).

Archer's quiet conversation with Tommy, however, is made possible only because earlier, the detective had admitted his own mistake. On finding Tommy, he had threatened him with force, with handcuffs, in order to make the boy stay with him. Tommy retorts, "Fuzz!":

The jeering word came strangely from him, like a foreign word he was trying to make his own. It bothered me. Boys, like men, have to belong to something. Tom had felt betrayed by one world, the plush deceptive world of Ralph Hillman, with schools like Laguna Perdida on the underside of the weave. He had plunged blindly into another world, and now he had lost that. His mind must be desperate for a place to rest, I thought, and I wasn't doing much of a job of providing one (p. 183).

In The Underground Man little Ronny Broadhurst rejects his own father in favor of Lew Archer who has been helping him feed birds: "'I want to stay with the man.' He took hold of my belt and stood with his head down, his face hidden from all adults" (p. 3). When Ronny is "kidnapped" by teenagers Susan Crandall and Jerry Kilpatrick, Archer finds them and talks them back into a world of relative sanity: "I hoped it was over. I hoped that Ronny's life wouldn't turn back toward his father's death

as his father's life had turned, in a narrowing circle. I wished the boy a benign failure of memory" (p. 249). Unlike adults, Archer never criticizes the young. They are the innocents, the victims of their parents.

If Lew Archer may be read as the new Dr. Spock for parents of teenagers, it is because he is non-judgmental. He may disapprove of the actions of adults, but he understands with a moving compassion that we are all at the same time guilty and guiltless. His unwillingness to condemn is also reflected in areas other than parent-teenager relations. Of man's greed he says in The Moving Target, "You can't blame money for what it does to people. The evil is in people, and money is the peg they hang it on. They go wild for money when they've lost their other values" (p. 182).

There is a sadness in Archer when he speaks about the rich. They are lonely, alienated, tarnished people. Watching them at a country club dance in Black Money (1965), he observes that "they gave you the impression of a party that had been going on too long, till the music and the dancers were worn as thin as the husks of insects after spiders had eaten them" (p. 70). Money, both to those who possess it and dream of it may seem to "confer spiritual grace" (p. 9), but it is the corrupter of people, and its value often makes those who possess it valueless: "She looked like a woman who had stopped believing almost

everything except the numbers on bills, the price tags on clothes and people" (p. 77).

If Archer is tender toward the decadent rich, he is tersely critical of bigots. It is the Mexican for Archer, rather than the black who is the victim of prejudice in most of the tales. In Black Money, for example, a landlady tells Archer:

I know a Mex when I see one. If you ask me he was probably a wetback, and that's why he lied. He didn't want the Immigration to put him on a bus and send him home. . . . He was all right, in his place. But he was too uppity. . . . He told me he was going to come back. Come back in a Rolls Royce with a million dollars and marry a girl from Montevista. That was uppity. I told him he should stick to his own kind (pp. 140-41).

In contrast to Travis McGee, Archer's replies are quick and to the point. Knowing that he can do nothing to alter their stupidity he does not lecture, and he reserves any clever asides for the reader:

"What happened to Nopal Valley?"

"It was ruined, absolutely ruined. Great hordes of low-class people, Mexicans and dirty oil crews, came in from gosh knows where, and simply blighted the town. We can't let it happen here."

"Absolutely not," I said with a phoniness she had no ear to catch. "Quinto must remain a natural beauty" (The Drowning Pool, p. 10).

And once again, in The Way Some People Die:

". . . what she saw in this guy that worked for Speed--I wouldn't trust a Mexican or Italian, they have no respect for women."

I was getting a little tired of her opinions, and she was repeating herself. I got out of my chair and stood up. "Thanks very much, Miss Graham" (p. 9).

John D. MacDonald, Raymond Chandler, and Kenneth Millar use their social criticism more to inform than to change. As readers, the detectives' opinions on race, religion, politics, and American society serve more to give us information about the characters of the detectives than to change our own views. Just as our appreciation of Sherlock Holmes is heightened by Dr. Watson's information concerning the sleuth's habits (his cocaine addiction, his violin playing, the Persian slipper in which he stores his tobacco), so our enjoyment of Travis McGee, Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer is increased by learning about where they stand. And if we stand with them, so much the better.

There is a difference, however, between the ratiocinative and the hard-boiled detective. In reading Holmes or M. Dupin we find very little social criticism. We may find that Holmes views Italians as "hot blooded" or passionate, and Jews as shrewd and cunning, but these observations are made only to enlighten us as to the motive or possible future actions of a subject. This is true, because the ratiocinative detective story adheres to a strict formula. Little action or dialogue is permitted that does not in some way bear a direct relation to the solution of a particular problem. Although not unpleasant, one must submit to a feeling of confinement in the ratiocinative tale, as if with the detective, he too is experiencing the unraveling of the mystery through a microscope.

The hard-boiled story, on the other hand, is more panoramic, more cinematic in scope. The formula is such that it provides for action beyond the limitations of the immediate puzzle. Often, the solution becomes subservient to other side developments in the case. Thus, the relationship between Philip Marlowe and Eileen Wade and Linda Loring is more interesting to us than Terry Lennox's disappearance in The Long Goodbye, and for some time certainly seems more significant to the detective. The outcome of the Chookie McCall-Arthur Wilkinson love affair in Bright Orange for the Shroud is at least equal to our concern for a just end for Boone Waxwell. And Lew Archer's search for Tommy Hillman and his confrontation with a former lover momentarily woos us away from our need to know who killed Tommy's mother in The Far Side of the Dollar.

The setting of the two types of fiction is also different. The ratiocinative story is often a manor mystery as well as a mystery of manners. Little is known about the world outside that of the detective's quarters or the home in which a murder has been committed. The detective himself is a remote figure, and one can only wonder how it is that he understands so much about human nature.⁴

⁴ Sherlock Holmes, we learn in "The Adventure of the Empty House," has been traveling for the past three years, but what did he do before this, besides read books and write monographs?

The action detective, however, is a man very much in tune with the world around him. He is not an aesthetic like Sherlock Holmes, nor a flamboyant nobleman like Dorothy Sayers' Lord Peter Whimsey. He is a man of the people, a working man with an office outside his home, and is very much a part of them. He is separated from them only because he was once with them; he has shared in their wars and their football games, their fights and their follies.

The action detective depends on brawn and legwork as well as brains to solve a crime. The modern murder touches on more lives than the Victorian one, and it is necessary for the private eye to leave his chambers and become involved in those lives. Gone is the quiet, cloistered world which we like to believe existed prior to World War I. The Great War demonstrated to the detective as well as to the rest of the world that isolationism was no longer feasible.

The ratiocinative story still exists and thrives today. Agatha Christie's Miss Marple (who learns all about people by studying those in her town of St. Mary's Mead) and Monsieur Hercule Poirot, are still fascinating figures. Ngaio Marsh's Roderick Alleyn and Margery Allingham's Campion have their devoted followers. Peter Whimsey remains whimsical. Yet even when these stories are set in the present, we read them with the same sense of

nostalgia that we read Sherlock Holmes. Even as we turn the pages the paper seems to yellow and crumble in our fingers, and we almost expect a pressed and faded tearose to slip from between the leaves.

This is not true of the hard-boiled school, however. The stories of Raymond Chandler are still crisp and immediate. Philip Marlowe's insights into American life remain relevant and fresh. There are no flowers in a Lew Archer or Travis McGee novel; the blush is no longer on the American Beauty rose. These three detectives, with their wise-cracking, philosophical, passionate, and sometimes condemning views of our society refuse to retreat into the past. They remain as alive for us as they were thirty years ago, because they keep their hands on the pulse of modern civilization. However much it twists and thrashes, is vicious and cruel and helpless and maybe even hopeless, the hard-boiled detective holds on with a tenacity that defies time.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

At a recent meeting of the Mystery Writers of America, Hillary Waugh, the fraternity's president, stated that "Many authors continue to operate along the lines of the classic detective story, but the horizons [of the form] have expanded enormously." He further remarked that "Writers are really seeking to write much more serious pieces of work, and there's an increasing trend toward authenticity."¹ There is certainly truth to Waugh's observation. Compulsion, In Cold Blood, and more recently, The French Connection, are three well-known examples of authenticity in crime fiction. It seems, in fact, that the detective, like so many other small businessmen, could easily be replaced by a machine. We ask the computer a question--"Who killed Roger Ackroyd?"--and push a button. Presto! The solution to another crime.

The character of the detective, too, may be changing. In The Chicken in the Airshaft by Steve Franklin,

¹Eric Pace, "New Trends are Emerging in Mystery Fiction. Who's Doing It?" The New York Times (Tuesday, November 28, 1972), first page of second section.

the hero is a tender-hearted Puerto Rican social worker. Joe Gore's Dead Skip features a detective who is a collection agent, Harry Kemelman's detective is Rabbi David Small who oversleeps on Fridays, but finds time between briths and Bar Mitzvahs to solve crimes, and Joseph Hanson is a writer whose detective is a homosexual. No wonder Jacques Barzun laments that the new phenomenon is a "sign of exhaustion of the form," and adds that "you now have to have a retired hemiplegic plumber before you can have a so-called interesting hero."

Yet the traditional formula both in the ratiocinative and hardboiled genres still thrives. Agatha Christie recently published her eighty-second novel and her mysteries have sold over three hundred and fifty million copies in paper and hardcover in the United States alone. That's popularity. Kenneth Millar's new Lew Archer novel, Sleeping Beauty, was released by Alfred A. Knopf in April, 1973. In addition, many of the Archer novels (as well as Millar's earlier mystery fiction), have been reissued in paperback and hardcover editions. His novel The Moving Target, the first Archer novel, was made into the successful movie, Harper, starring Paul Newman (Newman was on a lucky streak of "H" movies--The Hustler, Hud, and Hombre--hence, the change in the hero's name). The same is true for Raymond Chandler, whose entire Philip Marlowe series has been reprinted with artistic covers by Ballantine. That

The Long Goodbye was just made into a movie, starring Elliot Gould as Marlowe, attests to Chandler's endurance. And John D. MacDonald, a paperback originals author, is having his novels reissued in hardcover. If the demand for these authors was not evident, publishing houses would never spend money on them.

Furthermore, the arrival of popular culture studies as a valid scholarly endeavour has contributed to the growing interest, discovery, and rediscovery of mystery writers of all genres. Courses dealing with the mystery form are currently being offered at several major universities. Papers discussing a variety of aspects of the detective novel and its origins have been presented for the past three years at meetings of the Popular Culture Association. Even the traditional Modern Language Association has recognized popular culture; at the December, 1973, meeting there will be a special popular culture session.

The detective form is not, I think, showing signs of exhaustion. One factor that is so appealing about the hardboiled formula is that it is a relatively free one and contains within it possibilities for all kinds of variations on the tough hero. Yes, even a homosexual detective can be tough. I do not, therefore, mourn with Professor Barzun the death of the genre. It seems to me that he's planning the funeral when there's been no death. Of course there will be silly gimmicks used in the form; there always have

been, and they can be found everywhere. It is up to the reader to decide what he wants, and usually he is an excellent critic.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Batten, Jack. "Who Will Wear the Sacred Trenchcoat for Canada? Who, in Fact, Will Stand on Guard?: A Sour Look at What Passes for Crime Fiction in Our Midst." Saturday Night. Toronto: January, 1973, pp. 28-30.

Blumenthal, Monica D., Robert L. Kahn, et al. Justifying Violence: Attitudes of American Men. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1972.

Brucoli, Matthew J., comp. Kenneth Millar/Ross Macdonald: A Checklist. Detroit: 1972.

Chandler, Raymond. The Big Sleep. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939.

_____. Farewell, My Lovely. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940.

_____. Finger Man and Other Stories. New York: Avon Book Co., 1946.

_____. The High Window. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942.

_____. The Lady in the Lake. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943.

_____. The Little Sister. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1949.

_____. The Long Goodbye. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1954.

_____. Playback. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1958.

_____. Red Wind. New York: World Publishing Co., 1946.

_____. The Simple Art of Murder. New York: 1950.

Durham, Philip. Down These Mean Streets A Man Must Go: Raymond Chandler's Knight. Chapel Hill: 1966.

Goldman, William. Review of The Goodbye Look by Ross Macdonald. The New York Times Book Review, June 1, 1969.

Goulart, Ron T., ed. The Hardboiled Dicks. New York: 1946.

Hammett, Dashiell. The Adventures of Sam Spade. New York: World Publishing Co., 1945.

_____. The Dain Curse. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929.

_____. The Glass Key. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931.

_____. The Maltese Falcon. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930.

_____. Red Harvest. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929.

_____. The Thin Man. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1934.

Hartman, Geoffrey. "The Mystery of Mysteries." Review of The Under Ground Man by Ross Macdonald. The New York Review of Books. May 18, 1972, p. 31.

Haycraft, Howard. The Art of the Mystery Story. New York: 1946.

_____. Murder for Pleasure. New York: 1941.

LaCour, Tage, and Morgensen, Harald. The Murder Book: An Illustrated History of the Detective Story. New York: Herder and Herder, 1971.

MacDonald, John D. Bright Orange for the Shroud. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1965.

_____. Darker Than Amber. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1966.

_____. A Deadly Shade of Gold. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1965.

_____. The Deep Blue Good-By. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1964.

- _____. Dress Her in Indigo. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1969.
- _____. The Girl in the Plain Brown Wrapper. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1968.
- _____. The Long Lavender Look. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1970.
- _____. Nightmare in Pink. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1964.
- _____. One Fearful Yellow Eye. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1966.
- _____. Pale Gray for Guilt. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1968.
- _____. A Purple Place for Dying. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1964.
- _____. The Quick Red Fox. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1964.
- _____. A Tan and Sandy Silence. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Gold Medal, 1971.
- Macdonald, Ross [Kenneth Millar]. The Barbarous Coast. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956.
- _____. Black Money. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966.
- _____. Blue City. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947.
- _____. The Chill. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.
- _____. The Doomsters. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958.
- _____. The Drowning Pool. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950.
- _____. The Far Side of the Dollar. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965.
- _____. The Ferguson Affair. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960.
- _____. Find a Victim. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954.

- _____. The Galton Case. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959.
- _____. The Goodbye Look. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969.
- _____. The Instant Enemy. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968.
- _____. The Ivory Grin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952.
- _____. Meet Me At The Morgue. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953.
- _____. The Moving Target. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.
- _____. The Name is Archer. New York: Bantam Books, 1955.
- _____. Sleeping Beauty. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973.
- _____. The Three Roads. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948.
- _____. The Underground Man. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971.
- _____. The Way Some People Die. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.
- _____. The Wycherly Woman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961.
- _____. The Zebra-Striped Hearse. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.
- Madden, David, ed. Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968.
- Millar, Kenneth. The Dark Tunnel. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., Inc., 1943.
- Moffatt, Len, and Moffatt, June, compl. The JDM Master Checklist: A Bibliography of the Published Writings of John D. MacDonald. Downey, Calif.: 1969.

Nevins, Francis M., Jr., ed. The Mystery Writer's Art.
Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University
Popular Press, 1970.

Nye, Russel B. The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts
in America. New York: 1970.

Pace, Eric. "New Trends are Emerging in Mystery Fiction.
Who's Doing It?" The New York Times, Tuesday,
November 28, 1972, Part 2, p. 1.

Sokolov, Raymond; Zimmerman, Diane; and Reilly, Trish.
"Ross Macdonald--Master of Mystery." Newsweek,
March 22, 1971, pp. 101-109.

Spillane, Mickey. I, The Jury. New York: E. P. Dutton
and Co., Inc., 1947.

_____. Me, Hood! New York: E. P. Dutton and Co.,
Inc., 1963.

_____. The Tough Guys. New York: Signet, 1969.

Welty, Eudora. Review of The Underground Man by Ross
Macdonald. The New York Times Book Review,
February 14, 1971.

Wertham, Fredric, M. D. A Sign for Cain: An Exploration
of Human Violence. New York: The Macmillan
Company, 1962.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293000007504