

GENRE PECULIARITIES OF AMERICAN HARD-BOILED DETECTIVE STORY

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Detective fiction is a genre of fiction in which an investigator or a detective—either professional or amateur—investigates a crime, often a murder. This genre deals with crime, its detection, revelation of the criminals and their motives. The main hero is usually a detective accompanied by a friend or a companion. They usually act upon the rule of logic and ratio that attracts so many readers and makes detective fiction so popular. Detective fiction is based on readers' feeling they are as intelligent as the detective. Such a feeling makes them extraordinary and leads them out of their grey ordinary lives.

Even more popular is the American type of detective fiction – the hard-boiled detective fiction. Although this subgenre of the crime fiction shares to some degree its characters and settings with the classical detective story; and the hard-boiled formula resembles the main outlines of the classical detective story's, the American hard-boiled detective fiction has its own peculiarities. Hard-boiled detective fiction can be recognized by four main elements: the situation, the settings, the characters, and the action. It is a gritty detective story with a street smart professional investigator at its core. These realistic novels are generally set in a world permeated by violence and corruption. Hard-boiled fiction used graphic sex and violence, vivid but often sordid urban backgrounds, and fast-paced, slangy dialogue.

The hard-boiled detective brought a revolutionary change to the development of the whole detective genre. Representatives of the classical detective story paid little attention to the fact that the central event in the detective story – the murder or crime – is a dramatic event, or even a tragic one. Everything is imbued with drama – from the very murder to its solution. In the hard-boiled detective story the conflict of the detective with the environment is the main one. In the process of overcoming this conflict the detective comes to the solution of the mystery.

The popularity of the detective fiction as well as its hard-boiled subgenre is reflected not only in the increasing number of publications of the works themselves, but also in terms of growth of related publications: advertising in newspapers and magazines, critical articles, bibliographic compilations, etc.

The persisting popularity of the hard-boiled detective fiction contributes to the relevance of our investigation. Despite the existence of numerous studies of the hard-boiled genre, our study is still relevant, as the genre is permanently transforming, changing and improving. The **topicality** of the chosen theme of our research is determined by the need of generalization of genre characteristics of the hard-boiled detective. Nowadays there are a lot of works in this field, studying the detective genre in

general and the hard-boiled detective fiction and its features in particular. However the study of the hard-boiled genre remains relevant as it is not fully explored.

The aim of the study is analysis of some novels of chief representatives of the hard-boiled school, Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler and determination and systematic description of the genre features of American detective fiction. The main **tasks** are to define the peculiarities of the hard-boiled detective and to compare them with those of the classical school.

A hard-boiled detective novel is a gritty detective story with a street smart professional investigator at its core. According to John Scaggs, the main characteristics of this type of fiction are “Californian setting”, “American vernacular” and “the portrayal of crimes that were increasingly becoming part of the everyday world of early twentieth-century America” [3, 57]. Hard-boiled fiction used graphic sex and violence, vivid but often sordid urban backgrounds, and fast-paced, slangy dialogue. The predominant element of hardboiled fiction was derived from the incidents that are very common in society. From the classical detective stories hard-boiled writers borrowed, and modified, the so-called “puzzle element,” by which the reader was implicitly invited to compete with the fictional detective as he or she looked for a solution to the crime and an answer to the question, “whodunit?”.

The emphasis in the hard-boiled story is put primarily on the action. It is characterized by very fast pace of events and movie drive. It resembles movie scenes and their fast changing and reversing. It is full of short and fast dialogues and thrilling actions and is based on the physical violence and tough guys with tough and witty talk.

The hard-boiled detective is known for its use of street vernacular. Many stories are particularly notable for their use of the shocking and violent language that characterizes the wise-cracking, hardboiled detective. Hardboiled language describes things rather than ideas. Adjectives are kept to a minimum. It reports what happened and what was said, not how it felt. As a rule, the first person narration is used. The story is told from the point of view of the detective which emphasizes the present tense, moment by moment, telling of the action story. Further, this personal point of view shows the detective's honest, though irreverent, personality and allows the reader to feel that the detective is honest and open with the reader regarding the details of the case. Despite its use of stereotyped characters, the stories are meant to be realistic mirrors of society's dark underside.

Another defining characteristic of hardboiled detective fiction is the method of detection itself. In keeping with the origins in western and romance stories, the hardboiled detective is usually presented as being on a quest.

According to Poe, there are four main patterns of the detective formula: a) situation, b) a pattern of action, c) characters and relationships, d) setting. But each of them differs in the classical detective story and the hard-boiled detective story. So by comparison of patterns of these two types of detective story we will find some specific peculiarities of the American hard-boiled detective story.

The hard-boiled detective story begins with the introduction of the detective and the presentation of crime as well as the classical detective stories, but significant

difference in the treatment of crime leads to the rather different consequences. As a rule, the classical hero faces the fact, thus the crime has left behind its mysterious clues. As a result, the greater emphasis is put on the abnormality and isolation of the crime. In the hard-boiled detective story the main hero is generally involved in the crime from the very beginning. Most hard-boiled detectives get the task, which is typically a deceitful one and seems to have nothing to do with violence. In the course of doing the task, the hero faces the first murders that lead to the revelation of the true nature of his mission. Thus, the hard-boiled detective's investigation becomes not simply a matter of finding the criminal but of defining his own moral position. In "The Maltese Falcon", for instance, *"the shape of Sam's mission keeps changing from the search for the client's sister, to the investigation of his partner's death, to the hunt for the falcon until finally it turns out that his real problem is not to find the killer but what to do about a woman he has fallen in love with and who has turned out to be a murderess."* [5, p.146]

The hard-boiled detective stories deal with reality, rather than the artificiality of the drawing room mysteries, giving us realistic crimes performed by truly fearsome and obviously despicable villains. The hard-boiled story is one where the murder no longer takes place off stage and instead took place all around our hero on an ongoing basis. Unlike the classical detective stories, its hard-boiled counterpart goes deep down into the black heart of crime. The hard-boiled detective fiction deals with the corruption, that crime can bring into society, the pain and decay it causes, the effect on the criminal and the victim, and the reason for this all.

The pattern of action of the hard-boiled formula is similar to the classical one.

Both the hard-boiled and the classical detectives begin with the introduction of the private investigator. There is a significant difference in the place where the investigator is set. While Holmes and Watsons are put in the charming apartment, the hard-boiled detectives are usually set out in the office on the margin of the city's business district. Some hard-boiled detectives begin in this office, but most of them begin with the detective on his way to the client, like Continental Op in Dashiell Hammett's "Red Harvest" goes to the home of the man who hired him, or even to the scene of crime. Sometimes, like Philip Marlowe in Raymond Chandler's "Farewell, My Lovely", the detective is plugged into violence:

The doors swung back outwards and almost settled to a stop. Before they had entirely stopped moving they opened again, violently, outwards. Something sailed across the sidewalk and landed in the gutter between two parked cars.... A hand I could have sat in came out of the dimness and took hold of my shoulder and squashed it to a pulp. Then the hand moved me through the doors and casually lifted me up a step.... The big man stared at me solemnly and went on wrecking ...[4, p.1].

The sharpest distinction between the traditional detective story and the hard-boiled type lay in the character of the detective. Firstly, the traditional amateur sleuth came from the professional classes and operated in the society of the country-house, the vicarage and the suburban house. Secondly, the new detective was more often than not a "private eye", a hired operative working on his own, separate from the police and occasionally in conflict with them. *"The hard-boiled detective is a traditional man of virtue in an amoral*

and corrupt world. His toughness protects the essence of his character, which is honorable and noble. In a world where the law is inefficient and susceptible to corruption, where the recognized social elite is too decadent and selfish to accomplish justice and protect the innocent, the private detective is forced to take over the basic moral function of exposure, protection, judgement and execution” [1, p.152].

The hard-boiled school also handled the element of danger differently. In the older detective story the sense of danger was not really strong, nor was the reader convincingly caught up with it. “Certainly the impact of World War I was great. One of the reasons for the revolt against the old-style puzzle story was that the society of the 20s and 30s was no longer the orderly, confident and secure society of the prewar years [2, p.15]. It was the world of paid-off cops, corrupt politicians, rich crooks, expensive call girls and contract murderers.

On a more philosophical or theoretical level, the hard-boiled formula constitutes an escape from the full implications of the modern naturalistic moral universe. Like the heroes of Ernest Hemingway, who must be considered a major literary influence on the genre, the hard-boiled detective finds himself up against a corrupt and violent society that threatens to destroy him.

As a result of our study we can make the conclusion that the hard-boiled fiction is a tough unsentimental style of American crime writing that brought a new tone of naturalism to the field of detective fiction. It is a literary genre that resembles the main pattern of the classical detective formula but has its own peculiarities.

Literature

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Резюме

Стаття розглядає основні жанрові особливості сучасного жорстокого американського детективу на прикладах з романів Р. Чандлера та Д. Хемета, а також відмінності даного напрямку від класичного детективного жанру.