

# The Development of Raymond Chandler's Fiction

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Práce se zaměřuje na posun ve tvorbě Raymonda Chandlera. Konkrétně srovnává autorovy povídky s jeho prvními dvěma romány *Hluboký spánek* (1939) a *Sbohem bud', láska má* (1942). Zabývá se také zasazením americké drsné školy do literárního kontextu a pojednává o roli Chandlerovy hlavní postavy v posunu k románové podobě. Práce dochází k závěru, že vývoj autorova stylu je úzce spojen s vyšší propracovaností, stylovou extravagancí a aluzivitou v románové podobě. Významnou roli také zastává Philip Marlowe, který jakožto vybroušený vypravěč umožnil Chandlerovi naplno rozvinout jeho styl a který funguje také jako jednotící prvek v autorových románech.

Klíčová slova:

Americká literatura, Raymond Chandler, americká drsná škola, modus, detektivní literatura, styl, stylová extravagance, poetická licence, aluzivita, přirovnání

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis focuses on a shift in Raymond Chandler's works. Concretely, it compares the author's short stories with his first two novels *The Big Sleep* (1939) and *Farewell, My Lovely* (1942). It also deals with a classification of the hard-boiled fiction in the context of literature and discusses a role of Chandler's main protagonist in the shift to novel form. The thesis concludes that the development of author's style is narrowly linked with an increased elaboration, stylish extravagance and allusiveness in the novel form. The important role also plays Philip Marlowe who as a refined narrator enabled Chandler to fully develop his style and who also works as a unifying element for the author's novels.

Keywords:

American literature, Raymond Chandler, hard-boiled, mode, crime fiction, style, stylish extravagance, poetic license, allusiveness, simile

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## INTRODUCTION

A good story cannot be devised; it has to be distilled.<sup>1</sup>

Raymond Chandler wrote this sentence in one of his letters. It is simple but it is the essence of his writing, because he also distilled his works in order to create a good story.

Raymond Thornton Chandler was born on July 23, 1888, in Chicago. He is acknowledged as one of the godfathers of the hard-boiled style. Chandler started with writing short stories for the pulp magazine *Black Mask*, in the times of the Great Depression. He achieved a greater popularity after publishing his first novel *The Big Sleep* (1939), this masterpiece was followed three years later by *Farewell, My Lovely* (1942). *The Big Sleep* and *Farewell, My Lovely* are analyzed in this thesis, because they best illustrate the development of the author's writing and the literary quality of these novels is by the prevalent consent of critics also higher.

Chandler was a very perfectionist writer and it took him a long time to finish some work so unfortunately he completed only five more novels: *The High Window* (1942), *The Lady in the Lake* (1943), *The Little Sister* (1949), *The Long Goodbye* (1953) and *Playback* (1958). Raymond Chandler died on March 23, 1959.

The literary quality of Chandler's works differs in a short story form and in a novel form. I argue that the shift in his writing is caused by the improvement of his style. Therefore the purpose of this thesis is to analyze the shift from a short story to a novel and to identify the main differences between these two forms. This thesis also deals with approaches to classification of the hard-boiled fiction and with a role of Chandler's main character in the shift to the novel form.

It should be mentioned, that claims and conclusions, concerning Chandler's style, made in this thesis, should serve only as an auxiliary material for the further study of Raymond Chandler's works. These conclusions are not based on a comparative analysis including styles of synchronic authors and as such are not self-evident.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Chandler, "Selected letters" in *Later Novels and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 1030.

<sup>2</sup> See Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 35.

## 1 HARD–BOILED

The hard-boiled writing is often viewed as a subgenre of crime fiction. It is essential to shortly explain the terminology.

A fiction is, as M.H. Abrams argues, a narrative which is invented by an author and does not depict real events.<sup>3</sup> Crime fiction, also called detective fiction, refers then to the genre of fictional writing which is based in one way or another on crime. It could be focused on investigation, impacts of crime, main hero or other features.

The distinction between genre, subgenre and mode is crucial for a classification of the hard-boiled fiction. As defining a genre is quite a complicated task I will use delimitations of John Frow, Professor of English at University of Melbourne, who focuses on this field.

A genre can be described as a “specific organisation of texts with thematic, rhetorical, and formal dimension.”<sup>4</sup> In other words to classify some written text as belonging to the genre you should consider its thematic and formal properties.

It is certain that the hard-boiled fiction belongs to the genre of crime fiction. But does it form a separate subgenre or mode? A thematic content plays according to Frow a crucial role in the further differentiation of the existing genre in order to define the subgenre.

A mode is on the other hand determined by a theme and what is important it expresses itself mainly by “tonal qualification or colouring of genre.”<sup>5</sup> It is a question to which of these three categories the hard-boiled fiction belongs. This task still lacks a stipulated agreement.

However, Andrew Pepper, the lecturer of English and American literature at Queen’s University Belfast in his study “The ‘Hard-boiled’ Genre,” published in the *Companion to Crime Fiction* (2010), argues that “hard-boiled crime writing does not constitute a distinctive genre or subgenre, at least insofar as it has its own readily identifiable set of codes and conventions that all hard-boiled crime novels readily adhere or depart from.”<sup>6</sup>

Pepper’s idea denies a status of genre or subgenre in the case of the hard-boiled fiction. It should be logically classified then as a mode. John Scaggs, the lecturer of

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<sup>3</sup> See M.H. Abrams, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, (Fort Worth: Wadsworth Publishing, 1999), 94.

<sup>4</sup> See John Frow, *Genre*, (London: Routledge, 2005), 67.

<sup>5</sup> See Frow, *Genre*, 67.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Pepper, “The ‘Hard-boiled’ Genre” in *Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 142.

English at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, also uses a term “hard-boiled mode,”<sup>7</sup> in his *Crime Fiction* (2005).

Characterizations of a mode mentioned by Frow should also acknowledge the hard-boiled fiction as the mode of crime fiction. According to Frow, modes are emerging from existing genres, they are not separate units and their real nature is rather extension and modification of original genre.<sup>8</sup> If the mode somehow modifies a genre, gives it a new perspective or colouring, it is the same relation between the genre of crime fiction and the hard-boiled mode. This idea can be further supported with the Frow’s additional description of the mode which says that the mode specifies thematic features and “modalities of speech” however the formal structure remains the same.<sup>9</sup>

The hard-boiled attitude towards crime writing profoundly changed and coloured this genre, so authors who started to write in this style were in many aspects at least founders of the path-breaking mode.

The term “style” should be explained in order to stay precise in the terminology. J.A. Cuddon notes that a style is “the characteristic manner of expression in prose or verse; how a particular writer say things.”<sup>10</sup> To speak of the style of a particular author it is necessary to consult many features and it is difficult to define the style. “Style defies complete analysis or definition”<sup>11</sup> as Cuddon notes. Therefore this term is used in the meaning of a manner how an author expresses things.

Raymond Chandler is along with Dashiell Hammett usually considered as one of the founders of the hard-boiled mode. This mode mainly emanates from American literature but also has a quite strong relation to European literature, thanks to motifs which appear in it and obvious parallels between several well-known literary types and main heroes of the hard-boiled world.

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<sup>7</sup> John Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, (London: Routledge, 2005), 55.

<sup>8</sup> See Frow, *Genre*, 65.

<sup>9</sup> See Frow, *Genre*, 65.

<sup>10</sup> J. A. Cuddon and C. E. Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2000), 872.

<sup>11</sup> Cuddon and Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 872.

## 1.1 Hard-boiled Europe?

Scaggs's study *The Crime Fiction* (2010) outlines the development of crime fiction from early literature to present and as such will serve me to show parallels which are somehow related to the hard-boiled mode.

At this point I find interesting Scaggs's commentary on Martin Priestman's perception of *Oedipus the King*: "The plague with which gods punish Thebes for Laius's uninvestigated killing can be seen as a powerful image for that pollution of an entire society."<sup>12</sup>

Scaggs comments on Priestman's idea that the only way how to end the decay is the "banishment of the criminal," who is a kind of outsider or outlaw, and that Oedipus himself is the criminal and by the same time he represents the "force of authority," this phenomenon is parallel to the hard-boiled fiction.<sup>13</sup> It is a question whether Oedipus is comparable with, e.g., Philip Marlowe because of completely different time, setting, principles, etc., but it is certain that they have at least this in common – they are both segregated from society and their function is to somehow keep the order in society. According to Scaggs the same situation concerning the "doubling of functions" is presented in *Hamlet*.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, these examples of parallels are rather based on the similarity than on the descent of the hard-boiled mode.

The real model of the pre-hard-boiled hero is suggested by Scaggs who notes that it is the type of "the frontier hero" who serves as "the archetype of the private eye."<sup>15</sup> The same idea is presented by Richard Gray, the professor of American literature at the University of Essex. Gray mentions "the Western Hero" and his shift from the setting of the western to the setting of a big city.<sup>16</sup> This phenomenon is further discussed and demonstrated on two important characters in the "Hard-boiled America" section.

Scaggs finds another affinity of European literature with hard-boiled writing in the case of the Gothic fiction. He mentions an idea of Paul Skenazy the professor of English at the University of California. Skenazy says that, similarly to the work of Raymond

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<sup>12</sup> Martin Priestman, *Detective Fiction and Literature: The Figure on the Carpet* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990): 23, quoted in Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 10.

<sup>13</sup> See Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 10.

<sup>14</sup> See Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> See Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 64.

<sup>16</sup> See Gray, *A History of American Literature*, 540.

Chandler, it is present a mystery from the past in Gothic fiction and this mystery affects in the negative way events in the present.<sup>17</sup> This motif runs almost through the whole Chandler's work.

However Scaggs and other scholars suggest a closer relationship with the hard-boiled mode in observation of the progress which the Gothic fiction experienced. Scaggs concretely mentions the perception of this development observed by Fred Botting the professor at Lancaster University. Botting describes this shift subsequently: "from wild and mountainous locations dominated by the bleak castle, with its secrets and hidden passages, to the modern city."<sup>18</sup> Scaggs concludes that it is an analogous feature in the development of the hard-boiled mode, because a similar change in this case ended with a similar inhospitable environment of a big, dark and dangerous city.<sup>19</sup>

## 1.2 Hard-boiled America

Though there are evident ties with European literature it was rather the literature of American West which made a significant imprint on the development of this mode.

Gray mentions the period from the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century in the connection with an expansion of fiction. According to him this unprecedented demand for "escapist entertainment" was filled with the publishing of cheap novels periodically printed on a rough paper.<sup>20</sup>

According to Gray the most successful medium was *Beadle's Dime Novel Series*. These "dime novels" were based on action and fantastic adventure and shaped the driving force for the increasingly popular Western genre. Gray mentions three novels, influenced by Western dime novel tradition, which are significant for "[the]underwrit[ing] the romance of the West" namely *The Virginian* (1902) by Owen Wister, *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912) by Zane Grey and *Shane* (1949) by Jack Schaefer.<sup>21</sup>

It is useful to discuss *Shane* because of his strong similarity with Raymond Chandler's main hero Philip Marlowe. *Shane* is a real frontier hero rather than a cowboy as, e.g.,

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<sup>17</sup> See Paul Skenazy, "Behind the Territory Ahead" in *Los Angeles in Fiction: A Collection of Essays*, ed. David Fine (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995): 114, quoted in Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Fred Botting, *The Gothic (Essays and Studies)* (Cambridge: D.S.Brewer, 2001): 2, quoted in Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 17.

<sup>19</sup> See Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 17.

<sup>20</sup> See Gray, *A History of American Literature*, 537.

<sup>21</sup> See Gray, *A History of American Literature*, 537-538.

Buffalo Bill. The characteristics of Shane suits Scaggs's observation concerning archetypal relation between the hard-boiled private eye and the frontier hero or using Gray's term the Western hero. Scaggs further supports his claim by the demonstration of shared characteristics between these two types observed by Ralph Willet: "professional skills, physical courage affirmed as masculine potency, fortitude, moral strength, a fierce desire for justice, social marginality and degree of anti-intellectualism."<sup>22</sup> These features truly characterize Shane and Philip Marlowe. Both characters are also perceived in a similar way. Gray describes Shane: "Shane seems not so much a knight as a natural saint."<sup>23</sup> Chandler notes about his hero: "He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world."<sup>24</sup> Shane and Marlowe are due to these characteristics predestinated to struggle against their concept of evil. This evil is not purely represented by crime however it is any violation of their principles.

The usage of a vernacular in Chandler's works is another issue to discuss. It is a quite crucial feature with regard to the fact that the vernacular writing is embedded well in American literature. Gray argues that Chandler followed in "emphasis on dialogue, the vernacular and basic colloquial" Hammett. Nevertheless he also notes that Hammett is not the inventor of this style which is traceable deep in American literature and represented by Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Ring Lardner, Sherwood Anderson and Ernest Hemingway.<sup>25</sup> So Chandler further worked up this heritage and focused on language of the margin of society to put it in the context of crime.

LeRoy Lad Panek, the professor at McDaniel College in Westminster notes that Chandler collected and recorded a wide range of slang from a criminal slang to slangs of certain professions.<sup>26</sup> By doing this Chandler enriched the genre of crime fiction with word stock never used in it before. He consciously followed Hammett in this and they both as founders of the hard-boiled mode contributed to its emergence from the genre of crime fiction by providing the world of crime in new vivid colors.

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<sup>22</sup> Ralph Willett, *Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction* (Staffordshire: British Association for American Studies, 1992): 6, quoted in Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 64.

<sup>23</sup> Gray, *A History of American Literature*, 539.

<sup>24</sup> Raymond Chandler, "A Simple Art of Murder" in *Later Novels and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 992.

<sup>25</sup> See Gray, *A History of American Literature*, 541.

<sup>26</sup> See Leroy Lad Panek, "Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)" in *Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 410.

However the hard-boiled mode is not based only on the lexical enrichment of crime fiction genre it is the completely different attitude towards crime writing.

Both Hammett and Chandler started with writing for the pulp magazine *Black Mask* which as Gray notes served “as the medium for a new kind of detective tale, involving hardbitten detectives and tough-minded stories.”<sup>27</sup>

Chandler himself later commented on this productive period: “I decided that this might be a good way to learn to write fiction and get paid a small amount of money at the same time.”<sup>28</sup> During this training and before Chandler started with novels Hammett finished his *Red Harvest* (1929) which gave a name to the hard-boiled mode in the characteristics of his Continental Op as “hard-boiled, pig-headed guy.”<sup>29</sup> Chandler then as Scaggs notes “was writing in the shadow of Hammett,”<sup>30</sup> but as it is above suggested Chandler even improved Hammett’s style and undoubtedly acknowledged Hammett’s contribution “Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse.”<sup>31</sup> However Chandler also moved forward and created something describable as “street-wise poetry.”<sup>32</sup>

Though Chandler’s pulp stories from the beginning of his literary career show signs of his future style, he had to make changes to evolve it fully. The analysis of this shift from a short story aimed for pulp magazine to a novel is a matter of the next chapter.

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<sup>27</sup> Gray, *A History of American Literature*, 540.

<sup>28</sup> Raymond Chandler, “Selected Letters” in *Later Novels and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 1040.

<sup>29</sup> Dashiell Hammett, *Red Harvest* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 85.

<sup>30</sup> Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> Raymond Chandler, “Selected Letters” in *Later Novels and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 989.

<sup>32</sup> Dennis Porter, “The Private Eye,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 104.

## 2 FROM PULP TO NOVEL

To describe the development of Chandler's fiction is crucial to compare his early works with later. This can be done easily due to the technique used by Chandler in writing his novels. For the majority of them he reused plots and motifs which he had devised before for the *Black Mask*. A crime fiction writer Peter Robinson notes that Chandler never intended to publish again later re-used stories, which were originally published in *Black Mask*, in the one issue so they appeared as late as five years after his death in 1954.<sup>33</sup> This wish not to publish them again is a probable reason why they are not included in Library of America volumes of Raymond Chandler's work, which I use.

As this chapter's goal is to analyze a shift from short story to novel, it is necessary to mention properties of each literary form. A short story is as Abrams notes "a brief work of prose" which because of its length is in some aspects limited in contrast to novel.<sup>34</sup> Therefore an author of a short story has to say a lot on a small space and can't afford long elaborations in contrast to novelist. According to Abrams a novel is "[an] extended work of fiction written in prose."<sup>35</sup> These definitions maybe simplify the difference between a short story and a novel. But they actually correspond with Chandler's early short stories which are quite concise and lack an elaboration of his novels. I want to discuss Chandler's first two novels to demonstrate this idea on concrete works of the author.

Chandler's first two novels *The Big Sleep* and *Farewell, My Lovely* were crucial in the shift from a pulp story to a novel. Both of them were compiled from fragments of earlier works and both show the progress in the author's writing. Dennis Porter, the professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts notes that these two novels are largely acknowledged as the best of Chandler's whole work.<sup>36</sup>

### 2.1 The Big Sleep

*The Big Sleep* is composed from stories "Killer in the Rain" (1935) and "The Curtain" (1936) both published in *Black Mask*. Panek enumerates in detail which parts of each story were transformed into *The Big Sleep* and he concludes via comparisons of extracts taken

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<sup>33</sup> See Peter Robinson, introduction to the *Killer in the Rain*, by Raymond Chandler (London: Penguin Books, 1992), ix.

<sup>34</sup> See Abrams, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 94.

<sup>35</sup> See Abrams, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 190.

<sup>36</sup> See Dennis Porter, "The Private Eye," in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 107.

from the short story and the novel, that Chandler pays in *The Big Sleep* more attention to “the amount of sensory details” and to the involvement of figurative language.<sup>37</sup> It will be useful to partially follow Panek’s method to observe changes in Chandler’s writing.

However I also want to point out and comment on constructions which I find extraordinary in the sense of poetical aspect or the term “street-wise poetry” used by Porter.

### 2.1.1 Precursors

Both “Killer in the Rain” and “The Curtain” are in many aspects real precursors of the author’s first novel *The Big Sleep*. Some passages are unmodified copied to *The Big Sleep*. This fact is demonstrated in the following extract from “Killer in the Rain.”

The rain splashed knee-high off the sidewalks, filled the gutters, and big cops in slickers that shone like gun barrels had lot of fun carrying little girls in silk stockings and cute little rubber boots across the bad places, with a lot of squeezing.

The rain drummed on the hood of the Chrysler, beat and tore at the taut material of the top, leaked in at the buttoned places, and made a pool on the floorboards for me to keep my feet in.

I had a big flask of Scotch with me. I used it often to keep me interested.<sup>38</sup>

The comparison of the equivalent passage from *The Big Sleep* shows that both texts are almost identical.

Rain filled the gutters and splashed knee-high off the sidewalks. Big cops in slickers that shone like gun barrels had a lot of fun carrying giggling girls across the bad places. The rain drummed hard on the roof of the car and the burbank top began to leak. A pool of water formed on the floorboards for me to keep my feet in. It was too early in the fall for that kind of rain. I struggled into a trench coat and made a dash for the nearest drugstore and bought myself a pint of whiskey. Back in the car I used enough of it to keep warm and interested. I was long overparked, but the cops were too busy carrying girls and blowing whistles to bother about that.<sup>39</sup>

It is possible to conclude that these texts are not only very similar but also have the same literary qualities if we focus on the usage of the figurative language. This is in conflict with Panek’s unfounded claim concerning the figurative language and the amount of sensory details in the author’s early and later works. “Killer in the Rain” is precisely

<sup>37</sup> See Leroy Lad Panek, “Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)” in *Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 410.

<sup>38</sup> Raymond Chandler, “Killer in the Rain” in *Killer in the Rain* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 8-9.

<sup>39</sup> Raymond Chandler, “*The Big Sleep*” in *Stories and Early Novels* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 610.

elaborate in some passages, so these two extracts do not fully confirm Panek's idea that these properties of the elaboration are typical only in the author's novels.

However it is visible that the author is getting to be more elaborative in *The Big Sleep*. This feature is definitely also determined by a genre of each extract – the first is taken from the short story and the second from the novel. What is more interesting is the figurative language in both extracts. The simile “slickers that shone like gun barrels” is a flash of the author's future mastership in the usage of this figure. According to Cuddon, a simile is “an explicit comparison” done via words “like” and “as” which should “clarify and enhance an image.”<sup>40</sup>

These signs of the author's future style are quite common in Chandler's later pulp stories and because they are usually almost perfect it is logical that the author used them later in the original form.

The following extract, taken from a short story “The Curtain,” illustrates the similarity and at the same time the differentness between the author's early work and the novel. Chandler took fewer features from “The Curtain” than from the second short story “Killer in the Rain.”

What Chandler adopted primarily from “The Curtain” is, as Panek notes, the central storyline.<sup>41</sup> It is interesting that despite the fact “The Curtain” was written later than “Killer in the Rain,” it is according to my observation written in a more concise style than the latter. It shows that Chandler's shift to the novel form was not realized subsequently from one short story to another and then to the novel. However in a one big step in which he took the best from his selected short stories, reworked it, and composed the novel. As I noted “The Curtain” is written in brief style in contrast to “Killer in the Rain.” Therefore I can't provide a corresponding demonstration from “The Curtain” and from *The Big Sleep* as in previous extracts. One scene which appears in both works particularly shows the briefness of the short story and the later elaboration in the novel.

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<sup>40</sup> See Cuddon and Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 830.

<sup>41</sup> See Panek, “Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)” in *Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 409.

Mrs O'Mara was stretched out on a white chaiselongue with both her slippers off and her feet in the net stockings they don't wear any more. She was tall and dark, with a sulky mouth. Handsome, but this side of beautiful.<sup>42</sup>

The author used a different name and an appearance of described character in *The Big Sleep* but the setting and context are the same.

I sat down on the edge of a deep soft chair and looked at Mrs. Reagan. She was worth a stare. She was trouble. She was stretched out on a modernistic chaise-longue with her slippers off, so I stared at her legs in the sheerest silk stockings. They seemed to be arranged to stare at. They were visible to the knee and one of them well beyond. The knees were dimpled not bony and sharp. The calves were beautiful, the ankles long and slim and with enough melodic line for a tone poem.<sup>43</sup>

The conclusion resulting from these two extracts is quite clear and corresponds to Panek's observation of the development of Chandler's writing. Panek argues that Chandler became more elaborative in the novel form and proved this fact on the increased number of words used for the description of the same scene in the novel compared to the lower number of words in the short story.<sup>44</sup>

### 2.1.2 Novel

I discussed precursors of *The Big Sleep* and suggested that particularly "Killer in the Rain" is not in its style as brief as "The Curtain" in contrast to *The Big Sleep*. However I suppose that the shift from pulp to novel was not determined only by the usage of the figurative language and by the length of the text. I also want to take into the consideration a nonstandard effect created with the figurative language, which in my opinion sometimes borders on poetry in some aspects, e.g., rhythm expressed by a frequent usage of an anaphora or it can be marked at least as a "poetic license."<sup>45</sup>

According to Abrams the term "poetic license" refers "not only to language, but to all the ways in which poets and other literary authors are held to be free to violate, for special effects the ordinary norms."<sup>46</sup> Such effect is even stronger if it is realized in the genre of crime fiction which is often viewed as inferior.

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<sup>42</sup> Raymond Chandler, "The Curtain" in *Killer in the Rain* (London: Penguin Books, 1992.), 142.

<sup>43</sup> Raymond Chandler, "The Big Sleep" in *Stories and Early Novels* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 599.

<sup>44</sup> See Panek, "Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)," 410.

<sup>45</sup> Abrams, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 230.

<sup>46</sup> Abrams, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 230.

Another important element thanks to which the author opened a profound space for the further development of his style is a main character – Philip Marlowe who is also a narrator of the action. He moreover became the embodiment of the hard-boiled private eye and by all means also the brand of Chandler's novels. Marlowe as the main character is a matter of separate chapter "The Main Hero" because he represents one of the key moments which moved the author's writing further.

One thing that was not mentioned yet and which is closely connected with the main character is a specific sense for humor which characterizes Phil Marlowe and which makes novels more amusing for a reader in comparison with short stories.

*The Big Sleep* begins with Marlowe's visit to the house of his future client general Sternwood and even the first pages show elaboration which is not present in the author's early works. When Marlowe meets in the hall Carmen Sternwood – general's younger naughty daughter he remarks upon her:

Her eyes were slate, and had almost no expression when they looked at me. She came over near me and smiled with her mouth and she had little predatory teeth, as white as fresh orange pith and as shiny as porcelain. They glistened between her thin too taut lips. Her face lacked color and didn't look too healthy.

"Tall, aren't you?" she said.

"I didn't mean to be."

Her eyes rounded. She was puzzled. She was thinking. I could see, even on that short acquaintance, that thinking was always going to be a bother to her.<sup>47</sup>

This extract shows the author's striking and apt style. Chandler lets his character to express his world in an unexpected way that is very attractive for a reader. The sentence: "her eyes were slate," provides immediately not only the color of her eyes but also her characteristics due to the connotation of a "slate". This impression is supported by the description of her smile: "she smiled with her mouth," it perfectly corresponds with her slate eyes, because she smiled only with her mouth in fact. On the other hand the last sentence is a perfect description of her intellect.

The usage of the anaphora is another interesting feature in this extract and actually also in the extract on the page 19. The anaphora is quite frequent in *The Big Sleep*, especially in descriptions of characters. It works in the author's writing, apart from

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<sup>47</sup> Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 590.

cohesive function, as an intensifier of an impression and due to its rhythm can also refer to the poetic aspect of text.

Described qualities of the mentioned extract generally do not appear in such amount in Chandler's short stories. However it is not possible to classify Chandler's short stories as less perfect than novels. The biggest difference is that they are not so readable.

Chandler's novels are refined due to his original expressing which violates ordinary norms in the meaning of the term "poetic license." However the marking of Chandler's expressing as a "poetic license" is problematic because then is necessary to determine what ordinary norms are. So the claim: Chandler violates ordinary norms in expressing, should be then proved in the terms of the hard-boiled mode respectively in the terms of the genre of crime fiction.

A correct approach to this task is described by Geoffrey Leech, the professor of Linguistics and English language at Lancaster University in his *Style in Fiction* (1981). Leech suggests that an acceptable method how to prove any claim concerning the style of a particular author is a quantitative analysis which compares a number of selected linguistic features of one author with other comparable authors.<sup>48</sup>

This type of analysis is not feasible for me due to the fact that I do not dispose with a sufficient amount of authors whose works I read. An ideal analysis of Raymond Chandler's style should include works of other authors writing in the hard-boiled mode, in terms of crime fiction other crime writers and so on. Conclusion is that any claims concerning Chandler's writing that would be possibly made are not undeniable, if they are not supported by frequency data.<sup>49</sup>

My approach thus remains qualitative rather than quantitative so I will continue with mentioning extracts from Chandler's works in order to show his style and comment on features which I find extraordinary in its development. Unfortunately these comments will not be supported by evidence obtained in some sophisticated analysis comparing, say for example, the style of Carroll John Daly, Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. But at least it will serve as a small guide in the development of Chandler's writing.

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<sup>48</sup> See Leech and Short, *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 35.

<sup>49</sup> See Leech and Short, *Style in Fiction*, 35.

This digression concerning correct approaches in the style analysis arose thanks to the claim that Chandler violates ordinary norms in expressing. The claim by itself is not self-evident, yet it will be helpful to mention some examples, which could be possibly marked as a poetic license.

The following extract is taken from the beginning of *The Big Sleep* and the narrator describes the glasshouse of general Sternwood in it.

The glass walls and roof were heavily misted and big drops of moisture splashed down on the plants. The light had an unreal greenish color, like light filtered through an aquarium tank. The plants filled the place, a forest of them, with nasty meaty leaves and stalks like the newly washed fingers of dead men. They smelled as overpowering as boiling alcohol under a blanket.<sup>50</sup>

The extract shows Chandler's perfectionism in the usage of simile. The striking sentence is the one with the simile "stalks like the newly washed fingers of dead men," which is very expressive and could be perceived as the violation of ordinary norm for the special effect. The scene continues with dialogue of Marlowe with general Sternwood:

"A nice state of affairs when a man has to indulge his vices by proxy," he said dryly. "You are looking at a very dull survival of a rather gaudy life, a cripple paralyzed in both legs and with only half of his lower belly. There's very little that I can eat and my sleep is so close to waking that it is hardly worth the name. I seem to exist largely on heat, like a newborn spider, and the orchids are an excuse for the heat. Do you like orchids?"

"Not particularly," I said.

The General half-closed his eyes. "They are nasty things. Their flesh is too much like the flesh of men. And their perfume has the rotten sweetness of a prostitute."<sup>51</sup>

This dialogue demonstrates again the figurativeness of the Chandler's novel writing especially in last two sentences describing the features of plants in that glasshouse "their flesh is too much like the flesh of men." It is a simile which is close, due to its morbidity, to this one already mentioned: "stalks like a newly washed fingers of dead men." The atmosphere is completed with last sentence which describes the smell of orchids and compares it to "the rotten sweetness of prostitute."

There are several features which should be noticed in this extract. Firstly Chandler quite often uses expressions connected with death in his works. Even the title of *The Big*

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<sup>50</sup> Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 592.

<sup>51</sup> Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 593.

*Sleep* is a metaphor for death.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand this phenomenon is not exclusive feature of novels.

It was a quiet street, deadly quiet.<sup>53</sup>

There was a dead silence.<sup>54</sup>

These examples are taken from the short story “The Curtain.” The manner of expressing things by usage expressions connected with death is actually not typical for Chandler’s writing only. It is rather a matter of the genre of crime writing and therefore also of the hard-boiled mode.

The reason, why it is worth to mention this “death language,” is that it can serve for the more general demonstration of the development of the Chandler’s style. Examples taken from short stories are not so unusual if they are viewed with regard to the poetic license. This is not the case in the novel in which similar things are expressed not only in more elaborated form but in which the expressiveness of such constructions usually violates the ordinary norms.

This phenomenon is so typical for Chandler’s novels that Denis Porter marks it as “a quality of stylish extravagance” which is realized by evocations of described places, characters, dialogues and so on and which is present in Chandler’s best works.<sup>55</sup> The “stylish extravagance” is not the commonly used literary term. So I use it with the reference to Porter because I argue that it is an apt marking of the Chandler’s style, which is extravagant in his novels.

Secondly the whole glasshouse described in extracts can be viewed as an allegory of a high class society – isolated from outer world, rotten, with man who is a part of it and who is disgusted with it. The rottenness of the high class society is quite a frequent motif in Chandler’s works.

The last thing I want to point out in these passages is that they are nice examples of the author’s elaboration in description of sensory details. It corresponds to Panek who mentions Chandler’s perfectionism in this aspect.

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<sup>52</sup> See Porter, “The Private Eye,” 104.

<sup>53</sup> Chandler, “The Curtain,” 148.

<sup>54</sup> Chandler, “The Curtain,” 159.

<sup>55</sup> See Porter, “The Private Eye,” 105.

*The Big Sleep* is in fact a composition of Chandler's best ideas, taken from his short stories, complemented with his fully developed extravagant style which is closely connected to the expressiveness of his writing. This expressiveness carried out by the usage of the poetic license is further demonstrated in the following extract.

I thought I could see two parallel grooves pointing that way, as though heels had dragged. Whoever had done it had meant business. Dead men are heavier than broken hearts.<sup>56</sup>

Unusual and striking expressing shapes the brand of Chandler's style in later short stories and early novels. Concerning the mentioned extract, the sentence "dead men are heavier than broken hearts" is perfect in its simplicity and by the same token in its comprehensiveness. An evocation created by this comparison is very strong.

A reader who evokes a body of murdered man can imagine that it is not only physically heavy but an immense heaviness is also present due to the violent atmosphere of the scene. This double burden is further supported when it is marked as heavier than broken heart.

The comparison of dead men and broken heart could be perceived as quite extravagant and as such violates again "the ordinary norm" and it could be classified as a poetic license.

The extravagance of the Chandler's style is visible mainly in his similes. Panek appreciates Chandler's contribution in this by claiming that thanks to Chandler, similes became "a standard feature of hard-boiled style."<sup>57</sup> Similes provide a rhythm and give a dynamics to the text as well as they increase cohesiveness.

Her face under my mouth was like ice. She put her hands up and took hold of my head and kissed me hard on the lips. Her lips were like ice, too.

I went out through the door and it closed behind me, without sound, and the rain blew in under the porch, not as cold as her lips.<sup>58</sup>

Both paragraphs in this extract are actually interconnected with three similes which are related to the described character. The first two similes "her face under my mouth was like

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<sup>56</sup> Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 618.

<sup>57</sup> See Panek, "Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)", 410.

<sup>58</sup> Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 739.

ice, her lips were like ice too” are related to the third one “rain..., not as cold as her lips.” It is visible that position of similes in sentences has a certain pattern.

To illustrate this phenomenon could be useful to take out these sentences from the extract and put them in this way:

Her face under my mouth was like ice,	> the first sentence of 1st paragraph
her lips were like ice.	> the last sentence of 1st paragraph
The rain blew in under the porch,	
not as cold as her lips.	> the last sentence of 2nd paragraph

The similes positioned in this way seem to evoke a poetry. However I do not want to mark it as the poetry as it is not so simple to do so. Cuddon notes that marking some text as poem is usually done with reservations. According to him, the main criterion is “a metrical composition” of the analyzed text.<sup>59</sup> To recognize a meter, or rather a rhythm in prose, is crucial to analyze the stress on syllables and the “duration” of them.<sup>60</sup> That is not the aim of this analysis. However it is visible how the author places his similes – two of them are positioned in the last two sentences in each of paragraphs. So there is a certain pattern in the extract which can be possibly marked as written in free verse. Abrams notes that free verse has no “regular metrical form.”<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless the reason why it was mentioned is that I find interesting how Chandler works with these elements especially in novels and although it is not easy to describe it in the literary terminology it creates a forceful effect from the point of reader.

Another issue which should be definitely discussed and which makes Chandler’s novels more readable is author’s sense of humor. This humor is also represented mainly by similes which are somehow shocking or strikingly apt in Chandler’s novels. Following examples serve to illustrate this phenomenon.

There were a couple of colored feathers tucked into the band of his hat, but he didn’t really need them. Even on Central Avenue, not the quietest dressed street in the world, he looked about as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> See Cuddon and Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 682.

<sup>60</sup> See Cuddon and Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 753.

<sup>61</sup> Abrams, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 105.

<sup>62</sup> Raymond Chandler, “Farewell, My Lovely” in *Stories and Early Novels* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 767.

The simile “looked as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food” represents the typical mixture of Chandler’s sense of humor and shocking effect created by the certain extravagance of the language. The next extract shows a respect of the main hero (Phil Marlowe) to the force of law.

Sprangler turned his head and Breeze turned his head. They grinned at each other. Breeze poked the cigar at me.

“Watch him sweat,” he said.

Sprangler had to move his feet to turn far enough to watch me sweat. If I was sweating, I didn’t know it.

“You boys are as cute as a couple of lost golf balls,” I said. “How in the world do you do it?”

“Skip the wisecracks,” Breeze said. “Had a busy little morning?”

“Fair,” I said.<sup>63</sup>

Marlowe is questioned by two police officers who are compared by him to “a couple of lost golf balls” in this passage. This is again witty and also very apt if it is put into the context: the police officers are completely lost and need information from Marlowe.

The extract contains a one more remarkable feature. It is the hostility of police to the hard-boiled detective. This hostility is partially based on the archetype of the frontier hero, as Scaggs notes.<sup>64</sup>

Nevertheless from the point of the development of Chandler’s fiction it is also good to notice the term “wisecracks.” Wisecracks are witty similes, which are almost exclusively a feature of his novels.

However the Chandler’s humor is not restricted only to the form of similes, the following extract shows how he uses an epistrophe for such effect.

“Mr. Cobb was my escort,” she said. “Such a nice escort, Mr. Cobb. So attentive. You should see him sober. I should see him sober. Somebody should see him sober. I mean, just for the record. So it could become a part of history, that brief flashing moment, soon buried in time, but never forgotten—when Larry Cobb was sober.”<sup>65</sup>

### 2.1.3 Summary

Chandler’s writing developed from his short stories (“Killer in the Rain,” “The Curtain”) to *The Big Sleep* in several aspects.

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<sup>63</sup> Raymond Chandler, “*The High Window*” in *Stories and Early Novels* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 1113.

<sup>64</sup> See Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 60.

<sup>65</sup> Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 698.

- Firstly, he started to write in the more elaborative style – however this is partially matter of the genre (short story x novel form).
- Secondly, he pays more attention to the figurativeness of the text and to the amount of sensory details in novels. Concerning the figurativeness, roles of anaphora and simile are discussed.
- Thirdly, the way, how he expresses things – his style, changed profoundly in *The Big Sleep*. Chandler tends to violate ordinary norms for special effect and creates structures which can be described as written in poetic license in this novel.
- The last point is the humor in *The Big Sleep*. The humor becomes one of brand marks of Chandler's writing in the novels. It is fully developed by similes, which are denoted as wisecracks, if they are amusement.

The next chapter analyzes Chandler's second novel *Farewell, My Lovely*. The approach to it is similar as in the case of *The Big Sleep*.

## 2.2 Farewell, My Lovely

*Farewell, My Lovely* is Raymond Chandler's second novel published in 1941. It was two years after the publishing of *The Big Sleep*. *The Big Sleep* was immediately very successful and gained a broad recognition for its author. Chandler was acknowledged as one of the main artists of the hard-boiled style and he decided to continue with re-using parts of his short stories or as he said to "cannibalize"<sup>66</sup> more of his early works.

*The Big Sleep* was in many aspects a real masterpiece, so Chandler had to keep the quality of his novel debut also in his second novel. This was probably the reason why he applied the same technique in the writing *Farewell, My Lovely*.

In this chapter I want to compare and contrast Chandler's short stories with *Farewell, My Lovely*, analogically to the analysis of *The Big Sleep*. However I want to take into consideration also possible differences between these two novels.

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<sup>66</sup> Raymond Chandler, *Selected Letters of Raymond Chandler*, ed. Frank MacShane (New York: Delta, 1987), 332.

### 2.2.1 Precursors

There are three short stories which parts or motifs are contained in *Farewell, My Lovely*. The first one is “The Man Who Liked Dogs” (1936), the second “Try the Girl” (1936) and the last one is “Mandarin’s Jade” (1937). “The Man Who Liked Dogs” and “Try the Girl” were originally published in *Black Mask* magazine. Chandler later changed publisher and “Mandarin’s Jade” (1937) was published in *Dime Detective*, which was contemporary alternative medium for pulp crime fiction.

The quite general claim that Chandler became more elaborative in novels can be also adopted for *Farewell, My Lovely*. This elaboration should be again understood in terms of how much attention the author paid to details in the short story form and in the novel form. The following extract describes the opening scene of the short story “Try the Girl.”

I saw the big guy standing in front of Shamey's, an all-colored drink and dice second-floor, not too savory. He was looking up at the broken stencils in the electric sign, with a sort of rapt expression, like a hunky immigrant looking at the Statue of Liberty, like a man who had waited a long time and come a long way.

He wasn't just big. He was a giant. He looked seven feet high, and he wore the loudest clothes I ever saw on a really big man.<sup>67</sup>

The comparison with the corresponding passage from *Farewell, My Lovely* reveals that it is more elaborative.

It was a warm day, almost the end of the March, and I stood outside the barber shop looking up at the jutting neon sign of a second floor dine and dice emporium called Florian's. A man was looking up at the sign too. He was looking up at the dusty windows with sort of ecstatic fixity of expression, like a hunky immigrant catching his first sight of the Statue of Liberty. He was a big man but not more than six feet five inches tall and not wider than a beer truck. He was about ten feet away from me. His arms hung loose at his sides and a forgotten cigar smoked behind his enormous fingers.<sup>68</sup>

However there are certain features which are already perfect in the short story. The simile “like a hunky immigrant looking at the Statue of Liberty” is reused in the novel and it corresponds due to its style with Chandler’s later works. This phenomenon was mentioned in the case of the short story “Killer in the Rain.” The whole passages are copied practically unchanged to *The Big Sleep* from “Killer in the Rain.”

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<sup>67</sup> Raymond Chandler, “Try the Girl” in *Killer in the Rain* (London: Penguin Books, 1992.), 189.

<sup>68</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 767.

In other words Chandler's short stories are almost as stylistically refined as his novels in some passages. The fact is that only some passages in short stories can be marked as stylistically refined and therefore the quality of short stories is rather unbalanced in contrast to novels.

The typical feature of Chandler's second novel is again humor. A witty simile is present in both extracts. However opening scene of *Farewell, My Lovely* is also supplemented by amusing description of that men: "He was a big man but not more than six feet five inches tall and not wider than a beer truck."

Panek comments, that Chandler used this type of structures in the opening scenes of both *The Big Sleep* and *Farewell, My Lovely* to "establish a wry tone" of his writing.<sup>69</sup> This "wry tone" is already recognizable in his short stories. However it is fully developed due to the character of Philip Marlowe who narrates a storyline in a sarcastic tone.

It is certain that short stories are refined in some passages. Nevertheless novels are still invincible in this aspect. Following extracts show how Chandler detailed fragments from short stories in the novel. The first extract is taken from "The Man Who Liked Dogs."

A large blueness took form beside me and I smelled tar. A soft, deep, sad voice said: "Need help out there?"

"I'm looking for a girl, but I'll look alone. What's your racket?" I didn't look at him.

"A dollar here, a dollar there. I like to eat. I was on the cops but they bounced me."<sup>70</sup>

A comparison with the following passage, which is taken from *Farewell, My Lovely*, shows that the attention, paid to details and elaborate descriptions of characters, is one of key differences.

A large blueness that smelled of tar took shape beside me. "No got the dough--or just tight with it?" the gentle voice asked in my ear.

I looked at him again. He had the eyes you never see, that you only read about. Violet eyes. Almost purple. Eyes like a girl, a lovely girl. His skin was as soft as silk. Lightly reddened, but it would never tan. It was too delicate. He was bigger than Hemingway and younger, by many years. He was not as big as Moose Malloy, but he looked very fast on his feet. His hair was that shade of red that glints with gold. But except for the eyes he had a plain farmer face, with no stagy kind of handsomeness.

<sup>69</sup> See Panek, "Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)", 410.

<sup>70</sup> Raymond Chandler, "The Man Who Liked Dogs" in *Killer in the Rain* (London: Penguin Books, 1992.), 111.

“What's your racket?” he asked. “Private eye?”  
“Why do I have to tell you?” I snarled.  
“I kind of thought that was it,” he said. “Twenty-five too high? No expense account?”  
He sighed. “It was a bum idea I had anyway,” he said. “They'll tear you to pieces out there.”  
“I wouldn't be surprised. What's *your* racket?”  
“A dollar here, a dollar there. I was on the cops once. They broke me.”<sup>71</sup>

The duration of the passage increased from 57 words in the short story to 199 words in the novel. The shift in Chandler's writing looks in most comparisons, concerning a passage from short story and a passage from novel, like that.

The elaboration shapes the Chandler's writing technique. He truly played with general frames which he “cannibalized” from his short stories and elaborated them deeply. The character in the second extract is only supporting and he does not need to be described in detail. It is probably the reason why his description is missing in the short story altogether.

Chandler pays the extraordinary attention even to supporting characters in novels. Descriptions of Chandler's characters make his novels more interesting in that point that a reader has a better picture of the hard-boiled world which presents itself more by characters than by the setting.

On the other hand the following passage taken from “Mandarin's Jade” shows that the claim that Chandler's supporting characters are described in details only in novels is not thoroughly precise.

He was a tall man, straight as steel, with the blackest eyes I had ever seen and the palest and finest blond hair I had ever seen. He might have been thirty or sixty. He didn't look any more like an Armenian than I did. His hair was brushed straight back from as good a profile as John Barrymore had at twentyeight. A matinee idol, and I expected something furtive and dark and greasy that rubbed its hands.

He wore a black double-breasted business suit cut like nobody's business, a white shirt, a black tie. He was as neat as a gift book.<sup>72</sup>

This extract is a quite exhausting description of the supporting character which already appears in the short story. It is definitely necessary to take into account that “Mandarin's Jade” was written somewhere in the middle of Chandler's short story creative period (in 1937). So his style was getting better in contrast with previous works.

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<sup>71</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 951.

<sup>72</sup> Raymond Chandler, “Mandarin's Jade” in *Killer in the Rain* (London: Penguin Books, 1992.), 288-289.

Although the mentioned extract seems to be elaborated enough to be a part of some Chandler's novel, the way how is an analogical passage elaborated in *Farewell, My Lovely* is again on a completely different level.

I looked him over. He was thin, tall and straight as a steel rod. He had the palest finest white hair I ever saw. It could have been strained through silk gauze. His skin was as fresh as a rose petal. He might have been thirty-five or sixty-five. He was ageless. His hair was brushed straight back from as good a profile as Barrymore ever had. His eyebrows were coal black, like the walls and ceiling and floor. His eyes were deep, far too deep. They were the depthless drugged eyes of the somnambulist. They were like a well I read about once. It was nine hundred years old, in an old castle. You could drop a stone into it and wait. You could listen and wait and then you would give up waiting and laugh and then just as you were ready to turn away a faint, minute splash would come back up to you from the bottom of that well, so tiny, so remote that you could hardly believe a well like that possible.

His eyes were deep like that. And they were also eyes without expression, without soul, eyes that could watch lions tear a man to pieces and never change, that could watch a man impaled and screaming in the hot sun with his eyelids cut off.

He wore a double-breasted black business suit that had been cut by an artist. He stared vaguely at my fingers.<sup>73</sup>

The text has increased number of Chandler's typical similes which are nothing surprising in his novel writing. An extended simile of the well in which depth is compared with eyes of described person is particularly apt and shows Chandler's mastership in the usage of this figure.

However the main reason, why I chose this passage, is the personification. It also describes the eyes of the character which were: "without expression, without soul, eyes that could watch lions tear a man to pieces and never change, that could watch a man impaled and screaming in the hot sun with his eyelids cut off."

This personification shows how much attention Chandler paid to this one single detail of characteristics and how such a detailed description of the eyes, firstly compared by simile to the depthless well and then personified, contributes to evoke an expressive picture even of the minor character in the novel.

### 2.2.2 Novel

*Farewell, My Lovely* is along with *The Big Sleep* considered to be the best novel of Chandler's work. It is said to be even better than *The Big Sleep*. William Marling, the professor of English at University of Cleveland, notes that *Farewell, My Lovely* "explodes

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<sup>73</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 876.

with metaphors and allusions.”<sup>74</sup> Cuddon defines an allusion as “an implicit reference to another work of literature or art, to a person or an event”<sup>75</sup>

Marling gives few examples of allusions even from the first page of the novel, one of them I have already mentioned when I discussed humor in Chandler’s writing. It is the simile describing the grotesque character of Moose Malloy as “he looked about as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food.”

According to Marling this simile alludes to Charles Dicken’s *Great Expectations* (1861) in which a spider appears on Miss Havesham’s cake. Another allusion is not so direct and it is represented again by the character of Malloy who with his grotesque appearance alludes to Sherwood Anderson’s character Wing Biddlebaum in *Winesburg, Ohio*. Malloy is also characterized similarly to Biddlebaum by using his most striking trait – his hands.<sup>76</sup>

His arms hung loose at his sides and a forgotten cigar smoked behind his enormous fingers.<sup>77</sup>

*Winesburg, Ohio* belongs to the frontier literature. I have mentioned the relation between the hard-boiled mode and the frontier literature, when I discussed the origin of the hard-boiled mode and particularly the archetype of hard-boiled hero. The close resemblance between Biddlebaum and Malloy further supports the idea of origin of the hard-boiled style in the frontier writing.

The allusiveness of *Farewell, My Lovely* is the point I want to discuss a bit further. The allusion with tarantula is firstly used in “Try the Girl,” as well as a following simile, provided by Marling, which is taken from “Mandarin’s Jade” and reused in novel: “this car sticks out like spats at an Iowa picnic.”<sup>78</sup> The allusiveness of this simile requires information: what is the Iowa picnic? Marling explains that it was an annual political action in which expensively dressed politicians tried to get votes from immigrant Iowans.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> William Marling, “Major Works: Farewell, My Lovely by Raymond Chandler,” Detnovel.com, <http://www.detnovel.com/FarewellMyLovely.html> (accessed April 22, 2011).

<sup>75</sup> Cuddon and Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 27.

<sup>76</sup> See William Marling, “Major Works: Farewell, My Lovely by Raymond Chandler,” Detnovel.com, <http://www.detnovel.com/FarewellMyLovely.html> (accessed April 22, 2011).

<sup>77</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 767.

<sup>78</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 876.

<sup>79</sup> See William Marling, “Major Works: Farewell, My Lovely by Raymond Chandler,” Detnovel.com, <http://www.detnovel.com/FarewellMyLovely.html> (accessed April 22, 2011).

So this allusive simile, which is not so easy to recognize as an allusion today, was in the time of publishing *Farewell, My Lovely* perfectly understandable, apt and moreover amusing.

Allusions were already present in short stories, but the point is that these allusions are concentrated in *Farewell, My Lovely*.

Chandler's style can be also defined by the frequent usage of similes in *Farewell, My Lovely*. He employs them almost in the each scene of the storyline and they are at least as perfect as in *The Big Sleep* or often even better.

The eighty-five cent dinner tasted like a discarded mail bag and was served to me by a waiter who looked as if he would slug me for a quarter, cut my throat for six bits, and bury me at sea in a barrel of concrete for a dollar and a half, plus sales tax.<sup>80</sup>

On the other side of the road was a raw clay bank at the edge of which a few unbeatable wild flowers hung on like naughty children that won't go to bed.<sup>81</sup>

These examples show that similes are often extended in *Farewell, My Lovely*. This phenomenon is already present in *The Big Sleep*. It is rather a matter of genres of a short story and a novel in which this feature differs in Chandler's works.

I discussed the occurrence of expressively unusual or striking structures in *The Big Sleep* and labeled them as the poetic license.

*Farewell, My Lovely* is not as progressive as *The Big Sleep* in this feature, it continues with established language of *The Big Sleep*. The expressiveness of selected similes seems to be sometimes even stronger in *The Big Sleep*. This is caused probably by the fact that they are often related to death, as well as, the title of *The Big Sleep* is a metaphor for death.

*Farewell, My Lovely* can be with a bit of an exaggeration marked as devoted to love. According to Marling, the love is a sentiment embodied in the character of Moose Malloy<sup>82</sup> who madly and hopelessly loves his ostensibly lost girl Velma. Velma in fact hides and when Malloy finds her, she shoots him.

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<sup>80</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 946.

<sup>81</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 874.

<sup>82</sup> See William Marling, "Major Works: Farewell, My Lovely by Raymond Chandler," Detnovel.com, <http://www.detnovel.com/FarewellMyLovely.html> (accessed April 22, 2011).

I went back to the bed. Malloy was on his knees beside the bed now, trying to get up, a great wad of bedclothes in one hand. His face poured sweat. His eyelids lids flickered slowly and the lobes of his ears were dark.

He was still on his knees and still trying to get up when the fast wagon got there. It took four men to get him on the stretcher.

“He has a slight chance--if they're .25's,” the fast wagon doctor said just before he went out.

“All depends what they hit inside. But he has a chance.”

“He wouldn't want it,” I said.

He didn't. He died in the night.<sup>83</sup>

The sentimental tone can be also found in the main character of Phil Marlowe, who tired from his life claims:

I needed a drink, I needed a lot of life insurance, I needed a vacation, I needed a home in the country. What I had was a coat, a hat and a gun. I put them on and went out of the room.<sup>84</sup>

These extracts demonstrate the tone of *Farewell, My Lovely*, which is quite special in Chandler's writing. I use the term “tone” in the meaning of “reflection of the author's attitude” aimed mainly at readers.<sup>85</sup> Chandler's tone is not only ironic in *Farewell, My Lovely* as it is in the most of his works, it is sentimental.

*Farewell, My Lovely* has all qualities of *The Big Sleep*. Moreover it is complemented with a larger use of allusions and the sentimental tone, which creates in a combination with the violent hard-boiled world a strong effect. This sentimentality appears again in author's later novels.

### 2.2.3 Summary

The shift from three short stories which shape the basis of *Farewell, My Lovely* is similar as in the case of *The Big Sleep*. Therefore I compared selected passages taken from short stories with analogical extracts taken from *Farewell, My Lovely*.

- The novel form shows again an increase in the elaboration.
- The next point, I focused on, is how much attention the author paid to minor characters in short stories compared with the novel.

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<sup>83</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 977-978

<sup>84</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 943.

<sup>85</sup> See Cuddon and Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 920.

- “Novel” section dealt with the allusiveness of *Farewell, My Lovely*. It also further supported the role of simile in Chandler’s writing and it finally mentioned the sentimental tone of the novel. This tone is along with the higher allusiveness the main difference between styles of *The Big Sleep* and *Farewell, My Lovely*.

### 3 THE MAIN HERO

Chandler's main hero Philip Marlowe is more than only the narrator in author's novels. He embodies the shift into the novel form and works as a unifying element of all Chandler's novels. Marlowe moreover became the typical example of the hard-boiled mode hero. I want to introduce Marlowe as not only the literary character but also as the mediator of hard-boiled world in this chapter.

To begin with, it is necessary to mention properties of Philip Marlowe as the narrator. Monika Fludernik, the professor of English literature at University of Freiburg emphasizes the importance of a central human or "anthropomorphic" character in order to perceive any text as a narrative.<sup>86</sup>

Philip Marlowe is the central protagonist and narrates in a first-person narrative situation. Chandler used in his works almost exclusively first-person narrators. Only several of his short stories are narrated in figural narrative situations. This fact is quite fundamental for the understanding of how the Chandler's hero influences his style. Philip Marlowe as the first-person narrator gives a picture of his internal state of mind as well as of his external perception.

Chandler simply needed to use the first person narrative not only because it reflects immediately the state of mind of protagonist but it is also more intimate and deeply involves a reader.

Alain Silver and James Ursini, who focus on crime and mass media, note that the first person narrative situation of hard-boiled writing has "particular utility" for crime genre because of a power of immediacy between a protagonist and a reader.<sup>87</sup>

The utility of first person narrative consists in easier empathizing to a character. It can be illustrated, e.g., on similes. Philip Marlowe gives a subjective picture of what he perceives or feels in each of hundreds of similes and this wouldn't work in such way in the figural narrative situation which does not provide so close contact.

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<sup>86</sup> See Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 6.

<sup>87</sup> See Alain Silver and James Ursini, "Crime and the Mass Media" in *Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 71.

I was as hollow and empty as the spaces between stars.<sup>88</sup>

Philip Marlowe is really important for the shift to the novel form, which is as it is proved in previous chapters analyzing *The Big Sleep* and *Farewell, My Lovely*, more elaborated. I argue that the presence of the strong main character is crucial for the elaboration in Chandler's works.

Marlowe should be characterized at this point. It would be useful to start with his precursors from short stories. They mostly share same character traits with him. Some of them have a relation to police, e.g., Delaguerra in "Spanish Blood" is the police detective others like Carmady or Mallory are private investigators.

Marlowe originally also worked as the police investigator, but he was fired for "insubordination" as it is stated in *The Big Sleep*. This contributes to the image of the "fallen angel"<sup>89</sup> hated by his own ex-colleagues.

Phil can be further characterized as, in *The Big Sleep*, 33 year old, cynic, single man ("I'm unmarried because I don't like policemen's wives"<sup>90</sup>) with a good relation to alcohol. He has his own principles and works even for a low wage as a real professional. He is willing to sacrifice a lot for his clients, e.g., in *The Big Sleep* he covers a murder and claims with a bitterness at the end of the novel: "Me, I was part of the nastiness now."<sup>91</sup>

However Marlowe as the narrator is also a poet who speaks in a way that breaks ordinary clichés.

On the wide cool front porches, reaching their cracked shoes into the sun, and staring at nothing, sit the old men with faces like lost battles.<sup>92</sup>

His long fingers made movements like dying butterflies.<sup>93</sup>

Nothing answered me, not even a stand-in for an echo. The sound of my voice fell on silence like a tired head on a swansdown pillow.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Raymond Chandler, "The Long Goodbye" in *Later Novels and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 645.

<sup>89</sup> See Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 77.

<sup>90</sup> Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 594.

<sup>91</sup> Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 764.

<sup>92</sup> Chandler, *The High Window*, 1036.

<sup>93</sup> Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 899.

<sup>94</sup> Raymond Chandler, "The Little Sister" in *Later Novels and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 1113.

Chandler lets his hero to interpret what he perceives mainly by similes which can be generally characterized by the term “poetic license”. Marlowe is actually the mediator of this language which is embedded into the vernacular of his environment.

He lives in criminal atmosphere of Los Angeles and deals with crimes of streets as well as with the rottenness of the high class society from which is the majority of his clients. Despite of this, he keeps his kindness and conscience.

A mystery writer, who created in hard-boiled mode, Ross McDonald speaks about how difficult was for him to be an heir of Chandler’s writing:

He wrote like slumming angel, and invested the sun-blinded streets of Los Angeles with a romantic presence.<sup>95</sup>

This “romantic presence” makes Chandler’s works powerful because it is not primary and it expresses itself just in the character of Marlowe, who is the fallen angel trying to better the world and who ends disappointed from his helplessness.

Marlowe’s cynicism originates in this disappointment. His cynicism is reflected in the wry tone established in early novels and pervading the rest of his works.

His surprise was as thin as the gold on the weekend wedding ring.<sup>96</sup>

I paid off and stopped in a bar to drop a brandy on top of the New York cut. Why New York, I thought. It was Detroit where they made machine tools.<sup>97</sup>

The hard-boiled image of Marlowe is another point which should be discussed. It is not based on a violent behavior as it can look like. Panek notes that Chandler’s idea of the hard-boiled hero is rather based on the ability of the character to be resistant in the world of violence as well as on a will to finish that he started.<sup>98</sup>

It was mentioned that Marlowe works as the unifying element for Chandler’s novels. Marlow became a brand mark of novels after *The Big Sleep*. He is greatly designed for a

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<sup>95</sup> Ross MacDonalld, *Self-portrait: Ceaselessly Into the Past* (Santa Barbara: Capra Books, 1981), 27. quoted in Panek, “Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)”, 414.

<sup>96</sup> Raymond Chandler, “*The Long Goodbye*” in *Later Novels and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 482.

<sup>97</sup> Chandler, *The Little Sister*, 268.

<sup>98</sup> See Panek, “Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)”, 408.

hard-boiled novel with his tough appearance, unclear past, moral and physical strength inherited from frontier hero.

He is even named after a playwright who was in his life isolated from society, wrote in a blank verse and who was under unclear circumstances killed.<sup>99</sup>

The segregation from society as a character trait of hard-boiled heroes was discussed in the opening chapter of this thesis. The fact, that Chandler named his hero Marlowe, shows that he consciously alluded to Christopher Marlowe.

However Chandler was not only playing with this allusive background, he also equipped his hero with sense of humor and with ability to express what he observes in a way that breaks the conventions of crime writing.

The creation of Philip Marlowe was also extremely important with regard to Chandler's "cannibalizing" technique of writing. Marlow works as the unifying element for re-used parts taken from short stories in this technique.

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<sup>99</sup> See Panek, "Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)", 407.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this bachelor thesis was to analyze the shift from a short story form to a novel form in the writing of Raymond Chandler. The issue was opened with a discussion how the hard-boiled fiction should be classified. It was concluded that the hard-boiled fiction is a mode of crime fiction.

Then I focused on ties with European and American literature in order to put the hard-boiled mode into the context of them. The emphasis is put on the American descent of the hard-boiled mode. This is illustrated mainly by the archetypal relation between the frontier and the hard-boiled hero.

The analysis of the development of Raymond Chandler's writing was done via a comparison of passages from the author's short stories and corresponding passages from the first two novels *The Big Sleep* and *Farewell, My Lovely*.

The thesis concludes that the main difference between the author's style in the short story form and the novel form is an increased elaboration. This elaboration is mainly visible in the increased attention which Chandler pays to details and to the figurativeness of the text in the novel form.

The figurativeness is mainly represented by similes in Chandler's style. Similes are frequent figures in author's novels and as such are important for the shift in his writing. Similes are also often bearers of the author's stylish extravagance as well as the manner of expressing, which can be described as a poetic license.

The stylish extravagance and the poetic license are the main features which are according to my research not fully developed in short stories and on the other hand already perfect in novels.

The allusiveness of Chandler's writing is discussed in the case of the novel *Farewell, My Lovely*. *Farewell, My Lovely* shows the increased allusiveness in contrast with short stories and *The Big Sleep*.

The importance of Philip Marlowe as the main hero is the last discussed issue. Marlowe is a refined literary character in many aspects. It is emphasized that the creation of him opened Chandler profound space for the further development of his style. Main differences concerning the elaboration, stylish extravagance and the usage of the poetic license are narrowly linked with the emergence of this type.

Another significance of a need of such a strong main hero lies in the fact that Chandler needed a unifying element for fragments taken from his short stories, in order to design a refined novel from them.

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