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Breaking Free: Detectives Let the Guilty Walk

Cassandra Holcombe
Central Washington University, casholcombe@gmail.com

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BREAKING FREE: DETECTIVES WHO
LET THE GUILTY WALK

A Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Literary Studies and Teaching

by

Cassandra Joy Holcombe

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CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the thesis of

Cassandra Joy Holcombe

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Committee Chair

Committee Member

Committee Member

Dean of Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT
BREAKING FREE: DETECTIVES WHO
LET THE GUILTY WALK

By Cassandra Joy Holcombe

May 2022

In a genre like detective fiction, known for affirming social order, the refusal to enforce rule of law seems like an anomaly. The number of famous detectives who have let a perpetrator go suggests that release of suspects is not a break in genre conventions, but is a wider pattern that needs to be acknowledged. This study investigates that pattern by measuring the complexity of thirteen detectives: eleven of whom release perpetrators and two of whom do not, to serve as a control group. The higher the complexity of the character, the more human the character seems to be. The reasons why the detectives make the choice they do is also examined. Characters such as Dr. George Abbershaw and several others allow perpetrators to go because they are victims of an earlier crime. Other detectives, like Hercule Poirot, want to avoid the consequences that would befall innocents as a result of the situation if the perpetrator is punished. Some, like Sherlock Holmes, follow their own moral code rather than the dictates of the law. Many police detectives privilege the duty to protect people over the one to punish them. These cases reveal that the detective genre is about the struggle of humanity to uphold an ideal of justice impossible to reach. With such being the case, it is expected that detectives who make the choice to allow a criminal to go free are more complex and so more human than detective characters adhering the normal pattern of crime followed by punishment.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Scholars and casual readers of Detective Fiction assume the genre to be about the punishment of deviants. The general pattern of a criminal committing a crime against the laws of society and then being summarily caught and/or punished by a representative of law and order in the form of a detective does give that impression. If detective fiction is controlled by such a pattern then it would be both unrealistic and a flat genre, if we use E.M. Forster's definition which states that being flat means the reader cannot be surprised by it. However, the storylines of every work of detective fiction are not so uniform. Cases where the criminal gets away or overcomes the detective disrupt the pattern, pointing at deficiencies in the law, but the biggest problem for the idea of detective fiction advocating for social conformity is the cases where the detectives decide to let the perpetrators go. These cases reveal that genre is more complex and realistic than we would assume and reflects the struggle of humanity to uphold an impossible to reach ideal of justice. With such being the case, it is expected that detectives who make the choice to allow a criminal to go free are more complex, holding a more nuanced understanding of crime and morality, and so are more human than detective characters adhering to the normal pattern of crime followed by punishment because they believe all crime should be punished.

To show this, I examine thirteen detectives, most of whom choose to allow criminals to escape unpunished. The group of amateur detectives shows that situations surrounding the punishment of criminals are complex. An amateur detective is not someone new to criminal investigations or unskilled, but a detective who solves crimes for pleasure or necessity and not financial gain. Dr. George Abbershaw demonstrates the complications of situations by introducing a perpetrator who had been wronged by the legal system and so chose to commit a crime in response, making him a murderer/victim (Allingham 268). The story of Hercule Poirot reflects that the act of and punishment for a crime can cause harm to more than the victims and the perpetrators (*Murder on the Orient Express* 315). Meanwhile Father Brown's tale notes the possibility that giving a criminal a second chance instead of punishing them might turn them away from crime ("The Flying Stars 67). Each of these amateur detectives looks at a complicated situation and makes a choice based on that, rather than simply following the maxim that crime must always be punished. The control detective of the group, Lord Peter Wimsey, obeys that maxim because he lacks the ability to make such judgement calls.

Private investigators appeared on the scene in the scene as early as amateurs and were popularized by Sherlock Holmes. They added to the conversation the idea that people have their own private moral codes that they value more than the public ones encoded in the laws. Cordelia Gray reveals in *An Unsuitable Job For A Woman* that some detectives value emotional connection and the need to protect those they care for more than serving justice on a killer (James 19, 147, 181, 198). After hearing a murderer explain why he killed, Sherlock Holmes admits his own view that some causes are worth killing for ("The Adventure of the Devil's Foot"12). Marlowe portrays the desperate need to protect somebody in a hard, unforgiving

world and the need to have a code of honor of one's own (*The Long Goodbye* 188). Spenser then showcases the guilt that could sometimes taint the detective when killing becomes necessary along with the desire to avoid spilling more blood than necessary (*The Judas Goat* 37, 90). Each private investigator makes a judgement based on their own moral code rather than following the scripted moral code written down in the law books. Sam Spade acts out of the belief that the law demanded justice. No matter what moral code one holds, the law demands punishment in response to a crime (*The Maltese Falcon* 12, 20, 130). As a result of these beliefs, Spade's growth and human complexity are stunted, making his character seem forced and unnatural. Douglas Torgenson argues that, for all the characters, in *the Maltese Falcon* "never do we glimpse a panorama or gain access directly to an inner voice, an introspective viewpoint, or any depth of soul or psyche" (Torgenson 206). The lack of inner voice or introspection means that Spade's character is never explored beyond the surface character, making him a flat character.

Finally, the fictional police detectives bring attention to the dual nature of the law which requires human interpretation to properly judge between. The law is meant to uphold justice both by punishing the guilty and protecting the innocent. Yet in the stories included in this study, those two duties clash and the detective is forced to choose which duty is more important. Sergeant Trotter Cuff decides to protect the innocent to ensure more lives were not lost to the situation the crime had created (Collins 66, 94). Inspector Sir Clinton Driffield protects a young man he deemed to be worthy of protection from a punishment that would ruin his life (*Murder in the Maze* loc. 2981). To protect the happily ever after of a young couple, Inspector Poole punishes another for murder in their place (*Lonely Magdalene* 282). Finally,

Pendergast acts out of a desire to protect a murderer/victim whom his own actions had created, showing himself to be a human first and a detective second (*The Book of the Dead* 448). Like their real world counterparts, fictional police detectives are duty bound to keep the law, yet even they decide not to uphold it at times.

Based on these trends, supported by a system designed to measure character complexity, it can be assumed that the cases where detectives allow a criminal to go free are not flukes or even anomalies. They show that detective fiction is not about society trampling the rights of the individual or even how wrong society can be at times, but about the never-ending struggle to uphold truly moral justice in a broken world.

We have seen this struggle become violent in our time as cities such as Portland, Minneapolis, and Atlanta burn¹ and protestors challenge police over a system they believe to be corrupt. However, these are not signs that we must abandon laws altogether or even wholly scrap the legal system in place. They are reminders that the legal system we live with will always have flaws of some kind. The eleven of the thirteen detectives encountered the same problem, and they did not crumple the law up and throw it away altogether. They show that society has a history of recognizing inadequacies in the legal system. While some may argue that they do not attempt to overthrow the legal system due to a lack of imagination or despair of every overturning something so pervasive, they act in accordance with the law apart from

¹For specific examples see “Burning Cities” National Review. 2020 <https://www.nationalreview.com/the-morning-jolt/burning-cities/>, “Here’s A List Of Cities Hit By Riots In The Last 3 Months” Daily Caller 2020 <https://dailycaller.com/2020/08/25/list-of-cities-riots-three-months-george-floyd-death-looting-fires-police-seattle-portland-dc-atlanta/>, and “Riots That Followed Anti-Racism Protests Come At Great Cost To Black-Owned Businesses” NPR. 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/12/901859883/riots-that-followed-anti-racism-protests-come-at-great-cost-to-black-owned-business>.

these cases, suggesting that the law can still be flawed in places without the entire system being morally rotten. Instead, they judge whether or not to apply the law and in doing so they acknowledge that a legal system is not and should never be the sole word on morality.

CHAPTER II HISTORY AND METHODOLOGY

History

The Story So Far....

Detective fiction scholars have mostly neglected the topic of why detectives get away with breaking the law when other characters are punished for it. Amongst the scholarship that has been done on the subject, however, two main theories stand out and this short section on detective fiction history will be divided according to them. I will refer to them as the Superman theory and the Common Representative theory.

Superman theory

One theory that has been put forward on why detectives are allowed to break the law at their discretion is that they are seen as superior human beings, much like Friedrich Nietzsche's *Übermensch*. Trevor Cook states that for such detectives, of whom Sherlock Holmes is among the most famous, it is "reassuring for the public to believe that someone with superhuman abilities is on its side, however fictional and authoritarian those abilities might be" (842). Cook cites Julian Symons' influential book *Bloody Murder* to back up his argument, but a close look at the paraphrased section reveals that there is more to Symons' argument; Symons states that in the end Holmes is seen to be "really one of us" (12). This aligns less with the Superhuman theory and more with the Common Representative theory. There are plenty of the detectives

the theory applies to, and most are from the first two periods of detective fiction history: the Early Period (1868-1917) and the Golden Age (1918-1940).

Detective fiction as a genre began in 1868 with a tale involving a mysterious yellow diamond and a detective obsessed with roses. Detective fiction writer P.D. James explains in her book *Talking about Detective Fiction* that Wilkie Collin's *The Moonstone* is one of "two novels who vie for the distinction of writing the first full length classic detective story" (16). The detective, Sergeant Cuff, is not a main character, but he plays a decisive role in the plot, unmasking the mastermind behind the plot to steal the diamond.

Prior to this point, except for a few landmark short stories such as Edgar Allen Poe's "Purloined Letter," detectives, and particularly the police, did not get much attention. According to Samuel Saunders' study of Victorian newspapers, the police were barely mentioned in the newspapers and their investigations were certainly not covered in any detail (Saunders). The beginning of the 1870s, though, saw the publishing of several police memoirs. These set the stage for the first period of detective fiction history, the Early era. Nascent as the genre was in this period, it boasted some of the most famous names in detective fiction. Father Brown (1910-1936) made his bumbling, good natured appearance to solve the problems of friends and parishioners around this period. Sherlock Holmes (1887-1927) began a flourishing fictional career, establishing many of the signature tactics and details that later detective fiction authors would use. His superiority over the police, especially the fumbling Lestrade, reflects the soured attitudes towards the police that Saunders notes sprang up when they first formed and were not yet effective (Saunders).

With the exception of standouts such as Sergeant Cuff, most detectives were amateurs like Sherlock Holmes. The word “amateur” in this case does not mean that the detectives were not experienced and did not know what they were doing. In detective fiction, “amateur” simply means that the detective takes on cases for pleasure or for private reason instead of for money. They do not have a job in the police force and rarely have a client who pays for their services. Holmes cares little about the money most of the time and seems to want for very little. Father Brown has his position in the church to care for his needs. The tradition of amateurs blossomed more fully in the Golden Age of Detective Fiction.

The most studied age in Detective Fiction is the period from 1917-1939. In Britain, a group of novelists banded together to create the fabled Detection Club. During this period, Agatha Christie’s amateur detective Hercule Poirot came to life, as well as the arm-chair detective Miss Marple with her knowledge of village life. Dorothy Sayers created Lord Peter Wimsey, an aristocrat who cheerfully investigates murders, aided at times by his capable butler. The stories in this era are best known as the sub-genre of detective fiction called Cozies. Cozies are detective stories where all the gore, the wide-staring dead eyes, and the weeping family of the victim are kept at a distance. What matters in the stories is the puzzle with all its clues and the detective’s unique method of putting them altogether to get to the solution.

The Detection Club developed the notion of “fair play,” or giving the reader a chance to solve the mystery alongside or before the detective came into being. The relationship between author and readers becomes like players in a chess game. The author’s goal is to keep the reader from finding the true culprit while still giving clues and introducing the perpetrator early on. Some scholars have contended that the fair play element hinders detective fiction

considerably. Yet authors in this club increasingly obscure knowledge as clues and unique methods of killing. Christie, in particular, makes anyone—from the chamber maid to the narrator, or even an entire train full of people—the culprit. In more modern times, P.D. James claims that “Many authors have found the constraints and conventions of the detective story liberating rather than inhibiting of their creative imagination” (10). The fair play concept remains a key part of the detective fiction genre, but with World War II came a new, darker type of detective fiction.

The Common Representative Theory

The Superhuman theory justifies why detectives break the law by relying on the extraordinary nature of the detective characters, but the Common Representative theory relates to what the detectives have in common with other characters and the reader. Instead of being an impartial and vengeful superhuman who judges a criminal much like a deity would, these detectives act more like a jury, representing society and protecting its values when even the law fails. Some of the detectives whose behavior conforms to the idea of the Common Representative were created during the Golden Age and were developed around the same time as detectives that behave according to the Superhuman theory. Symons argues that Holmes is a representative of the common man instead of a superhuman, after all. Most of the detectives that fall into the category of the Common Representative, though, came into existence after World War II when the public had become disillusioned with the government, as well as law enforcement, and wanted heroes who were dirty and poverty stricken, sharing the same morals

as most of the members of the public such as equal treatment for the rich and the poor and the protection of children.

While World War I prompted a wave of escapist detective fiction focused on puzzles, World War II brought with it a crushing amount of depression in real life as well as fiction. The detectives used more psychological methods of investigation, and science began to take on a new ugly role as a weapon. J. J. Connington's police detective, Inspector Driffield resorts to using nerve gas to put an end to the culprit without loss of life in *Murder in the Maze* (1927). Perpetrators became more twisted and much more likely to be killed, either by themselves or the detective, rather than be handed over to the police. Henry Wade's stories, such as *Lonely Magdalen* (1940), reflect on the lives lost and irrevocably changed by the second world war and the poverty it brought to England.

Across the sea in the United States, the Great Depression produced a similarly dark ripple in the genre. The average United States citizen grew concerned with money and how to make enough to keep themselves and their families healthy and safe. They looked towards the few rich among them with envious eyes and suspicion that the world they lived in had been corrupted by such people. The hard-boiled sub-genre of detective fiction brought with it a wave of plucky private investigators because readers wanted someone who lived in their harsh reality and refused to give up. Dashiell Hammett's Sam Spade had his debut and fought for his life in *The Maltese Falcon* (1930). Unlike previous detectives, he has an antagonistic relationship with the police and no one he trusts fully to watch his back. Philip Marlowe tries to live as an honest, hard-working man in a city filled with corruption. The detectives of this era are often thought of as chivalrous knights fighting to save the innocent, but they are tainted with cynicism and the

knowledge that most people are evil at heart. Those who lived through the world wars came out jaded and traumatized from seeing so much death, and the detectives of the time reflect that view.

The 1970s detective fiction had much in common with the fiction created right after World War II, yet was vastly different. Robert B. Parker's Spenser is also an independent, stubborn private investigator. While Spade and Marlowe never consider the police trustworthy, Spenser cooperates with them in every way possible. The way he makes his client rush the international gun permits in *Judas the Goat* (1978) shows that he goes to great lengths to keep his actions legal. He even calls on the police for assistance when wounded after an attack by criminals. In such a vulnerable state, Spade or Marlowe would never let the police near them. Yet the lack of corruption does not keep Spenser from feeling the same taint as his predecessors. He uses guns and kills far more frequently than they do. The taking of those lives is what makes Spenser feel ugly and sullied inside in a way a corrupt government never could.

P. D. James contributed her own unique detective around the same time as Parker did, but added a unique twist by making her detective female. While she would never have the long running career of Spenser or P.D. James' main detective, Adam Dalgliesh, Cordelia Gray has her own impact on detective fiction. As a young female private investigator in James' *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (1973) and *The Skull Beneath the Skin* (1982), she has to work extra hard to convince the police to take her seriously, but still she cooperates with them. As a British detective, she reflects post-war poverty far better than Spenser does. Her major case relies more on leg work than shoot outs and backroom deals. Most important of all, it involves more psychological methods, which would pave the way for the detective fiction of the modern era.

Today's detective fiction is an amalgamation of the past traditions combined with modern psychological and forensic techniques. One detective that exemplifies this hybridity is Aloysius Pendergast, the main detective in the Pendergast series, which continues to this day. He is an amateur in the sense that he only takes cases that interest him or for his own personal needs or those of his friends. Yet he is also an FBI agent with a successful career and he uses the badge along with its authority on cases to which he is not officially assigned. He solves those cases through forensic science, a keen eye for detail, and a deep understanding of human emotions and culture. Like the private investigators of the seventies, his cases come with a fair amount of violence that is not sugar-coated, and he feels guilt for his actions. The action, however, makes Pendergast novels thrillers as well as detective fiction, a combination that became much more common with the modern era. Whatever the case, detective fiction is still alive and well connected to past roots.

Breaking Patterns and Laws

The history of detective fiction has shown that the rigid structure of detective fiction is deceptive. Critics in the past have argued for the existence of rigid rules within the genre. The rules published in 1928 by Ronald A. Knox are the most referenced, although figures as T. S. Eliot have also tried to establish rules for the genre. Yet a quick look at Knox's list and most of the other writers for that matter, shows that few detective fiction writers actually adhered to them. Love interests were banned, and yet Margery Allingham's *The Crime at Black Dudley* (1929) revolves entirely around love and how it changes the main character and detective, Dr.

George Abbershaw. Knox states that Chinese people were not be involved (Dove 69) yet frequently they are used. The closest thing to a rule that is observed is the fair play principle which came into prominence during the Golden Age of Detective Fiction. Even in that, writers observed the letter of the law far more often than the spirit. There is, though, a general pattern that most novels follow. A crime is committed and an investigation by the police, amateur detective, or private investigator is carried out. The perpetrator of the crime is unmasked with appropriate drama and then justice occurs through either death, whether by the hand of the detective or the criminal themselves, or the police when they take custody of the guilty party. The genre can seem simplistic and unrealistic because of this pattern, and yet it is much more complicated than it seems.

Tzvetan Todorov, a Russian Formalist who pioneered genre criticism and had a special interest in detective fiction, argues that detective fiction is composed of two stories (44-48). The first story is the story of the crime. According to Todorov, the story of the crime ends before the second story, which covers the entire novel, begins. This story is glimpsed through the clues left behind, and it is the puzzle the detective and the reader race to unravel. What really happened the night of the crime and where all the characters were when it occurred is the story of the crime. The second story Todorov refers to is the story of the investigation. The second story is concerned with the discovery made in the first, and it features more character development and greater potential for change. The second story can obscure parts of the first from the reader's knowledge. It can cast different light on what the first story might be and trick the reader into going down the wrong path. The attributes that make detective fiction literature instead of a mere logic puzzle, such as interesting characters, exploration of human

themes, and novel setting, are parts of the investigation story as well. Having two stories compose every detective fiction story adds a level of complexity, but it is not the only source of complication.

Another source of complication begins after the perpetrators are identified because they do not always face justice. Sometimes the perpetrator will successfully flee the country, destroying any chance that they will be caught. Other times the villain is clever enough to make sure that the evidence needed for a conviction is destroyed or never left behind in the first place. The detective can know who committed a crime yet not be able to arrest the person responsible. Such cases are disquieting enough, especially in a genre that critics often contend represents the restoration of social order from chaos or how deviant individuals are brought back within the norms of society. That is without mentioning the hardest examples to reconcile: stories where the detective lets the criminal go. In these cases, the detective, the supposed representative of law and order, refuses to do their duty. This goes beyond breaking a few lesser rules to find evidence or discover a perpetrator so justice can be served. I use the word “lesser” as a descriptor because detective fiction often treats illegal methods such as breaking and entering as necessary in order to catch clever criminals hiding behind technicalities. There is an entire category of books where detectives are the perpetrators of the crimes being investigated, but that is an entirely separate genre known as anti-detective fiction. Yet the stories where detectives let the guilty party go differ from the anti-detective form because the detective is not involved in the commission of the original crime. As a result, the break in the pattern of detective fiction remains.

Oddly enough, detective fiction scholarship has yet to address this problem. There is scholarship on the individual texts where a detective lets someone go, yet none appear to have tried to see where these deviant texts fit within the pattern or ask why the detectives make the decision to let go of justice. The closest scholars seem to get are the general theories seen in Julian Symons' work and Trevor Cook's article that detectives might release criminals because they are above the law or represent a societally agreed morality that goes beyond the law. The purpose of my process is to rectify this discrepancy. Through an investigation of several deviant stories across detective fiction history (1868-2009) and sub-genres using a rubric built on psychoanalysis, I hope to see if these stories suggest something new about the nature of detective fiction as a whole.

Detectives and Shrinks

Before moving onto my rubric, I want to acknowledge the vast history of psychoanalysis and detective fiction. Since Sigmund Freud, detective fiction has been linked to psychoanalysis. Alexander N. Howe references a meeting between Freud and one of his acquaintances where Freud spoke of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's work and, in particular, Sherlock Holmes. The most prevalent psychoanalytic figure in Howe's book, however, is Jacques Lacan who used detective fiction in the seminars he gave at times. While I will be using a later psychoanalyst, C. J. Jung, for my own rubric and psychoanalytic readings, Howe does use Lacan to make some convincing arguments. Howe gives a quote from Lacan that relates methods of forensic detection to medical features, and Howe argues that in both medicine and detection, the investigator uses

clues to uncover something that lies underneath (Howe 4-5). In the case of medicine this might be a particular malady, and in the case of the detective it would involve how a crime occurred and who did it. If we look at the clues in detective fiction as symptoms, the connection grows even stronger. While Howe used this logic to analyze detective fiction from the standpoint of particular psychological diagnoses such as hysteria and obsession, I do not attach any particular label or diagnosis to my analysis. What I have observed in my readings in detective fiction contradicts the idea of crime being treated as a societal illness. I do, though, agree with Howe that psychoanalysis holds the key to understanding detective fiction and support that by using C. J. Jung's research.

Methodology

Argument

My hypothesis is that the detectives who decide to let criminals go have a more nuanced and complex character development, allowing them to make a choice beyond the standard one of innocent or guilty. Moving past such a binary requires the detective to understand the variety that exists in the real world as a person would. To demonstrate my argument, I focus on eleven detectives who let a perpetrator go and two detectives who do not to serve as control samples. If my hypothesis is true, the eleven detectives all possess complexity scores that are above average and higher than the two control detectives. The results match that expectation, though the control detectives did score better than anticipated. The following methodology details how that conclusion is reached and is divided into three sections: Selection, Evaluation, and Complication

Selection

The selection of detectives and fictional works for my study is based on several factors. The first is the story must be in the detective fiction genre, which means it has to meet the base requirements of possessing both a crime and a detective. Other genre conventions such as a need for the detective not to be perpetrator and the ability to follow clues to solve the crime are also taken into consideration. Next the detective and author of the work must be well known to either scholars or historians. Finally, the detective should find the perpetrator of a crime and choose to let them get away with the crime. The situation cannot be that the detective does not have enough evidence to convict the guilty party or that the criminal fled somewhere the detective cannot reach. The emphasis is on the detectives making a choice of their own freewill. The reason for this is that it causes the greatest disruption in the pattern of detectives as representatives of law and social order.

Specific detectives and/or authors came from either general knowledge of famous detectives such as Sherlock Holmes and Sam Spade or books which discuss detective fiction as a genre such as *The Golden Age of Murder* by Edward Martin, and P.D. James' *Talking about Detective Fiction*. I searched through the history of each of the detectives to see if they fit the requirements and then located a text with the clearest example of the choice in question. To ensure that factors outside of complexity could be eliminated as possible explanations, I chose detectives from a variety of time periods, types, and social classes. Overall, ten detectives were selected as regular subjects, while three control detectives, detectives who fit the profile in

everything but the choice to release a criminal, are also included to make sure the conclusions arrived at are accurate. In this way, I gathered my subjects.

Evaluation

In order to evaluate the complexity of each detective character, I used a rubric of my own invention to construct profiles for each detective. E.M. Forster writes of a method for determining the complexity of characters in *Aspects of the Novel*. He divided them into a simple binary, flat or round, with flat characters being determined by the ability to sum them up in a single sentence and the inability to surprise the reader. My rubric utilizes both Forster's definitions and principles of psychoanalysis. The rubric utilizes realism because the characters are psychoanalyzed as if they are simulations of human beings. I say "simulations" because the characters are intentional constructions yet contain characteristics of human beings such as a personality and some level of free will. Mary Sue Wang states that realism requires the reader to believe in the free agency of the character. She points out "At the same time, however, readers are aware that the novel is a fiction written by an author, and as such, the characters' seeming open-endedness and agency are merely apparent, since the author has already determined how those chains-of-events will unfold" (Wang 291). In order to maintain the awareness Wang speaks of in the quote, the reader must view the character as a simulation or copy of a person. My hypothesis relies on the belief that such simulations are possible and argues that the more complex a character is the better a reflection of humanity and their viewpoints the character is. I will use the phrase "more human-like" when referring to characters who are more accurate reflections.

According to my hypothesis, the characters with the highest complexity and therefore the highest scores would be the most human-like. To determine which characters are more human-like, I use psychoanalysis to identify how complex a character is and so how close to human it is. The level of complexity is determined by how high a character scores in each category, and the categories themselves are based on traits that the human psyche possesses that could be observed in a story. Four elements are on the scoring rubric: the Persona and the Shadow as posited by C. J. Jung, *The Hero's Journey* by Joseph Campbell, and the variance from stereotypes established within detective fiction. The profiles establish which category a detective belongs in and determine a detective's score and human complexity utilizing textual evidence. Each of the rubrics had one to five points possible with a total of twenty points available for each subject. Table 1 shows the rubric:

Table 1 Scoring Rubric

Scoring Element	Exceptional 5 points	High 4-3 points	Moderate 2-1 points	Absent 0 points
Persona development	Persona is easy to identify yet not too obvious and demonstrates the contrast between the face the character shows the world and their true nature.	Persona is identifiable, possibly a bit too obvious, and hints that the character's real self might not be who they portray themselves as.	Persona is partially or vaguely defined. The character has a moment or two where their true identity shows, but the identity itself is amorphous.	No Persona is present and the character fully appears to be who they seem.
Shadow development	Traits the character despises about themselves and desires they struggle with are clearly visible and provide insight into their identity.	Traits the character despises about themselves and desires they struggle with are visible but are too exaggerated or provide little insight into the character's overall identity.	The traits the character despises about themselves and desires they struggle with are only partially present or vague. No insight into the character's identity is provided by them.	No traits the character despises about themselves or desires they struggle with are present. The character seems to be fully content with themselves.
Progression on the Hero's Journey	12 to 17 steps of the Hero's Journey have been accomplished and they have impacted the character's growth greatly.	11 to 6 steps of the Hero's Journey have been accomplished. Their impact on the character's growth is slightly ambiguous.	5 to 1 steps of the Hero's Journey have been accomplished. The impact on character growth is small or unknown.	No steps on the Hero's Journey are taken. The character does not grow throughout the narrative.
Variance from Stereotypes	The character contains a brief reference or two to the stereotype, but cannot be reduced down to such a label without losing a large part of the character's identity.	A part of the character fits the stereotypes but there are major problems that keep it from fitting well.	The character Mostly fits into a stereotype, but for one or two traits.	No variance. The character fits completely into a stereotype.
Score	Exceptional: 20-17	High: 16-9	Moderate: 9-1	Absent: 0

For Persona, the focus is on what characters show the world around them, as well as what they believe about themselves. If a character portrays themselves as an analytical, detached person and identifies with that image, that is their Persona. A clear Persona should be easy for a reader to see, but not overexaggerated or so obvious that it seems unnatural. While the Persona is not responsible for reflecting the subconscious or inner being of the character, which is the Shadow's role, there should still be enough subtle hints about it to show the Persona is only the character's public face and not their true self.

Persona and Shadow, while separate categories, are still linked so it is fitting that Shadow is beside Persona in the rubric. To obtain the highest score in Shadow, the subconscious identity and struggles of a character must be visible. On some level, characters and people accept their Persona and the characteristics within; the Shadow, however, as Jung notes, is composed of traits that are suppressed by the mind out of a general unwillingness to believe or the notion that such features are inappropriate for others to know about (Jung and Hull 267, 269). Struggle as a concept is a key element in the Shadow category as the description in Table 1's reference to "traits the character despises about themselves and desires they struggle with" shows. The second part of the description relies on insight into the character's identity. Even without acceptance or consciousness, a Shadow is a major part of a person's self and should drive a character's actions and decisions. Knowing the Shadow should give the reader insight into who the character is as a person so it is required. The same need for subtlety is present in the Shadow category, but it is more implicit, and what shows it to be a requirement is the mention of obviousness in the category below it in scoring.

I combined the Persona and the Shadow with the steps in The Hero's Journey described by Joseph Campbell because Hero's Journey is an established method for looking at the change in a character throughout a story. Each score is also determined by the number of steps, rather than how well the character did or did not fit a description. The main difference between my interpretation and Campbell's is that, although Campbell appears to view the journey as a physical one leading to spiritual and identity changes, I view some of the requirements, such as the need to face the main power in the hero's life, as part of a more inner self journey than an outer physical one.

Similarly, how much a character varies from a stereotype is relatively straightforward to judge. Knowledge of detective fiction as a genre given to me by previous experience reading and studying detective fiction novels, as well as books on the genre such as *Talking About Detective Fiction*, *The Golden Age of Murder*, and *Bloody Murder*, allowed for recognition and judgement of stereotypes. Stereotypes that have not been articulated much, but are well-known, such as the wise-cracking, dirty and poverty-stricken private investigator or the rigid, regulation-driven policeman, are compared to the character. Here, E.M. Forster's qualifications for round characters, the capability to surprise the reader and inability to be summed up in a simple sentence, are used. If a simple description like a stereotype can fit a detective, the character is lacking complexity, and their score in this category reflects that. People cannot be summed up by labels so the characters most like them should not be able to be as well.

Overall, the higher the score, the greater the complexity of the detective character involved. After each detective was scored individually, I ranked them numerically from highest to lowest score. The detectives were then divided by type in the following groups: Amateur

detectives, Private Investigators, and Police detectives. The scores of the individual detectives in each rubric category were added together to give a group average in each element and overall. The system is sound and helps to give my thesis a stronger base by allowing for comparison between multiple works of literature. My system shows its worth with a surprising result.

Complication

Originally, I had Special Agent Aloysius Pendergast down as a control detective. When I scored him, however, his score varied widely from those of his fellow control detectives and the notes were different as well. To resolve the anomaly, I researched Pendergast's fictional history again and found that there was a case where he had chosen to let someone go, and I had missed it. I redid the profile based on the case in question and Pendergast's notes remained similar, but his score rose significantly. As a result of this case, he changed from a control detective into a regular one, and I was left with two control detectives instead of three. Unwittingly, I demonstrated that the system was accurate at predicting which detectives would or would not make the choice to let a perpetrator go.

CHAPTER III

AMATEUR DETECTIVES

Introduction

Amateur detectives are closer to the experience of the average reader who is not a part of law enforcement than detectives in law enforcement or who are part of a private investigation business. Unlike private investigators and police detectives, they do not always possess professional skills or specialized knowledge. They represent ordinary people who have only become detectives by necessity, pleasure, or both at once. The motive of pleasure, in particular, makes them akin to the reader who immerses themselves in the story for the same reason. The ability to represent the average person has two significant consequences. The first is that the detectives vary widely in terms of character and overall complexity score because ordinary people vary, while the second is that amateur detectives are able to portray the complicated situations surrounding crime and the punishment of criminals more realistically than the other groups. The practiced detachment of the professional or the duty of a policeman are absent, allowing the amateur detective to feel the full weight of crime and its consequences.

In *The Crime at Black Dudley* by Margery Allingham, for example, Dr. George Abbershaw encounters a man who has been torn apart by grief and driven to murder by a previous crime. The choice he makes to let the man go shakes his faith in the law to its core. Hercule Poirot

in Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* faces twelve murderers, all of whom are traumatized by the murder of one child. Unlike Abbershaw, though, his choice is more situation because Poirot is worried about a friend who may be harmed by the crime's revelation. The possibility that putting someone in jail might make them morally worse instead of better is discussed in "The Flying Stars" when Father Brown confronts the thief, Flambeau over stealing a diamond necklace. All three detectives recognize that there is something about the perpetrator or situation that make involving the law the least favorable option. Lord Peter Wimsey, though, in *Death at the Bellona club* lacks the ability to do the same and nearly turns in a badly traumatized friend as a result.

Faced with perpetrators who are sometimes victims themselves, the amateur detective often lets a criminal go out of a desire to be merciful. When faced with a circumstance in which the criminal has an understandable reason for what they do, especially if something happened that causes them to lash out, the average person would rather help the person in question than punish them, and amateur detectives reflect that tendency.

Dr. George Abbershaw

Dr. George Abbershaw, the protagonist of *The Crime at Black Dudley* encounters a clear example of a victim/perpetrator, and it shatters his faith in the legal system. The following table breaks down his complexity score.

Table 2. Dr. George Abbershaw	
Ranking: 2 nd	Overall Score: 18/20
Persona Score: 5/5	Shadow Score: 5/5
Hero's Journey Score: 4/5	Stereotype variance: 4/5

The novel is the first in the Albert Champion mystery series, written by Margery Allingham, one of the so-called Queens of crime, but Dr. George Abbershaw serves as the protagonist and detective, not Champion. In the story, a party held at Black Dudley manor is interrupted by the murder of the house's owner and all of the guests find themselves trapped by a gang of robbers shortly after. Abbershaw differs from the typical amateur detective in several ways. First, he has the second highest score in the study, making him the second most complex character and the second closest to human. Abbershaw is different from the average amateur detective because he is connected to the police and yet is a medical examiner and not a detective. Abbershaw pretends to be a rationally minded scientist like the medical examiner he is employed as, but he is at heart impulsive and intuitive man, always ready to fight for those he loves. For this reason, when he is faced with someone who is both murderer and victim at the same time, his faith in the legal system is shaken to its very core, and he lets the perpetrator/victim escape.

Abbershaw's persona is the rational scientist he believes himself to be for most of the novel. He prides himself on being highly rational, as well as logical and objective in his thinking. In first meeting him, the narrator describes him as "fastidiously tidy in his dress and there was an air of precision in everything he did or said which betrayed an orderly mind" (Allingham 6). Also, when the robbers who take over the manor, Black Dudley, shortly after the murder of the

owner turn his room upside down searching for their plans, and he returns to find the mess, he gets angry and then begins to put the room back together. The narrator notes that “Prisoners they might be, shots could be fired, and people disappear apparently into thin air, none of these could shake him, but the sight of his belongings jumbled into appalling confusion all but unnerved him completely” (Allingham 80). The picture we get from these quotes is that he is methodical and highly organized to the point of being disturbed when the world around him is not in order. When dealing with medical examiner-related duties or knowledge, Abbershaw is confident, but he is by nature a cautious, nearly fussy person. The narrator comments that “he was naturally a man of thought, not action” (Allingham 80). While this is the identity Abbershaw portrays to the world and somewhat believes himself, there are hints at the cracks in the persona. He is quicker to anger than an organized, cautious person would be and no stranger to impulsivity despite his privileging of rational thinking. We see this in the anger he feels when his belongings have been searched and how he acts in Black Dudley, a fairly extreme situation. These are hints of the shadow that provides depth to Abbershaw as a character.

As the story continues, Abbershaw is forced to recognize his shadow, which reveals him to be an impulsive, intuitive enthusiast rather than the detached mind he believes himself to be. The pride Abbershaw displays so freely in his persona is secretly embarrassing to him. During one incident “he saw himself as she [Meggie] must have seen him all along, a round, self-important little man, old for his years and inclined to be pompous perhaps--terrible thought--even fussy” (Allingham 82). His curiosity makes him willing to trespass on propriety at times as well (Allingham 10). The caution so prominent in his persona when he speaks to others or acts is his way of hiding the anxiety he feels much of the time. The deepest part of

Abbershaw's shadow, the part he is forced to confront the most throughout the novel, revolves on his emotions. A pugnacious, fighting spirit lies close to the surface of Abbershaw's mind, and emotion is the key to letting it free.

Shortly after the incident where his room is searched, Abbershaw has a sudden epiphany in his anger and realizes he is reacting to the actions of the robbers and not truly fighting against them. The narrator tells us that "this discovery horrified him, and in that moment of enlightenment Dr. George Abbershaw the sober deliberate man of science stepped into the background and George Abbershaw the impulsive, energetic enthusiast came forward to meet the case" (Allingham 80). Given the event Abbershaw experiences and how he reacts, anger seems to be the trigger for his new impulsive state, for the sudden appearance of part of his shadow. Further evidence for this can be seen when the robbers take Meggie, whom he has fallen in love with, for interrogation. On hearing of her capture, Abbershaw grows so enraged that he storms to the part of the house they have taken over and demands that they release her. It is only when the door is shut in his face by a stronger man that Abbershaw's temper cools and he begins to think rationally again. His love for Meggie is something that he admits he has no idea how to deal with, and it drives him to fight the robbers as much as he can. After he discovers the identity of the murderer to be Wyatt, a friend of his related to the owner of Black Dudley, Abbershaw's action are once again out of emotion. He faces his friend alone, without telling anyone of the murderer's identity or where Abbershaw himself is going, and demands an explanation. By doing this, Abbershaw allows himself the option to decide whether or not to hand his friend over. He subconsciously admits that his friend might have an explanation good

enough for Abbershaw to avoid turning him in. This is not a decision founded on reason, but based on emotion.

The choice to let Wyatt go is the final step in a long journey Abbershaw experiences throughout the novel as he comes to understand the truth of his shadow: that he is ultimately an emotionally driven, intuitive man instead of the proud, detached scientist he believed himself to be. We see him face this in his decision to play the detective, the way he handles his relationship with Meggie, and the actions he takes during the events at the manor. One of the biggest moments of revelation comes after he has been captured by the robbers. He breaks into the room where the robbers' leader is interrogating Meggie and boldly announces that he has burned the robbery plans they are holding all the guests hostage in order to recover. The robbers do not appear to believe him, but decide to lock him up in a room with Meggie until they can find out the truth. Unable to act any longer, the full weight of his actions and the emotional, impulsivity of them bursts into his mind full force. He feels guilty then, assuming that letting that side of him out made stupid mistakes occur. The exact words he uses are: "I have behaved like an idiot all the way through" (Allingham 118). When he makes this statement, he is apologizing to Meg as they wait to see what the robbers will do to them. He blames himself for burning up the plans that the robbers are searching for and indirectly causing the hostage situation they are in. Burning that letter is the most impulsive action he takes and he regrets it thoroughly, supporting the argument that he sees impulsivity as unintelligent.

Once the events at Black Dudley end and the guests are set free, Abbershaw even tries to convince himself that circumstances were what made him act so irrationally. He tells himself,

“the lawless methods of Black Dudley were no longer permissible, no matter what circumstances should arise” (Allingham 231). When he is presented with the murderer, though, and with the choice to rationally ensure a murderer is punished or let the broken, hurting lover escape to find peace, Abbershaw has no excuse for choosing emotion. His rational world of black and white is gone, leaving him lost in a world of gray. We see this in the response Abbershaw has to the policeman who gives him a ticket for how he parked his car and tells him, “Persons offending against the Law are not going to be tolerated” (Allingham 272). Abbershaw’s response is to sincerely thank the policeman who can still see the world of right and wrong that Abbershaw has lost sight of, even when it comes to small matters like tickets.

Crime at Black Dudley addresses the breakdown in the perpetrator and victim binary. Laws are meant to protect and avenge victims as much as they are meant to punish criminals. The question Allingham poses, though, is what happens when the criminal who should be punished is the victim of a crime themselves. There are times when a criminal escapes punishment, through technicalities, flight, or other means, and leaves behind a victim the law cannot provide closure for. If the victim does the avenging themselves, however, the law says they are just as guilty as their persecutor. I refer to such people as perpetrator/victims. In terms of legal justice, a perpetrator/victim should be punished. Yet, sometimes the people who serve such justice, in both real life and fiction, recognize that the perpetrator/victim has an understandable, perhaps even sympathetic, motive. While repaying wrong with wrong is not a moral or lawful response, a person can recognize how natural and emotional such a reaction can be. Such is the case with Abbershaw, whose own recent experiences with love and crime create an understanding between him and Wyatt. What shakes Abbershaw’s faith in legal

justice is that the perpetrator/victim exists at all. The perpetrator/victim represents the idea that the legal system might not be able to bring true justice to this world by pointing out cases where the law's failure to protect led to a crime, creating an unsettling ending for a genre supposedly built on affirming the legal system.

Hercule Poirot

Hercule Poirot is an iconic character, but his complexity score reveals him to be surprisingly flat. For evidence of this, see Table 3.

Table 3. Hercule Poirot	
Ranking: Tied for 9 th	Overall Score: 12.5/20
Persona score: 4.5/5	Shadow score: 0/5
Hero's Journey: 2/5	Stereotype variance: 5/5

As an ex-policeman, one might expect the Belgian to use more forensic methods, but he prefers to work through observations, logic, and interviews with suspects. He possesses the jovial, amiable air of the amateur detective enjoying crime solving while on holiday. Rarely does Poirot seem serious, even when cracking down on a lying witness or suspect. While Poirot can be ruthless and manipulative at times, he does not appear to think these qualities at odds with his friendly nature or be ashamed of them. The lack of shame or guilt is at the heart of why Poirot lacks complexity. Unlike Abbershaw, who struggles with his own impulsiveness and emotion, or Philip Marlowe struggling with the feeling of being tainted, Poirot does not appear to have a

part of him he does not welcome. As a result, when Poirot encounters the meeting of a perpetrator/victim that devastates Abbershaw, multiple perpetrators/victims in Poirot's case, Poirot is barely disturbed. Instead, Poirot makes his decision to release criminals without punishment based on the possible consequences a friend of his might face as collateral damage. *Murder on the Orient Express* is the tenth book in the Hercule Poirot series written by Agatha Christie. Hercule Poirot boards the Orient Express and during the journey, one of the passengers is murdered shortly before an avalanche blocks the tracks, halting the train. *Murder on the Orient Express* explores how crime and punishment of it affects more than perpetrators and the victims.

Poirot portrays himself as an amiable, if a bit strange, gentleman who happens to be a detective. An accurate summation of his persona comes from the thoughts of Mary Debenham, one of the train passengers, in the first few pages of the book. She sees Poirot and thinks him "a ridiculous-looking little man. The sort of man one could never take seriously" (Christie 7). The narrator's description of Poirot's egg-shaped head and long, curled mustache given by the narrator--said by Julian Symons to make the detective's appearance resemble "Humpty Dumpty with a moustache" (102) --only enhances the impression Debenham gives. Kenneth Eckhart notes that Poirot is usually perceived as ridiculous by those who have never meet him before, but that "these disparaging views are never permitted to be vindicated by events" (193). Eccentricity is a key part of Poirot as a character. The thoughts he shares with his friend, M. Bouc are philosophical, romantic, even whimsical at times. Chris Ewers argues that Poirot has a flair for the dramatic and love for shocking and startling the audience. Perhaps this characteristic is why Nóra de Buiteléir states Poirot is "arrogant and vain, and revels in his

public status as detective prince” (375). While Poirot does muse on human nature, his thoughts are more interesting than dark or jaded. He acts agreeable and fairly friendly to almost all the passengers, even listening to and showing sympathy for Mrs. Hubbard, whom most of the other passengers seem to regard as insatiable blabber mouth. When she bursts into the car he is sitting in shortly after her “attack” from the murderer, Poirot is kind, listening to every word she says and insisting that she be taken care of as well. Eckhart states that “Poirot interacts with her as if she were a babbling child, treating her ‘soothingly’ when she gives her deposition” (196).

The biggest exception to his kindness appears to be Ratchett, whose face he claims he does not like. Even in telling Ratchett this, however, Poirot is polite and asks that Ratchett “forgive me (him) for being personal” (Christie 36). While eccentricity and kindness are a large part of Poirot’s character, his loyalty to his friends has the greatest influence on the story. Eckhart states that Poirot “accepts the case out of friendship and diversion and not remuneration” (195), suggesting he only investigates because Bouc asks him to do it. He also allows Bouc to investigate alongside him, even though the train owner has no detective skills and adds no real value to the investigation. Poirot listens to his opinions and does not belittle them in any way when they turned out to be wrong or unfounded. In the end, Poirot hands the decision of whether or not to let the culprits go entirely over to M. Bouc and goes along with the coverup, even though what he is doing is illegal.

In spite of his kind, polite and loyal nature, Poirot does not care how crueler elements change the image his persona projects when they seep in. He notices the love between two of the passengers, Colonel Arbuthnot and Mary Debenham, early on in the story. While he

originally had the romantic, impractical thoughts concurrent with his persona when he saw this, he later leverages the knowledge against them. Debenham is brought in mid-way through an interview with Aburthnot. After confronting her, Poirot provokes her until she cries which makes Aburthnot angry. In his anger, Aburthnot gives away more than he normally would, prompting Poirot to remark that angry Englishmen are amusing because “the more emotional they feel, the less command they have of language” (Christie 285). He also remorselessly presses Helena Andrenyi for details about the murder of her sister even after Helena pleads with him to stop. If Poirot acts guilty or sad after any of these incidents, then his cruelty could fit into the shadow category. The fact that he makes no attempt to hide his machinations and the lack of emotional effect they have on him, however, puts them squarely in the persona category. The reader sees Poirot struggle with nothing, be emotionally affected by nothing that happens in the novel. Eckhart states that “the novel never substantively questions Poirot or challenges his worldview” (192). In fact, Ewers identifies Poirot’s lack of emotions and worry as an advantage that helps him solve the case while his two assistants, Bouc and a doctor on the train, fail (117).

A phrase Poirot commonly uses when speaking about Poirot is “little grey cells.” Typically this phrase refers to the rationality and logic Poirot uses to solve his cases. The way Poirot goes about solving the crime, by making lists of people, questions, and the timeline, shows him to be a logical person above all else. So meticulous are his actions in fact, that Tim Bastiaens, Laurence Claes, and Samuel Greiff¹ diagnosed him with obsessive compulsive

¹ As the serious academic nature of this sort is slightly in doubt, I will be citing it here instead of the works cited: Bastiaens, Tim, Laurence Claes, and Samuel Greiff. “Dimensional Assessment of Personality Disorders: Diagnosing Tony Soprano, Norman Bates, Hercule Poirot, and Carol Beer through the *DSM-5* AMPD.”

disorder according to the *DSM 5* manual, noting that Poirot has “Rigid Perfectionism and Perseveration traits” (292). Labeling Poirot sociopathic would be incorrect, though, because he does care about M. Bouc. His emotional side is not missing, simply unformed like a statue with only half of itself carved out of the marble. The motivation behind Poirot’s case and his character are flat and uncomplicated because there is no struggle or change in Poirot’s character.

Poirot’s choice to let the train filled with murderers go seems off-hand, like he feels compelled to make a choice, but does not think much of it. The agony and confusion seen in Abbershaw when he makes his choice are not present here even though the murderers fit the description of martyr/perpetrator far better than Wyatt. The 12 murderers all lost someone dear to them, and Linda Arden shows off all the pain and sorrow they feel in a truly stirring tale of loss and revenge when she relates the story of Ratchett’s crime and the murder on the train. Yet Poirot does not react at all to her tale of woe. He simply turns to his friend, Bouc and asks him whether the murderers should be allowed to get away or not. Possibly, he leaves the decision up to Bouc because a train filled murderers could impact the Orient Express as Bouc’s business venture and Poirot wishes to protect Bouc from loss if possible.

Many of the perpetrator/victims on the train are indirectly damaged by Daisy’s murder in just such a way. McQueen’s father’s law career is ruined by the pressure to finger someone for Daisy’s murder. The conductor’s sister and Hardman’s lover, a French nursemaid, is accused

of the crime and terrified into killing herself. The other servants in the Armstrong household all suffer because of the crime. They are not the primary victims of Caseti's crime and probably barely even thought of by Caseti or the police. Yet they all are harmed because of a single crime, turning them into victims and then murderers. Bouc himself could lose business due to the scandal that accompanies a guest killed on his train and the part his employee, the conductor, Michel plays. Ewers points out that Bouc does worry "about the consequences of the bad publicity for the train line" while trying to solve the murder (117). When Poirot identifies Caseti as the victim and speaks of his crimes, Bouc admits he is happy Caseti is dead and only wishes that he had been murdered somewhere other than the Orient Express (Christie 84). However, when the moment of judgement arrives, he seems to think less of the possibility of financial ruin and makes the judgement more based on his sympathy with the perpetrators/victims than anything else; it is possible Poirot left the decision to him because he believed Bouc did know the consequences that would accompany announcing the truth. Bouc's decision to let justice go unserved is not questioned in the least. The novel's swift finish after the choice makes it seem casual and almost obligatory, as if Poirot is doing it because of how his character is written by Christie not out of any real thought on his part.

Apart from the added complication of people close to the crime, but neither victim nor perpetrator being harmed by crime and its punishment, one more complication to the perpetrator/victim paradigm is introduced: that of a victim who is a murderer himself. While Caseti and his deed are not mentioned in Poirot's reason for letting the perpetrator/victims go, Bouc's emotional nature makes it more likely that they were the deciding factor in his mind. Casetti represents the victim in detective fiction who is not entirely innocent of crime. Ewers

notes that *Murder on the Orient Express* creates “a fantasy of serving justice to a man, Ratchett, who had escaped the electric chair in America on a technicality” (111). Ewers goes on to state that the Orient Express becomes a place where fantasies about vigilantism, about taking the law into our own hands when the law fails to act, become not only possible, but acceptable. Casetti is the perfect target for such feelings. He is the kind of person the reader is inclined to loath and so his death appears to be no great tragedy. Some people such as Bouc might go so far as to say that Casetti deserved to die for murdering a child. Ernest Shannon from *Murder in the Maze* is a similar type of person, though he is killed when the police are trying to apprehend him rather than being murdered. The unlikability of Ernest’s character does, however, make the reader more likely to side with the detective’s decision to use lethal force. For *Murder on the Orient Express*, it makes Bouc’s choice to let the perpetrator/victims go more palatable than it might have been otherwise.

Poirot low overall complexity score is not unexpected because he would have willingly told the police everything and prosecuted the murderers if Bouc decided he wants that. The final choice is not made by Poirot. His passing off of the choice to another illustrates that *Murder on the Orient Express* is not like *Crime at Black Dudley*. The story is not about the triumph of emotion over reason or law. The ethics of the legal system that would let the murderer of a child go free and punish those who avenged themselves on him are not questioned. *Murder on the Orient Express* seems to be a novel focused on the “whodunit” puzzle alone. The rushed ending of the novel after the murderers are revealed suggests that the more human elements of the story, such as the emotional fallout from the murder and the choice Poirot makes are not important. Some scholars may suggest that the focus on the puzzle

is part of the Golden Age emphasis on “fair play.” Shosuke Kinugawa wrote in the article “Agatha Christie’s Secret Fair Play” that “As a representative author of Golden Age mysteries, Agatha Christie is widely recognized for her innovative contributions to the convention of fair play” (164).

The formulaic aspect of the novel and the way it is divided into parts based on the clues agree with this. A map of the train car where the murder occurs, complete with labels to show who is in what cabin, is provided along with a list of basic facts about each passenger. Yet it cannot be said that all Golden Age detective fiction novels center around fair play in the same way because *Crime at Black Dudley* does not follow the fair play rules. It cannot be denied, however, that *Murder on the Orient Express* has fair play at the heart of it and that affects the development of the characters. Most of the plot’s focus is on the first story or story of the crime and not the second, so there is not as much character development for Poirot, the main character, especially.

Murder on the Orient Express complicates the perpetrator/victim type and the nature of crime and punishment by taking a wider angle and looking at all those who can be harmed, not just the victim and perpetrator. In creating a train full of murderers, Christie portrayed a range of people from all different backgrounds and nationalities who all suffer because of a single murder. To further explore it and link it to her detective, Poirot, she puts a friend of Poirot’s in danger of financial ruin because of the murder. Poirot, the eccentric, friendly and kind detective who is nonetheless capable of cold logical and ruthlessness when needed, is defined by his loyalty to his friends, particularly, Bouc. Such stakes ensure that Poirot not only takes on the case, but that he hands the choice over to Bouc in the end. This action is the closest Poirot gets

to emotion, and it is done in an off-hand way that reveals Poirot does not care about justice or the ending of the second story. The puzzle is solved, which is enough for Poirot; what happens after is up to other, more human characters.

Father Brown

Given Roman Catholicism's reputation for harsh punishments, Father Brown's privileging of mercy over justice is unexpected. In many ways, he acts the part of a kind-hearted, bumbling country priest. He fits that stereotype so well that his character is less complex, and he has a lower score than Poirot as a result as Table 4 shows.

Table 4 Father Brown	
Ranking: 11 th	Overall Score: 12/20
Persona score: 4/5	Shadow score: 3/5
Hero's Journey: 3/5	Stereotype variance: 2/5

A key aspect of his character, however, is that he refuses to judge anyone, whether it is his parishioners being intolerant of each other or the perpetrator of a crime, such as Flambeau. The literary work this attribute is best displayed in is "The Flying Stars," a short story where Father Brown participates in a Christmas pantomime during which a valuable necklace known as the Flying Stars is stolen. While "The Flying Stars" lacks the perpetrator/victim complication present in the stories examined thus far, it posits the idea that justice should be about rehabilitation over retribution. Father Brown chooses rehabilitative justice over punitive justice

due to both his faith and a desire for mercy, making him an ideal character to explore the possibilities of rehabilitative justice.

The kindness Father Brown shows to all combines with his appearance to make him seem a simple country priest. The description of him emphasizes his ordinariness by noting that “everything seemed undistinguished about the priest, even down to his name which was Brown” (Chesterton 58). The mundane impression does hide a more extraordinary mind, but the appearance of normality is important because it allows the reader to sympathize with Father Brown. The aristocratic pride of Fischer, the wealthy businessman visiting his niece, and the passionate political theories of Crook, the journalist, are barriers that both make them distinct and separate them from readers. Father Brown, though, seems unremarkable and, as a result, the reader can more easily understand him.

His kindness reveals itself the most in his patience around and tolerance of others. While the characters around him argue, he makes simple jokes, not contributing much to one side or the other. Of particular note is the argument between Fischer and Crook over Capitalism versus Socialism. Fischer angrily rejects Crook’s arguments for socialism and the joyful Christmas gathering seems in danger of dissolving into a bitter disagreement, but Father Brown diffuses the fight. Instead of siding with Fischer or Crook, he tells a joke and turns the conversation towards lighter matters. An impatient person would have told them to shut up, a prideful, intelligent one would have used superior logic, but Father Brown uses a method that resists putting blame on people.

When the idea of putting on a play is put forward, the more serious characters such as Fischer react with annoyance to the enthusiastic pantomime, but Father Brown shows his patience by accepting his own part. Blount puts a paper donkey head on Father Brown, a clear insult to the priest, but Father Brown “bore it patiently and even found some private manner of moving his ears” (Chesterton 62). The reaction shows that Father Brown is patient enough not to mind being the butt of a joke and will even join in with it, proving that he does not take himself too seriously. The tolerance again makes itself seen when Fischer accuses Father Brown of stealing the diamonds. The priest is not offended by either the lack of trust or the lack of respect shown for his holy office. He simply complies with the search and then goes on to help with the investigation. Father Brown seems to care genuinely for others, and the truth of this is seen in the end of the story when he shows concern for what the crime will do to Flambeau, as well as to Fischer and the other guests.

The brief investigation that Father Brown carries out and his precise reconstruction to the thief himself of Flambeau’s heist reveals the intelligence hidden within Father Brown’s shadow. Up until the diamond is stolen, Father Brown appears to be of average intelligence at best. He does not engage in the theoretical discussion between Fischer and Crook, except to head off the argument. The donkey’s head placed on his head both allows him to act the part of the fool and suggests that he is as intelligent as a donkey. The illusion of Father Brown’s simpleness soon vanishes when his careful, yet swift investigation of the crime scene, combined with detailed earlier observations, reveals that Flambeau is Blount, as well as perpetrator. Even though he did not know a theft would be taking place, Father Brown observes and remembers enough details to put together every move Flambeau made in a matter of minutes, from posing

as Ruby's uncle, whom she had never seen before, to putting a tail on Fischer to conceal his lifting of the diamond from Fischer's coat pocket. The memory and analysis needed to put the pieces together are far above average, revealing Father Brown is smarter than he appears.

Like a scholar, he also enjoys hunting for the answer to a mystery, but enjoys it far more than he would like to admit. Finding the thief produces in him a "quite unusual excitement" and makes him "bound like a rabbit shot" (Chesterton 65). Yet the reaction Father Brown has when his theory about the crime forms prior to looking at the scene is to drop what is in his hands and stare with "a look of blank mental ruin" (Chesterton 65). It is this mixed response that suggests this is part of the Shadow, not the Persona.

The knowledge in Father Brown's shadow, however, is not merely academic, as the priest also knows of the world's evils. For Father Brown's decision to hold weight, he has to understand the nature of evil and its consequences, otherwise it is not better than the judgement of the child. His understanding of and knowledge of evil is most present in the speech he gives to Flambeau to convince him to give back the diamonds and turn away from crime. In order to show Flambeau what he could become if he continues, Father Brown cites numerous cases of people who became fully evil. He knows of and understands these cases enough to be able to speak coherently about them and apply them to Flambeau's situation. Joshua Hren confirms this by stating that Father Brown "is neither naive nor uninitiated into the world's contingencies and evils" (153). Hren made this statement in response to a different Father Brown story, but his argument remains accurate. Chene Heady states that Father Brown utilizes "his broad knowledge of human nature and the masses as they actually are to discern who psychologically must have committed the crime" ("Autobiography" 56); this further

supports the picture of Father Brown as knowledgeable about human evils. The understanding of worldly evils creates cynicism in Father Brown that he does not often allow himself to express, hence its position as a part of his shadow. Although, Father Brown does possess some hope in the form of his faith.

While the Catholic faith may be known for its strict traditions and penances, Father Brown focuses on the other half religion: mercy for sinners. Catholics believe that Christ died to save them from sin even though that salvation requires more conditions than other denominations of Christianity. One of these conditions is confession of sins to a priest who is not allowed to discuss the contents of these admissions with others due to the Seal of Confession. While Flambeau is notably silent when Father Brown confronts him and Father Brown does not ask the thief to discuss his sins, Father Brown's concealment of the crime mimics the Seal of Confession. Heady states that "most famously, Father Brown hears criminals' confessions but does not turn them into the authorities" ("Father Brown, Labor Priest" 866). The quote shows that Father Brown has listened to confessions in the past from criminals and also backs up my argument that the short story "The Flying Stars" is a part of a larger pattern of Father Brown releasing criminals, such as when he realizes that General Arthur St. Clare is an insane commander who killed all of his men and not the historical hero he is portrayed as. In that case, Father Brown knows the truth, but chooses not to reveal it to the ignorant public. When it comes to Father Brown's faith, Hren notes that he seems to prefer the New Testament to the Old Testament. Given that the Old Testament tells the story of how the Jews were chosen as their God's people and portrays the ways they were punished and judged when they sinned over and over again and that the New Testament relates how the Christ came to earth

to save humanity from their sins, Father Brown's preference for the New Testament shows his focus on mercy over judgement for sins. He seems to believe that if mercy is offered to those who are not too far gone, such as Flambeau, then a transformation to evil can be prevented.

Rehabilitative justice is about giving second chances to those who have committed crimes. While retributive justice is about deterring criminals with the punishment they could face or avenging the victims by making the criminal suffer an equivalent or greater amount, rehabilitative justice aims to turn the criminal into a functioning member of society. Father Brown clearly chooses rehabilitative justice by stating that his choice to let Flambeau go is an attempt to save both him and Crook, who will be blamed for the theft due to his socialism. When the priest speaks to Flambeau, the concern is not for the return of the diamonds, but for Flambeau and what will happen to him if he continues to be a thief. He states that "there is still youth and honour and humour in you [Flambeau]; don't fancy they will last long in that trade" (Chesterton 67). Father Brown continues by talking about "the honest outlaw" which together with his earlier statement about Flambeau having honor shows that he does not think that what Flambeau has done is too bad. Chiefly, Father Brown is concerned with the greater evil for which the theft of the diamonds are a stepping stone. He warns Flambeau that "men may keep a sort of level good, but no man has ever been able to keep to one level of evil" (Chesterton 67). One might think the theft itself is the evil Flambeau has committed that will lead to his moral decline, but Father Brown's words show he thinks the true evil is Flambeau's framing of Jonathan Crook for the crime. The suspicion that Crook committed the crime would separate him from Ruby, the woman he loves, and prevent any possible marriage between the two of them.

Even with Ruby and Crook as possible victims, Father Brown does not forget that Flambeau could also be a victim if he continues to steal, so he asks for Flambeau to renounce crime altogether, not just give back the diamonds. Arguably, Flambeau could have gone to jail and been physically prevented from further evil in that way, but eventually, he would get out through parole, release, or escape and go back to doing what he had done. Sending Flambeau to jail would be punitive justice and not rehabilitative. What is telling is that Father Brown's way of dealing with Flambeau is successful. Flambeau drops the diamonds and lets Father Brown give them back. By doing this, he signals that his ways have changed and he is now a moral member of society. He did not do this because Father Brown threatens him with punishment, but because Father Brown rehabilitates him by showing him the truth. In Flambeau's case, punishment is unnecessary and may have made things worse, proving that the crime followed by punishment pattern is not always the best choice.

Father Brown's reliance on rehabilitative justice calls into question the view of detective fiction as a pattern of deviance followed by punishment, but does fit the idea of deviance followed by correction. The difference is that punishment implies the revenge part of justice where justice itself means making everything right again. The fact that everyone in the story felt happiness and closure by the end without Flambeau needing to suffer for his theft posits the idea that punishment should be about showing criminals the proper path and persuading them to follow instead of using pain to force them to stay on it. Notably, however, the crime in question is a theft and not a murder. Theft is unquestionably a crime, but does not hold the same visceral and personal suffering murder does. Add to that the inherent lightness and humor of the story, and that the "The Flying Stars" seems to take place in a world where

murder cannot take place. Other Father Brown stories contain murder, but the attention to violence and loss is kept to minimum.

A possible reason for this is that the story is part of a sub-genre of detective fiction: Cozies. Cozies focus on the puzzle and intellectual challenge more than the implications of murder. The blood and grime of more realistic detective fiction is hardly in the story at all. The downplaying of these elements is what allows Father Brown to choose rehabilitation and mercy, but it also keeps his character fairly flat. Hints of possible darkness are present, mostly in the speech to Flambeau about criminals too far gone, but the lack of exploration keeps them from giving more shape to Father Brown's character. As a result, his score is on the lower end to indicate a lower amount of complexity and, ultimately, human realism. (See Table 4.)

Lord Peter Wimsey

Lord Peter Wimsey's aristocratic status not only separates him from the other amateur detectives in the study, but also defines both his character and choices. Table 5 shows his complexity score.

Table 5. Lord Peter Wimsey	
Ranking: 13 th	Overall Score: 10/20
Persona score: 4/5	Shadow score: 2/5
Hero's Journey: 2/5	Stereotype variance: 2/5

Lord Peter Wimsey's aristocratic status not only separates him from the other amateur detectives in the study, but also defines both his character and choices. The proper aristocratic gentleman is cheerful, generous, and hedonistic. He maintains a stiff upper lip in all situations, feeling emotions deeply, but hiding them, and is, above all, a bastion of rationality and common sense. Wimsey demonstrates these qualities throughout the books he serves as a protagonist for, but *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club* shows how his identity as an aristocratic gentleman defines his role. In this story, Wimsey comes face to face with his own perpetrator/victim, a dear friend and fellow soldier named George Fentiman, and hands him over to legal justice. The emotional connection that stops Abbershaw and Poirot is present in Wimsey, yet is ignored. He does not seem to recognize that circumstances impact the carrying out of Justice. The demands made by the Fentiman brothers for a reason why are only met with the declaration that the law is the law and it must be followed. Luckily for Wimsey, Fentiman is later proved to be innocent and the real perpetrator is not a perpetrator/victim or a dear friend of his. At the time, however, Wimsey absolutely believes that Fentiman committed murder and hands in the evidence that points to his guilt to the police without hesitation. While Wimsey does suffer over the decision, the conclusion he comes to seems forced. The forced nature of the decision combines with a low score in stereotype variance and a higher persona score to suggest that Wimsey is incapable of defying the stereotype defining him to make a different decision because he is too defined by his aristocratic English gentleman role.

The most robust part of Wimsey's character is his persona. A majority of his character is encapsulated by the trope of the typical rich English gentleman. As true gentleman, Wimsey

does not like any talk of money, whether it is his own lavish fortune or the measly amount his friend, George Fentiman lives on. He has love of good food and fine drink as well as a cheerful, always joking personality. Craig Mattson states that those who hate Wimsey and those who love him both agree that Wimsey's silly prattle is distracting. Mattson claims that Wimsey's loquaciousness is meant to question the stoic, grim detective type and stretch the genre (37). Whether or not that is the truth, Wimsey's over-the-top gaiety is his character's signature attribute. The stiff upper lip attributed to Englishmen can be seen in how he wades through crimes with a smile that does not dim at the horrific sights he looks upon. In fact, the gorier the crime, the more interested Wimsey is said to be. The desire to solve crime is not looked at by Wimsey's peers and social lessers as strange but seems to be taken as a form of eccentricity rich men display. While showing emotion was looked upon as unseemly or weak in English society, impulsivity was not frowned upon and the police inspector Wimsey works the closest with, Inspector Parker, states that Wimsey is known for his impulsivity. When examining a few paintings during the case, Parker wishes that Wimsey were with him, viewing the English lord as the artistic type. For most of the story, Wimsey fits the English gentleman stereotype perfectly, but one situation does threaten his control.

When George Fentiman becomes a suspect and evidence surfaces that points toward him as the killer, Wimsey's rational English attachment is threatened. An examination of his shadow shows that loyalty to his friends composes its heart, making it similar to Poirot's shadow in some ways. The only part of the story where Wimsey becomes emotional is when the evidence starts to point to his friend. His refusal to tell the police about his theories illustrates his loyalty and even in making a decision he knows to be right, he feels like a traitor.

The narrator notes that Wimsey washes his hands “like Pontius Pilate” and states that “Macbeth has murdered sleep” when he is called back to the case (Sayers 193). Both George Fentiman and his brother are infuriated when Wimsey admits his intention to reveal evidence that points strongly to George’s guilt to police and asks George to turn himself in. Wimsey’s reaction to their accusations is a combination of anger and grief that shows how torn by the situation he feels. For most of the story, Wimsey acts as if he is playing a game and nothing much is at stake, but the situation with George Fentiman causes Wimsey’s mood to take a more serious turn.

Wimsey’s connection to George Fentiman is more than just that of a friend, though. Like Wimsey, George fought in World War I and emerged with the same shell-shock Wimsey displays in other stories, though George’s appears to be more severe. While Wimsey lives his life and functions well in spite of his condition, George is unable to hold down a job due to PTSD and, as a result, lives in poverty. The effect on George’s psyche is worsened by his inability to fulfill the traditional role of the husband in English society and provide for his wife. He served his country and is left with a debilitating condition, but his country does not take care of him or make allowances, turning him into a victim. George states that “a man goes and fights for his country, gets his inside gassed out, and loses his job, and all they give him is the privilege of marching past the Cenotaph once a year and paying four shillings in the pound income-tax” (Sayers 6). If George turned out to be the murderer, he would have been a perpetrator/victim because of the damage done to his psyche. He raises the question of how responsible those with mental conditions, particularly soldiers returning from war with uncurable mental wounds

should be held for crimes like murder. The question is not explored in depth, unfortunately, but is still present.

Wimsey's own war experiences and shell-shock give him empathy and allow him to understand George. Monica Lott states that "as a major in the army, Wimsey saw a great deal of battle during the war; was nearly buried alive in the trenches; and suffered from flashbacks and anxiety, particularly in situations in which he was responsible for the lives of others" (103). Wimsey inherited a fortune and so does not suffer the same poverty but does know the same psychological issues and fears. The duty of the English gentleman to maintain a stiff upper-lip mean that, on the occasions shell-shock does cause his emotions to become uncontrolled, he feels emasculation like George. Lott points out that "Peter's class role meant that he had to see the war through, and ultimately, each mystery, until he could break down under the weight of his responsibilities" (120). The word "could" in this quote likely refers to the need for Wimsey to find a safe, private place where he is allowed to have a break-down. The mention of Wimsey's class role points to the requirement to be in control as a part of the aristocracy and not simply masculinity in general. While never stated outright, Wimsey cares for George because George is like the traumatized, emotional soldier Wimsey hides in his own shadow.

Wimsey's loyalty to his friends and connection to George as a traumatized veteran provide excellent motivation for Wimsey to let George go, yet Wimsey still chooses to give the police damning evidence against George. The reason for this is the commitment to rationality, which forms a key part of the English gentleman ideal and another cornerstone of the stereotype: the belief in absolute belief in law and order. This is seen in Wimsey's unwillingness to break the law, even to save his friend. George and Robert Fentiman both rail on Wimsey as a

snitch when he reveals evidence unfavorable to them and decry him as a sellout, but Wimsey refuses to disobey the law. He states that he told the police about the evidence against George “because glass bottles are facts and one mustn’t conceal facts” (Sayers 212). Parker asks Wimsey shortly after the evidence is handed over for Wimsey’s theories about the case and Wimsey replies angrily that he is obliged as a citizen to give evidence and facts he uncovers, but that he will not go past what the law requires in George’s case. Wimsey’s determination to follow the law and do no more shows the law as the factor that made him turn George in.

Beyond the stereotype, Wimsey’s dedication to the law does not appear to have a reason, making his decision seem mechanical, like he has to make that decision because that is the way he is written. The only response Wimsey gives when George and his brother press Wimsey on why he is going to give the evidence to the police is that the law is the law. No other reason is given, and the story does not provide any backstory or other evidence to suggest why Wimsey is so attached to the legal system and its preservation. In addition, Wimsey’s stereotype score is a two only, showing how defined by the aristocratic English gentleman role he is. The persona score of four Wimsey receives is both the highest out of all his rubric categories and closely linked to the stereotype he is a part of. His entire persona can be described by that stereotype fairly accurately, making its highly developed state and greater indication of how enveloped by the role Wimsey’s character is. Laura Martin notes that seven years later in *Gaudy Night*, Wimsey becomes a more lifelike, complex character. She states that until that point Wimsey is “a sham and a caricature, if a highly amusing one” (37). The use of the word “caricature” in particular points to how the stereotype dominates Wimsey’s personality until *Gaudy Night*. Perhaps if Wimsey had been placed in the same situation after

that point in his history, he might have grown even more human and complex, but he is not placed in such a position so there is no evidence to draw a conclusion from.

Wimsey's lower score (see Table 5) and corresponding lack of complexity supports the argument that the detectives who choose to let perpetrators go do so because they are more complex and human than detectives who choose not to. As an example of a detective who does not release a perpetrator, it is significant that Wimsey's score confirms that trend. *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club* provides evidence that Wimsey is constricted by the English gentleman stereotype. The emotions he feels, as well as his experiences as a war-torn soldier, slightly complicate that image, but are not allowed to control the character. The result is that Wimsey is unable to make a decision other than the one his role dictates: obeying the law without thought to the complications.

Conclusion

Without money or duty to consider, amateur detectives are freer to take all of the different facets of a situation into account when deciding whether or not to turn a criminal in. Dr. George Abbershaw sees an area where the legal system failed and loses faith in its infallibility, so he chooses to let a perpetrator/victim go. Realizing that the revelation of the perpetrators to the police would harm his friend, Bouc, Poirot leaves the ultimate decision about whether or not to proceed on legal grounds to Bouc. Father Brown judges rehabilitative justice to be more beneficial for both the thief and the victims, so he never reports the theft or its perpetrator. All three detectives look at the situations and decide to make their own call,

rather than blindly following the law's dictates. Lord Peter Wimsey, however, is unable to do the same because he is completely controlled by a stereotype. As a result, he lacks a mind of his own.

Wimsey's own lower score along with the higher scores of the other three detectives reflect this reality and support the claim that more complex, human-like characters are able to make decisions on their own. A higher score Persona indicates that the image a character is portrayed to the reader and other characters has been purposefully constructed like a person in real life would intentionally create their own image. We see this in Abbershaw's orderly, slightly fussy persona, Poirot's eccentric appearance and mannerism, and Father Brown's bumbling cheer. Scoring higher Shadow shows that a character possesses layers, because the Persona is not all there is to the character, and self-consciousness. Abbershaw is not a rationalist, but a man who defaults to reason because he finds emotion harder to understand. The apparent lack of intelligence on Father Brown's part conceals a keen, slightly jaded mind. Meanwhile, Poirot and Wimsey's lack of internal conflict or hidden traits, leave them with fewer dimensions. Wimsey, in particular, can be easily summarized and lacks the ability to surprise, making him a fairly flat character. The Hero's journey shows how circumstances changed Abbershaw well beyond his fellow amateur detectives, providing further proof of humanity. In the end, each character earned their score, whether higher or lower, and showed that higher complexity scores result from a higher level of realism and so humanity in a character.

CHAPTER IV

PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS

Introduction

Private Investigators (hereafter PIs) emphasize independence in general in literature, but especially do so when it comes to how they do their job. Though he sometimes works as an unpaid amateur detective, Sherlock Holmes is mainly a PI. The PI flourished the most as a literary figure, however, in America not Britain. The American PIs have a different relationship with the police than either amateur detectives or Holmes. Holmes insults the police at times for being slow-witted or incompetent; still, he is never their enemy. By contrast, PIs such as Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe possess an antagonistic relationship with law enforcement. While they are loyal to their clients and are even willing to withhold information from law enforcement if required, PIs do not follow their client's every whim. As Marlowe points out in *The Big Sleep*, hiring a detective is not like paying someone to clean windows because solving cases is not that simple, and, when hired, detectives see a case through, whether the client wishes it or not. Because the PIs control their methods and what they communicate about their findings, they preserve their agency.

Therefore, each PI uses a moral code to determine the fate of a guilty party in each case. Cordelia Grey in *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* by P.D. James, for example, decides that preserving the memory of the initial victim and respecting his wishes makes disguising a murder as a suicide morally acceptable. In "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot," one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's classic short stories, Sherlock Holmes states his belief that homicide is justifiable in circumstances such as avenging the murder of a loved one. Philip Marlowe in Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* acts on the belief that covering up a murder is sometimes best if the perpetrator needs psychological care and not prison and if it is to protect a dying man. The choice does not sit well with him even though he sees it as moral. Spenser shows in the Robert Parker novel *The Judas Goat* that he has less compunction than Marlowe about letting a crazy perpetrator off the hook. Sick of blood and death, he decides to release a terrorist rather than allow her to be arrested and tried. The one private investigator who seems unsure of his moral code and his reasons is the control detective, Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*. He hands his perpetrator over to the police because the author requires he do so to fit in with the detective stereotype and create closure in the novel.

For PIs in detective literature, it is not uncommon for the client to be morally dubious or criminal. PIs live in a morally bankrupt world where they strive for a semblance of honor or morality. While amateur detective fiction typically possesses the reputation of being idealistic and shallow, the hard-boiled genre PIs are central to possess an image of gritty realism. The law cannot be relied upon because the police are dirty, paid off, or unable to act, so the private investigator can only look inward at what they believe to be just and construct their own moral code. Julian Symons notes that particularly in the hard-boiled genre, it is not uncommon for PIs

to possess “their own crude code of ethics, but they are rough people doing dirty work” (153). While the need for physical toughness, as Symons suggests, is a significant part of the private investigator trope, the code of ethics is far more central. Alexander Howe’s statement that the PI “offers no guarantee of a shared justice, only his own idiosyncratic sense of honor” (69) concurs with this view. I argue that Private Investigators in detective fiction represent the potential for people to develop and live by their own moral codes that may operate outside the law.

Cordelia Gray

The following table details the complexity score of Cordelia Gray, the only female detective in this thesis.

Table 6. Cordelia Gray	
Ranking: tied for 3rd	Overall Score: 17/20
Persona score: 4/5	Shadow score: 5/5
Hero’s Journey: 4/5	Stereotype variance: 5/5

Cordelia Gray’s character can be summed up by one line from the original Cordelia in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*: “Love and be silent.” At first, Cordelia does not seem to fit this line because she is pragmatic and so logical that she appears to be unfeeling. She appears in only two books, *The Skull Beneath Her Skin* and *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*,¹ the novel I will be

¹ Keating rates the characterization in this novel at 8 out of 10. (188)

focusing on in this section. A majority of her character growth is said to occur in *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*. The novel explores Cordelia's first case as a solo detective which ends with a murder that Cordelia proceeds to disguise as a suicide. Cordelia takes this illegal action because she has fallen in love with and begun to identify with Mark Callendar, the victim of the case she is asked to investigate. When Cordelia witnesses Mark's mother, a perpetrator/victim, shoot Mark's killer in the head, Cordelia decides not only to stay silent about the truth, but also to alter the scene of the crime to throw suspicion off Mark's mother. Cordelia links herself with the famous Shakespearian heroine's line in both feeling and action. In the Shakespeare play, Cordelia is the only daughter of King Lear to do what is right instead of looking after her own selfish interests. We see this reflected in Cordelia's desire to protect Mark and do what she sees as morally right, even if society sees it as wrong. Overall, Cordelia reminds us that emotion often serves as the heart of humanity and the motive behind the choice to release the guilty from punishment.

Cordelia's persona portrays her as a practical and pragmatic businesswoman, and she certainly acts the part with her controlled reaction to Bernie's suicide. The lack of expression of her grief adds a new dimension to the idea of loving and being silent. As Cordelia's history with Bernie is revealed throughout the novel, her love for him as a father figure is uncovered. Yet she remains rational when finding his body because that is what Bernie would have wanted her to do, and she needs to seem in control of her emotions. When Cordelia is given the suicide note her partner and mentor, Bernie Pryde left on her desk and finds his body, she simply observes the scene and then tells the secretary "Mr. Pryde is dead; don't come in. I'll ring the police from here" (James 5). She remains so detached in fact that the first policeman to

respond to her call expresses “disapproval that she should be so calm” (James 8). The lack of hysteria or any emotional reaction portrays Cordelia as unsentimental and rational. Given that we first meet her when she discovers Bernie’s suicide, this impression is important to how she is viewed as the novel goes forward. Cordelia also takes pains to strengthen this image by being mature and business like in her appearance and speech. When interviewing Mark’s employers, she tries to look like “a mature business woman, sole proprietor of Pryde’s Detective Agency” (James 43). Cordelia knows she probably fails at projecting this image of herself at times, but strives to make the illusion of “a mature business woman” as real as possible.

In trying to act business-like, Cordelia consciously pushes back against gender norms in English society. While many private investigators face hostility because they are the only people who refuse to sell out, Cordelia faces greater scrutiny because she is a woman in a male-dominated profession. Women in the 1970s were considered to have sensibilities too delicate to investigate affairs or murder and to be too emotional for a rational profession like private investigator. P.D. James sets up this idea with the title of the book, *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*, and brings the idea up multiple times in the story. Glenwood Irons notes that “whenever the familiar dubbing of detective work as ‘unsuitable’ for a women surfaces, James indicates that she is signaling some deeply entrenched, but highly suspect claims that women are incapable of conducting themselves professionally as well as men” (31). While she is polite, Cordelia is unafraid to push to get what she needs. The friends of the victim, Mark Callendar, whose suicide, later revealed to be murder, she is hired to investigate attempt to evade her questions and distract her when she has conversations with them about Mark and his suicide.

Cordelia persists in asking her questions, including uncomfortable ones like whether any of them were Mark's lover. Combined with her dogged persistence, the persona of a tough, logical, working-class female detective who can get the job done emerges.

As the novel progresses, Cordelia's persona begins to crack. Her methods of investigation combine forensics and emotion from the start. She insists on staying in the place where Mark lived and died, and while she examines the cottage for evidence, forensic protocol would dictate that the scene should remain undisturbed by anything such as a person living in it. From the beginning, Cordelia aims to experience life as Mark had so that she could understand Mark more, a choice that ultimately led to the fracturing of her persona. Trying get inside of a victim's head gives the detective an intimate link with the victim that can turn emotional if not carefully managed, and Cordelia has no such practice at controlling herself. The tactics she uses would be understandable if she were trying to uncover the reason why Mark committed suicide, but Cordelia suspects murder early on and her investigation changes accordingly so the need to understand Mark is greatly lessened if not gone. During the period where she spends time with his friends and walks around his school, she attempts to see what Mark would have seen. She becomes closer to Mark the longer she stays in his world, and James Maxfield argues that Cordelia herself becomes "consciously aware that her whole interpretation of what happened to Mark Callendar is influenced by (if not created lock, stock and barrel) her identification with him" (213). The results of her strong attachment are both pure rage when she learns the identity of his murderer and the horrible way it was engineered to cover up the murder and the breaking of her persona.

When she confronts Sir Ronald Callendar, who hired her to find out why his son committed suicide, she expresses disbelief that Mark's own father could do such a thing, stating that "[She] can't believe that a human being could be so evil" (James 172). As Sir Ronald sneers at Cordelia's sentimentality, she cries out "what is the use of making the world more beautiful if the people who live in it can't love one another?" (James 172). In stark contrast to Bernie's suicide at the beginning, Cordelia shows herself to be idealist and emotional as she counters Sir Ronald's brutally logical observations and explanations with passionate outbursts. In that moment, Sir Ronald becomes the image of cold rationality, while Cordelia burns with uncontrolled, chaotic feelings. The mask of an intelligent and practical working girl is gone and beneath is an avenger filled with righteous anger.

Her ultimate act of emotion over reason occurs when Callendar is shot. Ms. Lemming, Sir Ronald's secretary and Mark's biological mother, overhears Cordelia's accusation and Sir Ronald's confession to Mark's murder and the threats leveled at Cordelia to keep her quiet. Enraged by her son's murder, she enters the room and shoots Sir Ronald in the head. Cordelia witnesses the crime but makes the decision to help Ms. Lemming and cover up the murder in an instant. Cordelia states in her head that the reason is "she did care if Mark's mother went to prison. She cared that the truth of his death should never be known" (James 181). Earlier on, she reveals with her thoughts that she covered up the murder to protect Mark and his memory, not because she cared for Ms. Lemming. Maxfield further reveals that Cordelia is defending the version of Mark her shadow represents and not the real person. He states, "Even when she thinks of Mark, she is thinking less of the real young man who died shortly after his twenty-first birthday than she is of a sort of male projection of herself" (Maxfield 213). "Projection" in the

quote is a reference to Cordelia's shadow. The emotional connection Cordelia develops with Mark shows the influence that a character's shadow can have on their decision making.

Cordelia's shadow is almost completely manifested in Mark Callendar. Both were lonely children without a mother in their life to look after them. When examining Mark's life early on in the investigation, Cordelia realizes that "she had identified with him, with his solitariness, his self-sufficiency; his alienation from his father, his lonely childhood" (James 89). Cordelia's father was dedicated to Communism and Mark's to science, but neither father had time to pay attention to their children or give them love. Mark went to college in Cambridge and Cordelia's dearest wish had been to go to Cambridge, but her father destroyed those plans and "there were no 'A' levels and no 'scholarship' for Cordelia as a result" (James 64). As a student at Cambridge, Mark got to live the life Cordelia secretly always wanted. Neither Mark nor Cordelia, fell in love with anyone. Both craved love desperately, but neither had anyone. As the novel progresses, Mark grows to embody Cordelia's shadow and the lost, lonely child she is inside.

Instead of playing the role of only an avenger in the story, Cordelia becomes linked with the victim, posing the question of how detective fiction changes when the detective is a victim. It would be possible to argue that Cordelia becomes a victim in the novel because she is a woman, but hard-boiled PIs are shot, beaten, or framed by murderers frequently enough to suggest that Cordelia's case is part of a genre pattern more than a gender one. Cordelia is threatened and assaulted by the murderer multiple times throughout the novel. She is thrown down a well and barely survives. Callendar chose Cordelia not because she is the best, but because as Joan G. Kotker states, "Sir Ronald is confident that whatever Gray's findings are, he

can control her and her information so that he will learn what he wants to know without endangering himself" (53). When the detective is also a victim, the objectivity and pure, unsentimental rationality detectives are identified with is no longer present. Maxfield observes "To be the avenger of a person whom one identifies with is, needless to say, to be symbolically avenging oneself" (214). If, as Maxfield argues, avenging someone closely identified with is analogous to avenging yourself the impossibility of detached judgement is clear. The perpetrator makes the abstract puzzle of crime solving into something personal and emotionally messy by attacking the person beneath the detective's role. While Lord Peter Wimsey faces a similar attack on himself as a person when his friend Fentiman became verbally abusive, he is a flat character, so he continues mechanically applying the law. More complex human characters such as Cordelia take actions they believe to be morally just whether they are legal or not.

This is especially true when the detective becomes a victim because the laws of society failed them. Callendar is able to blackmail Cordelia because Cordelia had no physical proof. Without hard evidence, the case would rely on Cordelia's word, the word of a young, inexperienced female private investigator against Callendar's word, the word of a rich, older respected male scientist. In a corrupt society such as the one Cordelia lived in, Callendar's word trumps Cordelia's every time. Leigh Gilmore notes that in many historical cases "a conventional association of women lying ignited the fire of scandal" (2). The word "conventional" in the quote supports the idea that women were habitually thought of as liars. Gilmore goes on to state that any women who did bring forward testimony had their reputations smeared and were shamed. Not only that, but the law could be used to punish Cordelia for even trying to tell

the truth through civil suits Callendar could file against her as well as the ugly rumors his influence could spread far and wide. In those days, finding work depended heavily on reputation, especially for women. The blow Callendar's slander gave to Cordelia's reputation would be crippling for her business. Like many PIs, Cordelia lives in a corrupt society where she alone tries to be morally just. The key difference is that in her world society is sexist instead of deformed by dirty cops or bribed politicians.

There can be no doubt that Cordelia acts on emotion when she helps Ms. Lemming get away with murder. The pragmatic, practical businesswoman Cordelia portrays herself as is not present when she confronts Callendar about Mark's murder. Her own words and actions show that she has fallen in love with Mark and empathized with him so completely that she has, in essence, become him. It is not usual for detectives to have an emotional connection through their shadow with the victim or for such a relationship to influence their decision making. In Willkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, Sergeant Cuff Trotter's view of Rosanna Spearman as a tragic flower plucked too soon certainly influences his decision to let Rachel Verinder get away with burglary, while Abbershaw's feelings for Meggie and the murderer's identity as Abbershaw's friend, sway his decision. Cordelia's journey from rational to emotional, however, vividly portrays what such passion looks like and how it is formed. As detective and victim blended, all chance of a detached, scientific approach disappeared. Any human being would choose emotion when provoked so personally, and the fact that Cordelia does so and clearly displays her feelings confirms that she is a very humanlike character, just as her near perfect complexity score suggests. (See Table 6)

Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock Holmes' score is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Sherlock Holmes	
Ranking: 5 th	Overall Score: 16.5/20
Persona score: 4.5/5	Shadow score: 5/5
Hero's Journey: 2/5	Stereotype variance: 5/5

While Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is renowned as one of the progenitors of the classical detective along with Sergeant Cuff from Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* as well as C. August Dupin from Edgar Allen Poe's "The Purloined Letter," his penchant for accepting justified homicide is much less well known. Holmes' unique brand of practical, scientific thinking combined with his emotional core, gives rise to his flexible moral code. The logic of his deductions and his study of science and forensics continue to influence many sleuths long after his creation. The ability he is best known for is reading a person's occupation, social standing, and often the reason for their visit to him at a single glance. Holmes scholars believe that the inspiration for Holmes, Dr. Bell², had a similar gift of diagnosing patient symptoms and diseases.

² Catherine Ramsland backs up this point by stating in "Observe Carefully, Deduce Shrewdly: Dr. Joseph Bell" that "He seemed a virtual wizard, and Conan Doyle was sufficiently impressed to later transform Bell into a fictional character—Sherlock Holmes." (77).

All of this is a mainstream part of Sherlock Holmes lore, but what is less remarked upon is Holmes' love of the arts, such as music. His long-time autobiographer and companion, Dr. Watson also notes his enjoyment of theater and the skill of disguise he gains from it. The resulting portrait of Holmes' character reveals him to be a man who believes in being rational yet still understands and is influenced by emotion. It would be tempting to see him as similar to Cordelia in this respect, but Holmes is more accepting of the emotional side of his nature than Cordelia and can call upon it without falling apart as she does. Combined with his lack of faith in the law and its efficiency, it is not surprising Holmes develops his own moral code. Sherlock Holmes's moral code allows for the possibility that murder could be justified, filling in a gap that Holmes perceives in the law.

Holmes exercises his extralegal moral code in several cases to let murderers go free. Trevor Cook notes that at such times Holmes invokes his independence as a "consulting detective" who is not employed by the police and bound by their rules to exercise his own judgement. Cook notes that "because Holmes operates independently of the police, he is free to forgive and forget whenever he feels justice has been served, and because that sometimes means he has to act outside the law, he expects to be equally forgiven and forgotten" (854). Cook also contrasts this freedom with the way police detectives are bound to report whatever they take note of. Many cases in which Holmes releases perpetrators exist. One of the most stand out of these is "The Case of Charles Augustus Milverton" in which Holmes and Watson witness the murder of the titular blackmailer then proceeded to help cover up the crime. Yet the story chosen for this study is not, "The Case of Charles Augustus Milverton" but "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot." Unlike most of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes

stories, "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" takes place outside of London. In the picturesque town of Cornwall Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson are vacationing when they are asked to investigate attack that left one woman dead and two of her three brothers insane. This story is relevant because Holmes not only approves of the murder with his actions in this story, but also clearly expresses to Watson and the reader that he allows the murderer to escape because he believes that the emotional suffering of the murderer at the hands of the victim made the killing understandable, if not justified. "The Adventure of Devil's Foot" thus casts a unique light on the famed detective, leading to its inclusion in the study.

From the beginning of the case, Sherlock's well-known persona as a man of rational thought and science is highly evident in a detached view of his own body that leads to physical exhaustion. Alyce von Rothkirch describes Holmes as "a university educated gentleman who, despite his professional manner, continues the tradition of the Victorian scientist" (9). The case itself takes place outside of London, Holmes's usual hunting grounds, because Holmes has made himself sick from overworking and Watson forces Holmes into taking a vacation somewhere away from London to recuperate. While Holmes does choose an idyllic country spot not far from the sea, his idea of a vacation is to study archeology in Cornwall and work on a scholarly thesis concerning ancient Celtic. Holmes's choice of location and decision to use his break to study academic interests reveal his attachment to science. The detachment with which Holmes faces the world is also pointed to as a sign of his rationality. Cook notes that this detachment is what allows Holmes to forget whatever he wishes to and thus maintain his mind for facts he deems useful (855). Yet the reason Holmes and Watson are in Cornwall is because he is so detached from his health that he let himself become rundown.

By using Cornwall as the setting, involving a vicar, and theorizing that the Devil is the culprit, the story juxtaposes Holmes's scientific thinking with faith in the mystical and the religious. When Holmes's assistance with a murder case that has left one woman dead and two men insane is sought by Mortimer Tregennis and the local vicar, Mortimer expresses his belief that the Devil may have killed his siblings. In response, Holmes simply states, "I fear that if the matter is beyond humanity it is certainly beyond me. Yet we must exhaust all natural explanations before we fall upon this theory" (Doyle 3). The first part about humanity is not just humility on Holmes's part, but an expression of his belief that the deduction he uses is an extension of rational human thought. Other stories support this claim, but as this study is focusing on one story for each detective, I will restrict myself to passages from "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot." The last half of the quote about "natural explanations" shows Holmes's belief in science and logic over supernatural explanations. While he is famously quoted as being willing to believe anything no matter how impossible if all else is eliminated, Holmes portrays himself as a skeptic. At no time during the case does he accept or consider the theory that the Devil is the murderer, thus demonstrating his faith in science over superstition.

During the case, every character except for Holmes gives in to some type of superstitious hysteria and shows themselves to be too personally invested in the case to be objective. After the examination of the first crime scene, however, Holmes seems to abandon the case altogether for a period. He already has some evidence by that point but knows that he has to wait on more developments before acting, so he goes back to his academic pursuits. Watson remarks that: "I may have commented upon my friend's power of mental detachment, but never have I wonder at it more than upon that spring morning in Cornwall when for two

hours he discoursed on celts, arrowheads, and shards, as lightly as if no sinister mystery were waiting his solution (Doyle 5). Watson's use of the word "detachment" indicates that Holmes does not seem to be thinking about the case at all or to be emotionally invested. When a person is emotionally invested in something, they bring it up frequently and always seem to be thinking about. Holmes departs from this because he seems to have stopped thinking about the case altogether. Rarely in the middle of a case does a detective simply forget about the case and go back to what they were doing previously. They may appear to do so, but usually whatever they are doing ends up being a part of the case anyway. The story does not connect Holmes's linguistic and archeological studies back to the case or its solution, though, and Holmes's academic pursuits remain as much a part of the background as Cornwall itself.

The detachment from his case that Holmes shows in the momentary pause he takes fits well Paula J. Reiter's argument that Holmes acts the part of the professional by being detached. Mostly Reiter uses economics to make her point about Holmes's objectivity emphasizing that "He could not be bought and would not be a slave to economic gain or the vicissitudes of the market" (Reiter 87). Reiter is arguing that Holmes is above economic motivation. It is also important and more relevant to my argument to note that she also stated Holmes is above emotional struggles too. Reiter writes "the Holmes model of professionalism proposes that work not only provides the material necessities of life, but also the emotional needs" (Reiter 82). After this quote, Reiter points out that if work is everything, then maintaining a private and domestic life becomes unnecessary. Single-minded dedication to doing a job well leaves little room for excitement over an individual case or client. Too much attachment to a case would leave Holmes unable to be either objective or patient, two values professionalism demands and

Holmes shows himself to possess. While Holmes is on his break, a famous explorer named Dr. Sterndale visits him and tries to get Holmes's theories on the case. Instead of his words prompting Holmes to return to the case or frightening him with the implied threat, Holmes calmly asks Dr. Sterndale when he heard about the murder case and then goes back to his Ancient Celtic. At the end of Holmes' break, Mortimer is murdered, and the vicar begins to believe that the Devil is the one responsible for the murders, showing up at Holmes and Watson's rented cottage terrified. Holmes, however, is merely excited about this second murder and shows no signs of guilt or shame.

During the examination of the second crime scene where Mortimer died, the veneer of rationality begins to fade to reveal the eager and emotional man underneath. Watson points out that when Holmes is intent on a case "One realized the red-hot energy which underlay Holmes's phlegmatic exterior" (Doyle 7). The great detective is also compared to a hound multiple times throughout the course of the study, with Watson describing him as "an old hound who hears the view-halloa" (Doyle 2) or a "dashing foxhound drawing a cover" (Doyle 7), and he makes exclamations of joy when he finds evidence. Only when his investigations wind down and the fresh evidence is all but exhausted, does the persona of the scientist re-solidify around Holmes and this part of his shadow disappear.

When Holmes finds the powder that later turns out to be Devil's Foot powder burned on the lamp and decides to test the effects on himself and Watson, the emotional nature of Holmes' shadow prominently displays itself in the impulsivity of the experiment and the horror the detective feels after nearly killing himself and his companion. Even with precautions such as the window open and the door ajar, both of them nearly succumb to the terror induced by the

fumes. Watson manages to break free then grab Holmes and escape out of the door just in time to avoid any permanent effects. Afterwards, Holmes apologizes to Watson for attempting an experiment that risked both their lives and becomes emotionally unguarded for the only time in the story, surprising Watson. Holmes' apology shows two aspects of his shadow: how he relies on his imagination and the feelings he has for Watson. Watson notes that Holmes probably chose Cornwall because "its sinister atmosphere of forgotten nations, appealed to the imagination" (Doyle 1). Rothkirch also sees Holmes as a romantic. He states, "Holmes embodies the late 19th-century faith in the scientific method, but he is also a romantic knight errant, motivated by his sense of chivalric duty and valour" (7). It is apparent that Holmes possesses a vivid imagination that influences his actions. Holmes also relies on this imagination as his comment after the disastrous experiment to Watson that "I never imagined that the effect could be so sudden and so severe" shows (Doyle 8). The use of the word "imagined" implies that Holmes uses his imagination to visualize outcomes in his head before acting and so uses his imagination to plan. The quote also reveals that another trait of Holmes's shadow is impulsivity. His every action may seem calculated, but if he had thought about the powder and what it had done for long enough, he probably would not have used it on himself and Watson.

It is possible he might have still risked using the powder on himself if his desire to know combined with his own detachment from his health. However, it becomes evident after the experiment that he views Watson's life as more valuable than his own. Holmes states that "it was an unjustifiable experiment even for one's self and doubly so for a friend" (Doyle 8). The "doubly so" combines with Watson's description of the unsteadiness in Holmes's voice to show that Holmes values Watson more. The emotion he feels towards the other man is at the core of

his shadow. While part of the sudden outpouring witnessed in the experiment's aftermath might have been the stress of going through a near death experience, the Devil's Foot powder inhibited the brain as well. It is, therefore, possible that Holmes did not possess the control over his shadow that he normally did, allowing it to leak through more clearly than ever before. The final nail in the coffin of a completely rational Sherlock Holmes is Holmes's decision to let Mortimer's murderer get away.

As an emotional man, Holmes recognizes that cases where the law fails and murders/victims are involved often have a motive behind them that is based on such feelings as love and grief. From the moment he takes action against the murderer, Holmes shows himself to be open to an extralegal situation. Holmes reveals to Watson that Dr. Sterndale is the murderer and that the powder they experimented with is the murder weapon. At this point, Dr. Sterndale arrives, having been invited by Holmes. If Holmes had notified the police of his findings, then Sterndale could have been ambushed and arrested by the police without trouble. Even if Holmes lacked proof, the police could have lain hidden nearby as Holmes teased a confession out of Sterndale. The detective's commitment to the possibility of another solution is further emphasized by Holmes' statement that "what my next step may be will depend entirely upon the nature of your own defense" (Doyle 9). One could argue Holmes takes this position because he does not respect the police, but the careful way he leaves behind the evidence for the police at the second crime scene shows this to be unlikely. If anything, Holmes respects the police more than many other private investigators.

Holmes' respect does not mean he believes the police or the law to be infallible, though. Rothkirch wrote that Holmes' "tendency to take the law into his own hands reflects not only a

prevailing distrust of the police, but also a sureness of moral instinct which were (and probably are) largely endorsed by the reading public" (11). These moral instincts would mostly be present in the form of feelings rather than rational thought. Holmes recognizes that there are cases where law, as a form of rational thought, fails. Christopher Clausen states that often in cases where Holmes lets the perpetrator go it is because "the crime was a pardonable act of revenge for acts which the law is helpless to redress" (113). The acts Clausen references are likely crimes committed that the perpetrator cannot be held accountable for due to a lack of evidence or other technical factors. The last words of the quote about how law can sometimes be "helpless to redress" harm done to a person shows that Holmes acknowledges that murderers/victims exist and must be accounted for. The logical solution to such an insight is to come up with a moral code of his own that allows him to respond to what the law cannot.

Sterndale shows himself to be a murderer/victim and to have an emotional reason Holmes could empathize with. When Sterndale discovers that Mortimer killed his sister, Sterndale takes Mortimer's life in revenge because he was in love with Mortimer's sister. The loss of his love makes him a victim, while the rage and pain he feels at losing someone he cares for so much makes his irrational, violent decision understandable. In that moment, Holmes especially could empathize with Sterndale. While there are few indications Holmes has a romantic attachment to Watson, there are more than enough to show Holmes loved Watson like a brother. Holmes nearly lost his near-brother in the disastrous experiment shortly before Sterndale's arrival. The emotion and adrenaline from he and his friend's near death is likely still present in Holmes's mind and heart. As a result, Holmes listens to Sterndale's explanation and

applies his own moral code, coming to the decision that Sterndale should be allowed to leave and bury himself in his work in Africa as Sterndale originally planned.

Rothkirch argues that Holmes makes decisions about whom he allows to escape the law based on Utilitarianism, yet the reasoning Holmes gives for letting Sterndale go does not match that idea. When asked about his reasoning, Holmes states, "I have never loved, Watson, but if I did and if the woman I loved had met such an end, I might even act as our lawless lion-hunter has done" (Doyle 12). The words show that Holmes understands emotions and the power they have over people as human beings when certain situations occur. Holmes concludes that the murder is more or less understandable, if not justified, based on the circumstances. After Holmes's confession of his motives, the story ends with the detective calmly going back to his ancient Celtic speech as if nothing had ever happened.

Cook supports the idea of Holmes's decision being based on his emotions when he states that incidents where Holmes lets a criminal go are "Sometimes cited as evidence of Holmes's humanity" (855). Proponents of the theory that the detective is allowed to pass judgement and let a criminal go because they are more than human, earlier referred to as the Superman theory, often cite Holmes as a prime example of a more than human character. Yet I argue that the emotions Holmes displays seriously question the idea of him being above humanity as Julian Symons and others argue. Holmes cannot be said to represent society in this moment either because the horrific nature of the murder weapon combined with the fear people of the time had of poisoning ensure that they would want Sterndale to be punished, even though his motives are romantic. Ian Burney refers to a "poison epidemic" that started in 1840 (20) and argues that while the number of poisoning cases remained small compared to

other homicides, the public was in a panic about poison due to the newspapers' reporting at the time. The newspapers covered poison trials more often than other murder trials so the public perceived poisoning to be on the rise, resulting in a societal fear of poison. "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" was written in 1910, but poison cases were still viewed as a societal threat as suggested by the increasingly more elaborate tests for poison around the time (Burney 187). Holmes's condition as near human character is the best explanation for his choice.

Overall, as a mainstream detective, Holmes supports the argument that a detective deciding to release the guilty is a well-established anomaly. Holmes shows himself to be rational and emotional at the same time, making his character complex and ultimately human-like. His complexity score of 16.5, which is in the excellent range, confirms this. As has already been noted with Cordelia Gray, the murderer is often attached to the detective's shadow or embodies it in some way. Emotion is highly present in the top four scorers in the study and is present in other detectives in the study to some degree. The conclusion that can be drawn from the profile of Sherlock Holmes is that to privilege emotion and loved ones over reason is an intrinsically human quality. A rational machine would deal with all societal deviants impartially which is why Justice is said to be blind because the reason why a crime occurred is not supposed to matter. If the motive for the crime does not influence whether punishment occurs or is severe, then perpetrator/victims should be treated like normal perpetrators. Detectives are certainly not blind to emotions and cannot remain rational in all circumstances, though. As a result, they recognize the difference between perpetrator/victims and other criminals. Holmes, in particular, understands this as both a person and a detective so he created a moral

code with three options instead of two: guilty, innocent, and justified. For Holmes, murder is forgivable if the reason is emotionally understandable.

Philip Marlowe

In Table 8, Phillip Marlowe's complexity score is broken down.

Table 8. Phillip Marlowe	
Ranking: 7 th	Overall Score: 15.5/20
Persona score: 4/5	Shadow score: 5/5
Hero's Journey: 3.5/5	Stereotype variance: 3/5

Philip Marlowe, as written by Raymond Chandler, is a man who strives to be honorable in a world where honor and even a stable concept of morality have ceased to exist. Marlowe diverges from the stereotype of a tough guy trying to do right because his shadow reveals that he knows being a pure, honorable man is impossible in the tainted world in which he lives as is apparent in his debut novel, *The Big Sleep*.³ The story begins with Marlowe investigating the case of black-mailer, Arthur Geiger for General Sternwood. Geiger is murdered shortly after and Marlowe retrieves the blackmail material for Sternwood then undertakes to find out what happened to Rusty Reagan, Sternwood's beloved son-in-law. The novel's focus on pornography, bribery, extortion and murder illustrates the corruption present in Marlowe's world. One way

³ H.R.F. Keating in his simple 1-10 rating scale for characterization gives a score of 9 for *The Big Sleep* (135).

his recognition of the taint is prominently displayed is in his reaction to law enforcement. While the amateur detectives could rely on the law to uphold morality and even Cordelia Gray could to some extent assume that they would help her, Marlowe never pretends to trust law enforcement and openly despises how the police can be bought off or bribed. Without a moral code given by the law or the world around him to follow, Marlowe comes up with his own which mimics the chivalric code of knights in deference to his desire to be one. Charles J. Rzepka suggests that Marlowe seeks to become a romanticized version of a knight and his persona certainly lives up to that theory (Rzepka 298). Marlowe possesses the warrior's courage and sheer physicality inherent in both the tough guy stereotype prevalent in hard-boiled detective fiction and in chivalric legends. Another defining trait is that cares he for the people around him. In the end, Marlowe is faced with a unique perpetrator/victim who forces him to recognize what his shadow already has, that being a moral, honorable man is impossible in the world he lives in, and he lets a murderer go free, leaving himself forever tainted.

The opening image of *The Big Sleep* is an iconic stained-glass window that hints strongly at Marlowe's desire to be a knight. Marlowe waits in the foyer of the Sternwood house to meet with General Sternwood, his client, observing while he waits the stained-glass window picture showing a lady, naked but strategically covered by long hair, tied to a tree with a knight doing his best to undo the knots holding her. Marlowe's thought is that he would want to help the knight if he had to see the window every day. As Eric Sandberg notes this desire "is famously associated, on the opening page of *The Big Sleep* (1939), with a stained-glass 'knight in dark armour rescuing a lady,'" (134). This shows Marlowe's desire to take over as the knight and to more or less protect the innocent lady in the stained-glass window. What is more telling than

his reaction to a simple window is the way he acts towards the Sternwood sisters throughout the novel. In *The Big Sleep*, Marlowe is hired to investigate a blackmailer named Arthur Geiger who is targeting his client's youngest daughter Carmen. Although nothing in Marlowe's assignment suggests that he is being hired to physically save Carmen or her older sister Vivian, whom Marlowe meets shortly afterwards when she demands to know if he was hired to find her runaway husband, Rusty Reagan, Marlowe seems to feel obligated to save them. When he finds Carmen drugged out of her mind and naked at a pornographic photo shoot, instead of focusing on Geiger, who is his original assignment and has just been murdered, he clothes Carmen and escorts her safely home. Later on, he rescues Vivian when she is held at gunpoint outside the gambling den of a mobster named Eddie Mars. Saving others is part of what knights are known for and Marlowe goes out of his way to do so multiple times.

In order to be a knight, Marlowe must possess the courage and physical toughness of a warrior. Marlowe seems like the typical tough private investigator and part of the reason is that many of the hard-boiled stereotypes were formed by Raymond Chandler and his fellow writers during this time period. Sandberg identifies Marlowe as "the classic example of hard-boiled heroism" (134). As expected of a hardened private investigator, Marlowe seems to fear nothing, even refusing to carry a weapon despite how frequently he is held at gunpoint. Julian Symons notes that Marlowe himself is best summed up by the famous quote from Chandler "Down these mean streets must go a man who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid" (153). When Mars holds Marlowe at gun point, Marlowe is not intimidated and continues to be his usual, mouthy self. For his courage, Mars nicknames Marlowe "Soldier" and gives him respect. Sandberg pointed out that "Chandler insists on Philip Marlowe's size and

attractiveness: 'You're tall, aren't you' are the first words spoken to him in the first of the Marlowe novels" (138). Sandberg argues that the focus on Marlowe's physicality added to the tradition of tough and masculine PIs.

Most of the time, when Marlowe fights, he uses his bare hands while his enemies have a gun. In spite of this, Marlowe wins and often takes away his opponent's gun. It is important to note that Marlowe is capable of using a gun but chooses not to out of a distaste for them, rather than a lack of skill. Marlowe displays his skill with guns when he kills Mars' hired killer, Canino, towards the end of the novel in order to protect himself and Mars' wife. By refusing to use a gun yet still possessing the ability to, Marlowe demonstrates the courage and skills needed to be a knight

There is, however, a major problem for Marlowe's knighthood aspirations: the tainted world in which he lives. Part of the filth can be seen in the sheer wantonness and childish selfishness of Carmen. Apart from Marlowe, most of the people in *The Big Sleep* are morally bankrupt, greedy, and/or lustful. The systemic nature of the taint is most visible in Marlowe's primary interaction with the police in the story. While Marlowe is investigating Geiger's murder, Geiger's business partner is shot to death in front of Marlowe. Marlowe runs the culprit down and turns him into the police, finally revealing what he knew about Geiger's murder after keeping silent for an entire day. Marlowe requests that the Sternwoods' involvement in the case be kept out of the media and out of the trial. The police officer listening to Marlowe's report, Captain Cronjager complains about the injustice of such a coverup, and Marlowe is quick to snap back at that policeman that he has "been in the police business (myself), as you know. They come a dime a dozen in any large city" (Chandler 114). The word

“they” refers to coverups, and the phrase “dime a dozen” hints that the city is rife with corruption and that justice can be bought off fairly cheaply. The picture the quote paints is of a corrupt police force willing to conceal any crime if well motivated to do so.

Much like Byronic heroes, Marlowe lives in a world where any notion of God or a fixed truth is dead, and he understands that. Peter J. Thorslev attributes the godless setting that Byronic heroes archetypally find themselves in to “the increasing secularization of what the Victorians were to call the ‘godless’ eighteenth century” (37). The Byronic hero was developed during the eighteenth century from characters in Lord Byron’s poetry, lending Thorslev’s argument credence.⁴ Later in the nineteenth century, as Nietzsche, with his famous declaration “God is dead,” arrived on the scene, this secularization of the Byronic hero increased. Alienation from society is another prominent characteristic of the Byronic hero. Thorslev observes that Byron replicated the isolation he himself felt from society in the poems that would define the Byronic hero. Marlowe exhibits the same kind of separation as a moral individual in an immoral world. The corrupt city of Los Angeles in which Marlowe lives shapes a foundational element of his shadow, which can best be described as the tainted knight. Marlowe expresses this himself when he looks at the chessboard in his apartment and thinks that “Knights had no meaning in this game. It wasn’t a game for knights” (Chandler 132). That no one except Marlowe reflects or comments on the injustice and corruption in the world portrays him as the lone knight, tainted by his surroundings yet still struggling to hold onto some semblance of honor.

⁴ See “GLOSSARY OF THE GOTHIC: BYRONIC HERO” E-publications, Marquette University. https://epublications.marquette.edu/gothic_byronichero/ for further details.

Marlowe's refusal to take anything more than a fair payment and the dedication he shows in protecting his client mimics the chivalric code of a knight. A large aspect of Marlowe's honor code is to take no more money than a job is worth. Part of this is connected to one of the key attributes of Marlowe's persona: his portrayal of himself as a working man just trying to earn a living in a survival of the fittest world. During his report, police officer Captain Cronjager threatens Marlowe to get information Marlowe is withholding to protect the client. After his threats fail to make an impact, Captain Cronjager demands to know why Marlowe is willing to risk the ire of most of the police in the city to keep faith with his client. Marlowe simply says, "I am on a case. Selling what I have to sell to make a living. What little guts and intelligence the Lord gave me and a willingness to get pushed around to protect a client" (Chandler 114). The phrase "selling what I have to sell to make living" invokes the working man who lives by the labor of his hands. While this may seem to apply more to serfs than to a knight, knights too made their living through physical work, even if theirs was oriented towards combat and protection instead of creating a product. Marlowe demonstrates his commitment to this principle when he refuses to accept the exorbitant amount General Sternwood tries to give him for his work on the Geiger case. Sternwood, however, will not take any of the money back so Marlowe undertakes an extra job for Sternwood he deems to be worth the excess amount in the payment: finding Rust Reagan, Vivian's runaway husband whom his client is fond of. As an honorable professional, Marlowe knows what a job is worth and will accept no more or no less, so he does extra work to make up the balance when given an excessive payment.

Another significant part of Marlowe's code is to protect the client above all else. One way Marlowe protected General Sternwood is by refusing to sleep with either of the Sternwood

sisters. Rzepka states that “Marlowe's adherence to the rule of *comitatus* or knightly fealty [to their lord] is closely linked to his maintaining chastity, or sexual continence, throughout the book” (703). The “comitatus” that Rzepka refers to is defined earlier in his article as a knight’s fealty to their lord. By mentioning that in connection with chastity, Rzepka introduces the claim that Marlowe refuses the sexual advances of the Sternwood sisters because of his loyalty to General Sternwood. Rzepka argues the point more explicitly later in his article as well. When Carmen shows up naked in his bed, Marlowe tells her that he cannot have sex with her because “It’s a question of professional pride. . . I am working for your father. . . He sort of trusts me not to pull any stunts” (Chandler 132). Marlowe’s mention of “professional pride” and the trust placed in him not to pull any stunts make his refusal a matter of honor. Vivian is not as blatant as Carmen in her attempted seductions, but Marlowe refuses her firmly, too.

It is tempting to think that Marlowe is simply not interested in women, and Alexander Howe has pointed out that past critics have wondered if Marlowe is homosexual. Howe also discusses the way Marlowe “goes back to the bed and tears it savagely to pieces” after Carmen has left it (111). Marlowe’s so-called hangover from women, Howe argues, show that “clearly, Marlowe’s defenses are not as sound as he would make them appear” (111). The reference to Marlowe’s defenses reveals that Marlowe still has a libido, and his reaction to Silver Wig later in the story is certainly more sexual than the way he treats Carmen and Vivian. If anything, Marlowe seems disgusted by lust of the sisters, going so far as to threaten to throw Carmen out of his apartment naked if she does not put her clothes back on in the time he allots her. He views their actions as the product of the morally depraved world in which they live. If either sister is in trouble, Marlowe is their staunch protector, but if they seek sex with him, he

resembles a disapproving older brother. The contrast reveals that Marlowe is less the kind of knight who fights for a lady and more the type that serves and protects his patron faithfully. In refusing to sleep with General Sternwood's daughters, Marlowe seeks to protect the General from emotional harm.

While part of the reason Marlowe is willing to go so far to protect his client is certainly his self-imposed knightly code, Marlowe possesses a genuine care for people inside his shadow. The biggest example of this is General Sternwood who never asks Marlowe to look for Rusty, but yearns for him to all the same. Perceiving Sternwood's love for Rusty, Marlowe takes it upon himself to find out what happened in order to give the dying man hope. On a smaller scale, the feelings Marlowe displays when Harry Jones, a man trying to sell Marlowe information on Rusty Reagan, is killed by Canino also shows his desire to care. Marlowe had only spoken with Jones once, and yet the loss of Jones upset him. The caring combined with the more daring part of Marlowe's aspect as a knight to cause him to shoot Canino when given the opportunity and to rescue Mrs. Mars off from the husband who had confined her.

The exploration of the ability to care seems to leave Marlowe unstable at moments, particularly when he faces Canino and rescues Mrs. Mars, because he knows the world he lives in does not have place for kindness yet he still wishes to give it. The changes Marlowe goes through give him a 3.5 score for the Hero's Journey which is not as impressive as his shadow score of 5 or persona score of 4, but still above average for most detectives in this study who typically score a 2 or below. In the beginning of *The Big Sleep*, Marlowe's relationship with General Sternwood and his daughters is businesslike, and Marlowe sees no problem with doling out hard truths. Marlowe asks General Sternwood in their first meeting "do I have to be polite?"

Or can I just be natural” (Chandler 14). At this point, Marlowe’s commitment to being truthful and just is firm and unquestioned. As time goes on, though, I argue that the ugliness of blackmail, lust and greed begin to wear at him leading to his declaration that the world he lived in is not for knights. Carmen causes Marlowe to change further by setting his need to be truthful against the requirement of his code to protect his client. Finally, the ultimate expression of his care for people combines with his desire to be a knight to motivate his choice to conceal Rusty’s murder and Carmen’s identity as his killer which corrupts slightly Marlowe’s moral code.

Marlowe’s decision to let Carmen get away with murder is made, in part, out of concern for General Sternwood. While his personal code did involve protecting his client, Marlowe seems to act more out of sympathy for the general. Revealing the truth about Rusty’s murder and the location of his body would take away the one event that the general looked forward to as he lay on his death bed: a reunion with his beloved son-in-law. The reason for his silence, however, is “to protect what little pride a broken and sick old man had in his blood, in the thought that his blood wasn’t poison and that although his two little girls are a trifle wild, as many nice girls are these days, they are not perverts or killers” (Chandler 228). The original reason that General Sternwood hires Marlowe is because he has too much pride to simply give in to a blackmailer. Marlowe understands how important this pride is to his client, because his pride and his daughters are all that the elderly, dying man has left. Telling the General about what Carmen did, about her wild homicidal impulses that killed Rusty and would have killed Marlowe if he had not filled her gun with blanks, would reveal to General Sternwood that he had failed as a father and done so horribly that the son-in-law he loved paid the price. The

reference to the general's hope "that his blood wasn't poison" implies that Sternwood places hope in the proud heritage that he has passed down to his daughters and Marlowe knew taking away that hope would be devastating.

Marlowe also decides to keep the secret because he cares about the Sternwood sisters. Carmen's sudden attack on Marlowe for refusing her sexual advances is reminiscent of a toddler throwing a tantrum. Frequently throughout the story Carmen is said to "giggle" which invokes a child and cloaks her in a sort of innocent naivety even as she acts lasciviously. Marlowe implies that insanity is the cause of Carmen's behavior when he describes her attempt on his life as part of "a mild epileptic fit" (Chandler 184). When Marlowe informs Vivian that he knows what happened to Rusty, Marlowe gives Vivian three days to get Carmen into a place where she could not get weapons anymore. Marlowe describes a place where people like Carmen could be handled and Carmen herself could possibly be cured, implying it is some type of mental hospital. Marlowe agrees to stay silent about Rusty's murder if Carmen is taken to one. Prison would restrict Carmen's access to weapons just as much, so Marlowe's decision is not about keeping Carmen from harming others, it is about her well-being.

Carmen's illness complicates how her crime is viewed and ultimately sets Marlowe's personal code at war with itself. It causes Marlowe to see her as a murderer/victim, but unlike the previous murderer/victims that have been discussed, Carmen's turn to criminality is not due to a crime she fell victim to. One option for criminals in court is to plead not guilty due to insanity. Murder has a requirement known as *mens rae* or "guilty mind" which refers to the need for intentionality in the commission of a murder according to Cornell Law School. In order to qualify as murder and not man-slaughter, the perpetrator must understand that murder is

wrong and premeditate or plan the murder, even if only for a few seconds. A landmark case on pleas of insanity in the United States, *McDonald vs. U.S.*⁵ occurred only five years prior to the publication of *The Big Sleep*, making those types of cases a recent and timely issue. Carmen's illness means that she is unable to distinguish right from wrong, giving her the right to plead insanity instead of guilty or not guilty. Rzepka argues that Marlowe does see Carmen as a victim: "Carmen has clearly been abandoned by her father to her own homicidal impulses, and Chandler implies that she is as much their victim as the man she killed" (704). The mention of abandonment by her father might make it seem like he is the guilty party, and parents certainly do bear some responsibility when it comes to the mentally ill and their ability to do harm, but the homicidal impulses are what Rzepka shows to ultimately be at fault. A successful insanity plea results in the perpetrator living out the rest of their life in a mental asylum instead of doing time in jail. Marlowe imitates this somewhat by demanding that Carmen be placed in an asylum, but with a difference. The reference to Carmen possibly being cured shows that Marlowe is not forcing Carmen to be imprisoned for the rest of her life.

In making his decision, Marlowe's desire to be honorable and need to protect and care for the innocent clash. As an honorable man, he should not lie to his client or even to the police, yet Marlowe must do so. If he tells General Sternwood, he inflicts irrevocable harm on the old man, and if he tells the police, Carmen will not get the help she needs. While Marlowe

⁵According to Justia US Law, in the case of *McDonald vs. U.S.* the defendant's lawyer argued that his client was insane when he was committing the crime. With the author of the crime uncontested, the only issue being argued was whether McDonald knew right from wrong at the time. The court-appointed psychologist concluded McDonald was incompetent to stand trial and he was placed in a mental hospital for a ninety-day assessment. At the end of that period, three psychologists concluded that McDonald was sane and could stand trial. McDonald was found guilty and appealed using the insanity defense through multiple appeals, but could not get the guilty verdict overturned.

does not ponder his decision long and is not indecisive, his conversation with Vivian when he makes the deal showcases his agitation. During the conversation, Vivian insults Marlowe and, even though he has been called worse throughout the story and barely reacted to it, he rants about how he risks everything for his clients for very little money and thanks. When he asks Vivian to take Carmen somewhere safe for her, Marlowe is said to be speaking “heavily” which makes the words seem like they are a burden Marlowe is forced to carry. The decision to leave Carmen be is not a simple one in Marlowe’s mind. Marlowe states that he is “part of the nastiness now” (Chandler 190), afterwards showing that he believes the act of releasing a murderer has tainted him forever. The world Marlowe lives in has made him just as morally stained as it is, which is why he can never be a true knight.

While Marlowe’s desire to be a knight is unusual, his desire to protect others as a detective is not. Like the desire to be merciful, the desire to protect is a trend across multiple different detective profiles. Cordelia Gray’s shadow connection to Mark Callendar leads her to a desire to protect Mark’s mother from harm along with Mark’s memory. Aloysius Pendergast feels a duty to safeguard his ward and adopted daughter, Constance, as well as to keep the world safe from whatever harm his brother Diogenes will try to unleash. The desire to be a knight mimics the unrealistic dreams of being like heroes of myth that we openly talk about as children and secretly continue to harbor as adults. Marlowe’s attempt at knighthood is simply another way that he is realistic. Detectives such as Father Brown do want to protect others, but it is the private investigators and the police detectives, both of whom are bound by their job to serve people, who are most responsible for protecting others. The police are more bound than the investigators, due to their duty to protect on a grander scale, while private investigators

shield only small groups of individuals. Perhaps it is due to this desire to protect that private investigators, such as Marlowe, act as knights in a dark world.

Spencer

The score of Robert Parker's Spencer, another private investigator is detailed in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Spencer	
Ranking: 8 th	Overall Score: 13/20
Persona score: 4/5	Shadow score: 5/5
Hero's Journey: 2/5	Stereotype variance: 2/5

Like Marlowe, Spencer, a private investigator created by Robert Parker, is a protagonist in several hard-boiled detective fiction novels and yet he does not possess the same knight-like ideals as Marlowe. Part of this could be due to the thirty years or so that elapsed between the publication of Marlowe's debut novel *The Big Sleep* and the first Spencer novel. Police and the corruption of the city are not the focuses of Spencer's problems, which are more international in nature. Spencer plays a more combative role in his investigations than Marlowe and carries a gun to use in the physical violence that is more a part of his job than his counterpart's. Spencer also does not hesitate to work with criminals, such as hired guns, if he needs to for a case. Yet the same feelings of being tainted that are prominent in Marlowe are also seen in Spencer. For Spencer, the corruption comes from the job and how it requires him to kill. A prime example of

this comes from *The Judas Goat* where Spenser is contracted to identify and punish a group of bombers. He kills or captures all but one, whom he declines to identify and allows to walk free. The action hints at both the guilt that Spenser feels from killing, a frequent necessity in the course of his job, and his desire to protect life rather than take it.

Spenser's persona is best described as a gritty, gunslinging hero. When Spenser is interviewed by his client, Hugh Dixon, one of the questions Spenser is asked is how good he is at persevering when a case gets tough. Spenser's answer is "on a scale of ten, ten" (Parker 6). While Spenser is not humble in his assessment of his own abilities and his answer could be taken as a lie, at no point during the story does Spenser contemplate quitting even when the Liberty Bombers, the terrorist bombers his client has sent him to identify and capture or kill, send members to murder him. In one of these attacks, Spenser is shot, and he acts like the injury is no real issue. More than that, though, Spenser's ability to keep going in hard situations is recognized by others. Dixon tells Spenser later on in the interview that the reason he is hiring Spenser is "you're tough, you won't cheat me, and you'll stick" (Parker 10). Spenser's own words and what Dixon reveals of Spenser's reputation match the reputation for grit and perseverance already introduced to the hard-boiled genre by Marlowe. The image of the tough private investigator shouldering his way through poverty, enemies and dishonest clients is a trope that Spenser exemplifies well, so much so that his own development is hindered by the stereotype somewhat as his score of 2 in stereotype variance suggests.

Where Spenser differs from this stereotype is that his grit involves the use of guns. Marlowe and Spade, his contemporary, openly dislike guns and rarely, if ever use them. For those two detectives, it shows their courage and confidence in their own skills, whether in

hand-to-hand combat, investigation, or manipulation. Spenser, however, openly relies on the use of guns. One of the first actions he takes when planning to leave for London to hunt the Liberty Bombers is to secure a gun permit for concealed carry in England. When the men from the Liberty Bombers try to assassinate him at his hotel, Spenser uses his gun well and without hesitation, though he does showcase some hand-to-hand skills. The use of guns does not make Spenser any less masculine than Marlowe or Spade. When talking with his girlfriend, Susan, Spenser refers to himself as a “tough manly bastard” (Parker 25), as well as hunter, a traditionally male role. More important than the gun, though, is what it signifies for Spenser: a willingness to get his hands dirty when need be.

Detectives can be competent fighters, and often are in the hard-boiled genre as has already been seen, but few kill multiple opponents in the same story the way Spenser does. In part, the novel’s post-war setting and the feeling of nihilism around violence during that period are responsible. Mostly, however, as the thriller genre became more defined and private investigators began to populate them more and more, the violence grew. The most modern detective in the study, Agent Pendergast, does not possess the sheer number of kills Spenser does, but the scene where he fights a prison gang and snaps the neck of the gang’s leader with bare hands is as horrific as it is memorable. The argument that violence in hard-boiled detective fiction has grown is justified by his example.

The violence Spenser eventually commits is foreshadowed by the mandate that he is handed by his clients is to bring all the bombers in, dead or alive. The possibility of bringing back corpses instead of live criminals for judgement signals from the beginning that this story is going to be bloody, even with Spenser’s stated preference for bringing the criminals back alive.

As the Liberty members throw themselves at Spenser in desperate attempts to kill their hunter, the bodies begin to pile up. When Spenser hires Hawk, a hitman with a penchant for automatic weapons, the case grows bloodier still as two more bombers die in a hail of bullets from Hawk when Spenser tricks the group into capturing him and bringing him to their hideout. At no point during the story does Spenser hesitate to shoot, though a majority of the cases are self-defense. Spenser thinks to himself before one of the assassination attempts that "I won't shoot if I'm not taking fire. They try to kill me, I'll fight" (Parker 44). While the first part of the quote expresses that Spenser will only shoot in self-defense or when "taking fire," the second part shows his unflinching resolve to kill if necessary. On a more figurative level of dirtiness, Hawk also shows Spenser's willingness to associate with criminals in order to get a job done. Mark Letcher states, "Spenser's closest ally is Hawk, an African American with an unclear, but criminal past" (120). Letcher uses Hawk as an example of how it is sometimes hard to tell heroes from villains in Parker's fiction, and he is certainly right about Hawk's dubious past. Spenser even refers to a time where Hawk had been hired to kill him, but decided against killing Spenser in the end. Working with Hawk does show Spenser's willingness to be around people who are not ethically pure.

In spite of his readiness to do what is required, Spenser does possess a strict moral code of his own, which is in keeping with the tough guy stereotype perpetuated by the hard-boiled genre, as well as his desired image of a hero. Spenser openly declares to Dixon during the interview that there are lines he refuses to cross and actions he will not take for any amount of money. In fact, he says, "the things I won't do for money are one hell of a lot more numerous than the things I will do" (Parker 10). While it is not uncommon for a private investigator to

emphasize their independence, most of them wait until the client tries to ask them for something unethical before giving the speech about how they and their morals cannot be bought. Spenser emphasizes it upfront before he is even hired. Yet, Spenser does not define his moral code clearly. He does not tell Dixon what precisely he is unwilling to do or show the tenacious loyalty to his client Marlowe does. James Golsan notes that Spenser lives by “a code that is at once firm, deliberate, and not quite capable of being articulated” (159). While Golsan states that the moral code is very present and unable to be defined code, I argue that it is a combination of honesty and loyalty. Most of the times when the code is referenced in the story, killing is being discussed, but there is one other point where the code is clearer than others.

The closest either Spenser or Dixon comes to defining the code is the reference to two popular cultural heroes of the time: Captain Midnight and Hop Harrigan. Dixon refers to Spenser as “a hungry Captain Midnight” (Parker 10). Captain Midnight is a fictional pilot from a 1938 radio show who saved people, first as a private citizen, and then as the commander of a secret air-force squad sent on impossible missions. Spenser does not dispute the association, but instead adds a hero of his own who is similar to Captain Midnight: Hop Harrigan. The primary difference with Hop Harrigan, though, is that he took on a guardian angel aspect later into his fictional career. What both have in common, however, and what Harrigan in particular symbolizes is the desire to save people. Spenser confirms this later on in the story in a conversation with Hawk. Hawk asks, “why not go the easy route and whack’em out right off?” (Parker 90). Ruthless as the suggestion is, Hawk is right about killing all the bombers being the “easy route.” With the instructions Dixon gave, Spenser would not lose any of his fee for it. Spenser refuses to do it, which implies that one of his rules is trying to save anyone he can by

not killing needlessly. The rule also hints at one of the most foundational parts of Spenser's shadow.

Much like Marlowe, the desire to protect others and be a hero is at the core of his persona and life, but he recognizes in his shadow that this is impossible. With Marlowe, it is because the world around him is tainted and morally grey in every area. For Spenser, the problem is that saving one life in the hard reality he lives in often involves the taking of others. The corruption of the world is more evident in Marlowe's world than Spenser's, which is mostly gritty because of his job fighting against criminals instead of being due to a lack of morality in the world at large. When Spenser kills, the part of his shadow that recognizes this becomes consumed by guilt. Before any of the Liberty members attack, Spenser tries to convince himself that he might not have to kill them and that he is not setting them up to die by tricking them into coming after him, but gives up in the end with the statement that he will do it anyway "whether it's messy or not, so there's not much point analyzing its ethical implications" (Parker 44). After Spenser shoots two assassins in the first attack on him, he acts unbothered, but has trouble sleeping because he killed what he referred to as "two kids." Because he kills, Spenser feels tainted and guilty. In response to his feelings of guilt, Spenser seeks out the company of Susan whom he says gives him a feeling of purity. He tells Susan, "It's like I need to love you to come back whole from where I go sometimes" (Parker 202). This is manifestly opposite from Marlowe for whom women were only a hinderance or a temptation. For Spenser, Susan reminds him of the life he values. That value along with the taint he feels from taking life is likely what leads to his choice to release Kathy.

The scene where Spenser makes his choice is short but weighty. In the hospital where Spenser is recovering from injuries received in the final fight of the case, he is visited by Dixon who wanted to express his satisfaction in person at the great work Spenser has done fulfilling his request and to see the final bomber, Kathy, whom he has been informed is in custody. Spenser, however, tells Dixon that Kathy is not the final bomber and claims to have missed the real one. While Hawk does not conflict the story in Dixon's hearing, he does question Spenser as soon as Dixon leaves. Spenser claims he is releasing Kathy because he feels he owes her for being the one to betray the Liberty bombers to him. Hawk is suspicious and does not agree with Spenser, but helps Kathy get out of police custody on Spenser's request.

After the case is over, Spenser admits that his reason for letting Kathy go is more instinctual and had more to do with the desire to avoid one more casualty from a case that already had too many. He states when deciding on whether or not to hand someone over to the police on cases like Kathy's that "sometimes I guess, sometimes I trust my instincts, sometimes I don't care. I do what I can" (Parker 201). The last words about "doing what he can" seem to refer to saving who he can. The impression is bolstered by Spenser's next response to a seemingly innocuous question from Susan about a shower. Spenser states "There was a lot of blood. Too much. People die. Some people probably ought to. But this time there was a lot. I needed to get rid of it. I needed to get clean" (Parker 201). The reference to the guilt and feelings of corruption that killing gives Spenser so soon after he gave his reasoning for releasing Kathy suggests that he felt enough lives have been taken in the case already. Sending Kathy to the police would not be the same as killing her, though the death penalty is a possibility given her status as a terrorist. It would still be ending a life, though, and it is too much for Spenser to

bear. It was also unnecessary as Kathy does not seem to have the will or intention to keep killing. Without the need to protect other people from Kathy, he would not be killing to save lives so he could not kill her. The problem with this explanation is Hawk, who does kill and will continue to do it. Spenser, however, seems to trust that Hawk will not kill without reason.

Detectives have commonly valued life throughout the history of the detective fiction genre. Mostly, they value the lives of their friends and loved ones like anyone would. However, Inspector Drifffield, who is a police detective, feels more responsibility to protect the lives of his subordinates than the lives of the perpetrator or anyone else. Pendergast, also in the police detective group, kills without hesitation if required, but hates to do it, even if the victim is a horrific child murderer. Yet Spenser is the detective who most seems to understand the gravity of taking another's life possibly because of how high his kill count is. Whether by bullet or putting them behind bars, the private investigator takes lives and the job is not to be taken lightly.

Spenser behaves more like a hard-boiled themed action hero than a detective. He possesses the same clichéd perseverance and toughness as the stereotypical PI and a moral code of a sort, but does less investigating and more fighting. Like Marlowe's shadow, Spenser's recognizes that the pure hero he wishes to be is an impossibility. Spenser's job involves protecting others by killing as much as by investigating so he will never be completely ethical. All he can do is save as many lives as he can, even if not all the lives he saves are innocent, and wash the blood off with the pure love of his girlfriend.

Sam Spade

Given Sam Spade's fame and reputation as a ruggedly individualistic character, his fatalistic faith in the legal system and shallowness of character are surprising. The lack of complexity can be seen in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Sam Spade	
Ranking: 12 th	Overall Score: 11.5/20
Persona score: 4.5/5	Shadow score: 2/5
Hero's Journey: 2/5	Stereotype variance: 3/5

Given Sam Spade's fame and reputation as a ruggedly individualistic character, his fatalistic faith in the legal system and shallowness of character are surprising. The text I examined was Dashiell Hammet's famous novel, *The Maltese Falcon*, which follows iconic private investigator Sam Spade as he investigates the case of Brigid O'Shaughnessy after the murder of his partner, Miles Archer. Spade discovers that O'Shaughnessy is a member of a group of thieves who stole an artifact, the Maltese Falcon, and that she double-crossed them to steal it for herself. In the story, Spade takes great pains to create the persona of a violent gambler with a mercurial temper. When utilizing this persona, he appears to pay the law only grudging lip-service, but the form his persona takes reveals his belief in the absolute power of the law to exact punitive justice. We can only see his shadow, a wily strategist, by considering how neatly and perfectly Spade performs his actions. Yet not even Spade's shadow allows his character to develop because it reveals him to be an unreliable narrator who is manipulated by the author like a

puppet to deceive the audience. The unexplained belief in the law's inevitable power seen in the persona and the artificiality revealed by the shadow as well as the biased nature of the narrator combine to make Spade a superficial character unable to make choices on his own as more complex characters in this study have done.

Spade's persona can best be described as a wild gambler, unsurprising considering that his last name is the same as a card suit. Part of his persona is the suave, gentlemanly charm connected with gamblers. The description of him in the beginning of the story states that "he looked rather pleasantly like a blond satan" (Hammett 1). The adverb descriptor "pleasantly" in addition to the word "satan" give the idea that Spade is physically attractive and charming. The number of women interested in Spade throughout the novel, from his secretary, to Archer's wife, to Miss Wonderly, later Brigid O-Shaughnessy, confirms his overall charisma. Spade also possesses an ability to sweet talk nearly every person he talks to. Len Gutkin agrees stating that "*The Maltese Falcon's* Sam Spade is a good talker" (1321). When he wants to know about O'Shaughnessy and later Joe Cairo, the second person to come to Spade seeking the falcon, Spade strikes up a friendly conversation with hotel security. In spite of his position as a murder suspect, Spade eats lunch with the police detective, Tom Polhaus, and picks his brain about Thursby, the man O-Shaughnessy had Archer tailing before Archer was shot. Spade's own secretary even refers to Spade as "too slick for your own good" (Hammett 20). Spade certainly has the gambler's honeyed charm.

Spade's gambler approach is one of violence, unpredictability, and unchecked emotion. Much like Marlowe, Spade is unafraid of guns despite the numerous times they are pointed at him. Kathleen Urda notes that novels like *The Maltese Falcon* "heroized a particular type of

masculinity in hard-boiled detectives like Sam Spade: physically active, strong, and tough men” (294). Spade, in particular, is followed around by a young thug toting automatic weapons in the employ of Gutman, the mastermind of the group of thieves, but only ever makes fun of the thug. He treats Wilmer like a child carrying around toys he is too young to have rather than someone with a weapon that could end his life. Like Marlowe, Spade has reason to be unafraid as he is able to take his attacker’s gun away anytime he wishes. Wilmer threatens to shoot Spade if the private detective will not stop making fun of him, and Spade takes his guns away and gives them to Gutman saying, “You shouldn’t let him run around with these. He’ll get himself hurt” (Hammett 89). The casual confidence and grace with which Spade disarms gunmen shows him to be a capable fighter in his own right. In each case where he takes a gun, Spade’s violence is explosive in its suddenness and power. Spade is also said to be a big man who uses his greater strength and height to his advantage.

Spade’s temper adds an element of unpredictability to his violence. Spade will often begin a conversation fairly pleasantly, then start yelling at whomever he is speaking with. He does this when the police question him about Archer’s death and when O’Shaughnessy tries to make Spade pity her in order to dodge his questions about her circumstances. In the former circumstance, Spade starts the interview by kindly offering the policemen a drink and then becomes uncooperative, stating that he’ll tell the police information or not “as I damned please. It’s been a long while since I burst out crying because the policemen didn’t like me” (Hammett 12). The wildness of Spade’s temper is emphasized by Tom’s constant requests for Sam to “be reasonable” (Hammett 22). Several times in the scene with O’Shaughnessy, Spade is described as making “a growling animal noise in his throat” (Hammett 39) which links him to

the instinctive, unreasoning nature of a beast. Gutman draws attention to Spade's unpredictable nature by reacting with a laugh and calling Spade "a character" every time Spade surprises him. The character label is revealed to be about unpredictability when Gutman states after saying it at one point that "there's never any telling what you'll do or say next except that is bound to be astonishing" (Hammett 131). Spade never objects to being called a character and is not offended by Gutman's laughter, allowing the impression of himself as unpredictable and violent to remain. He even encourages this impression in O'Shaughnessy by telling her, "my way of learning is to heave a wild and unpredictable monkey-wrench in the machinery" (Hammett 62). The actions Spade takes seem to have no logic behind them, like he is taking whatever actions instinct says is right and gambling that they will pay off.

Spade's gambler persona, however, points to the fatalistic belief in the law hidden within Spade's shadow. Towards the beginning of the novel, when the police are interrogating Spade as a possible suspect, one of them expresses the belief that Spade is going to slip one day and Spade responds with "a depreciative mouth" and the statement that "Everybody's foot slips sometimes" (Hammett 12). The idea of his expression being "depreciative" hints at the possibility that is aware he will make a mistake at some point while the concept of "slipping" makes it sound like the mistake is going to come down to luck. Like he is walking on a balance beam and will be unlucky enough to come across a slippery patch one day. Spade also states that "this is my city and my game. I could manage to land on my feet-sure-this time, but the next time I tried to put over a fast one they'd stop me" (Hammett 130). The game introduces the luck aspect of Spade's job, and the phrase "land on my feet" further confirms this impression.

However, Spade believes that no matter how fortunate he is, a day will come when his luck is going to run out. He expresses this belief when he is trying to get the other conspirators behind the theft of the Maltese Falcon and its attendant crimes to designate one of themselves, Wilmer, as a scapegoat. He tells them: I never let myself forget that a day of reckoning was coming. I never forget that when the day of reckoning comes I want to be all set to march into headquarters pushing a victim in front of me, say "Here you chumps, is your criminal" . . .the first time I can't do it my name's Mud (Hammett 129). The near Biblical phrasing of "day of reckoning" emphasizes Spade's belief that it is inevitable. When O'Shaughnessy is pleading with Spade not to turn her over to the police, Spade states that one of them will have to take the fall for the crime and he will not be the one. His conviction is that the law will have its revenge, and while the lawbreaker might get lucky and get away for a short time, the law always gets its pound of flesh.

Spade's faith in the law's power is a significant part of his persona, but the private detective's shadow could best be defined as a wily strategist. This part of Spade's character matches up with Alan Goldman's argument that Spade is "clearly morally ambiguous" (269) far better because it shows him to be proficient deceiver. Despite the seeming lack of reasons behind his actions, Spade always seems to get the best possible result, implying the move is actually calculated. Neil Sargent claims that "Spade consciously provokes responses from others in order to see how they will react, and then relies on the information generated by these physical or verbal confrontations in order to decide what leads to follow" (297). The kind of conscious provocation Sargent describes is the act of a clever, controlled man, not a reckless gambler. W. Russel Gray confirmed this when he pointed out that Hammett "stated that he did

not intend Sam Spade to be ‘an erudite solver of riddles in the Sherlock Holmes manner’ but rather ‘a hard and shifty fellow, able to get the best of anybody he comes in contact with, whether criminal, innocent by-stander, or client’” (Gray). Spade uses his supposed unpredictability in a strategic manner.

The clearest instance of this is when he is ambushed by Gutman, Cairo, and Wilmer at the end of the story. He uses his wild nature to convince the thieves that he cannot be made to give up the Falcon and that one of them is necessary as a sacrifice to keep the police at bay. The logic he gives makes little sense to most of the thieves, but they believe that Spade thinks it necessary. It is important to note here that Spade does think it is necessary or he would have dropped the ruse when he was left with only O’Shaughnessy, and he had no reason to use the trick on the police earlier either. Whether the logic is genuine or not, though, Spade has specific reason to bring up his belief: to cause division among the four conspirators. Discussing whether or not to hand Wilmer over to the police divides Wilmer from the rest of the group and Cairo from Gutman, because Wilmer is hinted to be Cairo’s lover. Douglas Torgerson notes that Gutman’s status as master criminal is dethroned by Spade’s cunning actions because “Even with Spade trapped, seemingly at his mercy, the tables turn on Gutman, and he is unable with all of his devices—even slight of hand—to turn them back again (210). With all four thieves working together, Spade is powerless; making turning them against one another is his only chance. Spade admits when pressed that he is trying “to make my play strong enough that it ties you [a group of thieves] up, but yet not make you mad enough to bump me off against your better judgement” (Hammett 135). Even in that confession, though, there is a lie because Spade’s goal is division not indecision.

Spade's nature as a deceiver is also shown in how he perceives and appreciates the deception used by O'Shaughnessy. With most of the women in the story, Spade both plays with and is contemptuous of them, but he shows more respect to O'Shaughnessy because he recognizes that she uses the same tricks he does. At one point, when O'Shaughnessy is pretending to be scared, Spade "grinned sidewise at her and said: 'You're good. You're very good'" (Hammett 40). The words make Spade sound like he is appreciating her skill and the skill she is using in that moment is deception. He casually calls her a liar at one point, and she admits that she has always been one. In response, Spade tells her not to brag about her skill in deception. He figures out that O-Shaughnessy was pulling Thursby's strings and that she murdered Archer because he recognized her as a fellow deceiver. Dean Defino argues that O-Shaughnessy's deception keeps Spade from loving her. Defino claims, "It is not the equation—which grossly disfavors Brigid—that sways him. Rather, it is his belief that she has been playing him for a sap" (80). Yet Defino's view does not make sense in light of evidence from the text that was just examined. It only makes sense if the scene shortly before O'Shaughnessy's arrest is either the only factor taken into account or carries more weight than the rest of the novel. It is far more likely that O'Shaughnessy's deception skill gives Spade a kind of mutual admiration for O'Shaughnessy, but the connection to Spade's shadow is not enough to keep Spade from turning her in.

If Spade simply possesses an inclination for deception like O'Shaughnessy, he would have a clearly defined shadow that added complexity. After all, he is hardly the only detective to be manipulative. The trend of a talent for manipulation, especially of other people, is present in a disturbing number of detectives. It is in the shadows of Wimsey, Spade's fellow control

detective, as well as in Poirot, Marlowe, and other regular subject detectives. Even police detectives such as Inspector Driffield are not above tricking people to achieve their goals. The difference with Spade is that he is connected deeply to the narration.

Spade warps the narrative itself to deceive the reader, emphasizing his existence as a fictional character and function of the narrative. Cynthia Hamilton argues that “Hammett uses Spade to demonstrate the power of creative authorship in a world that operates on the assumption that narratives are definitive and meanings fixed” (Hamilton). Hamilton further clarifies that Spade becomes that author and controller of his own narrative. While she argues that this allows Spade to define himself, I argue that Spade can influence the narrative of *The Maltese Falcon* but not the overall archetypal role of detective, which controls him in turn. There are certainly clear signs that Spade controls the narrative even though the narrator is omniscient third person rather than first; the narrator clearly perpetuates the myth of the gambler and the wild man Spade wishes to show the world in the descriptions given of Spade and his actions. His eyes are described as bloodshot at times and his face as yellowish or fiendish. Spade’s own talent for deception merges with the narrative in this way to make Spade master of the narrative in his own right. This is why all of the actions he takes are so strategic in spite of their wildness, why Spade himself goes from glowing red with anger one moment to almost dead calm in the next as was already discussed. One scene, however, reveals this to be the result of Spade manipulating his appearance to take on whatever emotion would work best at the moment. In one scene, Spade loses his temper with Gutman and storms out. The second he is out of Gutman’s view inside the elevator, though, he relaxes and even says, “Whew,” as if he has just finished a hard task (Hammett 112). This suggests that Spade’s emotions are an act

and remind the reader that everything we see about Spade is an act because he is not even real.

The artificiality of Spade shows itself the most, though, in his reasoning behind turning in Brigid O'Shaughnessy. At first, he seems to be doing it out of love for Archer as his partner and revenge for his loss. He tells O'Shaughnessy that "you killed Miles and you're going over for it . . . I can't help you now. And I wouldn't if I could" (Hammett 157). When O'Shaughnessy starts to ask if Spade's statement means he is giving her to the police out of revenge for Archer, though, Spade cuts her off and tells her it is not like that. While the mad light in his eyes and hoarse voice he is described as having in this moment may make it seem like he is lying, Spade's words confuse the issue. He speaks in that moment, of duty and how "when a man's partner is killed, he's supposed to do something about" (Hammett 157). It would be easy to take that as sentimentality, but the use of the word "supposed" makes it seem like Spade is doing it because he has to.

The third reason that Spade gives for turning O'Shaughnessy in confirms this impression. Spade states, "I'm a detective and expecting me to run criminals down and then let them go free is like asking a dog to catch a rabbit and let it go. It can be done, all right, and sometimes it is done, but it's not the natural thing" (Hammett 158). The connection between detectives and hounds is not an uncommon one, but what is more important is that it reduces Spade to the role he is playing: detective. Because Spade is the detective, he must find his partner's killer and give them to the police. Finding and getting criminals arrested is what a detective is supposed to do, so Spade cannot do otherwise. In fact, by commenting on how "sometimes it is done"

and stating, “it’s not the natural thing,” Spade seems to be arguing that detectives who do let criminals go have transgressed their role entirely and are not acting as detectives.

Spade must have O’Shaughnessy arrested because his character type will not let him do otherwise. J. Madison Davis argues that Spade faces a hard choice between love and justice in that moment, but she is forced to admit that “He’s not even able to articulate well why he does this” (13). Lee Mitchell agrees, pointing out that “Whether Spade feels sympathetic, ethically unyielding, mildly resentful, emotionally restrained—or something else entirely—is far from clear here at the end” (8). That inability to “articulate” along with the comments from Spade himself that he has to do this because he is a detective suggest that no real reason exists and that Spade simply does what Dashiell Hammett wants him to do in order to fit in with the stereotypical detective and provide some resolution to the novel, because he is powerless to do anything else.

In the end, Spade proves himself to be not Spade the wild gambler or Spade the cunning master of strategy, but Spade the detective character. Detective characters must have faith that the law possesses power, when they possess an ambivalent relationship with the law, so Spade has that belief even though an explanation for it other than his role is not given. They must turn in the criminal at the novel’s conclusion because catching them is what a detective does and there is no other way. Spade is simple and has a lower complexity score than almost any other detective in the study because he is transparently a construction. (See Table 10). His fellow control detective, Wimsey lacks realism because he is controlled by the English gentleman stereotype. Spade is similar, but has more complexity because he is a puppet of the narrative and his role instead. This allows Spade to still have some emotions and identity, even though

both are patently false. Spade is more a metafictional concept than a person, but at least he is not a flat stereotype which would be worse because stereotypes require less skill to use effectively.

Conclusion

For Private Investigators, the most defining factor in their choice to release a guilty party is usually the moral code that they live by. The exception to this pattern is Cordelia, who acts based on her emotional connection to the victim. Amateur detectives can have their own code, but believe in the law and its fairness sufficiently enough that they barely use it while police detectives are too bound by duty to use their own moral code much. The implications this has given Cordelia's status as the only female detective in the study are interesting. What is more relevant is that this shows that the use of unique moral codes to make the decision is an important pattern, but not the perfect answer to why private investigators allow criminals to walk free.

A closer examination of pattern reveals that such individualistic moral codes often develop out of a perception that the law could not provide justice in every case. For Sherlock Holmes, the lack of ability stemmed from the law's status as a rational concept unable to account for the emotional nature of human beings. Hard-boiled PIs influenced by Marlowe, often create theirs on their own because they wish to be moral and the world around them is immoral. As time progressed, however, and violence became a more common part of the PI's job, personal codes began to develop out of the need to have morality in a job that often involved immoral acts, like killing, and dishonorable people, such as criminals. We can clearly

observe this in Spenser and how his moral code keeps him from killing indiscriminately even when it would be easier and causes him to spare those he can.

While moral codes and the cause of their creation evolved, the private investigator's need for them remains crucial to both their character and the understanding of why they let criminals go free. Private investigators support the idea that detectives represent the struggle of humans to keep the law and its ideals by using independent action to emphasize the break between the morality of individual detectives and the codified morality of society.

CHAPTER V

POLICE DETECTIVES

Introduction

More than all of the other groups, police detectives represent the struggle between the law's duty to protect and the duty to punish because they are most closely associated with the law. Given their association with the law, it would not have been unexpected for them to have the lowest complexity out of all three groups, yet one of the biggest surprises of the study was that police detectives scored the highest out of all three groups and did not do so by a small margin. My initial hypothesis that the policeman would score low, however, did not consider the duty of the police to do more than rigorously enforce the law. As an organization, in fictional representation, the police are dedicated to protecting individual citizens, as well as punishing criminals. The job of the police also means they are more likely to encounter a scenario where the need to protect and the duty to punish are at odds. In some cases, the police detectives in this study decide that protection is more important than the punishment. By doing this, their more human sides are allowed to express themselves, resulting in more realistic, human characters.

Sergeant Trotter Cuff

As the first detective fiction novel, Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*¹ is noteworthy enough to demand inclusion in a study of detective fiction. Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* is a novel composed of many smaller stories from various characters. A famous diamond known as the Moonstone goes missing in the house of the rich Verinder family, and Sergeant Trotter Cuff investigates the case. His score is described in Table 11 below.

Sergeant Trotter Cuff Table 11	
Ranking: tied for 3rd	Overall Score: 17/20
Persona score: 5/5	Shadow score: 5/5
Hero's Journey: 3/5	Stereotype variance: 4/5

The story itself is not from the detective Sergeant Trotter Cuff's point of view and does not follow him closely, but Cuff's presence is key to the final solution to the mystery of who stole the titular Moonstone. The first impression the policeman gives is that he is stern and tough. As he bonds with the elderly steward, Gabriel Betteredge throughout the novel, though, and starts to discourse on roses, a more human side to Cuff begins to emerge. What is unique in the case of *The Moonstone* is that the person Cuff releases is not guilty of the theft. This may seem like a problem for his inclusion in the study, but it is not since Cuff completely believes that the person he lets get away is guilty and he has the evidence that he needs to prove it in his hands, yet he still keeps silent and does not inform his superiors in the police of the identity of the

¹ *The Moonstone* receives a 9 out of 10 from Keating (141).

Moonstone's thief. Sergeant Cuff chooses to release his prisoner because he is defined as a detective by the strains on his conscience caused by a conflict between his duty and the desire to protect life that results from it.

Cuff himself possesses the persona of a grizzled, veteran detective. The impression he gives Gabriel Betteredge when the latter meets him includes "a face as sharp as a hatchet" and "skin as yellow and dry and withered as an autumn leaf" and "long lanky fingers hooked like claws" (Collins 52). Overall, Betteredge reflects that Cuff is not a comforting presence to the victim and her family, especially compared to the local police first on the scene. Lara Karpenko observes that "The thin, dry, and wrinkled Cuff seems almost corpse-like, but despite Gabriel's initial disgust, Cuff's lean body seems to complement his slow and meticulous investigative process" (142). Karpenko emphasizes that Cuff does not fit the hearty, athletic masculine description popular with male protagonists in 1868. Unlike the cheerful and bumbling Father Brown of 42 years later, Cuff is not meant to be a humorous character. His tough and unyielding persona invokes the inevitable doom of the culprit, and of criminals in general, when they are caught. The "slow and meticulous" investigative process he uses complements those attributes because he does not let the sensitivity of a situation stop him from investigating, much to Betteredge and Mrs. Verinder's dismay. Betteredge frequently decries Cuff for his lack of propriety and dedication to getting the truth in spite of how many people he is harming. Mrs. Verinder, the head of the family, treats Cuff like he is some sort of terrible nuisance and tries to send him away several times without completing the case when his attention turns in a direction she does not wish it to go. In this respect, Cuff is like a private investigator because he does not have to listen to her wishes and leave even though she called him and is responsible

for paying him. Multiple times, Mrs. Verinder tries to pay Cuff his fee for the case and send him off, but Cuff refuses the money and continues with the case; this means Mrs. Verinder must give Cuff free rein to move about her house. Much like Marlowe, when Cuff is hired, he stays on the job until the case is, in his opinion at least, closed. Cuff also possesses more leverage than Marlowe because he is an actual police officer. As a private detective, Marlowe cannot do anything if his employer hides evidence from him or does not cooperate. While Cuff never threatens Mrs. Verinder with anything, there is the unspoken acknowledgement that he is a part of the police and that once serious crimes are uncovered, criminals will be punished.

The heartlessness Betteredge and others accuse Cuff of shows itself more prominently when Cuff begins to pursue Roseanna Spearman as a suspect and Cuff's actions appear to agree with that assessment. Certainly, he does not hesitate to poke into whatever corners of Roseanna's life he deems necessary nor let her emotions hinder him. He does not hesitate to investigate her past life as a thief or the crush she has on Franklin Blake. Every claim of illness she makes is thoroughly scrutinized by Cuff. Janice Trekker states that Cuff "proves to be careful and methodical with a good grasp of investigative procedure" (345). In stark contrast to the bumbling local police, Cuff's inquiries are a success almost from the start, and it does not take him long to fixate on Roseanna Spearman, a maid, and Rachel Verinder, the daughter of the mistress of the house as the best possible suspects for the theft of the famous diamond. The cold, unyielding logic present within Cuff's persona supports the idea of him as a thinking machine, along with his eyes which are described as "looking as if they expected something more from you than you were aware of yourself" (Collins 52). When Cuff reveals to Betteredge and Mrs. Verinder that he believes the thief to be Rachel assisted by Roseanna, Betteredge

describes his tone as one of “a horrid clearness that obliged you to understand him; with an abominable justice that favored nobody” (Collins 92). Cuff’s logic leaves little room for doubting him even if the listener’s mind is clouded with emotion, which is why Betteredge refers to his justice as “abominable”(Collins 92).

Yet even with his more analytical attributes and disregard of feelings, Cuff is still fairly amiable unless given a reason to behave otherwise. Eric Levy states that Cuff possesses “unwavering powers of observation which enable him to focus his thoughts not on his own emotional needs, but on the thoughts and emotions of others ” (72). Cuff’s ability to know the thoughts of other people is disconcerting, intrusive even, but the mention of emotions shows he has understanding and compassion for people. When he interviews Roseanna’s friends outside the estate, he is patient and allows a bit of small talk to occur. Trekker notes that throughout the investigation “Cuff is extremely decent and professional” (344). He seems odd to Betteredge, though, not terribly unlikeable until he starts to suspect Roseanna and Rachel. Cuff is particularly friendly to the Verinder estate’s gardener and will talk to anyone who will listen on the subject of roses. His cherished love of roses causes him to seem quite eccentric to Betteredge and the other servants, but his shadow shows he has a logical reason for his enjoyment of them.

Hidden in Cuff’s shadow is a desire to protect life rather than to take it. Cuff laments his inability to be kind to people as a detective at times in the novel. The nature of his job is at fault for it, yet he also possesses the ability to put those emotions aside when necessary. Cuff has an ability to be cruel so he knows that he cannot entirely blame his job. It is significant that Cuff is an older detective instead of a young one. An older detective with more time on the job has

more time to accumulate the guilt and pain that comes with being a policeman. He states that he wants to show tenderness and care for those involved in crimes, but frequently cannot because it hinders investigations. He tells Betteredge, "I like to be tender to human infirmity—though I don't get many chances of exercising that virtue in my life" (Collins 62). The desire for kindness shows in his promise to keep Roseanna's crush on Franklin Blake a secret, even though he is mercilessly hunting for the evidence she concealed. Cuff often expresses his admiration for Betteredge and his near-fatherly relationship with Roseanna, as well as his deep emotional loyalty to Mrs. Verinder. Cuff thinks of himself as cruel because of his job and the lives it destroys in the process of finding the truth, as is implied in Cuff's statement when he says he does not get a lot of chances to be kind. Trekker comments that "One aspect of detectives and investigators has evolved, however, namely the necessity for suffering" (349). While Trekker argues that only hints of the suffering detectives will go through are visible in *The Moonstone*, I argue that Cuff's persona and shadow portray starkly the pain detectives feel and are meant to do so. His desire to be kind is a result of the freedom from guilt that being kind gives him.

All of this connects back to Cuff's love of roses because he sees in them the beauty and vitality he wishes could become more a part of his life and profession. He states, "show me any two things more opposite one from the other than a rose and a thief; and I'll correct my tastes accordingly--if it isn't too late at my time of life" (Collins 53). For Cuff, the charm in roses is in the opposition that he noted. Roses are beautiful and alive, requiring a tender touch to make them live up to their potential. Thieves and other criminals, by contrast, need to be handled with logic and with force. John Glendening states that Cuff's "passion for roses represents a retreat from the outside world and, consistent with the realm of a self-styled romance, from

overt reference to the dominant and often harsh social, economic, and political realities of 1848-49 when the novel is set" (287). As policeman, Cuff is a part of these hard realities. Roses allow Cuff an escape into tenderness he could not otherwise show. Ultimately, Cuff must decide between protecting Rachel and her life, allowing himself to show the kindness he wished for, or enforcing the law and getting justice for Roseanna Spearman.

It would be possible to argue that because Cuff believes the thief of the Moonstone to be its owner, Rachel Verinder, that there is no crime to be punished. Cuff even categorizes the theft as a private matter rather than a public one by relating the theft of the Moonstone to "family scandals" where he often acted in the role of "a confidential man" (Collins 92). However, the investigation prompted by the theft did damage to the Verinder family and consumed an innocent victim, Roseanna Spearman. Betteredge argues that Roseanna's death is Cuff's fault because he is the investigator and he suspected her. Cuff thought that Roseanna stole the diamond for her mistress, Rachel, in order to discreetly pay off some debts. In such a scenario, Rachel would be guilty of Roseanna's death, as the one who involved her and failed to protect her by coming forward with the truth when the investigation began. With Roseanna as a victim, the matter goes beyond a simple deception and turns into a true crime.

In spite of the crime's seriousness, Cuff chooses to let Rachel get away with her crime out of a desire to keep more innocents from losing their lives. Glendening argues it is no coincidence that the dead girl's first name contains the word "rose," and I argue that the link it creates between Roseanna and Cuff's love for the flowers is the reason for her name (300). In pursuing justice, one "rose" had already died and Cuff's decision to help Rachel is an attempt to prevent a second one from doing the same. Cuff does this by leaving the choice up to Mrs.

Verinder. He states that after he informs Mrs. Verinder of the truth of the case then “the responsibility will be off my shoulders. Let her ladyship decide, after that, whether she does or does not allow me to go on” (Collins 90). As Rachel’s mother and the head of the family, Mrs. Verinder is more likely to know what is best for her daughter, so I argue he leaves the choice to Mrs. Verinder in order to save Rachel.

Cuff’s reactions to how Mrs. Verinder and Betteredge respond to his speech further support the argument that Cuff’s decision comes from a desire to spare the Verinder family further harm. Cuff does not often show what he is feeling, but when Mrs. Verinder argues that she knows her daughter and that Rachel would not lie, Cuff’s “hatchet-face softened for a moment as if he was sorry for her” (Collins 92). While Cuff does not apologize for revealing the truth about Rachel, he feels sympathy for her and for her mother. The “softening” of his face is a brief moment where he allows those feelings to shine through. Throughout Cuff’s tale of what he believes, based on the evidence, to be the true story of the crime, both Mrs. Verinder and Betteredge protest, but Cuff never gets angry at them for their lack of reason or treatment of him. At one point, Betteredge refers to Cuff’s investigation as “abominable detective business” and “looked with righteous indignation” at him (Collins 94). In response Cuff “looked back like a lamb, and seemed to like me better than ever” (Collins 94). The word “lamb” refers, in part, to how innocent Cuff seems and could also reveal that he is showing understanding and softness. The part about Cuff’s fondness for Betteredge growing suggests that he admires the staunch way that the butler supports his mistress. Cuff knows his job is not to be a comforting person or even to allow Mrs. Verinder to see that he feels any sympathy, but he still wishes to do so.

Although Sergeant Cuff does not correctly identify the culprit, the evidence he possesses points clearly to a suspect, and he is forced to choose between protecting the living and avenging the dead. Karpenko notes that “while Cuff may be mistaken in identifying Rachel as the thief, his conclusions are startlingly accurate and his observations help propel the novel to a satisfying close” (142). Karpenko’s observation provides evidence that Cuff is the intelligent, seasoned detective his persona portrays him to be. The police detective is competent enough to prove his case, and given that he does it well enough with Betteredge and Mrs. Verinder that they are forced to believe that his suspect has indeed committed the crime, even though they do not wish to, he would likely succeed in a court of law. His job as a detective has taken a horrible toll that sends him running to rose gardens every chance he has in an effort to forget the guilt his job has cast on him. Much like the later hard-boiled private investigators, Cuff desires to be a hero and saver of lives but ends up destroying them too often. Marlowe and Spenser feel unable to be pure knights because the world taints them, and Inspector Driffield, another police detective, also seems to feel that. For Cuff, however, it is not that the world surrounding him is corrupted, but that the job he has chosen involves facing the more corrupt parts of humanity. Perhaps that is why he lets Rachel escape and retires to tend his beloved roses, because doing these things lets him leave behind the punishing aspect of the police and take on the gentler guise of the guardian of life he wishes to become.

Detective Inspector Sir Clinton Driffield

Inspector Driffield’s scientific persona and soldier-like shadow in *Murder in the Maze* combine with his moral code to make him unique. Table 12 provides his complexity score.

Table 12 Detective Inspector Sir Clinton Driffield	
Ranking: 6 th	Overall Score: 16/20
Persona score: 4/5	Shadow score: 5/5
Hero's Journey: 3/5	Stereotype variance: 4/5

Murder in the Maze is a novel by J.J. Connington about the murder of twin brothers in the garden maze of their country estate. Inspector Sir Clinton Driffield is vacationing with an Esquire who lives nearby, Wendover, but takes over the case after he concludes the murderer will strike again. Driffield's persona in the novel actively cultivates the objectivity prized by Holmes and Driffield possesses Holmes's scientific skills. Like Poirot, he hides his keen mind, though Driffield disguises it from others with normality instead of the eccentricity Poirot projects. These characteristics in his persona connect to amateur detectives, yet his shadow reflects the realities of war and the gritty, realistic tainted world of Marlowe and Spade. Hidden within his shadow is also a moral code that bases justice on the eye-for-an-eye principle instead of a recognized body of law. On the basis of his moral code which is unique among police detectives, Sir Clinton Driffield chooses to let one criminal escape unharmed, but mercilessly punishes another with toxic gas.

Driffield's scientific persona manifests in his insistence on maintaining objectivity. Throughout the story, whenever his friend and side-kick Wendover tries to get Driffield to speculate on the murder case, Driffield refuses, citing the need to maintain his objectivity. In one particular instance, Driffield cuts off Wendover's question and states "I'm keeping an open mind and I don't want to be prejudiced" (Connington ch. 6). The idea of making sure his mind

stays open and prejudice free mimics the efforts of scientists to make a hypothesis for an experiment based on facts alone and to avoid predicting how an experiment will end before it starts. Driffield also counts a lack of prior knowledge of the people involved in a crime as an advantage. When Stenness, the secretary to one of the victims, comments on how policemen have a hard job because they do not know the people beforehand, Driffield is quick to say that "There's a countervailing advantage of course. . . . A detective comes to a case with no preconceived ideas about character" (Connington ch. 18). When relating his methods, Driffield reveals that he tries to keep from conceiving any ideas while he is gathering information, though he admits doing so is a delicate balance. In this way, he is like a scientist attempting to simply record the data and prevent bias from corrupting it. Driffield strives for the objective view of a scientist.

Along with a scientist's point of view, Driffield also possesses the skills of a scientist. His first action on arriving at the local police station after viewing the murder scene and finding the murderer's abandoned curare darts is to use his knowledge of chemistry to create fake darts for the murderer to steal. Driffield's methods of detection also involve forensic science. Shortly after finding the murderer's darts, he takes them to a local toxicologist for testing. On arriving at the scene of the murder, Driffield inspects the bodies carefully, but makes sure not to touch them so any forensic evidence will remain intact. He then uses the wounds caused by the darts to calculate the trajectory and find where the murderer had been standing. In his methods, Driffield is reminiscent of Sherlock Holmes who also possesses a penchant for chemistry and forensics. Holmes is known for examining crime scenes in minute detail and calculating what occurred based on marks left behind by the murderer, such as shoeprints and dirt. While

Driffield does not have such evidence to examine, his use of a small loophole created in the hedge is reminiscent of the way Holmes would investigate because it involves using small details to put together a mental picture of the crime scene.

Holmes, however, has no problem using intuition even with his love of reason, while non-rational forms of decision making seem to terrify Driffield. Trusting to his intuition, Driffield leaves the murderer's case of curare poisoned darts, mostly filled with fakes created by Driffield but with a few genuine ones for authenticity, in a place he knows it will be stolen from. Even though the supposed slip is intentional, Driffield is visibly afraid when the darts go missing. It could be argued that this is a show meant to make the murderer think he got away with it, but Driffield is still emotional about it when he is alone with Wendover. It is significant that this is the only time in the story where Driffield appears not to be in control of himself. Driffield hates using his intuition, as most scientists would. Generally speaking, scientists focus on facts and build their ideas and theories off of them, not gut feelings.

In addition to the scientist elements of his persona, though, Driffield takes pains to project a common appearance. When Driffield is introduced to the reader, the narrator notes that "there was deliberate ordinariness about his appearance" and that "Sir Clinton refrained from anything characteristic in his dress" (Connington ch. 4). The use of the words "deliberate" and "refrained" hint that the unremarkability of Driffield's appearance is a purposeful act on his part. Driffield's appearance is so ordinary, also he is so sadly underappreciated, that even writers like Martin Edwards can only characterize him as "surprisingly youthful" (185). Driffield not only goes out of his way to cultivate this "common" impression, but also plays the part of the idiot at times. When Wendover asks Driffield why he left the darts where the murderer

could get them, Driffield states that it is so the suspect would take him “for a blundering idiot” (Connington ch. 11). Even among the police, he is not known specifically for his brains, but for his dedication to his subordinates and their safety. It is that dedication that hints at the soldier lurking in his shadow.

Driffield’s suspicion of the ordinary shows his shadow to be that of a soldier. He thinks of the normal as deceptive and dangerous, much like a soldier recently returned from war who suspects that secret danger is around every corner. The bitter attitude towards the truth Driffield expresses recalls the cynicism of soldiers. He believes that the truth is dangerous and even harmful at times. The efficiency that Driffield values in both himself and the people he interacts with is a sign of a military and strategic mind. We can see his valuing of efficiency in the difference between how he sees Ernest and how he sees Stenness. Ernest’s hysterics earn him Driffield’s irritation and contempt early on, while Stenness, with his level head and business-like nature, cause Driffield to respect him. The contempt Driffield has for overly emotional people like Ernest stems from his persona, in part, but also from the need for strength and the ability to carry on that a soldier has. Easily frightened men, like Ernest, are a liability on the battlefield, while people like Stenness, who remain level-headed and efficient amid the general hysteria of the murders are comrades and assets.

The most convincing proof of Driffield’s shadow possessing the identity of a soldier, however, is the way his responsibilities as a policeman seem to weigh on him. The normal duty of the police to protect and serve ordinary citizens is heightened as is the responsibility that Driffield feels towards his subordinates. To honor this responsibility, he resorts to toxic gas instead of sending his men into the maze after Ernest, the brother of the murdered twins and

the real murderer. The gas is described as sulfur but is likely sulfur mustard gas. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states, "Sulfur mustard was introduced in World War I as a chemical warfare agent. It has since been banned by international treaties. It causes the skin to blister and can also damage the eyes and breathing (respiratory) system" ("Chemical Weapons"). *Murder in the Maze* was published after World War I, when mustard gas was commonly used. The gas and Driffield's use of it support his shadow as a soldier. When Ernest flees into the maze, he takes a gun with him. Driffield knows Ernest will fight and thinks possible brutal death for a murderer is a lower price than the death in the line of duty of several of his subordinates. The element of duty to protect, however, comes into conflict with his need for justice and to uphold the law. This need shows itself early on as Wendover asks Driffield to join him in speculating on the case and the latter declines, not only because of the already cited need for objectivity in the case, but also because it would be libel and therefore against the law. It is only the two of them at that point, but Driffield refuses to break the law, even in private.

Yet Driffield clearly judges if a criminal should be punished based on more than the law. He releases one criminal in the story, Stenness, but uses toxic gas on the other, Ernest. Edwards notes that while Driffield's position does not stop him from using a horrifying weapon on Ernest "conversely, he allows a happy ending to a character who commits theft and forgery" (185). While Edwards is referring to Connington, his words suit Driffield equally as well. A comparison of the two criminals provides insight into Driffield's choice. Stenness forges a check and steals from his master, one of the victims, and is about to take the money and run when the murder occurs. Ernest, on the other hand, kills both of his brothers for the money and attempts to murder all others named in the wills to keep the family fortune for himself. Both crimes revolve

around money, though Stenness's theft is the lesser crime and Ernest's homicidal actions far bloodier. If the magnitude of the crime is what decides Driffield's actions, however, he simply could give Stenness a lesser punishment, so that is unlikely to be the deciding factor.

The factor that labels Stenness as justified in Driffield's mind is that the thief is also a victim and resembles the perpetrator/victim type previously discussed. When Stenness was younger, the man who would come to be his employer, Roger Shandon, swindled him out of his inheritance. Upon coming to work for Shandon and finding out that Shandon is the man who had conned him, Stenness decides to steal his money back. Stenness admits he could have taken more than Shandon stole from him, but that he felt that would be wrong, so he only took the exact amount of his inheritance. Not only does the limit Stenness places on himself show greed is not his motivation, it hints at Stenness possessing an eye-for-an-eye moral code. Luckily for him, he is not the only character who conceives of justice this way.

After listening to Stenness recount both his crime and his reasoning, Driffield lets him go. Part of this is because Driffield has already bonded to Stenness through his admiration for the secretary's efficiency and ability to keep his head. Those two qualities resonate within the soldier in Driffield's shadow, while Ernest's constant hysteria and whining continually disgust Driffield. On a personal level, he identifies with Stenness more than Ernest. It is conceivable that Driffield might like Stenness enough to let him go, but Driffield reveals that he shares the same sense of justice as Stenness when he tells the thief "on the basis of ethics, I think you've some right to that money" (Connington ch. 15). By using the word "ethics" Driffield shows that he believes Stenness to be morally justified in stealing his money back from his employer. Beyond keeping secret Stenness's crime and confession, Driffield actively makes sure that

Stenness receives the money. In doing so, he protects Stenness from further investigation.

Driffield serves the kind of justice he agrees with in this way.

It seems contradictory that Driffield would let Stenness go and still punish Ernest, but the eye-for-an-eye sense of justice shows Driffield is simply applying his own code of ethics. Ernest has killed two people and will kill more if given the chance. Unlike Stenness, Ernest is not seeking revenge. He commits crimes against his family when they only sought to help him. In Driffield's mind, Ernest takes lives and so his own life must be forfeit, whether to jail or to death. Edwards argues that Driffield believes cruel criminals deserved no more mercy than a plague virus (387). This attitude leads him to take the most alarming action in the book. Not even the double homicide at the beginning with its curare darts evokes the same level of horror.

When Ernest escapes into the maze, Driffield has ready a supply of Sulphur to burn upwind from the maze to create a toxic gas. Ernest can either voluntarily leave the maze and be arrested without any loss of lives or he can die in the maze from the smoke. Wendover is appalled by this tactic, much as most readers are, but the toxicologist standing nearby when Wendover makes a remark about the cruelty of the method points out that if Driffield acts differently and sends men into the maze he could end up with "a dead constable on his hands- perhaps a widow and some fatherless child to face" (Connington ch. 17). The focus on the potential loss of innocent lives weighs against the life of a guilty man prepared to harm others not only helps the reader understand Driffield's choice, but it also invokes the logic of war. Fighting bullet for bullet and hand-to-hand makes for a fair contest, but war is not about fairness. It is about achieving the objective with minimal casualties. Sometimes, that means

gassing a trench instead of fighting to take the men inside alive. By using poison gas on the murderer and discussing the ethics of it in such a way, Connington links together war and criminal justice as ethically messy realities.

Driffield possessing this soldier's view of criminal justice, however, does not mean that his choice to let Stenness go is easy. When Stenness is discovered to be the thief and reveals his motives for the theft, there is a clash between the requirement to uphold the law and the duty to protect those Driffield deems innocent. The conflict resolves swiftly, but it is still intense. On the one hand, Driffield is a police officer sworn to uphold the laws of the land as well as justice and such principles demanded the arrest of Stenness for the crime. All of the evidence against Stenness is clear and in Driffield's hands and Stenness promises to write a confession to the crime then sign it. The possibility at that point that Stenness might have killed to cover his tracks also looms. The conflict in Driffield's shadow is visible in these words: "I wish had your simple way of looking at things" (Connington ch. 15). On its own, the statement suggests that Driffield wants to take Stenness's side. Driffield, however, goes on to say, "You're a problem, Stenness. I don't know what to do with you" (Connington ch. 15). The confusion Driffield feels is visible in this statement. What seems to bring Driffield to a final decision is his desire to protect Stenness. He does not seem to believe the secretary turned thief is actually bad. When Stenness despairingly asks Driffield to arrest him, Driffield rebukes him, stating that such an action would be throwing his life away. The desire to protect wins out over the duty to punish, allowing Stenness to escape unscathed.

With his scientist persona and soldier shadow, Inspector Driffield shows attributes of many previous detectives. Having a detective who values objectivity and possesses forensic

knowledge is not new, but combining that with soldier attributes is. The addition of a personal moral code set atop the other two creates a character inspired by and reliant on past genre tropes, yet wholly different at the same time. Driffield shows that the formula set by detective fiction can be adhered to and new creations still result.

Inspector Poole

The score of the next police detective, Inspector Poole is given in Table 13.

Table 13 Inspector Poole	
Ranking: Tied for 9 th	Overall Score: 12.5/20
Persona score: 3/5	Shadow score: 4.5/5
Hero's Journey: 3/5	Stereotype variance: 2/5

Inspector Poole, who was created by Henry Wade, does not fit the stern image of a policeman developed by Sergeant Cuff and continued by Detective Inspector Driffield; however, he shows himself to still be a stereotypical policeman for his time in *Lonely Magdalen*, the sixth book of the detective series he stars in. When a scarred prostitute is murdered, Inspector Poole works the case, first as a subordinate and later as the lead investigator. As he looks into the identity of the mysterious woman, he discovers a past filled with romance, heartbreak, and intrigue. Poole portrays the average policeman in this novel because he scrupulously follows the rule of law and has a politician's knowledge of relations in the police department. He cares deeply about justice as well, even when it is not convenient. However, when put in charge of an

investigation, Poole's shadow shows him to be more than an average policeman and reveals him to be both idealistic and a hopeless romantic. In *Lonely Magdalen*, Poole chooses to pursue the background and identity of the victim rather than investigate the scene and possible suspects as would a typical police investigation. As a result, he develops a connection with the victim that is unusual for a policeman. It is not the connection that results in Poole's decision to let murders go, but his idealism and specifically his belief about what murder does to the soul. Inspector Poole is a stereotypical policeman, but he also possesses a romantic side that makes him choose happy endings over just ones.

Poole can be best described as a plain policeman with a hidden romantic side. I argue that Poole's romantic side is not about escaping from guilt, though, but about imagining the world as he would like it to be. His persona, unfortunately, is undefined and sticks mostly to police tropes as indicated by his variance from stereotype score of two. While Poole is ambitious, he is not so selfish as to impede the investigation so that his superiors look incompetent. The narrator states that Poole "has faith in his own abilities; he was an ambitious man in his quiet way" (Wade 125). The mention of his method being "quiet" shows that Poole does not try to cause a scandal in order to bring down rivals to get ahead or use sensational, impressively intelligent methods. It also refers to Poole's savviness in politics. A few times in the novel, he questions his superiors' methods or believes that they are not communicating with the lower ranks as much as they should. The narrator notes these thoughts, but points out that Poole never speaks them aloud, showing he is conscious of the disrespect to his superiors his assessments would show and the resentment they would spark. When the body of the victim, a prostitute who went by the name Belladonna, is found and Poole is put in charge of questioning

her landlady and canvassing the neighborhood where the victim lives, Poole is said to think that bringing in the local police is good and necessary but would “need delicate handling” (Wade 57). It is highly possible the “delicate handling” mentioned is needed due to jurisdictional issues and the need to make the local police feel like partners instead of lackies to the more powerful and famous Metropolitan Police. Edwards notes that Wade is aware of the realities of policework at that time and portrayed them well (256). Poole shows himself to be ambitious, attempting to achieve his goals through knowledge of the police system.

More than consciousness of police-centered issues, such as jurisdiction, though, Poole’s consideration for the lower-ranked officers shows his sympathy and empathy for the working men who compose the police. Poole himself gets ahead by honest hard work, which is shown in how he functions as a subordinate. During this time, he does his job well, showing that he values hard work in himself as well as the lower-ranked police officers he commands. It is said “he had faith in his own ability; he was an ambitious man, in his quiet way, and knew that to succeed where a Chief Inspector-to put it bluntly-failed would greatly increase his change of promotion” (Wade 125). The mention in the quote of the faith Poole has in his own abilities implies that Poole believes in hard work and the value of it because the word “abilities” implies he will need to put in effort to succeed in the way he wishes. Poole is representative of the common police officer who climbs the ladder through effort and proving his worth. Francis Nevins notes that he is “a representative of the new policeman: college educated, and police trained” (91). The mention of his higher education level points out that Poole is more educated and, thus, smarter than average. Going through college also takes hard work. The part about being police trained, though, connects more directly to hard work because it shows that he did

not simply walk into a position of authority in the police. Poole is said to have “worked his way up through all the ranks” and to have had a little bit of luck in catching the eyes of superior officers, but to have been promoted “due to merit and not to extraneous influence” (Wade 143). The emphasis placed on Poole’s work ethic and merit shows Poole gained his position the same way as an ordinary workingman, diligent effort rather than through birth or influence typical of a gentleman. The higher-ranked police officers know him to be reliable and smart, though not quite a genius. Instead of an idiosyncratic brilliant detective such as Sherlock or Poirot, Poole is closer to a hard-boiled PI, embodying a working-class characterization.

Another cliché of police officers that Poole embodies is kindness towards civilians. Cuff only displays such kindness sparingly, which is why he is not a comforting figure, but the local superintendent in *The Moonstone* does provide comfort. The police Cordelia Gray encounters frequently are nice to civilians as well. When a priest comes in with a fanciful story about Belladonna mysteriously visiting his church a couple times, Poole’s superiors view the interview as a waste of time and are anxious to send the priest packing. Poole, however, tries to be kind and see the priest out properly, but is stopped. The contrast between Poole and his superiors on this matter shows he takes the need to maintain good relations with the public more seriously than they do. Outside of the police station, he listens to the gossip of Belladonna’s landlady and pretends to be interested when she talks about her house and family, though it has nothing to do with the case and he is conscious of wasted time. After he leaves, Poole waits a short amount of time before heading to the next neighbor’s house because “to do so might well arouse hostility in the breast of Mrs. Twist” (Wade 63). Part of his rationale for avoiding making the landlady, Mrs. Twist, upset is undoubtedly that a happy witness is a more

cooperative one, but it also hints at the kindness that Poole shows all members of the public, even the hired thug, Varden, who is the prime suspect for much of the story.

The problem with the having ambition, valuing hard work, and being kind to civilians is that they are attributes a police officer is expected to have and so do not reveal more about his character other than that he fits his profession well. Worse, they make him seem to be an artificially perfect character. To have ambition in just the right measure, a hard-working attitude yet not a maniac dedication, and kindness but not too much emotion is a mix of traits in the right amount to create an admirable police officer, albeit an unrealistic and simple one. The plainness and lack of development in his persona are what indicates that his character has some ways to develop before coming close to human. If the persona functions as a disguise for more unique attributes like Drifffield's does, the score would be higher and the persona would not limit the character the way it currently does. Poole does not show any indication that he is using his persona in such a way, though. Fortunately, deviations from the stock police character occur far more in Poole's shadow.

Poole's shadow is not connected to his persona well, but his shadow leads the story. The idealistic and romantic way he looks at the world form the foundation for his shadow. When he looks at Belladonna's, later revealed as Christine Wake's body, he sees the possible story behind it rather than the ugly reality and chases after that story. Poole's pride does not come primarily from his investigative abilities, but from his imagination. When canvassing the street Christine lived on, Poole thinks he will be able to do a better job at finding information than the local police "by using his imagination, which by implication should be superior to that of the local

men” (Wade 64). As he investigates Christine’s life, he cannot help but picture scenes from the past and what they might have looked like.

Poole’s romanticism also bleeds into his ideas about justice, causing him to believe that justice can always be served and naively thinking murder leaves a mark on the criminal’s soul. When his superiors pick Varden as a likely suspect, they do so not just because he seems guilty, but also because the drunken thug for hire makes a good scapegoat. They can pin the murder on him and no one will object to a menace being taken off the street. Poole, however, objects to this easy solution at first because he sees it would be a convenient way to close a case and not real justice. Poole’s view on crime is that it is a dirty thing that well-bred people like aristocrats are incapable of committing. Most of all, he believes that crime desecrates the soul. When he begins to think that Helen, Christine’s sister, and Jim, her former husband who was in love with Helen before marrying Christine, might have murdered Christine, he believes that “the destruction of her [Christine’s] body seemed as nothing with destruction of these two souls” (Wade 282). These two souls are Helen and Jim. It is evident from these words as well that Poole does not want to believe the couple killed Christine in order to be together. He is eager to believe the story Helen told him, about how she paid Christine blackmail money the night that Christine died, but did not kill her, because he sees that it would give Helen a chance at happiness and that she does not appear to be tainted by evil. Poole becomes blinded by the desires his shadow induces, and he lets Christine’s murders escape as a result.

Unlike many detectives previously mentioned, Poole’s choice to let perpetrators go is not obvious. While arresting Varden for the crime makes sense and it is certainly possible Varden stole the money after killing Christine, the issue of how he got to the bar in time for his

alibi to hold up remains. Varden's motive is assumed to be robbery since he took money from Christine's body, but the money taken is not a large sum, and Varden might not have risked a murder charge for it. Aside from those speculations, the ending of the story provides the most evidence that Varden is unjustly hanged. Martin Edwards states that the "extraordinary last paragraph tease hints that Poole mistakenly helped to send an innocent man to the gallows" (397). An examination of this paragraph and the preceding page lays bare Poole's thoughts, revealing that he still is not completely sure that Varden is the murderer. He knows that the facts do not fit Varden entirely any more than they did before he earlier abandoned Varden as a suspect, after he took over the case and decides that his superior's fixation on Varden has no merit. Yet Poole cannot bring himself to believe Helen and Jim committed the crime because they seem happy and they lack the mark on their soul his naïve philosophy insists would be there if they are guilty. He admits that he could not bring himself to really suspect them of the murder because "it seemed completely untrue to form" (Wade 348). What is meant by the word "form" is appearances. Helen and Jim do not appear to be suffering any guilt or taint from the crime. As a result, the belief that the murderer would be tainted and Poole's desire to protect them combine to let him dismiss the couple as guilty in his conscious mind, even though part of him still knows the truth.

The main difference Poole shows from his counterparts in the police detective group is his idealized point of view. Many detectives become jaded during their time in the force, especially police detectives. Sergeant Cuff and Detective Inspector Driffield certainly gain a bitter edge as their duty increasingly weighs on them. Poole, however, does not appear to empathize with the pain of those whose lives were ruined by his job. His implicit, somewhat

naïve, belief that only the guilty are punished keeps him from feeling any guilt. Given that *Lonely Magdalen* was published during World War II, this is no small feat. The first World War forms part of the background of the story and experiences during that time drag characters down into poverty, but the darkness and nihilism of *Murder in the Maze* and Post-World War II detective novels published around the same time remains absent. The ending of *Lonely Magdalen* is ultimately unsettling, though, because the real murderers marry happily and a scoundrel who is nonetheless innocent of the crime is punished instead.

Special Agent Aloysius Pendergast

The score of the final detective, Special Agent Aloysius Pendergast is described below.

Table 14. Special Agent Aloysius Pendergast	
Ranking: 1st	Overall Score: 18.5/20
Persona score: 5/5	Shadow score: 5/5
Hero's Journey: 3.5/5	Stereotype variance: 5/5

Agent Pendergast is the most recent detective in this study; the first book involving him was published in 1995, and new books in the series continue to this day. He is also the only detective to be the product of two authors, Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child, instead of one. How that affects his characterization is unknown, though, because it is unknown how the writing duties are split between the two authors. While he is an FBI agent and does work on

official cases, he more commonly investigates cases unofficially based on what interests him. Yet he does not qualify as an amateur detective because that would require him not to be a paid professional like a policeman, and he still uses police methods. Pendergast is quick to flash his FBI badge, even on cases where the FBI is not officially involved. He obtains warrants and works with the local police when necessary. Like many police detectives, he suffers from a large amount of guilt, but what is unique is that Pendergast's guilt does not come from his job and what it entails. Personal tragedies play a key role in his character and choice to join the FBI in the first place. *The Book of the Dead* (2006) is the novel where Pendergast's painful past surfaces the most, and it is also a story where he lets a murder escape unpunished. The story begins with the protagonist, FBI Special Agent Aloysius Pendergast framed and imprisoned by his brother, the criminal mastermind Diogenes. Pendergast rushes to escape from prison so that he can uncover and prevent the massive crime that Diogenes plans to commit. The conflict seen in *The Book of the Dead* between the duty to punish and the duty to protect is not as straightforward in Pendergast's case as it is with the other police detectives, but the forced confrontation between Pendergast and his demons emphasizes the person behind the uniform as much as his choice to protect instead of punish.

Pendergast's persona is that of a cool, intelligent gentleman who is always in control. The novel begins with Pendergast in Herkmore Federal Penitentiary after being framed for several murders by his brother, the criminal mastermind, Diogenes. The FBI agent in charge of Pendergast's case holds a vicious grudge against him and goes to unethical lengths to force a confession out of him. Even in this situation, however, Pendergast remains calm and collected. The self-control he shows when he and Glinn, an outside consultant Pendergast hired to

investigate the Diogenes case prior to his own arrest, are enacting the escape plan speaks eloquently about his character. As part of the plan, Glinn arranges for Pendergast to be put in an exercise yard with a gang leader and murderer who hated whites. As an albino himself, Pendergast antagonizes him to begin with, but Pendergast further taunts the murderer to get him and his gang to attack. Pendergast knows the plan is to start a fight from the beginning, and is aware of the murderer's hatred for whites. He is so self-controlled, however, that he looks bored, and the guards watching think that "the poor guy hadn't a clue" that he would be attacked (Preston and Child 178). This is an example of what one reviewer, Nancy Roberts calls in Pendergast "an arrogant sureness." Pendergast never appears to lack confidence in both *The Book of the Dead* and most of the other novels in the series. He is comfortable with taunting and outright insulting the politically and physically powerful and following his own theories by whatever means are necessary, so I agree with Roberts' statement. When Pendergast is put in the yard with the gang after suffering brutal injuries the first time and killing the gang leader, he still seems unaffected by what is happening to the point where the guard observing the scene, who thinks the whole situation is set up to murder Pendergast, wonders "if he [Pendergast] was all right in the head" (Preston and Child 245). The guard's implication is that Pendergast is too stupid to know the danger he is in. Given that he is in on the plan, though, Pendergast knows what he is getting into. He is simply confident that he is in control of the situation. The incident also backs up the statement about how self-controlled he is and so does the fact that Pendergast is able to keep entirely silent, no matter what insults or punishments his interrogator sends his way to get him to confess.

The intelligence in Pendergast's persona is shown in part by how he manages to pass messages to his allies outside the prison with a detailed description of the prison itself as well as samples of the guard's uniforms. The most impressive use of his intelligence, however, is his memory palace technique, which is reminiscent of Sherlock Holmes's memory tactics. Rhonda Harris Taylor notes that Pendergast possesses many links to Holmes with Pendergast's brother, Diogenes, sharing the same name as the club Holmes' brother, Mycroft, frequented, and Pendergast's own last name sounding suspiciously similar to one used in the Sherlock Holmes story "The Gloria Scott": Pendergast (98). Taylor also states that Pendergast possesses "the same extraordinary intellectual and personal attributes as Holmes" (103). Like Holmes, Pendergast states that he has a photographic memory, and he is able to store those memories in a version of his childhood home, recreated in exact detail. Ironically, however, the solution to the central mystery of the story relies on Pendergast bringing back a memory that he has suppressed. Glinn states that the evidence pointed to Diogenes's vendetta against Pendergast being deeply personal, so personal in fact that Pendergast must have done something to him that destroyed his very identity and left him both insane and homicidal. Pendergast protests this and cites his perfect memory, but eventually gives in and searches for the memory, finding it hidden in the boarded-up section of his memory palace belonging to his childhood memories of Diogenes. Even after having suppressed the event that damaged Diogenes for so long, Pendergast is able to pull up a near perfect copy of the memory and experience it, complete with smell and sight. His appearance, from his pale complexion and white-blond hair to his silver eyes portrays confidence and intelligence. People like Vincent D'Agosta see this

intelligence and the control he emanates and follow him. Pendergast perpetuates the myth in his persona that he is always control of both himself and the events in motion.

Pendergast's shadow, however, reveals him to be a man filled with and controlled by his emotions. He possesses the ability to relate to anyone, a quality that can be seen in his encounter with a fellow inmate in solitary. The inmate is nicknamed "the Drummer" by prison staff because he drums on anything he can reach with his hands at all times of the day and night. Pendergast is placed in a cell next to the Drummer in hopes that the constant noise will torture him into confessing. Unlike everyone else, though, Pendergast listens carefully to the Drummer and even starts to imitate him in an attempt to understand him. Within hours, Pendergast comes to "understand something about the man next door and his mental illness, as had been his intent" (Preston and Child 117). He uses rhythm to communicate with the Drummer and ultimately convince him to cease drumming. At a different time, Pendergast enters a bar filled with hostile locales and uses what he understands of their emotions and values to convince them to help him find Diogenes's house.

While Pendergast can be slow to make friends, he has a very emotional connection to the ones he does possess. He cares for Vincent D'Agosta, a police detective he worked with on several cases who later became a friend, more than he can express. This can be seen as Pendergast thanks D'Agosta for his help in the escape. All Pendergast does is give D'Agosta a smile, some softly spoken words of gratitude, and a handshake, but D'Agosta "felt strangely moved by this man who found even the simplest human courtesies awkward" (Preston and Child 269). D'Agosta's reaction shows that Pendergast is trying to show D'Agosta how much he cares, but cannot really seem to do it well. Pendergast loves his ward, Constance Green, like a

daughter. Even in prison, Pendergast includes a short instruction to keep Constance safe at the end of his messages. Pendergast's attachment to her proves to be her downfall, though, because it leads Diogenes to seduce and then abandon her with a nasty letter meant to provoke her to suicide. He knew if Constance killed herself, Pendergast would blame himself for giving Diogenes motive to trick her into suicide.

In spite of or perhaps because of how deeply he feels, Pendergast is uncomfortable with his own emotions, as shown in the scene with D'Agosta. When his emotions break through his careful reserve, they clash with the strictly rational and intellectual image he strives to preserve and undermine his control. His response to emotions, especially emotions like guilt, threatens the myth of control. A visible example of this comes when he visits his memory palace to find the memory of what happened to Diogenes. Several times along the way, he feels so emotional that his self-control is threatened, and the memory palace nearly breaks apart as he almost loses the focus needed to maintain it. Guilt is an emotion he feels especially intently as can be seen in his relationship with Diogenes. The guilt caused by the event that damaged Diogenes's mind is so extreme that he suppressed the event because "the guilt was so overwhelming, it threatened his very sanity" (Preston and Child 307). When the memory is unsealed years later as an adult, the guilt returns with a vengeance that leaves Pendergast shell-shocked. The realization that he created the criminal he is hunting devastates him. While Pendergast still believes Diogenes to be dangerous at this point, his willingness to kill his brother vanishes and is replaced by a desire to save Diogenes and make up in somewhat for what had been done to his brother. D'Agosta recognizes Pendergast's intentions and tries to confront him, telling the FBI agent that "there's only one way to take care of Diogenes"

(Preston and Child 397). Pendergast does not answer the question and gives D'Agosta such a hard look that the question the policeman wants to ask, about whether or not Pendergast is capable of killing Diogenes if necessary, does not come out. Pendergast's cold reaction to the question and lack of answer hint that he himself does not know if he can kill his brother, despite everything Diogenes has done. The uncovered memory and revelation of his guilt changes his relationship with Diogenes. In facing such brutal guilt, Pendergast faces his shadow as well as his own demons, which is one of the reasons why he has the highest complexity score in the study.

At this point in detective fiction history, facing a perpetrator/victim is not new, but Pendergast faces two of his own creation: his own brother whom he has a direct hand in making and Constance, indirectly shaped into one as a result of his relationship with her. After escaping from prison, Pendergast thwarts Diogenes' plan to incite mass panic through a brain damaging national broadcast and Diogenes flees the country to return to his home to regroup. Constance, enraged by Diogenes's betrayal and attempt to get her to commit suicide, follows after him with a gun and homicidal intent. With both perpetrator/victims he created fighting one another, Pendergast feels duty bound to follow. He tells D'Agosta that "I am my brother's creator. And all this time, I never knew it--I never apologized or atoned for what I did. That is something I'll have to live with for the rest of my life" (Preston and Child 397). As the reason behind Diogenes' criminality and insanity, Pendergast feels obligated to catch him and try to make amends. Adding in Constance, whom Pendergast loves and wants to protect, makes the compulsion to follow the two perpetrator/victims in their cat and mouse game more irresistible. Pendergast chases after the pair and arrives just in time to witness Constance

pushing Diogenes into a volcano. Constance almost falls in as well, but barely manages to grab onto a rock at the edge of the volcano and hang there until Pendergast saves her. If she died along with Diogenes, Pendergast would not have had to face the second perpetrator/victim directly. The story, however, is structured so Pendergast is forced to face both of his demons and choose between the law and his own personal feelings.

As a result of his experiences, Pendergast makes the choice to let Constance get away with murder, acting as a person instead of a detective. If he thought as a detective, he would have noted that he witnessed the murder himself and knew that Constance initiated the series of attacks that led to the confrontation on the rim of the volcano, not Diogenes. His duty would bind him to turn Constance into the police since he has no authority outside the United States. However, Pendergast does not even consider punishing Constance. His love for her is undoubtedly part of it, but he also does not hold her accountable because he recognizes that what Diogenes did broke her mind and soul. He feels guilt for that damage, for leaving her vulnerable and for being the reason Diogenes sought her out in the first place. He also acknowledges, however, as Marlowe did in *The Big Sleep*, that Constance is not in her right mind and prison would make her worse in the end, not better. Pendergast comes away from the case with many regrets, but his choice to let Constance get away with killing Diogenes is not one of them.

Overall, *The Book of the Dead* provides a unique variation of the perpetrator/victim problem already seen in Allingham's *The Crime at Black Dudley*. The criminal involved has not only suffered a terrible wrong that makes him into a criminal, but the wrong was inflicted by the detective, himself. A relationship between the perpetrator and the detective's shadow has

been identified across multiple profiles, but that relationship and the conflict that comes with it take center stage in Agent Pendergast's shadow. The guilt that many police detectives suffer from becomes intense and reshapes the detective himself. He may not experience a clash between the duty to punish and responsibility to protect as other police detectives do, but he still has to choose between his judgement as a human being and his judgement as a law enforcement officer.

Conclusion

Police detectives are the group many would expect to be less conflicted about the law. It is the job of law enforcement officers to protect and defend the law, making it easy assume that individuals who believe and value it are more likely to be police officers, especially in fiction. What is generally not thought about in everyday life, however, is that the police have a duty to protect the law-abiding citizens, as well as to punish the guilty. These two responsibilities are not mutually exclusive, but are fundamentally opposed to one another. With such being the case, it is understandable that circumstances will arise when a police detective must choose between protection and punishment. Sergeant Cuff decides to let a presumed thief go because he has no wish to ruin more lives, Detective Inspector Driffield because he does not want to ruin the future of a diligent young man, Inspector Poole allows a murderous couple to get away so they have a chance at happiness, and, finally, Pendergast lets his ward get away with murder because her mind and spirit are broken, and she needs healing more than punishment. All of these detectives have various reasons, but they all decide to err on the side of humanity over strict enforcement of rule of law, ultimately rejecting the idea of

retributive justice in favor of rehabilitative justice and proving themselves to be realistic characters.

CHAPTER VI
A SHORT NOTE ABOUT RACE

A discussion of detective fiction would be incomplete without an acknowledgement of race. My approach in this study views characters as representations of the writers' cultural attitudes and beliefs in their respective time periods. Inevitably, some of those beliefs involve race, allowing us to measure the association between crime and race at the time a work was composed. During the early age of detective fiction, spanning from the creation of *The Moonstone* in 1868 to the beginning of the Golden Age in 1920, characters demonstrate racist attitudes in the suspicions they form on encountering those of another race. During the Golden of Detective fiction, ranging from 1920-1930, assumptions by characters based on race were commonplace in mainstream books such as Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. Stories created during and after World War II, however, begin to move away from racial stereotyping and take a more globalized and so ethnically diverse view of the world. By the time the most recent example in the study, *The Book of the Dead* by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child, is reached, racism is still present, but less racial profiling appears, and the detective does not display racist tendencies. The trend away from racism as time progresses matches the progress society has made in that time as would be expected if characters a true reflection of people from the time period of their creation.

Early Age of Detective Fiction:

The earliest example of a detective fiction novel in the study is *The Moonstone*, written in 1868, which demonstrates racial stereotyping in the portrayal of the Indians. Their use of the little boy to scry for them gives them reinforces the impression of mysticism present in the beginning of the story with the legend of the Moonstone and the three Brahmens who guarded it, as well as the curse placed on the stone itself. Before the theft takes place, the Indians are already seen as suspicious by the steward, Gabriel Betteredge. Betteredge tries to dissuade the impression of racism when he relates his first sight of the Indians by saying "I am generally all for amusement, and the last person in the world to distrust another person because he happens to be a few shades darker than myself" (Collins 6). Making a statement like this creates suspicion that Betteredge is racist, and Betteredge further supports the idea that he is racist by admitting directly after that quote that "But the best of us have our weakness" (Collins 6). Betteredge's daughter, Penelope also encounters the Indians and when she tells Betteredge about the boy and the scrying, his first thought is that the Indians are planning to swindle money from Rachel Verinder by finding out when Franklin Blake is arriving from the servants and then pretending to foretell the arrival magically for Rachel (Collins 7). When the titular Moonstone is found to be stolen, the first people suspected of the crime are the Indians based on their race and the belief that Indians were thieves. Despite a lack of evidence against them, they are locked up on a charge of vagrancy and interrogated about the theft by the local police. *The Moonstone* shows clear signs of racism in the description of the Indians as well as Betteredge and the local police's suspicions of them.

Much like *The Moonstone*, diamonds called “The Flying Stars” in the Father Brown short story of the same name (1911) are also racialized. Specifically, the diamonds are from Africa, lending them the same exotic ambience the Moonstone possesses. The pantomime put on by the guests is referred to as “a proper old English pantomime” (Chesterton 60). The ostensibly Canadian Uncle, who is Flambeau in disguise, suggests that the group do it. Flambeau frames it as a form of nostalgia by someone who has been too long in a foreign country where the plays are inferior (Chesterton 60). Racial suspicion is less present in “The Flying Stars” than in *The Moonstone*, but still showing prevailing racist attitudes of the time by using the foreign origin of the diamonds to make them exotic and holding up English traditions as superior to any other culture’s traditions through the pantomime.

“The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot” goes beyond treating non-Anglo races as possible petty criminals to theorize that they are a danger to human life by connecting Africans with the murder weapon. All the victims in “The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot” are found to have died from “Devil’s Foot Powder” which Dr. Sterndale explains is a poisonous gas created by burning a powder manufactured by medicine men in West Africa for ordeals (Doyle 10). The powder’s foreign origins link foreigners, particularly Africans, to danger. The mention of ordeals, which are rituals where the accused is subjected to a physical trial and the outcome determines their guilt or innocence. One example would be the medieval trial for witchcraft where women were thrown in a river and those who floated were deemed guilty while the ones that sank to the bottom were presumed innocent.² In the case of the poison, the accused would most likely be

² For further information on ordeals and how African tribes used poison for them see Robb, George L. “THE ORDEAL POISONS OF MADAGASCAR AND AFRICA.” *Botanical Museum Leaflets*, Harvard University, vol. 17, no. 10, 1957, pp. 265–316.

forced to endure the smoke and innocence or guilt would depend on a similar result.

Associating the murder weapon with a superstitious and brutal form of justice such as the ordeals gives the impression that Africans are savage. For Dr. Sterndale to have applied used an ordeal such as that on Mortimer, implies that he has been in Africa so long that what the Africans see as justice has become what he himself sees as justice. Holmes further supports this conclusion by referring to Dr. Sterndale as a "lawless lion-hunter" (Doyle 12). "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" does not use foreign diamonds like *The Moonstone* and "The Flying Stars" but does show racism in both the weapon and Holmes' theory on why a murder was committed.

Since *The Moonstone*, "The Flying Stars," and "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" originate from the earliest period of detective fiction, it is not a surprise that they contain the racist attitudes that were prevalent in society during that time in England. Other races such as Indians and Africans were believed exotic and unfairly stereotyped as dishonest at best and dangerous at worst. As terrible as that truth is, it shows that my hypothesis positing characters as simulations of people is sound. The Golden Age of Detective fiction lasted from the 1920s to the 1930s, an era where racism was a part of society. Since Jim Crow Laws and segregation were in effect during the 1920-1930s in America and the Klu Klux Klan's popularity reached its greatest heights, the racism of investigators in that period is unsurprising. Rationally minded or not, detectives and the authors of stories about them are heavily influenced by the time period and culture they came from. Unfortunately, at this point in time, British and American culture was high racist so the literature at the time reflected that reality.

The Golden Age of Detective Fiction

The earliest Golden Age text in the study, *The Crime at Black Dudley*, shows suspicions of criminality based on race much like those present in *The Moonstone*. In *The Crime at Black Dudley*, Dr. George Abbershaw is suspicious of the robbers before they ever reveal themselves to be criminals and take action not only because they are stranger to him but also because they are foreign, German to be precise, and make him uneasy as a result. Abbershaw describes the face of Gideon, one of the foreigners, as “grey, vivacious, and peculiarly wicked” (Allingham 14). When Abbershaw expresses his opinion on how weird Gideon looks, Meggie concurs with Abbershaw on how “wicked” Gideon appears. That Gideon later turns out to be a criminal reinforces the link between an unusual physiognomy, which Non-English races often possess, and moral evil. Gideon’s companion and the leader of the group of robbers, Benjamin Dwalish is also caricatured, though, he is thought of more as a living statute than a danger and thus comes across as less threatening. The idea of a household of servants uprising against their masters at the command of Germans to hold a group of wholly British characters captive links Germans to criminality and danger.

Race plays a brief and yet significant part in the 1927 book, *Murder in the Maze* where it is linked to danger. The poison used on the darts is African and came from a collection of artifacts in the Shannon Mansion amassed by Roger Shannon during his business ventures there. The existence of the museum implies that Africa is an exotic place while the poison originating from Africa suggests that it is dangerous. Roger is revealed to have gained most of

his fortune in Africa, but the details are deliberately hazy with the narrator stating, “the exact methods which had led to his fortune were never discussed by him” (Connington 285). The statement implies that whatever Roger did to get the money was shady and portrays Africa as a place for unsavory business ventures. Africa and likely Africans by extension in *Murder in the Maze* are portrayed as dangerous and criminal.

Murder on the Orient Express possesses the most diverse cast of characters in the study with Italian, French, Swedish, British, Jewish, and even Russian royalty among the nationalities presented. Yet, it also reinforces many racial stereotypes and racist ideas represented in texts such as *The Crime at Black Dudley*. Kenneth Eckhart states that “Christie’s novels particularly suggest both period racism and xenophobic Anglocentrism” (Eckhart 189). Bouc showcases the attitude mentioned by Eckhart when he claims the murder is “the act of a man driven almost crazy with a frenzied hate-it suggests a Latin temperament” (Christie 57). The passenger can also be easily categorized by their national stereotypes. Ms. Debenham is an English woman, so she is seen as stiff, cold and careful of propriety, while the Italian, Mr. Hardman, is gregarious and highly suspect. When examining *Murder on the Orient Express* and Poirot in particular, Eckhart points out “In Poirot’s list of clues nationality always follows names and figures prominently in his deductions” (Eckhart 191). Poirot’s noting of nationality may be a formality, but, as Eckhart notes, put together with Poirot’s insistence that the crime is English in origin and not Italian due to a lack of passion it suggests that Poirot believe in racial stereotypes. *Murder on the Orient Express* displays the superior attitude the British public adopted towards other races in the past.

Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club by Agatha Christie's fellow queen of crime, Dorothy Sayers, focuses mostly on foreign lands as savage and the setting for wars. The Bellona club is a place for officers who served in the British Army during wartime. Many of the men in the club had fought in wars to conquer and colonize various nations. These veterans are juxtaposed against the men returned from the recently ended World War I. The colonial veterans view the foreign lands they fought in as a proving ground to win glory for themselves and their nation against so-called savage races. Men from World War I see the countries they fought in and think of the horrible weapons employed such as gas and the danger of the trenches. The two groups of veterans signify two different attitudes on race and war in the British public: the old colonial mindset backed by the idea of British superiority and the traumatized World War I point of view where other countries were seen as dangerous and nightmarish.

The Maltese Falcon by Dashiell Hammett shows blatant racism and orientalism. First, there is the Falcon itself which is said to have been made for the Count of the Holy Roman Empire and so continues the trend of valuable exotic objects as a cause of criminality. Apart from Brigid O'Shaughnessy, who might be Irish if the last name she gave was her real one, the thieves in the story are all foreign, including Germans Gutman and Wilmer and the Egyptian Joe Cairo. Gutman continues the trend of Germans as criminal masterminds seen in *The Crime at Black Dudley*. Cairo's characterization, however, is what brings Orientalism into the story. Said notes in his famous work *Orientalism* that the West saw itself as rational and civilized while the Orient was viewed as irrational, which suggests they are emotional, and primitive. (Said 40). Cairo is the most emotional of the thieves, the only one besides Wilmer to get upset when Spade suggests using Wilmer as a scapegoat. He is also revealed to be gay, having an intimate

relationship with the boy, Wilmer. The overall impression of Cairo is that he as an emotional, effeminate man, he fits the Orientalist stereotypes present at the time well.

The hard-boiled novel, *The Big Sleep* by Raymond Chandler, reflects the Orientalism and Anti-Italian sentiments of America in 1939. These ideas are especially evident in the representation of the pornographer Arthur Geiger and Eddie Mar's hired thug, Canino. Geiger's shop is said to have windows covered with Chinese screens and the scene for the pornographic photo shoot is "decked out with strips of Chinese embroidery and Chinese and Japanese prints in wood frames" (Chandler 33). Geiger himself is wearing Chinese slippers and a jacket with Chinese embroidery when he is found dead. The constant repetition of objects described to be Chinese in Geiger's places of business and on Geiger himself associate the Chinese with the pornographic industry, showing orientalism. Orientalism effeminizes Eastern countries such as China and makes them look sexually promiscuous. According to Edward Said "In most cases, the Orient seemed to have offended sexual propriety; everything about the Orient. . .exuded dangerous sex, threatened hygiene, and domestic seamliness" (Said 167). When Geiger's lover is found to be a boy, the feminization of both Geiger and the Chinese is complete. Another stereotype in *The Big Sleep* is that Italians are mafia. Canino is an Italian name, and he is hired by the mafia boss, Eddie Mars as a killer.

Post-World War II Detective Fiction

After World War II and the overturning of key laws descended from Jim Crow, American (and Western) society began to slowly change its attitudes on race. We see the beginning of

this in *Lonely Magdalen* by Henry Wade which was published in 1940, a year into World War II. Apart from relating the offensives by countries opposed to Britain during World War I such as Russia and Germany, race does not display much of a presence in the novel, especially compared to earlier detective novels. At the least, this means that *Lonely Magdalen* is not openly racist.

The character who represents foreigners in *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* by P.D. James seems to represent a step backwards in the progression, but her child-like characteristics seem to be more a commentary on wealth than on race. Her name is Isabelle, and she is the daughter of a rich Frenchman who sent her to school at Cambridge. While her beauty is emphasized from the moment that Cordelia meets her, the deep blue eyes and blond hair, common British features, makes her seem white and therefore unexotic (James 72). Isabelle appears to be a spoiled child with a negligent governess who is often drunk. She holds parties in the fine house hung with expensive paintings, all rented with her father's money. All of the characteristics associate wealth and class with immaturity more than they do race.

While *Lonely Magdalen* and *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* mostly avoid negative representations of race by not confronting the issue directly, *The Judas Goat* both possesses an African American as a major side character and villainizes racist groups. Spencer's partner in *The Judas Goat*, Hawk, is African American, and Spencer does not treat him differently than white characters. Hawk is arguably smarter and better with guns than Spencer is implying that the idea of African Americans as inferior had lost most of its approval in the public. The Liberty Bomber group also directly ties into race in the story. The goal of the Liberty Bombers is to maintain white control of African countries. The bombing that claims Dixon's wife and child is a

reprisal against Britain for backing up independence for African countries. The event shows that the group cares nothing for collateral damage and frames white supremacy groups as terrorists. At the least, making a white supremacy group the villains of the story causes the reader to question their efficacy. If *The Judas Goat* were written in the 1920s or even 1930s it would be seen as radically counter cultural. The 1978 publication date, however, merely reflects a time when Jim Crow laws had been abolished and racial tolerance was beginning to become the public attitude.

Present Day

The Book of the Dead by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child represents the most modern text. The scene that deals most directly with race is when Special Agent Pendergast faces prison gang, The Broken Teeth. Pendergast's encounter with the Latino prison gang could be viewed as racist given it was led by a former drug kingpin and so supported the stereotype of Latino's as drug dealers. However, Pendergast never says or thinks anything about their race. When he riles up the leader, La Carra, to provoke an attack, Pendergast uses the crime La Carra committed and does not insult his race or country. Pendergast kills La Carra, but only as a part of the escape plan and he regrets the necessity later, implying that Pendergast did see La Carra as a person. Pendergast displays the modern attitude of general tolerance towards race.

There are, however, major events that occurred more recently than the books' publication that may have changed attitudes towards race in our society more. The recent killing of George Floyd in May 2020, the protests that resulted from it, and the police response to those protests has brought to society's attention potential racism within law enforcement. It

is possible that books from a more recent time period may portray a more critical attitude towards law enforcement and their relationship with race. A study of non-white crime fiction and writers might well reflect a different perspective. A majority of the characters in the study are white and all of the authors are so the view on race may be somewhat limited as is.

Based on the books in the study, though, and our brief examination of their treatment of race thus far, there are two conclusions we can come to that are valuable for this study. The first is that the characters in the stories reflect the racial attitudes of society at the time of their construction. We know this by the trend of race and its treatment in the varying stories across different time periods. The second conclusion relates directly to the investigators and the decision they make on whether or not to release a criminal. My hypothesis based on the evidence is that race is not the controlling factor in any of these cases. There are cases such as “The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot” where racism needs to be taken into account as one of the factors, but if race were the only reason that perpetrators were being released, then all the suspects released should be the same race as the investigator and we do not see that. Race is important to consider, though, especially if detective fiction is a true realistic simulation of people in history and I have no doubt that the stories being written today will show further variance based on recent events.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

While these stories and their detectives are fictional, they express the human heart and mind. If detective fiction, as previous scholars have argued, is a way for society to express its anxieties about deviants, to see those deviants punished, and affirm the belief in the absolute power of societal rules, then we would expect law and morality to be equivalent. Given that the pattern of detectives letting the guilty escape without punishment is not an anomaly but occurs when characters are more realistic, the logical conclusion is that we no longer assume the law protects morality.

That the characters who choose to let the guilty escape possess a higher level of humanity than the counterparts that made a different decision is shown by the complexity scores. The common factor that unites all of the different reasons and provides a possible explanation for the pattern is the high complexity scores of the detectives who let a criminal go versus Lord Peter Wimsey and Sam Spade, who did not do so. By measuring the complexity of the Persona, I investigated the ability of the character to consciously manage how others see them. Examining the Shadow's level of detail, lets me see if the character possessed a subconsciousness where parts of themselves they do not like lurk. Both the Persona and the Shadow are psychoanalytical concepts based on attributes that humans possess. Getting a high score in these categories is thus an indicator of greater humanity in a character and so greater realism. The concentration of most of the scoring points in the Persona and the Shadow support my claim that the greater the complexity score, the closer to human the character is,

and thus, the more capable to make a correspondingly complex choice. Unlike the previous two concepts, the Hero's journey has its basis in fiction. Nonetheless, utilizing it allowed me to measure another human-like characteristic: the ability to change. The last characteristic is rooted in stereotypes because humans are too complicated to be summed up by a stereotype. A truly complex and human-like character would also be unable to be defined in such a way. If the greater humanity of the detectives who possess the ability to disregard the law in the right circumstances is taken into account, there are several implications about how humanity regards the rule of law that can be made when the various types of detectives are examined.

The amateur detectives largely pose the question of what happens when the law fails to protect innocence, either by its inability to punish evil or to prevent more harm. Dr. George Abbershaw found in Wyatt a perpetrator who had also been a victim in his own right and decided that he did not deserve punishment because of it. When faced with an entire train filled with people similarly wronged, Hercule Poirot considered how the scandal of the crime would impact his friend's business and ignored the victimhood of the killers. Father Brown uncovered a perpetrator who lacked previous victimization, but could be rehabilitated if he were persuaded to give back what he had stolen and abandon his criminal ways. Amateur detectives interrogate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the law and its abilities are interrogated much as humans today.

Although amateur detectives do not see the inability of the law to punish evil or protect against it at times as malicious or a systematic failure, private investigators develop their own moral code because they suspect the law of both. Cordelia Gray is an outlier in the pattern of moral codes because she allows a murderer to escape due to her love for the murderer's son,

himself a victim of a previous crime committed by the man killed. Sherlock Holmes, however, undoubtedly made his choice out of his own moral code which allowed for murders to be justified based on reasons of passion. In Philip Marlowe, we see a man built on his own knightly code willing to overlook crime to protect his dying, vulnerable client and give the insane damsel in distress and murderess a chance to be saved. Spenser possesses a code less defined than Marlowe, but he too desires to protect rather than harm, so he releases an unstable terrorist. Private investigators lack faith in the law to morally deal with emotion or vulnerable victims, making them a reflection of humanity's suspicion of law itself.

Finally, we have the police detectives who represent situations where there is a conflict between law's duty to punish and its duty to protect. Sergeant Trotter Cuff wishes to keep another young girl from losing her life to a scandal, so he lets her go unpunished to protect her. Upon finding an earnest young man who committed a crime, Driffield assists him in covering it up so he can keep from losing his life, yet the same detective ruthlessly gases another criminal who he does not deem innocent. Inspector Poole deceives himself into getting an innocent executed in order to let two lovers walk away into a happy future. Pendergast confronts two murderers of his own creation and saves the one he is able to, protecting her against any consequences from her crime. Police detectives portray the struggle between the desire to exact justice by punishing evil and the need to protect people.

The widespread nature of the pattern of detectives letting criminals go combines with the scores to suggest that detective fiction is not about an affirmation of the way society is or a way to vent societal fears. Detective fiction is not the flat, rule-driven puzzle it has been assumed to be in the past, but a complex genre centered on realism. It is about portraying the

understanding that humans cannot follow an ideal perfectly whether they are meant to enforce it or to simply obey it. Based on what I have read in these stories and the flawed legal systems represented within in them, I believe that, in the end, everyone is flawed and the best we can do is try to make sense of and keep in mind that our legal system is not perfect, but it is better than nothing and will allow individual moral judgement to be made by the people who should make them: humans.

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APPENDIX A:

GLOSSARY

Amateur Detectives- Characters who investigate crimes for pleasure or out of necessity. They are not paid and being a detective is not their job.

Cozies- a sub-genre of detective fiction where the emphasis is on the puzzle at the expense of gory details and the trauma of the victim.

Early Age of Detective Fiction- The span of time from the creation of the first detective story in 1841 to the beginning of World War I in 1914.

Fair Play- The idea that detective novels are a match of wits between the reader and the detective so readers must have all the clues the detectives receive and a chance to solve the crime themselves.

Golden Age of Detective Fiction- A period in time from the 1930-1950s where detective fiction flourished in Britain and American.

Hard-Boiled-a sub-genre of detective fiction, typically associated with Noir, which focuses gritty realism as well as the horror and corruption of crime.

Hero's Journey- The template created by Joseph Campbell to serve as a monomyth for religions and mythologies across cultures and time periods. The focus is on a hero who goes on an adventure, engages in a struggle, and then returns home changed physically or mentally.

Private Investigators- Characters who work for or own a detective agency of their own and have been trained in detection.

Perpetrator/Victim-A person who commits crime because they were the victim of a crime themself.

Persona- The perceived identity of a person that they encourage others to believe is true. C.J. Jung created the term in the field of psychoanalysis.

Police Detectives- Characters who work for the police to investigate crimes.

Post World War II detective fiction- Detective Novels written from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Shadow- The part of a person's identity that they do not want others to know about due to embarrassment, shame, or hatred of those characteristics. The term was established by C.J. Jung and is used frequently in psychoanalysis.

Stereotype- Well known sets of tropes that create a simplified, overused characters.

The Superman Theory- The theory that the detective is allowed to pass judgement and let a criminal go because they are more than human.

The Common Representative Theory- The theory that detectives act like a jury, representing society and protecting its values when even the law fails.