



Establishing the Hardboiled Fiction as a Literary Landmark in Dashiell Hammett's Red Harvest

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Abstract

In spite of the existence of a great number of hardboiled detective novels in American literature, Dashiell Hammett's Red Harvest (1929) is regarded as a work beyond that of many others. The novel is Hammett's first detective tale and the first crime fiction that found out a new subgenre in crime literature. Critics refer to it as a literary milestone, due to the writer's realism, which was entirely unlike the way other writers wrote. This study argues that in addition to its realism the significance of the work is ascribed to Hammett's urban setting, colorful characterization of the detective, foreboding narration, and the writer's unusual notion of gender roles. The paper concludes that by the presentation of the true American world, penetrating through its affairs, and anticipating the consequences, Hammett detached British and American crime fiction, which was seen as one whole previously.



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1. Introduction

In the early twentieth century, American literature was enriched with a new mode of representation and expression with hardboiled fiction, which is a narrative that demonstrates the investigation of crimes and its horrors. This newly-born crime novel exhibits violence and horror as prevalent in the developing urban cities of that era (Harouna, 2022, p. 104).

The appearance of hardboiled crime fiction relied on a specific historical, socio-economic and cultural condition. On the plane of history, it was the decades after the civil war or the so-called Gilded Age that set the basis of modern American industrial capitalist system that was fully developed by the 1920s. The economic ascent connected with the initial industrial revolution of iron, steel, steam power, railroads, and quick urbanization had by then altered into the time of electricity, the telephone, the wireless, the automobile, the skyscraper, and certainly, the animated pictures. Old agrarian America had permitted for a new, rapid developing social and material atmosphere marked by monopoly capitalism, unparalleled wealth specifically for the few, the conflict between capital and labor, and elevated class struggle.

In the cultural realm, urban calamity, deceitful political machines, and real disenfranchisement of important components of population were aspects of the background in which crime of a new and arranged type was to become indigenous. Therefore, it is not completely a coincidence if *Black Mask* magazine, in which Hammett and Chandler commenced writing, first emerged in 1919 as the era of Prohibition started. Perhaps the influence of the most profoundly unwise section of legislation of twentieth century America was turning hundreds of thousands of day-to-day working, and middle-class Americans into criminals, and creating a community with developed crime syndicates for the sake of catering an appetite that could not be suppressed. With Prohibition the platform was designed for an unprecedented sway of crime connected in the popular mentality with fast cars and machine guns. The time was mature for the appearance of a widespread literary genre of a disillusioned, anti-authoritarian hero, who rather than escaping to Europe, enjoyed the complexities of lost generation fiction, remained at home to face crime and deception on the ugly roads of modern urban America (Priestman, 2003, p. 95, 96).

Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961) holds a high place on most lists of the finest writers of crime fiction. The American writer left school at the age of thirteen and worked different low-pay jobs prior to serving for eight years as a detective for the Pinkerton agency. He participated in the First and Second World Wars, he contracted tuberculosis and spent the postwar years in army hospitals (Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of American Literature, 2009, p. 661, 662).

That there was a new feature in Hammett's detective tales was doubtlessly the case. Hammett's role in the invention of hardboiled detective was greater than any other person. In spite of the existence of the action-filled, tough-guy detective stories prior to Hammett's coming on the scene, the roots of the formula were forgotten in the obscurity of early twentieth-century western and action-detective cores. During the twenties, along with Hammett's emergence, several hardboiled writers emerged, but Hammett was the most significant. Hammett's importance was due to his giving the new story much of its distinctive style and atmosphere, developing its urban setting, and, above all, articulating the hardboiled hero, with a special mixture of toughness and sentimentality, of sarcastic understatement and eloquence, that would persist as a stamp of hardboiled detective (Cawelti, 1997, p. 163). *Red Harvest* is a typical instance of Hammett's works which reflect most of these features.

The Continental Op who appears acting as narrator and detective in *Red Harvest*, is nameless and almost formless, common in appearance and around forty years old (Cline, 2014, p.29). The Op sets off to Personville to encounter newspaper publisher Donald Willsson, who has employed him to explore corruption in Personville. Before the Op is able to meet him in person, Donald is murdered. Following Donald's death, the Op's investigation shifts direction. The Op encounters Donald's father Elihu Willsson instead of meeting Donald. Unknown to the Op, Elihu is at the core of the corruption in the town. At a time that Elihu used to have domination over the town, he realized that

his authority is threatened by several gangs, which he primarily brought to Personville to assist in breaking a labor strike. Elihu appoints the Op to the task of cleaning up the city.

During the Op's inquiry in Donald's murder, and his trials to clean the city of criminals, he spends time with Dinah Brand. Dinah, who turns into a worthy source of information for the Op, is a prostitute who possesses relationships with Willsson family and the gangs. Moreover, the Op calls for the Continental Detective Agency and interrogates him for backup as he realizes the need of reinforcements for his investigations. The Op's investigation is supported by the quick arrival of the detectives Donald Foley and Mickey Linehan. One morning, following a late night of drinking and exchanging views about the case with Dinah, the Op finds her dead, an ice pick in her back. As the Op is the last person to view her alive, he is named as a lead suspect in the affair. Though the police suspect him the Op pursues his work in Personville, ultimately turning the rival gangs hostile to each other. The narrative soon turns to an anarchic gang war. The gangs' numbers are effectively reduced by corrupt police, arson, grenades and several gang fights. Elihu is also blackmailed by the Op to call the National Guard to announce martial law in Personville. Finally, Elihu regains his own town and the Op blamelessly goes back to San Francisco (Kelly, 2017, p. 44, 45). It is remarkable that the significance of *Red Harvest* is noticed via realizing its difference with previous kinds of detective fiction as well as comprehending how it deviates from the European norms of detective novels.

2.literature Review

Hardboiled fiction is an American literary style, associated with detective fiction appeared during the 1920s. This research which is under the title "Establishing the Hardboiled Fiction as a Literary Landmark in Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest*" has concentrated on the role of Dashiell Hammett and his novel, *Red Harvest* in establishing hardboiled fiction. The rise of this subgenre has been the subject of a growing body of research in recent years. The literature review of the current study includes theses and articles about various authors and literary techniques utilized in hardboiled fiction. Those previous works have inspired the researcher in the way of directing the study into regarding Hammett's *Red Harvest* as the provenance of this subgenre.

A study conducted by Carl D. Malmgren on Hammett's detective fiction "The Crime of the Sign: Dashiell Hammett's Detective Fiction" in 1999. In this study, the researcher discusses Chandler's essay, "The Simple Art of Murder" which rejects the British tradition of detective fiction. Chandler claims that the narrative form of this type of fiction fails to offer lively characters, sharp dialogue and a sense of severe utilization of observed details. The murders in these tales are motivated, the plots are totally artificial, and the characters are two-dimensional. He adds that the authors of this fiction are unaware of the facts of life and ignore what happens in the world. In other words, Chandler accuses Golden Age writers as Agatha Christie and Anthony Berkeley, of failure to be true to the real world and write about the type of murders that happen, and the original flavor of life. Chandler separates Dashiell Hammett as the author who saved the genre by portraying the real world, and writing realistic mystery fiction.

Malmgren also presents the views of some critics of detective fiction regarding Hammett's role in developing this subgenre. John Cawelti adjusts Chandler's claims acknowledging that Hammett's stories are not inevitably more realistic but they incorporate a powerful vision of life. Another critic states that Hammett acclimatized a new set of literary traditions better conformed with the setting. Malmgren regards Chandler's comments naïve and Hammett's realism as traditional as Christie's. He claims that examining the real world of Hammett's detective fiction which extends from American detective fiction and investigating his novels, specifically *Red Harvest* manifests that Hammett's powerful vision is derived largely from his devastation of the main structures of plainness including his language (Malmgren, 1999, p. 371, 372).

Another interesting study conducted by Zuzana Jalová in 2007 titled "Reflections of Society and Era in Hardboiled Detective Fiction", is relevant to the current study. In her

analysis of hardboiled detective fiction, Jalová demonstrates that popular culture in general and hardboiled fiction in particular ought to be regarded as literary genre comparable to high literature. She makes an effort to prove that different literary items common to high literature are widely manipulated in hardboiled detective fiction. Moreover, she associates this subgenre with the social and political events of the 1920s and 1930s. The study presents Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett as representatives of this type of fiction. It argues that despite of being flourished during the initial decades of the twentieth century, the impact of hardboiled detective fiction on modern American society is still noticeable. It adds that this type of fiction is one of the favorite genres read by ordinary people, due to the fact that it does not only provide entertainment but acts as a source of valuable literary satisfaction. The study concludes that resemblance between today's society and one of the early twentieth century is the cause of the persistent popularity of hardboiled fiction (Jalová, 2007, p.61-63).

Sara Trott, in a study titled "Recasting American Hard-Boiled Writing as a Literature of Traumatic War Experience" conducted in 2013, tackles the effect of combat on hardboiled novel. She regards the subgenre as a literature of trauma and investigates the impact of war on the individual, which represents both author and protagonist of the stories. Trott states that crime authors during and after Vietnam war recognized the consequences of warfare and felt no longer obliged to conceal their trauma. They managed triumphantly to express their anger and resentment. The study acknowledges that when the protagonist's psychological trauma is crucial a new level of authenticity is achieved in the crime genre. It adds that the demonstration of flawed protagonists manifests the sentimental entanglement at the heart of contemporary society. While in the early crime fiction the ugliness of society was symbolized by acts of physical violence and depravity, it is taken to a far higher level by contemporary authors through the use of a harsh and gritty language after Vietnam war (Trott, 2013, p. 24, 25).

Sumya. S J in a study conducted in 2017 under the title "Hardboiled Fiction: A Narrative Technique", describes hardboiled fiction as a tough unsentimental style of writing that provided a new spirit of realism to the realm of detective fiction. It defined the subgenre as a blending of noir with an American style detective fiction. The study attributes the enduring literary style of hardboiled fiction to three writers: Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and James M. Cain. Sumya. S J argues that the definition of what is meant by hardboiled fiction could be achieved through studying Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*, Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* and Chandler's *The Long Good bye*. The study concludes by emphasizing the central themes of hardboiled fiction as the self-destructive qualities of the characters and a perception of fatalism where the world is unconcerned with chaos and suffering (S J, 2017, p. 141-143).

It is obvious that researchers present various views concerning the status of hardboiled fiction and its authors' difference from their British counterparts. The current study regards Dashiell Hammett as a pioneer of hardboiled detective fiction. It assumes that Hammett's *Red Harvest* contributed in establishing the subgenre as a literary landmark.

3. Detective Fiction: An Historical Overview

Critics ascribe the origin of the detective form back to Oedipus and to the Bible. Yet the detective tale as a genre is an outcome of the nineteenth century; it evolved beside police agencies and detective bureaus in the advanced manufacturing cities like Paris and London, that demanded systematic patterns of municipal dominance and law implementation, and which employed scientific techniques of detection. Initial detective tales were memoirs of well-known detectives such as Eugène-François Vidocq and Allan Pinkerton, who wrote fantastic accounts of their experiences in the years 1828 and 1875 subsequently (Skenazy, 1982, 5,6).

According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the initial allusion to the detective policemen was in 1856, and to the detective story in 1883. Prior to that, however, Edgar Allan Poe wrote the first detective tale, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* in 1841, and the presentation of the detective C

Auguste Dupin launched a movement that maintained its strength till the twenty first century (Howard, 2010, 2). Poe erected models that set off characteristics of the genre: the higher-class context, the confined territory, the hero's impractical judgement of an issue stemmed from indirect notifications, the talented detective and his rather witless fellow, the vague and aggressive association between the detective and the police.

However, the true reign of detective fiction starts with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes novels of the 1890s. Holmes is an ideal literate, intellectual late Victorian, who is both polite to and skeptical of woman and corporal charm. He is an absolutist in mentality, having swallowing the mysteries of all time and space (Skenazy, 1982, p. 6).

A free-spirited bachelor, Holmes is capable of living free from commitments of money, of civil power, and aristocracy. He is the prime expert of London, who faces a world of shifting values, and of fortune and indigence. Holmes is capable of penetrating through the apparent chaos and finding out within it the basic rationality of a civilized order. His clear insight and precise mind cost him distress and addiction (Ibid, p. 7). Holmes establishes the norm for eccentricities for the future detectives with his "anti-social Bohemianism and cocaine-taking." (Kayman, 2003, p. 49)

The Holmes convention reaches the summit of its progress during the 1920s and 1930s. These mysteries composed mainly in England, partake an exceedingly alienated English rural district, a slight number of characters, a focal homicide that obstructs the careless context, and a detective who resolves the crime and restores the daily life of society. The Holmes tradition mysteries supply a promising model with principles regarding introducing evidence, developing plot, even the permitted extent of character complexities and internal depth. Writing, reading, and enjoying such stories are continuous today and they keep on illustrating, and affirming the integrity and soundness of a cultured, chaotic social system (Skenazy, 1982, p. 7). Heather Worthington, states that familiarity with the Holmes tradition becomes the basis for the rise of Golden Age crime fiction:

The so-called 'Golden Age' of crime fiction can justifiably be said to have been made possible by Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and his adventures in detection. Doyle's creation, perhaps more than any other previous foray into crime fiction, consolidated the public's liking for, expectations of and familiarity with the genre. (2011, p. 152)

The expression "Golden Age" is manipulated for the description of a blessed time of crime works and a surviving model for later products, viz the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century (Kollmitzer, 2010, p. 15).

An unrestrained, corrupted sketch of detective and mystery story started to occur during the 1920s in America, mirroring the vulgar truth of another group of readers, people familiar with city crisis and the outlaw world of Prohibition rather than elegant properties and country weekends. This new genre of the mystery form is soon dubbed as hardboiled or tough-guy convention due to the passionless figure of its hero (Skenazy, 1982, p. 7).

The so-called hardboiled fiction, shaped a powerful response confronting vastly synthetic classical detective tales of the interwar interval, essentially in Britain. Unlike its previous subgenre, this kind of crime literature mirrored the criterions and gauges of common culture and social associations in the USA prior to and following World War II, like the interest in the work and background of police and detectives, exploring sensational topics, and the involvement in the psychological part of crimes. In spite of the fact that it is mostly supposed that hardboiled detective fiction mainly refers to the spheres of the American popular culture of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, several of its facets, as the urban issues of modernism, could be observed in the products of some British remarkable authors, like Agatha Christie (Stolarek, 2010, p. 2). Hardboiled stories portray various aspects of crime literature, which are viewed as new features of detective fiction in the history of American literature.

4. Aspects of Hardboiled Crime Fiction

In the twentieth century, a widespread interest among various critics and writers was aroused by detective stories and crime novels. The canon of British literature was constituted by famous authors as Agatha Christi, G. K. Chesterton, and Dorothy Sayers whose works reflected the established social and cultural norms in this country prior and shortly following World War II. Nonetheless, the classical pattern of the genre, which was profoundly embedded in the European literary tradition, was soon questioned manifesting structural and thematic weaknesses, in spite of its ascents and success at the turn and in the first half of the twentieth century. Initially, the classic Golden Age novels used to be grasped as tightly sealed tales, typically by place in a country house which was represented as an alienated setting, by their artificial structural model, by the enrollment of apparently unreal elements, like the amateur state of the detective and the exclusion of any forensic and scientific police inspection (Abrams, 2013, 69).

Along with the public's gradual weariness and reducing concern with the conventional pattern of this genre hardboiled detective fiction started to develop soon immersing the preceding one. The vital elements of hardboiled detective tales are, a realistic, thrilling and sever manifestation of crime, an even and ordinary style, a vulgar, explicit language free from eloquence and compassion, and a pictorial, authentic description of incidents and characters. The language of hardboiled detective tales is characterized by realism and credibility, the style is clear and simple, void of artificiality and pompousness. The novels are sometimes pervaded by vulgar and coarse language. This subgenre alludes to and closely mirrors the aspects and standards of popular culture and meets the appetite and anticipations of its readers (Stolarek, 2010, p. 2). However, following a closer inspection of this subgenre, one should point out its remaining characteristics as the portrayal of the detective as an experienced figure, and the sovereignty of male heroes in the narrative fiction.

As far as the main characters of hardboiled fiction are concerned, they assume identical roles to those performed in the classical detective story though with quite various status. The primary of them, the detective is an experienced investigator who attempts solving a criminal riddle and finding a culprit individually. Different from the agent in the traditional novel, he is illustrated as a complicated hero, a tragic character, a perceptive noble figure who works in a violent and corruptive world, and who often withstands the atrocity and ruthlessness of the police. Regarding the vocation of the detective in the hardboiled fiction, he is possible to be neither a special eye nor a police officer, but rather he may be a journalist who privately inspects homicidal affairs and who habitually portrays the fraud of the police institutions. Accordingly, it is obvious that this kind of crime literature does not focus totally on detecting the murderer's identity and providing a resolution to a criminal issue but on the description of police performance and the manifestation of the viciousness and the malignant aspect of certain high-grade police officers. Thereby, the hardboiled tale considers the police procedural themes instead of a pure crime novel theme. In fact, the figure of the policeman and the murderer are usually incorporated. Unlike the classical detective novel, the circumstances of the detective and the criminal are dissimilar to that of the pursuer and the pursued. In hardboiled fiction roles are reversed: due to his high rank, the homicide (the police) pursues the major figure who acts as the detective. Such a model is followed by many remarkable authors of hardboiled fiction who frequently present policemen like culprits. Thereby, the aim is to portray the amorality and brutality of the legal system in the USA, consequently their products own didactic and instructive colors (Ibid, p. 3, 4).

An additional pivotal element of hardboiled detective fiction is the setting or the environment. Cynthia Hamilton (1987, P. 25) acknowledges that by 1920 the intervention of city on American life is not possible to be disregarded: less than half of its residents inhabit small villages or on farms. She adds that:

While cities were becoming more important politically and economically, they often seemed the repository of all that was evil. The city housed many of the vast wave of foreign immigrants who threatened, in the eyes of many, to dilute true Americanness. This was also the world of the flapper, the

gangster and the party machine - each a travesty of some aspect of American values. The flapper was an assault on traditional concepts of sex role, especially on the notion of women as the moral guardians of society. The gangster's illicit success sullied the character of the self-made man, while the party machine stood as a contradiction of America's democratic self-image. The hardboiled detective novel comes to terms with these troubling urban phenomena; its violence is an act of exorcism. (Hamilton, 1987, p. 26)

The utopian vision of the city as an organized and coherent environment, created by urban theorists as De Certeau, is shattered by hardboiled fiction. It is no longer a milieu of programmed, controlled processes. Under the ideologized discourses there is a propagation of deception and fraud that are without intellectual lucidity is not possible to preside over (Willett, 1996, p. 4).

Some critics argue that cities are always criticized due to their representation of the basest instincts of human community. They are declared as mapping the domination of the bureaucratic machine or the social pressures of money (Zukin, 1995, p. 1). Thereby, the urban realism that reflects largely the US convention and culture and that therefore has turned to be equivalent with the American detective fiction denotes disorder, confusion and unshrinking, determined offense. Such somber fact which doubtlessly shades the American dream and which represents social disruption, maltreatment of force and wealth, and scattered brutality of capitalism appropriates the motif of hardboiled fiction (Stolarek, 2010, p. 5).

Another crucial feature of hardboiled fiction is its close association with gender roles. The manifestation of male rudeness, their authority and dominance are the core of this subgenre. The world in such novels depict tough male characters and specify little area for female figures. Lawrence Block, in his article, 'Lady gumshoes: Boiled less hard' states:

Women don't fit well into a trench coat and a slouch hat ... The hard-boiled private eye is a special figure in American mythology. It's a staple of the myth that he should be a cynical loner, a man at odds with society and its values. That's not something women normally relate to. Women aren't cynical loners - that's not how they like to work. (Francis, 1990, p. 143)

Actually, in this type of fiction women are denigrated and marginalized. They are exclusively presented as male sexual fantasies who cause dangers to the life of the protagonist. In other words, they are exposed as deviant in their sexuality and erratic in their rejection of male dominance. Accordingly, woman's lusty lifestyle and their strength and stimulating conduct is a threat to men's dominant position.

All elements regarded, the hardboiled fiction has doubtlessly turned to be the most famous subgenre of detective literature in the period between the two World Wars and in the post-World War II. Ascribing its origins to the episodic city novel, this kind of literature soon became a model of popular culture via touching upon political, social and cultural matters in America in the interwar and postwar time (Stolarek, 2010, p. 5). The publication of Hammett's *Red Harvest* marks a turning point in the portrayal of crime and corruption found in numerous cities across America.

5. Red Harvest as a Hardboiled Novel

Hammett's novels undermine the formulation of rule and order as his characters are involved in the malicious underworld the author obviously depicts (Jaber, 2014, p. 84). In fact, Hammett's intrusion into the crime fiction and the manner he changed the reader's expectations concerning the way of engaging with and reading crime fiction are undeniable. It could be best noticed in his initial novel, *Red Harvest*.

The success of Hammett's *Red Harvest* popularized hardboiled crime fiction. Herbert Asbury calls *Red Harvest* as, "the liveliest detective story that has been published in a decade." (Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of American Literature, 2009, p. 665) Hammett disclaims the elegant, glorified characters and peculiar settings of conventional English mystery, upholding a more realistic advent to the shabby sphere of urban crime. The writer establishes hardboiled fiction in his first full-length book *Red Harvest* via his realistic narratives and language, his invention of a new landscape, a new investigator for the American crime fiction, and his unusual view about gender roles.

If British crime fiction of classic Golden Age draws from comedy of manners and selects a narrative style suitable to that genre, hardboiled drives much of its material from American realism – an American realism that implies "telling it like it is", through techniques of spoken language and ordinary people employed to convey their familiarity with the world (Priestman, 2003, p. 97). *Red Harvest* was written during a decade of upheavals. It was an era that commenced with women suffering, and the Prohibition and terminated with the Great Depression. Crime average was ascending at that time and there was a change to a firmer policing system. Hammett's novel described the society illustrating gangsters, bootleggers, and criminals who were participants in the creation of this lawless cosmos. Due to the great number of bootleggers in the story, Donald's wife wants to be sure that the Op is not a bootlegger as she meets him initially:

I'm really not ordinarily so much of a busybody as you probably think," she said gaily. "But you're so excessively secretive that I can't help being curious. You aren't a bootlegger, are you? Donald changes them so often (Hammett, 1929, p. 8)

According to the researcher, the quote is a harsh criticism of American society. Hammett intends to portray the real picture of America that its citizens frequently overlook. Hammett's realism is confirmed by Gary Day (1988, p. 35), who states that "if they agree about nothing else, historians of the detective story at least concur in the view Hammett was a realist."

Apart from manifesting the events as they are, Hammett's realism is supported by his use of everyday language. Car Malmgren (1999, p. 382) acknowledges that Hammett's fiction represents "the beginning of the fall of language." His simple vocabulary could be noticed throughout the novel. In one occasion he portrays the scene of Dinah Brand's murder by writing:

Not much blood was in sight: a spot the size of a silver dollar around the hole the ice pick made in her blue silk dress. There was a bruise on her right cheek, just under the cheek bone. Another bruise, finger-made, was on her right wrist. Her hands were empty. I moved her enough to see that nothing was under her. (Hammett, 1929, 155)

Hammett's use of a vulgar, straightforward, unsympathetic language, the repetition of the words "bruise" and "cheek", the simple comparison he draws (the size of blood spot is of a silver dollar), and the vivid, genuine description of the incident makes the scene closer to the reader's mind and more realistic. Critics described Hammett's distinctive depiction of murder as the importation of a new "realism" into the detective story. Raymond Chandler, stated that:

Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse; and with the means at hand, not with handwrought dueling pistols, curare, and tropical fish. He put these people down on paper as they are, and he made them talk and think in the language they customarily used for these purposes. (Cawelti, 1997, p. 163)

Hammett's realistic narration in *Red Harvest* is foreboding and making readers understand that he foresees the damaging results of widespread corruption and lawlessness as causing the collapse of American culture inevitable as long as the rapid growth of modernity progresses unchecked. This new novel creates a formidable sense of dread regarding the future of America and a dim illustration

of corruption at all levels of society. It is a reflection of Hammett's most pessimistic views about modern America (Kelly, 2017, p. 44).

Hammett's new landscape is another element of hardboiled novel in the story. The seedy setting of the story is best portrayed in the name of the town: Personville - pronounced Poisonville by most of the residents of the town. Hammett demonstrates the nature of Personville early in the story by describing it as:

The city wasn't pretty. Most of its builders had gone in for gaudiness. Maybe they had been successful at first. Since then the smelters whose brick stacks stuck up tall against a gloomy mountain to the south had yellow-smoked everything into uniform dinginess. The result was an ugly city of forty thousand people, set in an ugly notch between two ugly mountains that had been all dirtied up by mining. Spread over this was a grimy sky that looked as if it had come out of the smelters' stacks. (Hammett, 1929, p. 6)

The manufacturing quality of the town has spoiled the surrounding area. Similar to its town, the inhabitants are villainous, with wrinkled appearance and grey of eyes. This diseased venue is visited by the Op, appointed by Donald Willsson for an ambiguous task, as Donald is assassinated prior to the Op's arrival (Thomson, 2009, 37).

The history of Personville is drawn for the reader by the organizer of labor union, Bill Quint, whose narrative clarifies that its ugliness is not solely outer; the city's sickness is due to violence, voracity, and bourgeois blackmail. Quint declares that, "For forty years old Elihu Willsson—father of the man who had been killed this night—had owned Personville, heart, soul, skin and guts." (Hammett, 1929, p. 11). His dictatorial leadership initiated a miner's strike that continued for eight months:

Both sides bled plenty. The wobblies had to do their own bleeding. Old Elihu hired gunmen, strike-breakers, national guardsmen and even parts of the regular army, to do his. When the last skull had been cracked, the last rib kicked in, organized labor in Personville was a used firecracker. (Hammett, 1929, p. 11, 12)

Though the thugs that Elihu Willsson brought won the strike for him they hold their control over the town, as it is a convenient domain for them to remain. Willsson cannot oppose them openly as he is responsible of what they have done during the strike. With the failure of Elihu's operation, he thinks that he possesses a single ultimate hope: his son. He brings back Donald to the city to fight the gangsters but his son is murdered.

Thus, *Red Harvest* is a depiction of American corruption with an intense focus that Hammett never changed (Gale, 2000. P. ix). The writer acknowledges that violence is systematic in the town: it become a portion of the daily life of its people; it happens in various places and forms. There have been "sixteen of them (killed) in less than a week, and more coming up." (Hammett, 1929, p. 145) Even the police become tired of the murders in Poisonville. Violence and domination appear as the sole powers in an area controlled by amoral gangsters, dishonest politicians and deceitful chief of police.

Another utilized technique in *Red Harvest* that popularized hardboiled crime fiction is Hammett's detective (the Op); he is not presented as a brilliant figure like Sherlock Holmes of Arthur Canon Doyle's writing. Rather Hammett depicts the Op as a tough character with suspicious moral token, who never hesitates to be engaged in the violence that pervades personville (Jaber,2014, p. 84). As mentioned earlier Hammett was himself an ex-detective in the Pinkerton Detective Agency and he manipulates genuine information brought from his experiences in detective business which he forwards to life in the action of his tales.

The exact cause Donald Willsson has required the Op is maintained intentionally ambiguous by Hammett. The reader is merely informed that Donald had some work for him, and the Op acknowledges that the least he can perform is discovering the murderer of his client. Yet, Elihu aims hiring him for a clear-cut task: “to clean this pigsty of a Poisonville for me, to smoke out the rats, little and big.” (Hammett, 1929, p. 42) The Op’s ethical values are best revealed via the terms he sets for his approval of Elihu’s proposal:

I’d have to have a free hand—no favors to anybody—run the job as I pleased But I’m not playing politics for you. I’m not hiring out to help you kick them back in line—with the job being called off then. If you want the job done you’ll plank down enough money to pay for a complete job. Any that’s left over will be returned to you. But you’re going to get a complete job or nothing. That’s the way it’ll have to be. Take it or leave it. (Hammett, 1929, p. 43, 44)

This is the way the Op declares his professionalism. He makes it obvious that he will not be Elihu’s puppet: he will run the job as he sees it suitable. Ironically, Elihu provides the Op with the type of force and liberty Donald would have perhaps provided him had he lived, and Elihu also unknowingly places the Op in a position that will ultimately terminates his kingdom of Personville.

The Op is capable of finding out the killer of Donald Willsson and leading him to admit that he is the murderer of the king’s son. Robert Albury confesses that he killed Donald because:

All I could think about was that I had lost her because I had no more money, and he was taking five thousand dollars to her. It was the check. Can you understand that? . . . It was seeing the check—and knowing that I’d lost her because my money was gone. (Hammett, 1929, p. 58)

Albury wrongly supposes that Donald had distanced him from Dinah Brand due to taking a large check to her. The standard for measuring value is merely dollars in Personville and if someone does not have it, he reacts violently. Albury’s act is consistent with the situation in Personville. Cheating, fierceness and money are the fundamentals of Poisonville that the Op aims to overcome. He initially triumphs in fulfilling his plans and feels proud of his achievements. Once, beholding a car full of people careening down the street, the Op says:

I grinned after it. Poisonville was beginning to boil out under the lid, and I felt so much like a native that even the memory of my very unnice part in the boiling didn’t keep me from getting twelve solid endto- end hours of sleep. (Hammett, 1929, 109)

As the quote shows, the writer twisted the idea of the detective around. Different from the Golden Age detectives, the Op relinquishes any allegation of advocating law, meanwhile he turns to be the law itself if he finds it necessary (Howard, 2010, p. 21, 22).

Following an attempt on the Op’s life changed his mission of giving control of the city back to Elihu. The Op subsequently compels Elihu to permit him to progress constantly to revenge upon criminal bands in Personville by setting them against each other to create anarchy. Hammett’s detective abandons the city at the end of the story leaving much of the chaos unsettled.

An easily noticed element of *Red Harvest* is, structurally the story is an accurate reflection of the notions and views of the male protagonist. It is written from the viewpoint of a tough guy, the detective who endeavors to unfold criminal mystery of Donald’s death and encounters the Elihu’s deception and Dinah’s immorality. Only two women appear along the story. Mrs. Willsson, appears in few scenes and occupies a traditional woman role in American society, and Dinah Brand, presented as a prostitute, and independent wealthy

woman. Hammett portrays women as insignificant figures in his novel. He gives no effective role to Mrs. Willsson and depicts Dinah as an obstacle to the detective's inquiry for truth. Though she acts as a source of information for the Op, she seduces him sexually and hinders his success. The police chief describes her as a dangerous woman, "a soiled dove, as the fellow says, a de luxe hustler, a big-league gold-digger." Whom the police department has been "keeping an eye on." (Hammett, 1929, p. 24)

Dinah's personality is reflected in her sexual relationships with men in the city, and her capability of manipulating them for her behalf. The Op acknowledges that while Dinah takes "her pick of Personville's men," she is manipulative too, frequently selling information concerning organized labor strikes (Hammett, 1929, p. 33). When she is asked to help she declares that the cost is "Money....the more, the better." (Hammett, 1929, p. 34) Dinah relies on men for her independence and survival. Hammett illustrates women as socially and sexually free, yet they are dependent on men for their existence. The freedom she gains from modern society is the cause of her downfall ultimately (Kelly, 2017, p. 54, 55). Thereby, he manifests the challenges women encounter in post-World War I America.

6. Conclusion

Dashiell Hammett is a pioneer of hardboiled crime fiction. His works are not written to entertain the masses, but they reflect Hammett's anxiousness regarding the future of the American cities in facing modernity. *Red Harvest*, which is a book concerning the politics of crime, is a severe and sarcastic vision of how systematic crime obtains footholds in company areas as Personville, where deception expands and grows like virus. Rather than separation between good and evil, Hammett keeps his readers in a state of guessing. They sympathize with villains and regard good figures like the hero and the police as dishonest sometimes. This obscure border between heroes and villains creates moral suspense and turns the story relevant to the modern age. It also detaches readers from the polite world of English crime fiction. Thereby, in this novel Hammett is capable of establishing hardboiled fiction as a distinctive subgenre in American crime fiction and separating it from British crime fiction.

The manipulation of the first-person narrator is an invitation to the reader to follow the detective in his career. Never learning the detective's name is an additional factor that lets the reader become the detective himself. Hammett aims to portray the expense of order in *Red Harvest* via exposing the cases of Elihu and the Op. Elihue's attempt to control his town costs him losing his son and the town. On the other hand, the detective's activities in following Donald's case are the causes of being accused of murder. Though Hammett has cleansed corruption in Personville, the purification is tentative as it is related to the inner part of the residents, thus the novel is a warning to the Americans against a worse expected future as a result of violence in the American cities.

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چه سپاندنی رومانی تاریک وهک هیمایه کی ئه ده بی له چیرۆکی رید هارقیستی داشیل هامیت

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پوخته

سه ره پای بوونی ژماره یه کی زۆر له رۆمانی تاریک له ئه ده بیاتی ئه مریکیدا، رۆمانی رید هارقیستی داشیل هامیت (1929) وهک به ره هه میکی دیارتر له به ره هه ئه ده بییه کانتر سه یر ده کړت. رۆمانه که یه که م چیرۆکی لیکۆلینه وهی هامیته وه که م چیرۆکی تاوانکاریه که په گه زیکی نوێ له ئه ده بیاتی رۆمانی تاوانکاری نیشاندا. په خه گران وهک هیمایه کی ئه ده بی ئامازه بوئه م رۆمانه ده که ن به هۆی پالیزمی نووسه ره وه که به ته واوی جیاوازه له شیوازی نووسینی نووسه رانی دیکه. ئه م توێژینه وه یه گرنگی رۆمانه که ده گه پێتته وه بو ژینگه ی شارستانی رۆمانه که، وه سایه تی هه مه چه شنه ی لیکۆله ر، وپیشینی ئه نجامه خراپه کانی گه نده ل، تیروانی نامۆی نووسه ر سه باره ت به رۆلی جێنده ر. توێژینه وه که به و ئه نجامه گه یشت که نیشاندا ئه نجامه ی راسته قینه ی ئه مریکا وپیشینی کردنی ئه نجامه مه تر سیداره کان وایکرد که هامیت رۆمانی تاوانکاری به ریتانی و ئه مریکی جیا بکاته وه، که پیشتر وهک یه ک سه یر ده کران. **وشه سه ره تاییه کان** : رۆمانی تاریک، رید هارقیست، تاوان، پولیس، لیکۆله ر.

ترسیخ الروایة المظلمة كمعلم أدبي في قصة ريد هارقيست لداشيل هاميت

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ملخص

على الرغم من وجود عدد كبير من الروايات المظلمة في الأدب الأمريكي، إلا أن كتاب ريد هارقيست (1929) لداشيل هاميت يعتبر عملاً يتجاوز أعمال العديد من الكتاب. الرواية هي الحكاية البوليسية الأولى لهاميت وأول رواية جرمية مثلت نوعاً فرعياً جديداً في الأدب الجنائي. يشير النقاد الى الرواية على أنه معلم أدبي ، بسبب واقعية الكاتب، والتي كانت مختلفة تماماً عن الطريقة التي كتب بها الكتاب الآخرون. تجادل هذه الدراسة أنه بالإضافة إلى الواقعية، تُعزى أهمية العمل إلى البيئة الحضرية لهاميت، والتوصيف الملون للمخبر، السرد المنذر ، ومفهوم الكاتب المميز لأدوار الجنسين. ويستنتج البحث أنه من خلال تصوير البيئة الأمريكية الحقيقية، والتغلغل في شؤونها، وتوقع العواقب، فصل هاميت الرواية الإجرامية البريطانية والأمريكية، والذي كان يُنظر إليهما كنوع واحد في السابق.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الرواية المظلمة، ريد هارقيست، الجريمة، الشرطة، المخبر.