

Chandler (3)

In everything that can be called art there is a quality of redemption. It may be pure tragedy, if it is high tragedy, and it may be pity and irony, and it may be the raucous laughter of the strong man. But down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of story must be such a man.... He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honor...I do not care much about his private life; he is neither a eunuch nor a stayr; I think he might seduce a duchess and I am quite sure he would not spoil a virgin; if he is a man of honor in one thing, he is that in all things.

Chandler, "The Simple Art of Murder," 59.

The misogyny of these books has become a critical commonplace. Largely ignoring the material social and economic context of this misogyny, these critics have invoked the figure of the New Woman as a particular threat to masculinity.... In my view, however, the bourgeois New Woman has less to do with hard-boiled misogyny than the transformation of working-class communities as a result of the de-skilling of craft work, the entry of young, single women into once all-male jobs, and the rise of consumer culture.

Erin A. Smith, *Hard-Boiled: Working-class Readers and Pulp Magazines* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 157–58.

In a kind of pseudo-Marxism, Chandler paints capital as a vampiric force driven to steal the labor power of honest workingmen.

McCann, *Gumshoe America*, 167.

I hate Raymond Chandler, yet I've read him and reread him so many times. He's a fascist, and I mean this in a precise sense. He represents the small businessman being trampled by outside forces. Each of his novels has an openly racist section. But of course, you care about the writing, and you end up forgiving things that really aren't forgivable. Chandler was a strange guy. He's buried a mile from here.

[Interviewer:] Have you been to Chandler's grave?

Yeah. It's right next to our Home Depot.

Mike Davis interviewed by Lois Beckett, *Guardian*, August 31, 2022, [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com).