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Raymond Chandler's Hard-Boiled Representations of Gender, Crime, and Space in "Trouble is My Business"

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Abstract

Hard-boiled crime fiction is generally set in urban areas in early twentieth-century USA. Raymond Chandler, as a pioneering author of the genre, incorporates gender roles in his portrayals of the criminal underworld in the post-war era. He portrays men and women engaged in law and order in different ways in relation to current situations of the period. Regarding these understandings of gender and crime with Raymond Chandler's attitude to these concepts in his early writing career, this chapter aims to explore representations of gender roles in his short story "Trouble is My Business" (1939). Chandler's representations of space are closely connected to gender because spaces symbolize gender identities in their structures. In addition, this chapter also focuses on spatial representations of such depictions of gender identities and how space is understood in relation to gender stereotypes in the story.

Keywords

Raymond Chandler, hard-boiled, *femme fatale*, masculinities, space

Introduction

Raymond Chandler is recognized as one of the most influential writers in the development of American crime fiction. Although his style and content have been discussed extensively, his challenging the norms of Victorian and early twentieth-century crime fiction is still foregrounded. He is hailed for his more realistic and violent representations of crime and policing in post-war America in contrast to idealized detectives and simple plots in classical crime fiction before the appearance of the hard-boiled genre. In his seminal essay "The Simple Art of Murder" (1944), he claims that detective fiction evolved into "the realistic style" by depicting the American society of this age and the verisimilitude in the investigation of crimes and criminality (Chandler, "Simple Art" 217).

Chandler mirrors and criticizes social circumstances in the period through his portrayals of law and order. In Warpole's words, the hard-boiled genre in general functions as "a vehicle for radical criticism" in terms of class, gender, and race (qtd. in Pepper 141). In his commentary on social and financial issues in the country, Charles Rzepka points out that excessive wealth in the roaring twenties led to "corruption at the highest levels of government" (185-86). Larry Shillock describes this corruption as the one "that exists when police are bought off and judges spend evenings with bootleggers and criminals" (7). Chandler unravels the criminal underworld of mostly gangsters and wealthy people, which is linked to bootlegging and

becoming financially powerful in a short time because of ongoing prohibitions. Like many writers during that time, he wrote in response to those social issues because he perceived "the socio-political sickness in American society" (Rzepka 153). In other words, he wrote his detective novels when insecurities and skepticism about the American Dream were evident in public. Moreover, his detective Philip Marlowe is thought to have a "more socially conscious code of ethics than that typical of the genre's heroes" (Athanasourelis 3). In this way, he incorporates his social criticism in the context of crime stories in a realistic way.

Apart from his "reputation as a realist" (Rzepka 153) and a social critic, Chandler is usually criticized for being sexist through specifically his depictions of women as merely seductive, dangerous, and materialistic (Madden 4). Additionally, his female characters usually take up a very small space in his works compared to male characters, who are involved in the main action and violence. He also foregrounds tough masculinity with especially his detective characters who usually possess masculine traits and fight the male dominated criminal underworld in big urban cities.

Different understandings of space may reflect cultural constructs and ideas which can be related to the social structure of a society. As hard-boiled crime stories are generally characterized by their urban setting together with portrayals of organized crime dominated by men in post-war USA, Chandler's representations of space are highly connected to gender because spaces symbolize gender identities in their structures. As Theda Wrede points out, space is ideologically constructed and "shaped by the dominant power structures . . . including gender discourse" (11). Thus, space reflects some implications of gender stereotypes as social and cultural constructs, and the hard-boiled genre's being set in urban areas is very appropriate for these spatial representations of gender which this chapter aims to examine. For instance, while urban and public spaces stand for heteronormative hegemony, private and domestic spaces symbolize women's being controlled by this order (McDowell 168). These reflections of gender disparity in spatiality could be used to maintain socially prescribed gender roles such as men's freedom and dominance in public spaces and women's exclusion from these areas in their private and domestic places.

Most academic studies address Chandler's novels, so some of the short stories from his early career suffer critical neglect. Regarding these understandings of gender and crime, this chapter aims to explore representations of gender roles in Raymond Chandler's short story "Trouble is My Business" (1939). Rather than merely focusing on Chandler's portrayals of gender, it aims to explore his attitude to gender and crime, especially in his early writing career and the effect of his personal life on it. After that, it focuses on the story's spatial representations of such depictions of gender identities in early twentieth-century USA.

The *Femme Fatale*

"Trouble is My Business," first published in *Dime Detective Magazine* in 1939, is like an early version of Chandler's novels, for it encompasses almost all the stereotypes in hard-boiled crime fiction such as the *femme fatale*, tough detectives, gangsters, and villains. It is set in 1930s Los Angeles, and Philip Marlowe is hired to deal with a gold digger woman to keep her away from a millionaire's adopted son. When this son is killed later, the fortune hunter and her boyfriend are the usual suspects; however, the plot twist at the end reveals a greedy scheme.

Depictions of women as *femmes fatales* are among the most recurrent themes in Chandler's fiction, which also receives the most critical response in academic studies. The *femme fatale* is generally described as a woman "who lures men into danger, destruction, even death by means of her overwhelmingly seductive charms" (Allen 7). As clarified before, Chandler is usually criticized for being sexist by reinforcing male hegemony; however, his representations of femininity and masculinity sometimes subvert mainstream understandings of gender identities. Chandler's ambiguous attitude towards gender identities is generally associated with his familial ties and war trauma.[1]

In addition to biographical influences, Chandler's inclusion of dangerous and beautiful female characters in almost every story seems relevant to his time as well. Regarding social conditions of the period, it is not wrong to claim that the fictional figures of the *femme fatale* and the transgressive woman challenging social boundaries coincide with the changes in the rights of women and their social positions in the USA such as women's getting right to vote and the Flapper movement. Similarly, Mark Jancovich points out that the ascendancy of these resourceful female characters in the post-war era parallels women's changing place in society after their indispensable contribution to the workforce during the First World War and their efforts to keep their social status after that (100). Gender roles and perceptions went on changing as female employment increased by twenty-five percent and all women got the right to vote in 1920 (Rzepka 185). Another group of women identified with this development in the USA were the Flappers "whose behavior and appearance constituted a major break with western, male-dominated civilization and was seen, in fact, as a dangerous threat to that civilization" (Yellis 63). Obviously, the *femme fatale* could be read as a reflection of those shifting gender dynamics in early twentieth-century America.

[1] Lyumba Pervushina and Richard R. E. Kania, drawing on Frank McShane's (1976) and Judith Freeman's (2007) biographies of Chandler, point out that Chandler had ambiguous relationships with "the women in his life and fiction" (306). Additionally, in their books on Chandler, Sarah Trott and Stephen Knight recurrently emphasize the influence of the First World War on Chandler's life and fiction.

The *femme fatale* Miss Harriet Huntress's name is a deliberate reference to her position in the story. She is the only major female character who triggers the action with a significant function in the plot. Marlowe's agent Anne Halsey initially mentions her as a "redheaded number with bedroom eyes" who is "shill for a gambler and she's got her hooks into a rich man's pup" (Chandler, "Trouble" 255). To illustrate, she is portrayed as a typical red-haired gold digger looking for money through manipulation and seduction, and Marlowe is hired by Mr. Jeeter to talk to her and warn her. On his first encounter with her, Marlowe describes her hair as "dusky red, like a fire under control but still dangerous" which suggests that she may not be controlled fully (262). This portrayal emphasizes her strength and unusual personality as well.

Alcohol is a prominent way of characterization for such female figures. While excessive drinking of alcohol is a reference to the roaring twenties and bootlegging, it is a definite proposition for women's changing attitudes and demeanors in the period. Simkin points out that the Flappers in the 1920s were engaged in drinking as a way to react against mainstream patriarchal gender roles, in addition to a reaction against the prohibition of alcohol during that time (100). Alcohol is in almost every part of Chandler's fiction, and not only male but also female characters consume it. Miss Huntress is usually described as "drinking her Scotch" (294) or "holding a glass in which there was half a drink" (286). Furthermore, there's always praise for the Scotch, another aspect for which Marlowe pays respect to her. Nevertheless, Trott argues that Marlowe uses alcohol as "a relaxant to numb his memory and senses" (239) not only in this particular incident but for any pain which could be triggered by his past war trauma. While alcohol is very much related to men's vulnerability and psychological states, the opposite holds true for women as it signifies their efforts to challenge heteronormative hegemony. That is to say, Chandler engages alcohol as a significant element in order to question standard perceptions of gender.

Beside alcohol, women's involvement in criminal activities is acknowledged as an embodiment of crossing boundaries (Athanasourelis 163). Crime has been a significant notion in the definition of nonconformist femininity, as criminality was not ascribed to female behavior because it was still considered a masculine activity. Maysaa Husam Jaber describes the *femme fatale* as "a woman who goes beyond the arena of dangerous sexuality to enter the realm of criminality" (2). Hence, Miss Huntress's incursion into masculine domains of crime, law, and order is an allusion to her unconventional womanhood in reaction to male authority. When Marlowe says, "Miss Harriet Huntress was a nice girl. She knew a few wrong numbers, but who didn't?" (265), it is understood that he admires her having such contacts and survival skills as a woman in a criminal environment. He does not judge or condemn this figure of a woman in contact with dangerous or criminal individuals.

Although she does not commit any crimes, Young Jeeter is killed partly because of her, for she is the one who is used by Mr. Jeeter in the case.

Ronald R. Thomas notes that in those hard-boiled stories "the woman's access to power is transformed into a form of sexual and cultural perversion that must be corrected" (433). To illustrate, female power is generally connected with licentiousness and criminality. Heather Worthington argues that such unorthodox women being punished in crime fiction "function[s] to enforce properly feminine behaviour" and to "valourise the male protagonist and endorse properly masculine behaviour" (45). This also reflects gender dynamics and conflicts in the post-war era. Similarly, Stevie Simkin claims that "the death of the transgressive woman is seen as an act of purgation" (89). As observed, several scholars agree that *femmes fatales* are punished and cleansed in different ways; however, Chandler does not display such an action in this story. Miss Huntress is not eradicated or killed; on the contrary, she just gets away without any form of legal or extra-legal punishment. She is let off scot-free because she does not have direct relevance to the murders committed. She does not commit murder, and the crimes in the story are all linked to Mr. Jeeter's grudge against his adopted son. Additionally, after the incidents, she can freely try to seduce Marlowe by calling him or sending him messages. Her relaxed attitude after so much violence and her flirting with Marlowe could be read as another disparate feature of Chandler's early fiction because women are not that unorthodox and openly flirtatious in his later fiction.

The term 'hard-boiled' is generally associated with male writers and tough masculinity, and it is defined as a "men's genre" (Irwin 273). It is usually set in a man's world where the tough detective deals with gangsters and organized crime. Similarly, Stephen Knight points out that the genre "is deeply implicated with masculinism" (*Crime Fiction* 163). Nonetheless, Philip Marlowe in *Farewell, My Lovely* indicates that he likes "smooth shiny girls, hardboiled and loaded with sin" (qtd. in Madden 5). As toughness is a characteristic many female figures in Chandler's fiction share, he subverts gender identities and expectations. He shows that supposedly submissive women can become active and engaged in crime in a similar way to men. About Miss Huntress' character, Marlowe says: "She didn't look hard, but she looked as if she had heard all the answers and remembered the ones she thought she might be able to use sometime" (262). That is to say, she is not that tough, but she is not very fragile and vulnerable either. Although she is surrounded by men most of the time, she is courageous enough to keep company with these men without getting harmed where most of these men fight and kill one another.

Later, it is revealed that Mr. Jeeter had his adopted son killed in order to get the money the son would receive. In this way, it is understood that Miss Huntress was used by Mr. Jeeter for his greedy aim. Rather than being the son's lover, she was possibly cooperating with Mr. Jeeter because Marlowe finds her in his house with

his men after the murder of the son. For this reason, the initial presupposition that Miss Huntress was looking for his son's money turns out to be a scheme. Chandler also presents how Mr. Jeeter takes advantage of mindsets about such beautiful and dangerous women to plot his adopted son's murder. Because of that, her previous story about her life and revenge plot seems doubtful now. Thus, her obscure position in the story refers to the contradiction about gender stereotypes and ideologies ascribed to Chandler and its reflections in his fiction.

In spite of her function in the story, Miss Huntress still does not take up much space like other women in Chandler's fiction. Although scholars like Jaber (66) emphasize the *femme fatale's* absence and invisibility in a huge part of the narrative, this also fortifies her power to some extent. As Stephen Frosh points out, "the stronger the negation, the more important the truth of what has been negated" (121). In other words, no matter how much they are portrayed as suppressed or repudiated, Chandler shows that women are actually prominent in society as much as they are in his fiction. In spite of her inaction and disappearance throughout most of the story, Miss Huntress is able to control the plot and induce damage. Young Jeeter is found dead in her flat and she appears in Mr. Jeeter's house, which displays her collaboration with him for the murder.

As observed, Chandler had more ambiguous but less sexist portrayals in the beginning of his writing career. Rather than being sexist, his remarks about Miss Huntress reflect something fundamental he finds in her nature and manner. Marlowe describes her as "nice" and "swell," and he expresses that he is generally fond of her by saying he "was for her" (Chandler, "Trouble" 266). While describing the night on his return from her place, he says, "Venus in the west was as bright as a street lamp, as bright as life, as bright as Miss Huntress' eyes" (266). Hence, he emphasizes her brightness which could be her physical appearance literally but a reference to her wit and power as a woman as well. Consequently, Chandler's portrayal of Miss Huntress makes the reader ponder his understanding of sexy and dangerous women because he does not treat her in a stereotypical way but as a character that deserves respect in many terms.

Hard-Boiled Masculinities

Beside female characters, Chandler reinforces mainstream masculinity and portrays some male characters differently with regards to their weaknesses and their relationships with women. The *femme fatale* challenges the detective's power by preventing his efforts to enforce law and order, and most importantly, by questioning traditional cultural gender norms. Apart from his fight against crime, Marlowe confronts deviant femininity, which reveals his acknowledged sexual anxiety. Moreover, Jaber explains that "the anxiety that Marlowe displays towards women is not only sexual

but also relates to power" (53). Rather than a male antagonist or rival, Philip Marlowe is in conflict with this *femme fatale* from the beginning. He cannot control her and her engagement with the criminal underworld. On the contrary, he respects her and does not deny his interest in her unorthodox femininity. At the end of the story, Marlowe goes "out with her twice" and sits "with her twice at home" (294), something he does not often do in his later novels. Nevertheless, he does not materialize his interest in her and refuses her in his realistic way of thinking.

Marlowe is generally considered as a reflection of Chandler himself, or the form of masculinity he is yearning for (Trott 215). In addition to the idea that Chandler's detective stories unveil a lot about him and his war trauma, Sean Carswell indicates that Marlowe "represents the man that so many soldiers returning from World War II hoped to become: a man able to shake off the horrors of the world and end up clean" (11). In relation to his desire for quintessentially masculine traits, in his article "The Simple Art of Murder" Chandler describes the ideal hard-boiled detective as follows:

> He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man . . . a man of honor. . . He will take no man's money dishonestly and no man's insolence without a due and dispassionate revenge. He is a lonely man and his pride is that you will treat him as a proud man or be very sorry you ever saw him. He talks as a man of his age talks, that is, with rude wit, a lively sense of the grotesque, a disgust for sham, and a contempt for pettiness. (219)

Thus, through his idealistic masculinity, Chandler's portrayal of Marlowe is definitely a threat for the corrupt criminal world of urban post-war America. Although he gives a clear description of a tough and manly detective, there is still an ambiguity in this passage when he paradoxically describes a common but an unusual man. This issue is noticed in his representations of gender stereotypes as well.

Marlowe deals with his dilemma and conflict with the *femme fatale* in his own ways. His dilemma is rooted in his interest in her and his evasion of her flirtations. Dennis Porter underlines that Marlowe builds his "mastery over women by rejecting, arresting or in some cases killing them," in what is a "fantasy-fulfilling display of male invulnerability" (185). Although Marlowe meets Miss Huntress a few times, he firmly rejects her sexual overtures to him. He states that "It was nice but I didn't have the money, the clothes, the time or the manners" (294). This remark by labelling her as a pretentious fortune hunter is sexist, but he is an "unromantic, realistic . . . materialistic" character in Stephen Knight's words (*Form and Ideology* 136). Marlowe's attempt to stay away from her shows his anxiety and realistic side regarding her character; nonetheless, he meets her a few times. When he says: "I was glad when she left," he mentions her as something dangerous to get rid of rather than trying to fight against (294). Hence, his conflict with the *femme fatale* is not resolved clearly, and he keeps indecisive about her until the very end of the story.

Although some scholars mention how dangerous and unconventional women are cleansed from Chandler's narratives, some particular types of men are eliminated, too, which evidently happens in closed and private places in the story (Pepper 141). Hegemonic masculinity attempts to create a form of masculinity "characterized by a dominance, aggression, independence, emotional invulnerability, physical strength and toughness, heterosexuality, wealth, and a propensity for violence" (Carswell 18). Marlowe demonstrates almost all of the above-mentioned attributes, and some male characters lacking these features are excluded in different ways. While referring to *Farewell, My Lovely*, Stephen Knight notes that the *femme fatale*'s "victims are doubles for, extensions of Marlowe. They are men he feels close to" (*Form and Ideology* 156). Knight connects this situation to Marlowe's homo-erotic interest and repulsion in such male characters, and these men die in settings that include him as well.

Regarding Knight's remark about this male anxiety, the character of Young Jeeter could also be seen as another ego or self of the writer that he tries to avoid. When Marlowe visits Miss Huntress the first time, he suddenly sees Young Jeeter behind him. Young Jeeter hides in Miss Huntress's flat and appears to beat Marlowe. He is attacked and beaten by this strong, seemingly masculine man who is manipulated and controlled by the *femme fatale*. She tells the boy to "ruin him . . . to see these hard numbers bend at the knees" (265). In other words, Marlowe is indirectly attacked by a woman and his hardness is partially ruined. This might be one of the stories in which Marlowe is physically attacked the most. Chandler's early short stories featuring Marlowe include more violence than the later novels, and the use of violence enhances "[Marlowe's] heroic status" due to his ability to use guns and show courage during violent encounters with gangsters (Athanasourelis 78; 94). The fact that he is physically attacked more than he attacks reflects his aversion for physical violence and perhaps wars in general. He rarely beats other people apart from using his gun when he has to. Marlowe says he "never really got to like killing people" which also discloses his war trauma in his opposition to violence (271).

Young Jeeter is a comparatively weaker character because he is easily manipulated by Miss Huntress. He does not have autonomy and capability because he is under the influence of Miss Huntress and his father. His being hidden in her flat refers to his vulnerability and possibly unconventional gender identity, although he is physically strong. He does not have his own voice and barely speaks in the only scene when he appears, and he is almost invisible in the text. These are actually the characteristics associated with a suppressed female character, so Chandler attributes these characteristics to a man who is killed a short time after he appears in the story. Moreover, his father's having him killed at the end does not only reveal a financial motive and greed, but also patriarchy's attitude to such abnormal forms of manhood.

In addition to the figure of Young Jeeter, generally fat or physically smaller men are killed, and this illustrates male anxiety and the predominance of tough men. Stephen Knight claims what Chandler unravels about the sexual anxiety is that "clearly effeminate men are described in absorbing detail but firmly rejected by the persona – too firmly perhaps for conviction" (*Form and Ideology* 158). In the story, it does not happen with obviously effeminate characters, but with male characters such as short, small, or fat men that do not conform with the conceptions of established hard-boiled masculinity.

One of the first examples for that is the private investigator John D. Arbogast. Marlowe visits him to talk about the case, but he finds him murdered in the office. The place is depicted as a dark and suffocating office which has several doors. Furthermore, there is a very detailed description of the murdered man as "enormously fat, fatter by far than Anne Halsey. His face . . . looked about the size of a basketball" (259). What also draws attention is Chandler's descriptions of minute details, in the manner of body shaming. Every inch of this fat man's body is described in the position in which he was killed. The dead body is on his knees as if he were begging and his head is leaning on the side of the table, which implies vulnerability. Chandler possibly tries to emphasize his fatness as a physical and unmasculine attribute because it signifies weakness and inability which he tries to avoid and cover up.

Another example of male weakness is the presence of "little" men. Marlowe often comes across gangsters trying to kill or overpower him, and he generally puts physically smaller ones down in the story. When he finds two men in his flat, he takes "the little man" and "his little gun hand" down and beats that "little punk" (267). Also, when he is attacked in the car by the same men, he shoots that little man. However, this little man is killed on the street, which means he is manly enough with his violent actions although he is humiliated for his physical appearance.

As observed, specific forms of tough masculinity are reinforced both in the detective figure and criminals in the story. On the other hand, characters not conforming with mainstream constructions of masculinity are eliminated and Othered in different ways (Pepper 147). It is obvious that these men not conforming to traditional understandings of manhood are simply cleansed, similar to the non-conforming female character. Stephen Knight suggests that such instances of vulnerable and nonconformist male characters are controlled by the use of excessive violence in Chandler's short stories in his early fiction (*Crime Fiction* 118). Thus, Chandler endorses masculine hegemony in many of his male characters more obviously than in his portrayals of female ones.

Spatial Representations of Gender

One of the peculiar features of Chandler's style is his description of places in extreme detail. In addition, Chandler's setting the story in several different places invites an exploration of spatial representations of gender. Studies of space generally focus on dualisms like urban vs. rural, and public vs. private, which symbolize men and women. Urban and public places stand for male mobility, freedom, and interaction in business, while rural and private places refer to womanhood and their domestic place (McDowell 148). Urban setting clearly denotes the men's world which Chandler depicts in detail in his plots, yet the rural environment is supposed to indicate vulnerable and innocent femininity. One of the most important elements of the story is that it is set in metropolitan Los Angeles, and male characters are predominant as a characteristic of Chandler's fiction. Still, Chandler's destruction of such typical views is observed through the environment and spaces attributed to men and women.

Unlike in classical crime stories preceding the hard-boiled genre, Chandler narrates the story from the detective's point of view, and this subjective narrative endows him with authority and power. The readers learn the story only through his point of view and thoughts, so this makes him the authorial voice which the readers have to believe. In addition, with first-person narration, Marlowe describes the objects in detail whenever he enters an unfamiliar place. Stephen Knight declares that "Chandler habitually uses the physical surroundings to foreground his hero's feelings" (*Form and Ideology* 144). The only place he does not describe is his own flat, which suggests privacy and individualism in Marlowe's lifestyle.

That the story is usually set in closed private places evinces the socio-cultural dynamics of the early twentieth-century, where the male criminal underworld is governed secretly. Marlowe's frequent driving through the streets of urban Los Angeles apparently signifies freedom and mobility for men. These spatial representations stress the social atmosphere of Chandler's age, when gangsters and bootleggers loom. Although many places are private in the story, most of them are generally crowded with men engaged in organized crime. This also contradicts the thesis that private places are feminine and blurs the line between privacy and publicity, which refers to subversion of gender stereotypes. Private places like Marlowe's flat are not actually very private because they might be intruded by dangerous and criminal men any time. In a similar way, the *femme fatale*'s suit does not offer privacy and domesticity, which symbolizes her unorthodox femininity.

The building where Miss Huntress lives looks more like a hotel rather than a domestic place, which is an obvious reference to her transgressive femininity. She does not lead a conventional family life there but she carries out her engagement in the criminal underworld. There is an attendant in the lobby who always accompanies her guests. In addition, Miss Huntress seems to welcome men all the time and she

is never alone, although her flat is seemingly a private place. Her statement to Marlowe, "I've been expecting lads like you any day" (263), could be criticized for establishing her dangerous sexuality and objectification under the male gaze. As an unusual woman, it also indicates her inclusion in a criminal male world Chandler often pictures. At first, she is portrayed like a Madam running an illegal business or a boarding house. Thus, the description of her place as different from a domestic space seems to contest the public/private binary of spatial representations of gender. Furthermore, Marlowe again describes his feelings in her place with "Scotch and swish on a tabouret, ice in a bucket, everything to make a man feel at home" (262). Hence, Marlowe ironically acknowledges that her unorthodox femininity would make him feel at home there, although it seems to emphasize domesticity at the same time.

As a usual element of Chandler's style, each chapter starts in a new setting where the detective carries out his investigation, which suggests male mobility. Nonetheless, Miss Huntress is possibly one of the most mobile female characters in Chandler's fiction so far. She appears in different places, once in her flat and then in Mr. Jeeter's house with his men. Finally, she appears on her dates with Marlowe at the end. Ronald R. Thomas claims that such uncommon representations of women "reflect, perhaps, the political and economic mobility women were beginning to gain in the culture, developments that were interpreted here as criminal threats to masculine power" (433). That is to say, Miss Huntress's movement parallels her transgressions of social and moral certitudes about gender identities.

As observed, Chandler complicates gender stereotypes through these spatial representations as well. As Theda Wrede emphasizes, "[s]pace is dynamic and simultaneous, just as gendered identity is multiple and in flux" (13). Chandler places some of his characters in settings which are not congruous with the aforementioned gender ideologies associated with these specific places. Because of that, these spatial representations are relevant and appropriate for Chandler's reorientations of gender relations and interactions. He does not only perpetuate gender stereotypes but also demonstrates subversion of them through spatial representations.

Conclusion

Regarding his portrayals in his early short stories or novellas like "Trouble is My Business," Raymond Chandler cannot always be considered sexist in his portrayals of gender. Although the story incorporates typical aspects of the hard-boiled genre, it generally lacks some established and biased representations of gender ideologies. Chandler associates toughness and hard-boiled not only with male but also female characters to some extent. Moreover, he keeps the ambiguity in all aspects throughout the story, from the characters and gender identities to spatial representations.

Although portraying some women as pernicious and scheming *femmes fatales*, these depictions function as subversions of gender roles, too. His female characters are not often passive, domestic, and merely subservient, which signifies Chandler's unorthodox reflections on gender in his early fiction. Miss Huntress is never portrayed as a mere victim of a man-made order and justice system; on the contrary, she is an ambitious character who engages in the male business of crime. Furthermore, she eventually survives in such a dangerous environment, while some male characters, both the father and the adopted son, die. Finally, she can get away with this incident in spite of her connection with the case and the culprit.

On the contrary, Marlowe cannot often restore order like Sherlock Holmes or other fictional detectives. Although Marlowe's failure to bring criminals to justice represents the complex criminal underworld in post-war America, it also refers to his inability in spite of his seemingly tough and invulnerable personality. Additionally, themes like male anxiety are in control with excessive action and violence which does not often feature that much in Chandler's fiction; nevertheless, he cannot eradicate the *femme fatale* as expected. In addition, he implies that female irregularities were harshly denounced while organized crime perpetrated by men was largely ignored and even tolerated.

As the two world wars had tremendous influences on him, Chandler might have become more concerned with masculine ideology and competence after the impact of the Second World War. That might be one reason why he is not so biased about gender differences in the early stages of his writing career. It is observed that he is not as sexist as he is in his later novels. As his portrayals of male and female characters sometimes subvert understandings of gender stereotypes, his attitude towards gender ideologies is more ambiguous in his early writing career. Accordingly, it would be right to state that Chandler's representations of gender transformed to become more sexist gradually compared to his previous works before his reputation as a novelist.

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