



Booze and the Private Eye: Alcohol in the Hard-Boiled Novel

Rita Elizabeth Rippetoe

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The hard-bitten PI with a bottle of bourbon in his desk drawer - it's an image as old as the genre of hard-boiled detective fiction itself. Alcohol has long been an important element of detective fiction, but it is no mere prop. Rather, the treatment of alcohol within the works informs and illustrates the detective's moral code, and casts light upon the society's attitudes towards drink. This examination of the role of alcohol in hard-boiled detective fiction begins with the genre's birth, in an era strongly influenced and affected by Prohibition, and follows both the genre's development and its relation to our changing understanding of and attitudes towards alcohol and alcoholism. It discusses the works of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Mickey Spillane, Robert B. Parker, Lawrence Sanders, Marcia Muller, Karen Kijewski and Sue Grafton. There are bibliographies of both the primary and critical texts, and an index of authors and works.

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