SAPPHISTICATED SATIRE AND PERVERTED PARODY:
INVERSIONS AND SUBVERSIONS OF THE TRADITIONAL MYSTERY GENRE
BY PIS IN FEMINIST PRESS PUBLICATIONS
FROM 1969 TO 1999

A Dissertation

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Doctor of Philosophy

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This dissertation revisits the Lesbian private investigator in mystery fiction and focuses on gender implications and genre expectations that affect her narrative and the effect of her narrative on the field. Highlighting the Lesbian detective's use of humor as a tool of inversion and subversion that works by "polluting" the genre's traditional discourse, this dissertation offers evidence as to how she effectively creates oppositional and resistant dialogues. In terms of her characterizations, structures, and themes, the Lesbian PI frames, defines, and enacts new gender implications while ratifying, supporting, and representing new genre expectations. This dissertation proves that humor is the means by which the Lesbian PI validates her coming-Out and her being-Out; reveals her characterization as a modern, hero myth of "being"; and

transforms the position of the traditional heterosexual white male image of power to that of an icon of weakness.

This analysis therefore focuses on gender implications and genre expectations circumvented, contravened, and exploited by Lesbian mystery fiction. Further, it emphasizes how these novels subvert patriarchal structures in order to stage, perform, and thereby produce their own validation. As well, it demonstrates that by polluting the traditional discourses of mystery fiction with satire and parody, Lesbian narratives create oppositional and resistant discourses in their characterizations, structures, and themes.

The texts under study are mystery novels written by self-identified Lesbian authors who began their publication history with Lesbian protagonists at independent feminist presses after the time of the Stonewall Riots. Because the mystery genre is often split between private investigators and police officers, I choose to reflect only on examples from novels featuring private investigators. The consequence of this study is the revelation of the importance behind the inclusion of Lesbian PIs as integral elements in the mystery genre and not merely as incidental appearances of a ghettoized minority or as a supplemental

sub-genre. The novels herein are examples of Lesbian self-determination, illustrating the competence and capability of an undervalued community.

Dedication

For swinging and smiling,
A newspaper-suitcase and a second-hand typewriter,
Thank you Granny.

Anna Ogureck
1916- 2002

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INTRODUCTION:

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

Demonstrating that mystery fiction provided fertile ground for innovative creation and growth early on, shifts from conservative to liberal appearances of homosexuality were inevitable. Initially existing as miserable characters, homosexuals were referred to in a verbally abusive manner, endured physical assaults, and experienced insensitive treatment. Golden Age and hard-boiled era authors used homosexual characters as the means through which to present didactic messages professing the wickedness of homosexuality. Writing homosexual characters as pretentious social climbers without the financial strength to back up their pursuits, many Golden Age and hard-boiled era authors presented Gays and Lesbians with predispositions for abnormality and inappropriate romantic attachments.

Specifically, Lesbian episodes of violence were typically related to spurned love or egotistical self-preservation. Sometimes curious and quaint, other appearances presented them as peculiar with predilections for pedophilia. Another stereotype for Lesbian women was

that they evidenced an abnormal athletic ability and were manly in appearance. Regardless of gender, the homosexuals' end was usually miserable. Sadly, the exploitation of stereotyped performance served to trivialize the lives of homosexuals, making them amusing departures from the norm and marks for evoking contemptuous laughter. Because homosexuality did not fit the fiercely heterosexual pro-male orientation of the early hard-boiled dicks, in those texts, Gays and Lesbians were vulnerable to persecution. Often the homosexuals' appearance served to reinforce individual responsibility to avoid the predatory trappings of perversity and to guard against passages highlighting the rightness of heterosexuality.

When investigators from marginalized populations appeared, the genre shifted. Specifically, when feminist women began to write gender inclusivity and multicultural diversity, they socially-polluted the narrative by thematizing women's concerns and testing traditional characterizations of the investigator. With the changes, murder was no longer the primary concern even though violence still tipped the scale of criminal behavior. However, offenses against women and minorities began to gain notoriety.

Then Lou Rand disrupted the status quo and designed a new community that featured playful and positive images of Queer characters. Following Rand, Joseph Hansen "fathered" the Gay inspector and his contributions promoted homosexuals into positions of prestige in the genre. Forging unique normative disruptions, Lesbian authors publishing with feminist presses produced a steady wave of Lesbian mystery fiction.

The first to do so was M. F. Beal who emerged confrontationally: her contribution demanded inclusion and forced Lesbians into the genre. Increasing the genre by way of cross-pollinated narratives, relationships, romances, and sexual encounters were laden with feminist themes. And, each Lesbian mystery text tested traditional genre expectations. Contextualized social examinations showed more precisely the cruelty and oppression endured by the homosexual. Early Lesbian detectives forced psychological studies of homophobia and the effects it had on the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, professional, and financial status of their communities. Remarkably, these works also fostered optimism and resilience in upheaval.

Since her literary inception in 1977, until the beginning of this project in 1999, only three doctoral researchers referred to the Lesbian private investigator, police detective, or amateur sleuth in mystery fiction; by the close of 2004, five new dissertations referencing this topic appeared. Of the eight, only six specifically addressed Lesbians in mystery fiction.[1] Adding to critical contributions in the field, this study first revisits homosexuality in early mystery fiction. Then, it traces the development of the homosexual characters in the genre and referentially relates the Lesbian PI to early female investigators. Next it focuses on the gender implications, plus the genre expectations, influencing the Lesbian PI's narrative and how she revolts against them. Finally this study shows how the Lesbian PI rewrites the position of the male.

Highlighting humor, this study makes evident the manner that Lesbian mystery novels copy the tradition in comical ways, effectively parodying the elemental building blocks that comprise basic and essential characteristics of the genre employed by conventional male and female writers. The novels also parody the early feminist-styled

contributions, constructing newer and more daring narratives than their foremothers. Furthermore, they launch scathingly witty and ironic criticisms against the failings and defects of male conduct, they reveal the thoughtlessness and recklessness with which men approach minorities and minority's issues: here specifically, women and Lesbians.

Such attacks, by Lesbian PIs against the tradition, are satirical volleys that collide with the central controls and dominating influences created and supported by heterosexual white males to the exclusion of all who do not appear the same. Hegemonic structures and hierarchical group behaviors portrayed within traditional mystery fiction, parodied by Lesbians authoring Lesbian PIs, demonstrate the flaws and insincerity of a patriarchal politic in a diverse society. Employing parody and satire as tools of subversion, these narratives work by "polluting" the genre's traditional discourse. Undermining long-established beliefs and providing evidence that Lesbian investigators function effectively, this study finds that they are creating both oppositional and resistant texts.

"Sapphisticated Satire and Perverted Parody" intends a reading of Lesbian PIs in mystery fiction as modern, carnivalized heroes, meaning that while Lesbian private investigators, police detectives, and amateur sleuths first appeared in compliance with established genre norms, they evolved into mythic models of homosexuality and the Gayborhood community. Eventually setting patterns and standards for present day Lesbian PI narratives that bring contemporary tastes, attitudes, and standards to the field, they also made a way for triumphantly celebratory existence marked by laughter and pageantry.

Previously, critics have identified the coming-Out story, the socially alert re/definition of gender, and the socially conscious re/awakening of sexuality as dominant themes in the narratives of Lesbian PIs.[2] More boldly oppositional and defiant than their feminist precursors, the Lesbian PIs going-into community theme serves to effectively destabilize, deflate, and debunk traditions favoring heterosexual-male dominant literatures. In the mystery genre, specifically in the hard-boiled sub-genre, depictions of the street-wise, world-hardened, tough-guy PI, with a pragmatic and pessimistic view of humanity, are

disrupted and dethroned first by the Dyke-dick's existence and then by the narrative tools she employs. Further disrupting the genre's tradition are the Lesbian PI's sexual orientation, physical experience, and sense of intimacy.

Lesbian-authored mystery novels currently present the Lesbian PI as a hardened tough-gal with an often-comedic view. In terms of her characterizations, structures, and themes, the Dyke-dick frames, defines, and enacts new gender implications while ratifying, supporting, and representing new genre expectations. Demonstrated here is the powerful humor by which the Lesbian PI validates her own coming-Out and her own being-Out. Subsequently, the Dyke-dick's characterization as a modern, mythical hero of "Being" in the genre is revealed as well. Notably, all of the authors selected for this work were born prior to the Stonewall Riots[3] and all of them were then under the age of twenty-one when the uprising occurred. It may be inferred that all of the authors were at least inadvertently affected by the political climate of their era and definitely subject to the social tides that forced cultural change.

This analysis will therefore focus on the gender implications and genre expectations circumvented, contravened, and exploited by Lesbian PIs in mystery texts. Emphasis is placed on the manner in which the Dyke-dick's narrative subverts patriarchal structures in order to stage, perform, and thereby produce their own validation. Demonstrated here, as well, are the means through which the Lesbian PI "pollutes" the traditional discourses of mystery fiction with humor. Creating oppositional and resistant discourses in their characterizations, the Dyke-dick reforms, habilitates, and improves traditional structures and themes. Important to this study, also, is the way in which humor works subversively against the patriarchal norms.

The mainstream texts under study are carefully selected mystery novels from the 1920s through the latter portion of the 1970s which create the backdrop for homosexuals in the genre prior to the effects of the Equal Rights Movement or Feminism and the momentum of Gay Rights after Stonewall, or Lesbian-Feminism. The Lesbian PI texts under study are the products of self-identified Lesbian-authors writing individually and not as a team with a shared pseudonym. They feature licensed investigators who

operate their own agencies and are located within the United States. Also, all of them began their publication histories with independent feminist-presses after 1969 and end by 1999 or transfer to a mainstream publisher thereafter. Included is a wide-range survey of novels that were identified and comprised the canon of Lesbian mysteries; the primary focus is given to three Lesbian-authored Lesbian PIs following hard-boiled tradition: Phyllis Knight is the creator of the Lillian "Lil" Ritchie series; the second is J. M. Redmann's Michele "Micky" Knight who appears in four installments—two of which are used here; and, Elizabeth Pincus writer of the Nell Fury novels—all of which are included in this study.

Though the genre is comprised of private investigators, police officers, and amateur-sleuths the attitudes observed here are those of Golden Age sleuths toward homosexuals and then those of private investigators who appeared during the hard-boiled explosion. Police detectives are omitted from this study because, at their root, police departments are founded on models of military institutions and therefore highly patriarchal in structure and operation. The concern here is not primarily organizational attitudes toward homosexuals but rather

social attitudes and the manner in which they have changed. Also of concern is the Lesbian PI's ability to function freely in her field, effecting transformations in gender implications and genre expectations.

Lesbian PIs are featured here because they are not paycheck-bound to a male-dominant department or driven by a formal hierarchy. By virtue of their professional and subsequent financial disassociation from male-administered institutions, Dyke-dicks shirk the associated responsibilities in ways that Lesbian officers on police forces, and those who work in private industry, cannot. Lesbian PIs escape all trimmings and trappings that are unavoidable for the Lesbian police detective who works in a traditional boy's-club setting. Moreover, Dyke-dicks are free in a manner not available to or possible for amateur sleuths whose time for case management and money for investigative expenditures are restricted by virtue of their primary professional obligation to a private-industry employer. Further, Lesbian PIs have more comic freedom in that episodes of discrimination, sexism, and homophobia are easier to interpret since they are not bound by the seriousness of supervisory reports for job stability or financial security in a fiercely male environment that does

not welcome them as professionals. Thus the works selected and referred to as "Gayborhood stories,"[4] survey installments only in Lesbian PI series.

The methodology used for this study is a blend of Feminist and Queer theories. Using both to interpret interactions between dominant hegemonies and subversive discourses, feminism offers the methodology for the Lesbian PI's carnival deconstruction and reconstruction while Queer theory informs the argument that identity is a transitional continuum and not a fixed binary. Queer theory also informs the reading of latent, potential, and Closeted identities in the representational dynamics and dilemmas presented within the Lesbian PI's narrative. Both easily allow readers to observe the Lesbian PI's techniques for de-centering, destabilizing, and modernizing what is traditionally a male-dominant hegemony.

The following is the order in which each is presented and approached during the course of this study. Chapter One is titled "Historicizing Inclusion, Validating Recognition: Images of Homosexuals in Early Mystery Fiction." Though this is not a proposal to perform an extensive survey demonstrating the emergence of Lesbian

mystery fiction, a brief historical review is important at the beginning of this study. This chapter also traces the roots of the homosexual in mystery fiction, their initial appearances in mainstream mystery fiction, and their development as PIs in the genre. After historicizing the characterizations and expressions that identify the Lesbian PI in the long-established customs of the genre, this chapter relates the Dyke-dick to the hard-boiled tradition.

Chapter Two is "Genre Incarnation and Transcendence: Emergence of Lesbians as Hard-Boiled Private Investigators in Mystery Fiction." Again, referentially relating the Lesbian PI to the mystery genre's literary tradition, the roots of the female PIs are traced and then the emergence of the Lesbian private investigator is discussed. Historicizing the characterizations and expressions of both, the Dyke-dick's identity is thereby validated as a legitimate, evolutionary element in mystery fiction.

Chapter Three is "Criminal Males and Villainous Hierarchies versus Sovereign Warriors and Tyrannical Saints." The manner which the Dyke-dick aggressively employs gender inversions and genre subversions as disruptive tools, in the inquiry for and presentation of

evidence implicating the heterosexual white male as criminal and villain, is reviewed.

Chapter Four is "Performance Anxiety: Dyke-dicks in Love and Dyke-dick Lovers." The categorization of female bodies and the Lesbian PI's sexual performances are examined. Because the female body is typically restricted by patriarchal social and physical expectations, the manner in which the Dyke-dick dismantles the restrictions and practices her own physical potential is discussed. Again humor, specifically satire and parody, is a laughter-evoking element in the space between patriarchal imposition and defiant Lesbian practice. It also serves to negotiate new perspectives concerning our assessments and perceptions of sexual categories, masculinity, femininity, and the flexibility of the human body.

At the end of the written analysis is an Afterward which is subtitled "Lesbian Mystery Series Titles and Non-series Contributions to the Lesbian Mystery Canon." It contains a personal description of the process that I followed to identify and locate the titles of almost 500 Lesbian mystery fiction novels published over a period of thirty-five years following the Stonewall Riots. Mentioned in the text is the bibliography of Lesbian mystery series

and one-shot novels, or books that were written without intentions for follow-up, which I include as Appendix I and Appendix II respectively.[5] It is important to note that no other list such as the one included in either Appendix and that the work performed, in the course of creating this collection, was like that of a full-scale "investigation." Many of the novels, published by small presses, are now out of print and difficult to find. Furthermore, references to their existence were often fleeting, at best. Therefore, it took some persistence to determine whether they truly belonged on the list, and it is with great satisfaction that I include them here.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICIZING INCLUSION, VALIDATING RECOGNITION: IMAGES OF HOMOSEXUALS IN EARLY MYSTERY FICTION

A brief historical review demonstrating the emergence of both humor and homosexuality in mystery fiction is important at the beginning of this study. This chapter reveals the roots of humor and then presents extensive examples of homosexual characters in early mystery fiction. Then, after historicizing the characterizations and expressions that identify the homosexual, the Lesbian PI is presented as a practitioner of the long-established customs of the genre and relates the Dyke-dick to the hard-boiled tradition.

Therefore, a succinct genealogy of mystery fiction charts American Edgar Allan Poe as the father of the first detective story in 1841.[6] Named the father of the prototypical detective as well, Poe was followed by Englishman Wilkie Collins who wrote the first full-length detective novel in 1868; then soon thereafter, Scottish-born Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote the first installment of the first detective series in 1887.[7] In American literary

history, Anna Katherine Green is credited with the first "best-selling" detective novel in 1878.[8] Green is dually recognized as the mother of both the prototypical spinster sleuth (1897) and the prototypical girl sleuth (1915).[9] Intriguingly, John Kennedy Melling's genealogy of the detective story-parody places Wilkie Collins as the father of the first spoof in 1859, followed by Poe who, in 1844, satirized crime novelists in a short story (12).[10] And, Anthony Slide reports that Doyle wrote the earliest inclusion of a homosexual in a short mystery dated 1909 (49).[11] Very quickly after its birth, the genre adapted, modified, and offered a place in which authors could mock the tradition, demonstrating that mystery fiction rests on attractive ground for experimental building and development.

Studies that outline the growth and expansion of detective fiction do so not only by claiming firsts but also by charting its conventions.[12] Many historians observe that early mysteries focused on the apprehension of a murderer from a clue-laden closed stage. Perpetrators, singled-out from a finite group of suspects, typically expressed focused purpose and intent; detectives relied on

orderly deductive methods to discover the identities of criminals. With crimes decoded, mysteries solved, criminals apprehended, the detective personified reason and convention. Characterized as morally upright, unmarried, eccentric, and an outsider-intellectual, the male detective was both scientific and artistic in his inquiries and worked with absolute freedom to his end. Themes upheld order over disorder, loyalty over betrayal, and preservation over manipulation. Elements of the pastoral and features of the nostalgic established setting and mood.

Through the development of detective stories, homosexual characters existed mainly as deserving victims or as decadent villains.[13] Anthony Slide points out that Gays and Lesbians were traditionally referred to as "pansy," "poof," and "nancy" (1); further, his research supports the conclusion that the abuse of homosexuals was acceptable because they were portrayed as deviant. Harbingers of moral decay who deserved punishment for attempting to spread their sickness, homosexuals were assaulted in early detective novels because they were visible and sometimes they were convenient targets. Further, intolerant detectives, who verbally and physically

bashed homosexuals, even latent ones, solved the mysteries of their deaths and the motives of their crimes without sensitivity for their humanity.

Critic dependent, the Golden Age ran loosely from WWI to WWII: or from Agatha Christie's first detective novel, published in 1920, to Dorothy Sayer's last mystery book, published in 1939.[14] Anthony Slide's work, Gay and Lesbian Characters and Themes in Mystery Novels: A Critical Guide to Over 500 Works in English (1993), proved invaluable in the compilation of the following examples from four leading authors of the Golden Age who included homosexual characters in their mystery novels. Margery Allingham, Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, and Dorothy L. Sayers demonstrate the use of homosexual characters as icons of depravity or as auxiliary props. More importantly, they always existed as the means through which authors built didactic passages and political statements concerning the rightness of heterosexuality.[15] Though many descriptors of homosexuality are blatant, Slide's work supports latent readings of several characters included here.

Echoing turn-of-the-century sentiments concerning homosexuality, Sayers was the earliest of the five to deal

with Queer characters. Her 1927 novel, Unnatural Death,[16] features spinster Miss Alexandra Katherine Climpson as a sleuth. Offering a rationale for her marital status, Miss Climpson professes to be a "spinster made and not born" for she is "a perfectly womanly woman" (Sayers 167). In this she indicates that her femaleness, her femininity, and her heterosexuality are in tact and that she is not a spinster because of a flawed biology but owing to circumstance. As such she fits the social definition of "woman" and the implications associated with her gender. That her rationale exists in due course within her dialogue offers evidence of a prejudice existent against unmarried women and proof that spinsterhood was indicative of Lesbianism. Clearly, Miss Climpson maintains privileges reserved for those who are heterosexuals. Again, her words indicate that she views herself as a casualty of circumstance, not empowered; this seems incongruent since she is the lead protagonist and element through which order is restored.

It is Miss Climpson who detects Lesbian Nurse Mary Whittaker and proves her guilty of murder.[17] About Nurse Whittakers' relationship with her love interest, Miss Vera Findlater, Miss Climpson declares: "It is natural for a

school-girl to be schwarmerisch—in a young woman of twenty-two it is thoroughly undesirable" (Sayers 166). Of course, she means that Miss Findlater can afford to be intimate friends with Nurse Whittaker so long as their intimacy eventuates in a heterosexual role for adulthood (Sayers 166-172). Miss Climpson's simple statement rings ironic when the Lesbian murderess kills her girlfriend. Nurse Whittaker's violence stems from the oppressive and sickly sweet love of Miss Findlater.[18]

In 1936, Margery Allingham wrote Flowers for the Judge and used a character who is, according to Anthony Slide, an interpretably Gay character (12). Used as an auxiliary prop to obstruct Detective Albert Campion's[19] murder investigation, Allingham's Peter Riggett is a disturbing working-class character with a passion for "self-aggrandizement" (200). He is a sneaky, eavesdropping, effeminate gossip with a flair for drama (Allingham 204, 209, 210, 278). Riggett demonstrates no interest in establishing romantic attachments with women since he both remains single well into his middle age and lives in his parents' home (Allingham 302). He is a pretentious social climber with a lack of financial strength and a

predisposition toward deviant behavior. Today the descriptors that identify Riggett as a Gay male seem vague and absurd; but, when Allingham wrote them, they manifested the homosexual's character. As such, Riggett's whole characterization hints at homosexuality; and, according to Slide, Detective Campion's physical beating of him seems a veiled display of Gay-bashing (12). Mentioned earlier, the abuse of homosexuals was publicly acceptable and seems standard reactionary behavior for detectives whose sole purpose was to maintain the traditional heterosexual hegemony and to restore social order when jeopardized.

The third and most frequently published of these women was Agatha Christie who, Gillian Gill asserts, wrote homosexuals into smaller parts than those of her contemporaries (197).[20] Homosexual characters are interpretable in at least three of her novels. In The Moving Finger (1942) "[a] middle-aged spinster" with "an abnormally female streak" appears (Christie 120, 135). Evaluating his description, Gill points out that "the retired antiquarian Mr. Pye seems a stereotypical Gay man" (197). Much like Allingham's Peter Riggett, Agatha Christie's Mr. Pye was most frequently described negatively

as a "dilettante" and "a born gossip" (Moving Finger 3); he was Queer. Renowned for his lack of scruples, Mr. Pye is known to "repeat a meaningless bit of information" (Moving Finger 106) for its gossip value. Moreover, other characters perceive him to be "not an ordinary man—but a certain kind of man" (Moving Finger 106), implying that his presence is unsettlingly abnormal and fails to fit gender implications associated with his maleness.

In Christie's Murder is Announced (1950) two Lesbian couples appear. The first is Miss Hinchcliff and her partner Miss Murgatroyd. The second is an interpretable Lesbian couple, Miss Charlotte Blacklock and Miss Dora Bunner. While Misses "Hinch" and Murgatroyd fit well with their social scene, demonstrating a positive and caring devotion for each other, Blacklock and Bunner do not. The former couple shares a "cottage" (Murder is Announced 8) and Murgatroyd assumes all of the household chores. The latter shares a house and Bunner assumes all of the duties prescribed to women.

Wearing her hair in a "manlike crop" (Murder is Announced 8), Hinchcliff is "as tall as a man" (187). Giving a "formidable handshake" (Murder is Announced 27) and taking an observably "manly stance" (58), Hinchcliff's

"stentorian voice" and manner of "short bark" styled laughter (77-80) are characteristics that mark her a masculine Lesbian: a stereotypical Butch. When Murgatroyd is murdered, her relationship with Hinchcliff is resolved according to the genre's standard and made neutral. Their relationship is no longer a threat to hetero-normative expectations once Murgatroyd is dead and the couple is destroyed. Worse is that none of the other characters "offered Miss Hinchcliff sympathy or mentioned Miss Murgatroyd's death" despite their witness to her "ravaged face" (Murder is Announced 233) and her expression of grief. The pain that she felt for the loss of her partner went ignored and was thereby invalidated.

Reiterating themes from Unnatural Death, Christie's murderess, Miss Blacklock, kills her loyal girlfriend, Miss Bunner, in a manner that implicates homosexuality as evil, selfish, indifferent, and incapable of appropriate love. Because Bunner is mentally flighty and loose with her words (Murder is Announced 253), she is a potential safety risk for Blacklock. Afraid that her Bunner will accidentally reveal her secret identity (Murder is Announced 254) and implicate her as the killer (256), Blacklock fears for her own personal safety and comfort. Acting selfishly, she

attempts to protect herself from detection by killing Bunner. After disposing of her special friend, Blacklock mourns saying: "[I]t just came over me. What I've lost. [. . .] Now that she's gone I'm quite alone" (Murder is Announced 184). Her words demonstrate that she did not value the experience of Bunner's affection until she threw it away. Worse is the understanding that the woman is capable of murder, serial murder, and is most likely so because her orientation fosters manly method and action.

Effectively, Christie is more kind to the female homosexual than to the Gay male until her writing of Nemesis (1971). In this text she capitalizes on the stereotype that defines homosexuality and predatory child molestation with the same terms.[21] According to Gillian Gill, Christie "joins three characters together in a murder triangle on the basis of mixed homosexual and heterosexual desire" (197). Investigating the murder of a young woman, Miss Marple discovers that the girl's spinster aunt is her killer. Evaluating the relationship between the aging aunt and her young niece, Gillian Gill interprets it as an emotionally incestuous relationship (197-98). Mimicking Gay "father-son" relationships, which is a coupling between

two men with one old enough to be the other's father, the spinster aunt and her young niece seem to be involved in a "mother-daughter" relationship. Discovering the sordid nature of the aunt's love for her young charge, Miss Marple makes a speech of reproach for the murderess, admonishing the spinster for killing her niece. She states:

> A different kind of love came into her life. She fell in love with a boy, a young man. [. . .] she wanted to escape—to escape from the burden of the bondage of love she was living with you. She wanted a normal woman's life. To live with the man of her choice, to have children by him. She wanted marriage and the happiness of normality. (Nemesis 235)

Now following Allingham's staging of homosexuality, Christie insinuates that episodes of female violence are related to inappropriately directed affections and selfish love.[22] Just as nasty as Sayers' insinuation that episodes of female violence are related to the spurned love of a "swarmerish" nature or selfish self-preservation, and Allingham's allusion that lower-class socio-economics and drifting are measures of homosexuality, is Christie's

implication that Queers are curious and quaint with predilections for pedophilia.

Ngaio Marsh, described by Anthony Slide as "the most homophobic of the classic mystery writers" (113), wrote only one Lesbian character but included nearly a half-a-dozen Gay males in her detective stories.[23] Marsh's lone Lesbian, Miss Katherine Abbott, appears in Singing in the Shrouds (1958). The first clues indicating her homosexual orientation are found in references to her physical prowess. Dennis, a secondary character, muses to himself that she "Runs like a man" (Singing in the Shrouds 28). And, in response to the fevered rush at which she races to communicate with her female friend, he states: "Well, it takes all sorts" (Singing in the Shrouds 28). Running like a man and expressing grave excitement in response to the call of a female friend are all the clues necessary to implicate Miss Abbott as a Lesbian; yet there are more.

Indicating that she is a masculine Lesbian, a Butch, Miss Abbott's hands are repeatedly described as "large and muscular" (Singing in the Shrouds 62, 91, 112); and, her jaw is frequently detailed as both "inflexible" and harsh (Singing in the Shrouds 62). Her general appearance is

maligned as unlikely to "release the safety catch in even the most determined sex-monster," and it is noted: "she shaves" (Singing in the Shrouds 78). Miss Abbott's manly form makes her an unlikely victim for the murderer who only attacks and kills pretty bodies (Singing in the Shrouds 79). Offering readers the image of a stereotypical Butch, Miss Abbott's athletic ability and masculine appearance are complimented by an unreasonable penchant for emotional flight and sentimental yearning.

During the course of Miss Marple's murder investigation, Miss Abbott is interrogated and must reveal her whereabouts and activities for the time frame during which another character was murdered. It is at this time Miss Abbott mentions that she lives with a "friend" (Singing in the Shrouds 90); and, when pressed for an alibi, she hesitatingly confesses to spending the time at issue watching a movie titled Pack Up Your Troubles (93). Of particular interest is the plot of the movie. Not only does Miss Abbott make her home with another woman, but the plot of the movie she confesses to watching is one in which a young woman struggles with the thought of "deserting her great friend" for marriage (Singing in the Shrouds 93). Marsh thereby hints at the reason that Miss Abbott is

separated from her "friend" while also offering an explanation for her constant air of mental distress and emotional suffering.

Giving considerably more time to the homosexual character than other women mystery writers of her time, Marsh includes an emotionally purifying moment for the Lesbian, Miss Abbott. Writing somewhat in a confessional Un-closeting voice, Marsh makes Miss Abbott affirm that she is tormented by a "personal devil" (Singing in the Shrouds 160-61). Construed as her affection for the "friend" with whom she lives, Miss Abbott's personal devil is her Lesbianism. Possibly, attempting to compensate for her weakness through religious involvement, Miss Abbot is an "authority on church music" (Singing in the Shrouds 10). Paired with her confession, Miss Abbott's participation in religious activities has all the makings of a didactic passage: homosexuality is a lamentable activity and redemption is an individual's personal responsibility.

Not fostering images of immature love, as did Sayers and Allingham, or Christie's curious and quaint pedophiles, Marsh's Lesbian character seems noble in that she merely runs away from the woman for whom she feels affection. For whatever reason, Miss Abbott does not attack or attempt to

physically destroy the woman she loves. Rather, she withdraws and internalizes feelings of rejection, shame, and suffering when the woman notifies her of her intent to marry. Noble but abnormal, nevertheless, Miss Abbott is a physically repulsive image with a pitiful character.

In other novels by Marsh homosexuals figure prominently. Discernibly Gay men such as student and manuscript illustrator, Cedric Malmsley appear in Artists in Crime (1938). Dennis, ship steward, is evident in Singing in the Shrouds (1958). Young actors, Peregrine Jay and Jeremy Jones are observable in Killer Dolphin (1966). And, Kenneth Dorne, tour participant, is interpretable in When in Rome (1971). Finally, Anthony Slide points out that Alleyn's son, Roderick, Jr., "Ricky," can be read as Queer in Last Ditch (1977) (114). Most of Marsh's Gay male characters were written in a manner observed by Slide as trendy, cross-dressing "drug addicts who meet with nasty ends" (114). Worse than the previously mentioned popular mystery-writing women of her time, Marsh's exploitation of stereotypical traits and behaviors served to minimize and trivialize the lives of homosexuals, effectively making them no more than a diversion or an amusement.

Cedric Malmsley's voice, in Artists in Crime (1938), is negatively described as "high-pitched and rather querulous" (Marsh 22). He moves "ostentatiously" (Artists in Crime 30) and is "cheeky in an artsy sort of fashion" (95); not the least dependable, his attitude is portrayed derogatorily and he is referred to as "Mr. Highbrow" (120). Maimsley is described in detail on one occasion:

> Seen across the dining-room table he looked sufficiently remarkable with his beard divided in two. This beard was fine and straight and had the dull pallor of an infant's crest. [He] wore a crimson shirt, a black tie and a corduroy velvet jacket. Indeed he had the uncanny appearance of a person who had come round, full circle, to the Victorian idea of Bohemian. He was almost an illustration for "Trilby." [. . .] He wore jade rings on his, unfortunately, broad fingers. (Artists in Crime 163)

Later, Maimsley is compared to Oscar Wilde (Artists in Crime 164, 169), a comparison that seals his homosexual persona much more than references to his use of drugs (Artists in Crime 165, 166) for recreation. As such, his character is "extremely affected and conceited" (Artists in

Crime 188). Such details are elements that establish Maimsley as a Queer character with the qualities of an opportunist. He is a pretentious social climber without any financial strength to do so. Of course his predisposition to deviant behavior is apparent, as is his utter lack of interest in heterosexual relationships or romantic attachments with women. He spends most of his time with male friends and even seems repulsed by the notion of having a female mistress (Artists in Crime 165).

Dennis, a ship steward, in Singing in the Shrouds (1958) is sadly described as "a queer little job" (Marsh 77) and is found dead while dressed in what can be interpreted as drag:

> The Spanish dress was spread out wide, falling in black cascades [. . . .] Its wearer lay back, luxuriously, each gloved hand trailing [. . . .] The face was covered down to the tip of the nose by part of the mantilla [. . . .] Artificial pearls from a broken necklace lay across the décolletage which had been thrust a white hyacinth. (189)

Likely mistaken for a female, Dennis was murdered by a killer who typically targeted only pretty women (Singing in

the Shrouds 189); only an exceptionally effeminate male could be mistaken for a female. Critically referenced as a "sex monster" by the ship's captain (Singing in the Shrouds 172), the novel's detective corrects him saying, "Not in the sense you mean" (172). Conceivably the detective is referring to Dennis' homosexual orientation. Further indicative of Dennis' orientation is the affinity that Lesbian character, Miss Abbott, displays for him. Considering that her "own private, inexorable weakness" is the affection that she feels for her female housemate, Abbott states that Dennis too has "his own private, inexorable weakness" (Singing in the Shrouds 211). Amusingly his quarters are referred to as the "glory-hole" (Singing in the Shrouds 176), slang among Gay males significant to anal intercourse.

Jay and Jones live together in Killer Dolphin (1966) and behave in a curiously feminine manner. Both concern themselves dramatically with the social advances of an older man, wondering if he is "making a queer pass" (Marsh 34) at one of them. Later they surmise whether the older man in question really is "an old queer" (Killer Dolphin 122), and unconstructively discuss the importance of such a detail in their relationship with him.

Kenneth Dorne is interpretable as a homosexual in Ngaio Marsh's When in Rome (1971). Dorne's early formative years were tumultuous; the son of a twice divorced Lord, his mother was "put away" (When in Rome 40) and likely had little to no hand in raising him. Marsh's detective laments Dorne's start and feels compassion for the young man when he meets him; Dorne is a pitiable young man. However, for readers he immediately evidences at least two features of homosexuality: a sense of social impermanence and tireless giggling. Admittedly, he intends to take "The big leap" from recreational drugs to "mainliner" drugs (When in Rome 101), happily confessing to having an affinity for chemical use, which is another signifier for homosexuality. "Sacked from his school for pot parties and sex" (When in Rome 157), Dorne's dismissal is never defined as is his predilection for heroin. But, having been previously arrested three times for speeding, it seems no surprise to any of the characters that he was also accused of manslaughter, a situation "resulting from high jinks at what is called a 'gay pad'" (When in Rome 158).

In Last Ditch (1977), a young man, Sydney Jones, seemingly accuses another young man, Ricky Alleyn, of being a homosexual in a scene where the two are at odds: "I

can't take you crawling round after me. [. . . .] I'm not one of those. It's not my scene, see? No way. See? *No way*. So do me a favor and—" (Marsh 94). Of course, Alleyn denies that he accurately understands Jones' insinuation and returns with: "You unspeakable— [. . .] if I thought you meant what you said I'd knock your bloody little block off. 'Crawl round after *you*' [. . .] I'd rather crawl after a caterpillar. You make me sick" (Last Ditch 94), after which, Alleyn vomits. Whether he gets sick because of Jones' accusation or something else altogether is not pointedly clear; however, it is possible to infer that his reaction stems from his fear of being labeled Gay.

It is in these five novels by Marsh that the inclusion of homosexuals as icons of depravity and as auxiliary props, as deserving victims and as decadent villains, was extraordinarily evident. Writing discernibly Gay men, Marsh offered many didactic platforms on which the rightness of heterosexuality was affirmed. Again, the exploitation of homosexuals served to diminish and belittle the lives of Lesbians and Gay men in Marsh's narratives, forcing them into positions as trite diversions and pathetic entertainment.

Between World Wars I and II, while many Golden Age writers strictly adhered to design—including that set for the treatment of homosexual characters—the genre was being transformed by American modernism. [24] According to Richard Slotkin, the classic detective blended with the image of an early American frontiersman (95) to create a specifically American, hybridized detective. Thus began the hard-boiled tradition in mystery fiction. As well, Derek Longhurst also points out that the new American version of the mystery novel appeared with the features of the "secular environment of the Western" (5).

It is this hybridized version detective who appeared in Black Mask publications with Carroll John Daly's first publication of Terry Mack in "Three Gun Terry" (1923). Black Mask offered Daly the forum to write the hard-boiled detective, or "dick," prototype and then, Dashiell Hammett (1929), followed by: Raymond Chandler (1939); Ross MacDonald (1944); and Mickey Spillane (1947), led further radical genre renovations by writing urban settings with vast populations that gave way to undefined pools of suspects and polyphonic narratives shaped by diverse themes. [25] Hard-boiled detectives lived moral quests

situated in a world of violence both threatened and misdirected by violence. Chandler best described the image of the detective in his discussion in The Simple Art of Murder (1972):

> Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is nether tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this story must be such a man. He's the hero. He's everything. He must be a complete man and a common man, yet an unusual man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honor. He is neither a eunuch nor a satyr. I think he might seduce a duchess, and I'm quite sure he would not spoil a virgin. If he is a man of honor in one thing, he is that in all things. He is a relatively poor man, or he would not be a detective at all. He is a common man or he could not go among common people. He has a sense of character or he would not know his job. He will take no man's money dishonestly, and no man's insolence without 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. (20-21)

Further, the American hard-boiled detectives of Hammett, Chandler, Macdonald, and Spillane were not just depressed stoics with tough driving senses of justice and courage. Roger Bromley describes them as white and excessively virile characters who reinforce and protect male independence and rule (106). The genre supported the notion that these men detected, did the looking, while women were the objects at which men looked. And, because the women at whom the male detectives looked were frequently victims of crimes or femme fatales, integral to the commission of crime, the investigators were typically distrustful of women and therefore unmarried. They rarely had family connections. Moreover, Derek Longhurst observes that the hard-boiled dick's world was constructed based on the premise of masculine bonding and competition (5). The hard-boiled dick's profession was not incidental or accidental but integral and deliberate. He was a relentless, incorruptible, moral mediator between the rich and the poor. The crimes he investigated were signs

pointing to networks of evil and criminals who were not just violent but intelligent as well.[26]

As it was in the Golden Age, Chandler's and Hammett's homosexual characters existed mainly as victims or as villains. Surprisingly neither Macdonald nor Spillane included homosexuality or homosexual topics in their mysteries, which may be interpreted as a "telling absence" or a "significant silence" in that nonappearance is a refusal to validate existence. But, as previously mentioned, for Hammett and Chandler, the homosexual's situations remained unimproved. In fact, their appearances were precarious because homophobic, hard-boiled dicks were inclined toward action and often ended up threatening the homosexual more than his Golden Age predecessors did. Because homosexuality did not fit the fiercely heterosexual, pro-male orientation of the morality-based hard-boiled detectives, many examples of verbal and physical Gay-bashing were evident in their texts; examples from noteworthy narratives ably demonstrate this.[27]

Hammett's descriptions of an effeminate boy in The Maltese Falcon (1930) preceded his PI's use of the words "fairy" and "gunsel" (356, 367); both are noted by Ian

Ousby as words of the era for "homosexual" (106). Sam Spade's reference to the relationship that the "gunsel," Joe Cairo, has with a physically large, wealthy, older male character seems indicative of a "father-son" relationship, again a relationship between two men in which one is old enough to be the other's father.[28] Spade's reaction to the "gunsel" and his "father" is violent; and, he engages in Gay-bashing by repeatedly slapping the "father" and demanding that the "son" keep away from him (Hammett 339-340). According to Anthony Slide, the Gay characters originally are even more pronounced, but "Knopf editor Harry Block ask[ed] that Hammett delete the 'to bed and homosexual parts'" (70). Victims or villains, Hammet's writing demonstrated the vulnerable literary and social positions of homosexuals as Spade's words and actions evidence just how emotionally explosive the traditional hard-boiled dick's defense is for oppressive and bigoted heterosexual morality.

Chandler's literary jaunt with homosexuality appears in the short story, "Pearls are a Nuisance" (1939). Two grown men, the investigator and his prime criminal suspect, wake in the same bed after an evening of drinking (Chandler

950).[29] Finding the company of the criminal with whom he wakes, "very stimulating [. . .], in spite of his rough way of talking," and his being, "very much of a man" (Chandler 967), the investigator's attraction is fostered by the suspect-turned-friend's rough masculinity. Parting company, spending the next night without the roughly masculine friend, the investigator sleeps fitfully (Chandler 967). He is restless without the calm effects and composes stimulation of the object of his attraction. However other characters observe their bond and the investigator is pressed to explain his relationship when asked about his involvement with the "friend." He responds by affirming that he finds his friend quite a man, that he has grown very attached to him (Chandler 970), after which he garners the cooperation of the inquirer who is both satisfied by the answer and touched by the investigator's "Jane Austin" tone (Chandler 971). Enamored by his friend's looks of affection (Chandler 976), until the investigator realizes that the "friend" is the very criminal for whom he is looking, the narrative reverts to tradition by making a mockery of the bonding that occurrs between the two men. The detective is resituated in

opposition to his friend-turned-suspect, a scenario that plays a dual purpose: that of affording the hard-boiled dick an opportunity to right his own orientation and that of getting in a bit of Gay-bashing pre-empted by a guilty sense of self-hate and shame.

Such techniques are not unique to Chandler's short story. They seem to be the norm. And, the restoration of the investigator evidences the attitude that homosexuality is a choice perversion and not a natural occurrence, one that can be coaxed. Also, it reinforces an individual's responsibility to prevent themselves from falling to the predatory trappings of perverse homosexuals who prey upon unsuspecting heterosexuals. The hard-boiled detective's struggle against homosexual perversion appears, like those of the Golden Age, as a didactic passage highlighting the rightness of heterosexuality and subsequent altercations are again, standard reactionary behavior.

Dicier still is Raymond Chandler's character, Philip Marlowe, a sexually abstinent male who only has longstanding male friendships and who often displays a fixed hatred for women. In The Long Goodbye (1953), Marlowe refers to homosexuals as "queers" and "perverts"

during a discourse on male friendship and the danger of being a suspected homosexual:

> I had a male secretary once. Used to dictate to him. Let him go. He bothered me sitting there waiting for me to create. Mistake. Ought to have kept him. Word would have got around I was a homo. The clever boys that write book reviews because they can't write anything else would have caught on and started giving me the build-up. Have to take care of your own, you know. They're all queers, every damn one of them. The queer is the artistic arbiter of our age, chum. The pervert is the top guy now. (Chandler 250)

Again, the fiercely heterosexual, moralistic, tough-guy dick affirms the vulnerable position of homosexuals in hard-boiled fiction. Marlowe's words and repugnance for the homosexual is on par with the disdain that Hammett's Spade holds for them; ironically they also point to misogyny indicative of potentially repressed homosexuality. Perhaps, because the male authors of hard-boiled dicks are publishing during a historical period that depicts male writers as effeminate, given to macho posturing with ambiguities of gender, is evidence of the lengths to which

Hammett and Chandler will go to be "male." However, the result remains the same. Homosexual characters are either included only as sufferers or scoundrels, harbingers of decay, and literary tools, but never as acceptable, integral, or respectable..

Just as change was heralded by the appearance of the hard-boiled "dick" after the ceremonial Golden Age, transformations rippled through mystery fiction as American women began to make their contributions. While the men re/enforced their segregated teams of men-only club tough-guys, the women made a move toward inclusion. By the 1960s and 1970s female mysteries shifted the genre toward androgyny. Stepping away from stereotyped sex-roles, from the ridicule and condemnation of those who were not in shape with the rules, Carolyn Heilbrun perceives that female detectives were increasingly aggressive and frightening as they developed and as they managed and maneuvered the tasks of their profession proficiently (5-6). Much more dangerous than the early female detectives written by male mystery authors were the new female investigators written by women, Carolyn Heilbrun assessed that they appeared "with the momentum of a mystery and the trajectory of a good story with a solution," they were the

construction of a forum for "profound revolutionary thought" (7). They evidenced quality and reflected radical insight.

Androgynous, aggressive and frightening, because of their revolutionary thought, early female PIs challenged genre conventions with cross-pollination, blending mystery, gothic, and romantic suspense. Paulina Palmer indicates that references to relationship building and maintenance, plus sexual encounters, along with the "exploration of themes of a specifically feminist kind" emerged when females wrote (10). Female detectives not only socially-polluted the narrative by thematizing women's concerns but also tested traditional characterizations of the hard-boiled dick. By introducing investigators from marginalized populations, women wrote gender inclusivity and multicultural diversity from Marcia Muller's Shoshone investigator Sharon McCone, Sara Paretsky's Polish-Italian-Jewish V. I. [Victoria Iphegenia] Warshawski, to Sue Grafton's urban politico Kinsey Millhone.[30]

Genre critics Rosalind Coward writing with Linda Semple, Paulina Palmer, and Julian Symons, point out that these new investigators fostered examinations of the world

at large and trained an eye on its' cruel oppressions (49; 10; 178-79, respectively). Their texts became studies of what was profoundly immoral and wrong with society and its structure; they offered assessments of the effects that criminal acts had on the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual and financial status of victims as well as their subsequent communal instability. However surprising, they still fostered a tone of optimism and encouraged resilience in rebellion within the pages of their teleological studies. They promoted communication, community building, humor and laughter. They charted a society in transition between the 1960s and the 1980s.

The traditional closed-room setting, a fixed feature in Golden Age detective stories was, according to Rosalind Coward and Linda Semple, "unhealthy breeding grounds for criminal acts" (53); but, in the context of a women's society, the closed setting could blend with the mean streets of the hard-boiled novel to serve a new purpose. The blending created a closed community setting which allowed for the manifestation and examination of relationships between the investigator and her professional associates, her personal/sexual partners, her self, and society. Writing diverse populations, leading the way for

the addition of "Other" defined and oriented investigators in the genre, women challenged the face of the professional, heterosexuals-only, "dick" club. By not only altering the sexual designs but also the physical expectations of the investigator's body, the female-authored female investigator changed the way readers perceived action and accomplishment. Fostering diverse viewpoints through the eyes of "Other"-defined detectives, they also encouraged new designs, expectations, and perceptions. The framework in which crimes were decoded, mysteries were solved, and criminals were apprehended was altered.

Murder no longer topped the course of mystery fiction. However, violence still ranked high on the scale of criminal behavior. Offenses against women, such as rape and assault, were inflected by perpetrators who had distressingly complex psychologies. Moreover, investigators no longer relied solely on deductive methods to identify criminals, but worked with crime victims subjectively and sensitively for the benefit of their examinations. Of course, with such alterations, it was inevitable that the role and personification of the investigator also changed.

Having set a positive stage for the "Other"-defined investigator, homosexuals emerged also. The manner in which they interacted with crime and acted out deviance was no longer synonymous with decadent villainy. The shift in characterization resituated the homosexual to the position of law-abiding defender. The challenge was to write the homosexual investigator, blurring mutually exclusive territories. Gillian Whitlock discerns this as the character being made to "operat[e] from within a hierarchically organized police force, which [bound] him/her into a set of formal relationships and responsibilities as part of a professional code of ethics" while contemporarily "mapping of the relationships between locations which formerly seemed mutually exclusive and in eternal opposition" (113). Just as Coward and Semple point out that women writers recycled and redeveloped the traditional closed room setting (53), homosexual mystery writers contextualized social-communities of Gay men and Lesbians as variations on the closed-communities themes. Further, many victims continued to be Gay or Lesbian and were frequently objects of the homosexual detective's suspicions. But criminals were interpreted differently and investigations were adjusted to accommodate new

perspectives. More importantly, with the inclusion of the homosexual investigator came different challenges and alterations in the sexual designs and physical expectations of the investigator's being and body.

The first contribution featuring a homosexual investigator surfaced in 1961 when Lou Rand's pulp novel, The Gay Detective was published. A parody of hard-boiled mysteries, Rand's novel introduced PI Francis Morley, a young man with "features [that] were fine, aristocratic and just a shade too regular" and who had "[a]n unconsciously un-masculine something" about him (Rand 15). Turning on its head the historically accepted manner of oppressing Gay men with the traditional charge of effeminacy, Rand's Morely is depicted with high-spirited style and proudly over-refined grace. Described as "'hard-boiled camp'" (v) by Susan Stryker and Martin Meeker, The Gay Detective:

> [O]ffers a serious political critique: [Hogan] shows how social privilege is preserved by casting non-normative sexuality out into the margins of society, but also how the sexual margins are preserved precisely because they offer a space for the socially privileged to enact desires and practices condemned by an

> oppressive and hypocritical society. It is in this space, structured by the needs of the elites, that pre-liberation gay life was allowed to flourish, and to be exploited. (xvii)

Forging the path upon which other Gay and Lesbian authors of mystery fiction would follow, Rand's Francis Morley pioneered the disruption of the status quo and the design of new political communities that featured initially playful and then more positive images of Gay and Lesbian identities.

However, the first significant contribution to the development of a positive and successful homosexual vein in the mystery genre came in 1970 when Joseph Hansen, the "father" of the Gay inspector, wrote Fadeout.[31] Selling to a mainstream readership, Joseph Hansen introduced Dave Brandstetter and wrote the longest-running mystery series featuring a homosexual character from 1970-1991. Hansen's contributions not only promoted Gay males but also forged unique normative disruptions later to be repeated and expounded upon by Lesbian mystery texts.[32] Exposing what Roger Bromley indicates is the Gay male's relation to the established hegemony, this narrative reveals how

Brandstetter profits in a male hierarchy fractured the foundation upon which all biologically prejudiced and socially reinforced arguments of gender-superiority were borne (105). In contrast to the early hard-boiled dicks, Roger Bromley points out that Brandstetter's character and his homosexuality clearly "threaten[ed] the self-enclosure and intimacy of the ever-vigilant male and refuses, or subverts, a discourse dominated by male values of virility" (103) originally written into the genre by way of Sam Spade and Phillip Marlowe. Hansen cracked the basis of heterosexual authority, redefined pleasure, revisited sexuality and, like detectives before him, always got his man.

Middle-aged and cold like the stereotypical heterosexual hard-boiled dick, Brandstetter had blond hair, blue eyes, and a broad, hairy chest like a stock homosexual. As such, Brandstetter was an amalgam. Anthony Slide writes the fact that "Brandstetter seems to bump into an inordinate number of men who are shirtless, wear only shorts or who are just stepping in or out of showers" setting the image of his Gay-playboy-next-door persona (72). But cigarette-smoking and Old Crow-drinking, Brandstetter's no-nonsense attitude was reminiscent of

Hammett's Spade and Chandler's Marlowe. In Fadeout, Brandstetter clearly states that he didn't "sing, play guitar, tell stories or paint pictures" and "had practically no sense of humor" (Hansen 32); he is stoic. Additionally, his own homophobic-styled speech is evocative of the hard-boiled dicks'; he is condescending and cruel. Musing over the initial meeting with his first partner, Rod, Brandstetter said, "The kid was feminine. A flit. Nobody [I] could live with. A decorator for Christ sake! One cut above a hairdresser" (Hansen 47). His statement implies that he adheres to a version of male homosexuality reminiscent of heterosexual hierarchies. Recalling his shared home and life experiences with Rod, Brandstetter painfully paints him in the image of Golden Age Gay males: lighthearted, childish and campy (Hansen 48-49). Yet, for Roger Bromley, Brandstetter's monogamous relationship is reminiscent of heterosexual relationship models (106). Further, as a post-Stonewall era Gay male of the 1970s, Brandstetter's reality would have been one of violent discrimination. However, Hansen rarely wrote Brandstetter into scenarios that featured heterosexual hostility or prejudice. Rather, he presented his character in circumstances that evidenced performative difference and

sexual nonconformity substantiating orientation-driven normative challenges with little to no adverse resistance.

Brandstetter's sexual nonconformity begs the question of his relevance to and function in the dominant hegemony. Failing to reinforce heterosexuality did he, could he, successfully uphold the socially heterosexual male defined role? Hansen's writing fostered narrative disruptions as he presented homosexual nonconformity reaping hegemonic privilege: his confrontation, his minimization, and his dismantling of heterosexual traditions. Hansen's disruptions of norms and stereotypes disputed the structure of the social system in which his character functioned. Moreover, Roger Bromley assesses that when Brandstetter's disruptions were recognized, they were validated (109, 113).

Opportunely, Dave Brandstetter paved the way for the Lesbian mystery novel. Before Lou Rand, the Stonewall Riots, the Lesbian/-feminist movements of the 1970s, and Hansen's character, formal contributions by Lesbians writing Lesbians in the genre were non-existent. It was not until 1977,[33] that the first homosexual female investigator officially appeared. When radical feminist,

activist/amateur sleuth Maria Katerina "Kat" Lorca Guerrera Alcazar was featured in Angel Dance by M. F. Beal, she emerged with a confrontational posture that demanded and forced inclusion.[34] Beal's "Kat" was acutely irate and, as critic Anna Wilson pointed out, an "isolated precursor engendering no imitators" (274). Both Katherine Klein and Anna Wilson indicate that Beal's plot was complicated and multi-layered while "Kat" and her female love interest are portrayed as casualties of social policy (216-220; 11, respectively). The effect of the novel was such that it supported Hansen's earlier contributions and continued to prove that sexual orientation was not a harbinger of social decay while calling the definitions of humanity and community into question. Society's inability to contain or validate all of its members was a dominant theme in Beal's narrative.

Soon after Beal, Canadian Eve Zaremba published Lesbian private investigator, Helen Keremos in A Reason to Kill (1978). Though Zaremba authored what was surely the first Lesbian PI series, Keremos remained Closeted until the fourth installment was published, bringing her official coming-Out twelve years after her first appearance.

Meanwhile, Valerie Miner published Murder in the English Department (1982) featuring a political feminist, college professor, Nan Weaver. As with Zaremba's PI, much of Nan's narrative fostered homosexual interpretation but did not present her overtly as a Lesbian (Coward 41). So while, Miner's contribution does fit tentatively into the Queer mystery canon, she did not officially write the first Lesbian amateur sleuth; Nan remained hopeful for a heterosexual relationship throughout the novel. Albeit the objective of Nan's quixotic consideration was a homosexual male who offered her no actual romantic potential. Though she did question her orientation, and struggled with the notion of Outing herself to her family, Nan was neither confirmed as a Lesbian nor acknowledged as one who followed her impulse to Un-closet for the reader (Miner 149). Unfortunately, Miner authored no sequels in which Nan's character could develop or come-Out.

Though Miner takes a crack at the Queer mystery canon, Vicki McConnell initially published the first episode of the first Lesbian amateur sleuth in a series that began with Mrs. Porter's Letter (1982). In the tradition of the mystery genre, McConnell's investigative reporter, Nyla Wade, is depicted as an unmarried, eccentric, and outsider-

intellectual, much like the early detectives. And though McConnell's novel more readily fit under the umbrella of the gothic genre, Anna Wilson assesses its inclusion of traditional mystery elements as significant (274). McConnell employed mysteriously romantic clue-laden letters that pressed Wade into the role of sleuth and steered her attempts to discover the identities of the letter's owners. Expressing focused purpose and intent in her pursuit, Wade relied on orderly deductive methods to find both the whereabouts of the writers and a surprising secret at the root of the correspondent's relationship: that they are elderly Lesbians in a committed domestic partnership. After which, a shaken Wade questions her own sexual orientation and exposes readers to the first appearance of Lesbian Un-closeting in a Queer mystery novel. As a consequence of her questioning, Wade throws her Closet door open and continues on for two more installments.

Two years passed and what seemed like a miniature explosion brought Katherine Forrest's police detective, Kate Delafield; Sarah Schulman's private investigator, Sophie Horowitz; and Barbara Wilson's amateur sleuth, Pam Neilsen. For the feminist's independent publishing presses', this trio was parallel to the phenomenal arrival

of the female-authored female mystery novel in mainstream presses during the previous two years.[35] Nineteen-eighty-four signaled an increase in genre cross-pollination and social-pollution in the narrative with these appearances. Relationships, romances, and sexual encounters continued the exploration of feminist themes while each new contribution tested traditional characterizations of detectives much in the same way that women of the 1960s through the 1970s did when they introduced detectives from marginalized populations. Contextualized social examinations showed more precisely the cruelty and oppression endured by the homosexual. Early Lesbian mysteries forced psychological studies of homophobia and the effects it had on the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, professional, and financial status of Queer communities. Remarkably, these works also fostered optimism and resilience in upheaval.

Initial creative works authored by Lesbians were concerned with representations focusing on concomitant issues of self-esteem, coming-Out, and community, as well as the Lesbian's need for validation. Not surprising, all of the ensuing Lesbian detective texts fell under the

umbrella of coming-Out and negotiating their place in traditionally male professional societies. Bonnie Zimmerman describes the process of writing Lesbian fiction and creating a body of literature a utility for unveiling "the story [of] how we came to be Lesbians, how our consciousness formed and our identity developed" functioning to preserve and present an artistic image of "the fundamental Lesbian myths of origin, the first basic tale of all Lesbian communities" (34). On the popularity of the mystery and the shift from coming-Out to being-Out, Bonnie Zimmerman observed that there existed a "shift from the collective to the individual" (220). And, just as social and political developments began to change the position of women in our culture, the genre began to shift from concern for the coming-Out story to that of the being-Out story. While the shift may seem anti-utopian by early Lesbian/-Feminist standards, it speaks of the Lesbian's modern autonomy. It speaks of her need to be recognized and validated as a being unto her self, just as men always have been. Anna Wilson asserted that the production of being-Out stories could "reasonably worry about what, now that one is 'here,' one is going to do next" and that the development of the Lesbian mystery canon presented "a

solution to the problem of being in the world, for it provide[ed] a sphere of action and a methodology for that action" (276). Antagonistically the establishment of feminist's independent publishing presses, thirty-five years ago, brought a formal Lesbian literary canon replete with works addressing, voicing, and viewing such concerns. Works in series presented the development of the Lesbian and her being-Out story, further rounding the Lesbian literary canon.

From that emergent Lesbian corpus of texts, scant discussions surfaced to assist in the strengthening of these Lesbian protagonists as new and empowered/-ing archetypes. Sadly, chronological appraisals, literary examinations, and critical analyses requisite for supporting the canon, were not forthcoming either. But reading the genre, it was evident that Lesbian mystery protagonists were characterized in the same stoically depressed, justice driven and courage fueled fashion of early hard-boiled dicks, with some of the same violently sarcastic dialogue evident in works by Hammett and Chandler. Legally unable to marry and distrustful of romantic intentions, early Lesbian investigators existed

with few, if any, family connections much as the early hard-boiled detectives.

Again, in the image of the early hard-boiled dick, the early Lesbian investigator's profession was neither incidental nor accidental and they functioned with the same relentless, incorruptible morals of their hard-boiled "fathers." However, unlike their "fathers" who intervened between rich and poor, early Lesbian investigators worked as mediators between the heterosexual and the homosexual more than between social classes. In appropriating the genre of mystery fiction, Paulina Palmer points out, Lesbians "interrogate and subvert patriarchies and heterosexual codes of conduct" (9). The same urban elements in the hard-boiled dicks' story existed in polyphonic narratives and diverse themes; but differences arose in the definition and development of criminal activity, its relation to the Lesbian, and violent crimes against their communities. Marvelously, Lesbian mystery novelists wrote more aggressively defiant narratives than their feminist "mothers" and fostered the same tones of optimism and resilience in rebellion.

For these reasons, Lesbian investigators are as easily at home in the separatist canons of women's or Lesbian's

literature as they are nestled in the study of "mainstream" mystery fiction. Further, just as Lesbians do not operate in a vacuum, Paulina Palmer reminds us neither do our works of literature (9). There is a need for a Lesbian canon.[36] Prior to 1969, established literary conventions presented the Lesbian as a "sinister, half-inhuman creature seducing the innocent maiden; the symbolism of deviance and damnation" who inevitably came to an "inauthentic ending with each woman safely married or dead, but definitely not together in each other's arms" (Slide xii) and Diane Hamer, writing with Belinda Budge, sees that a Lesbian canon serves to remedy that frame (4). Rather than constituting Lesbian writing as a separatist canon of literature, Lesbian mystery stories are a connected and vital contributor of change—much the same way the early hard-boiled detectives, early women detectives and early multi-cultural detectives were. They belong in the mainstream canon as much as Gays and Lesbians belong in mainstream society and culture.

CHAPTER 2

GENRE INCARNATION AND TRANSCENDENCE: EMERGENCE OF LESBIANS AS HARD-BOILED DETECTIVES IN MYSTERY FICTION

Neatly inverting the homosexual's traditional image as mentally incomplete, physically divergent, emotionally immature, spiritually weak, sexually perverted, and socially stunted, the hard-boiled Lesbian private investigator evidences a character of honor that is centrally purposeful, persistent, and principled. Following genre tradition for male investigators, the Lesbian PI has ethical fiber and professional knowledge; works tirelessly on behalf of her clients while convincingly negotiating respect and capital convincingly. Adhering to the hard-boiled tradition, the Lesbian PI faces threats and misdirection similar to those fore-fashioned in conventional narratives. She is a moral quester situated in an urban setting trimmed with violence. And, she is what Todorov labels "the venerable detective" (51). Like the investigators of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Ross McDonald, and Mickey Spillane, she "loses her immunity, gets beaten up, badly hurt, constantly risks

[her] life" (Todorov 51) on behalf of truth and justice. Her episodes of hollow impassivity echo hard-boiled depressed stoicism. Her sexual appetite certainly rings more unmistakable than hard-boiled male predecessors and her community connections are supportive beyond those of hard-boiled feminist pioneers.

For Todorov such visible similarities, here between the PI structures of the past and the Lesbian PI's shape in the present, are not just evidence of parenting which comes by way of following structures in formula fiction, but also a kinship (30). Reasonably it is the hard-boiled Lesbian private investigator's referential relatedness in character features that establishes her inclusion and validates her recognition in the genre. Todorov further contends that variation in artistic norms "creates, in a sense, a new genre and at the same time transgresses the previously valid rules" (43). It is through her difference that the hard-boiled Lesbian PI's narrative "establishes the existence of two genres, the reality of two norms: that of the genre [she] transgresses, which dominated the previous literature, and that of the genre [she] creates" (Todorov 43). Further, if John G. Cawelti's assertion is accurate, that "One cannot write a successful adventure story about a

social character type that the culture cannot conceive in heroic terms" (6), then inclusion and recognition of the hard-boiled Lesbian PI emphasizes a significant turn from the earlier positioning of homosexuals as deserving victims and decadent villains, heroes, and saintly interlocutors. It also affirms that Lesbian PIs are not necessarily manifestations who solely owe their creation to the Lesbian pulp fictions of the 1940s and 1950s.[37]

With such transformation, the hard-boiled Lesbian PIs very character composition parodically transgresses the gender implications associated with traditional literary images of both "women" and "homosexuals" in mystery fiction.[38] Further, the Lesbian PI transgresses conventional genre expectations while creating them anew. In spite of condemnation for what has been misconstrued by Sally R. Munt as mere drag and camp performance, the Lesbian PI is significantly more than a clever entertainer or amusing diversion.[39] To minimize the importance of the Lesbian PI's character and narrative by assassinating her with misinterpretation diminishes both the power and the control that she garners, plus the inversions and subversions that she affects, thereby changing gender implications and genre expectations. To discredit her

presentation further ignores her skillful, complex performances, "not necessarily logically harmonious with the first form" but "not necessarily constituted by the negation of the main feature of the old form" (Todorov 52). Rather, she employs implications and expectations in manners that effectively expose them but not so self-destructively or counter-productively in the process. Thus, the Lesbian PI invalidates hegemonic structures and forms by penetrating and permeating them satirically. Therefore, historicizing her placement in the tradition is not simply to display what Stephen Knight describes as a "neat linear development to the present" (3), but an attempt to demonstrate how the Lesbian PI's narrative relates to previous contributions; how she effectively maneuvers within established form; and, how she diffuses its hegemonic hold through exposure and then effective restructuring.

It is therefore important to first recognize Zelda Popkin's contribution to mystery fiction, Mary Carner, and then to work through the years that lead to the appearance of feminist and Lesbian PIs. Doing so establishes a referential relatedness among them and promotes the creation of a female mystery fiction canon. In the

footsteps of the hard-boiled fathers, Zelda Popkin wrote the earliest novel featuring a professionally capable, heterosexual-female private investigator in Death Wears a Gardenia (1938). Popkin probably was not conscious of either the literary backlash that her work would prompt or the inclusions that her work would foster.

Still, she conceived Mary Carner without any of the expected propriety or demure apologetics found in earlier female-authored amateur or spinster sleuths. Rather, Popkin presented Mary Carner as a trained security staff member of Blankfort's Fifth Avenue department store in New York City. Though Popkin's fashioning of Carner was not severely hard-boiled, elements of her character's construction were related to the tradition, including her professional intent and security training, the hard-line manner in which she deals with city criminals, the loyalty she exhibits for her employer, her tough attitude and sturdy courage accented with intellect and wit. Also, unlike prior female investigators in the genre, Carner echoed both the political and economic sentiments of women in society at the time of her publication.

While male writers of mystery fiction continued with formulaic plot, character development, dialogue and style,

Zelda Popkin wrote Mary Carner in observation of the events that were pushing America to experience political, economic, and social post-war effects amidst pre-war rumblings and the subsequent changed state of women as a direct result of the rumblings. Zelda Popkin's Mary Carner came after the first American woman in medicine founded the first birth control clinic in 1916 and after Suffragists encouraged the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1920.[40] She came as industry-employed housewives suffered the return of their veteran-husbands, as families readjusted to women in "barefoot and pregnant" jobs back in the home and in the kitchen to make room for the men, after years away in combat, who came to reclaim the jobs that they left. Mary Carner came as women were being shuffled from the industrial workforce to domestic work. Meanwhile, women were still trying to hold on to and demonstrate their independence and empowerment in terms of birth control and family planning programs. Zelda Popkin is imaginable as one of the women of her period who voiced her political position by exercising her voting rights and expressing discontent with power structures that only recognized value in males. She came to maturity among the women of the

period who fought to keep labor jobs and the wages they earned doing "man's work."

When Zelda Popkin wrote Mary Carner, she fashioned a character who maintained her professional position as a security officer even after marriage; she adapted the implications and the expectations for "wife" to fit her career. With substantial professional knowledge and proven investigative skill, Carner's liberated position even prompted her to forego pregnancy. Effectively skirting what Katherine Gregory Kline addresses as issues of marital consummation, Carner redefines motherhood by adopting a child (148). Further, Carner worked on cases while her husband, Chris Whittaker, stayed at home and cared for their daughter. According to Katherine Gregory Kline, Carner's husband, "assume[d] the background position of supportive spouse ordinarily allotted to women" (144). Popkin's characters cast off the typical connotations of: gender roles for "woman" versus "man," social roles of "wife" versus "husband," and "male" versus "female" appropriate careers, while renovating the customary model of the genre. As such, Popkin wrote a valid and professionally successful female investigator who was both a woman and a wife married to a male who was both a valid

man and husband. Popkin wrote an inclusive and valid representation of the female investigator, thereby challenging earlier traditions exhibiting only males as PIs. Subsequently, it is logical to assume that Popkin's work fostered more contributions featuring professionally accomplished female PIs; however, just the opposite occurred. What is interpretable as a reactionary wave of anti-feminist contributions appeared thereafter.

Following suit with attacks on women which accused them of "abandoning their social responsibilities and competing economically with men" (Sharf 44) to the detriment of society are mystery authors A. A. Fair with Bertha Cool (1939), Dwight V. Babcock with Hanna Van Doren (1941), and Sam Merwin, Jr., with Amy Brewster (1945). All three male-authored, unmarriageable female detectives were professionally inept women who were boorishly mannered, capriciously motivated and absurd. Published closely on the heels of Popkin's novel, it is appropriate to consider that the trio of characters, leaden with aggressive humor, were angry responses meant to put Popkin in her place, to mock Carner and to subsequently stifle potential female authors from writing similarly styled women detectives.

Fair's Bertha Cool was, at one time, young, thin, attractive and married. She was the social definition and physical image of both "woman" and "wife." By the time that she is introduced in The Gorgeous Ghoul (1941), she is in her sixties, a hefty 220 pounds, with gray hair and gray eyes, and a generally flat expression. Still spry, she was older, obese and unattractive. The antithesis of "woman," she claimed to like "profanity, loose clothes, and loose talk" (Gorgeous Ghoul 20). Bertha, also the direct opposite of "wife," was a widow at the time of her introduction. With the splendor of a mountain (Gorgeous Ghoul 16) and hard-boiled assurance with streaks of vernacular wit, she took control of her husband's detective agency, Cool Confidential Investigations, after his death. By 1939, Bertha had managed the agency for three years, seemingly without a license.

Unlike Popkin's Mary Carner, Bertha Cool exhibited no professional intent or security training and was loyal only to herself. Further unlike Carner, Cool's sturdy courage was rendered invalid as she failed to do her own legwork (Gorgeous Ghoul 26). Nearly immobile due to her size, she was also intellectually unable to solve cases without the assistance of Donald Lam: a short, twenty-nine year-old,

disbarred attorney who acted as both the legs and the brains of Cool Confidential Investigations. Forever underpaid, Bertha excused her mistreatment and underpayment of Lam on the grounds that her childhood was framed by the Depression and not her utter mismanagement of the agency or their cases.

Interestingly enough, Dwight V. Babcock's Hanna Van Doren was the daughter of a detective and a writer of crime novels. While she was angelic in appearance, she was a devil of a drinker with a personality to match. Moreover, her morbid interest in killings with perverse elements led her to specialize in the investigation of sexually motivated murder cases. While Van Doren exhibited professional intent, her background was only that which she inherited through exposure to knowledge of her father's cases when she was a child. Her loyalty is exclusive to herself in that her investigative interests are motivated by the advancement of her crime-writing career. Clearly not the quality of tough or sturdy found in Popkin's Mary Carner, Van Doren's hard-boiled manner seems depraved and unbecoming.

Finally, Sam Merwin, Jr.'s Amy Brewster was a lawyer and financier. Similar to A. A. Fair's Bertha Cool,

Brewster was a fifty-year-old, 300 pound, hard-nosed and hard-hitting female. Hardly the socially appropriate image of "woman," she was an aggressive, cigar smoking, unconventional "woman" who held two Ph.D.'s, flew her own plane, and was disowned by her upper-class family. Independently wealthy and single, Brewster made millions of her own money in the stock market and fought crime for fun. Exhibiting no real professional intent, her involvement in detection was sparked when a friend asked her for help and protection from a would-be murderer. With no security training, Brewster was loyal to her cases only because she was working for friends in need. But her attitude and courage fell short, as did her intellect and her wit, as the power of her money played a larger role in her cases than her manner.

Altogether, the male-authored female investigators were a block of incompetent, uncouth, unreliable and ridiculous women. Socially unpleasant, they were equally unattractive with overweight figures and unladylike appearances; they were not wives in waiting. Moreover, failing to fit the era's prescribed gender implications for womanhood and wifedom, their actions were seriously out of sync with gender implications. Further disconcerting was

the implication that the three females were invalid investigators because they were not male.

Though they seemed willing to take on threats and violence, the anti-feminists' trio was unable to fully partake in crime fighting. They were neither capable of sufficiently protecting themselves from the dangers of the trade nor wholly accepted by members of the profession. When they did demonstrate investigative abilities, they were literarily cross-dressed, merely dressed in drag and staged with camp quality. They confirmed the premise that females could not be effective PIs unless they were defective, unattractive and uncouth women. Evident in their descriptions, Cool, Van Doren, and Brewster were not realistically defined along social parameters designated for "women." Reflecting an unready fit with their era's prescribed gender implications for womanhood, their lack of femininity was serious and repulsive rather than innovative or progressive.

Cool, Van Doren, and Brewster were, what Sally R. Munt might describe as "self-conscious transgression[s]" (5), blatantly sarcastic parodies of masculinity copying the work of Carner so poorly that women as private investigators seemed unbelievably ridiculous. Munt's

statement seems fitting, for Brian Luke Seward describes such expressions as "socially acceptable outlets for aggression where laughter at someone else's expense elevates one's own self-esteem" (3). The intention of the anti-feminist trio was therefore to mockingly invalidate departures from social convention and to functionally validate social definitions of woman versus man and their associated gender implications. As satirists, Fair, Babcock and Merwin, Jr. functioned as self-appointed sentinels of the genre's standards, attacking professional women by implying immorality, wrongful thought and recklessness relative to their performances in traditionally male positions. By fashioning Bertha Cool, Hanna Van Doren and Amy Brewster as horrid women and vile wives, the three male authors mocked and condemned the professional female investigator. Furthermore, they fostered disrespect and disdain for professional females, making clear their point that women were unwelcome in the workforce.

Fair, Babcock and Merwin, Jr.'s characters were protests made of refined anger and cultured indignation. Surely the laughter they evoked was threatened laughter, a kind of laughter deemed an acceptable vent for aggression

but which traditionally lowers the value of another while elevating one's own self-esteem. Therefore, Fair, Babcock, and Merwin, Jr. expressed their discontent in a socially appropriate manner and functioned as literary therapists for readers who felt helpless against the political tide that promoted equality for females, redefinition of gender implications and, as in the case of Popkin's Carner, the recharacterization of genre expectations.

Again, the intention of the anti-feminist trio was to invalidate female departures from socially conventional definitions of women and to functionally validate conventional hierarchy. Therefore, the textual suspension of Cool, Van Doren, and Brewster as unwomanly females, necessitated the ending of each novel with the investigators salvation coming by way of male intervention, heterosexual romance, or marriage. Effectively ending the female's leave from "womanhood," Fair, along with Babcock and Merwin, Jr. maintained genre expectations by closing the three narratives with the reestablishment of traditional, gendered characterizations, territories, and themes. As such, members of the anti-feminist trio reinforced their literary joke, expressing hostility toward professional females and their associated insecurity with

women occupying traditionally male professional roles. The anti-feminist trio, unlike Popkin's Carner, offered no redefinition or authority, only temporary departure and ridicule.

Still, the three anti-feminist contributions did fall in line with traditional elements of the hard-boiled genre. Regardless of interpretable motives that led to their inception, Cool, Van Doren, and Brewster's appropriation of hard-boiled elements demonstrated referential relatedness to their male precursors. Their gender related them to Carner, further depicting women in the field of private investigation. Too, Fair, Babcock, and Merwin, Jr., did inadvertently validate hard-boiled female characters simply by creating them and making them visible. Further, recognizing the caricature qualities of the protagonists, Frances A. DellaCava and Madeline E. Engel remind readers that appreciating the portrayals of the anti-feminist trio "may have reflected a sense that mystery readers were not ready for a real woman private investigator," their appearances probably were "a catalyst for the creation of the more acceptable hard-boiled woman investigator" (5). Thus, they played an important role in the eventual inclusion and recognition of hard-boiled female PIs, plus

the ultimate appearance of the Lesbian PI, by residually creating a segue through which female authors contributed to the hard-boiled tradition and were validly accepted. By writing female PIs, even as an aggressive attempt to invalidate Zelda Popkin's Mary Carner, the male-authors fashioned a platform for literary gender inclusivity after which followed authorial gender inclusivity, and which circuitously fostered sexual diversity.

Breaking the intensity of anti-female sentiments with what seems to be parodic intervention and satiric deliverance was protagonist, female PI, Gale Gallagher, written by the pseudonymous Gale Gallagher (1947). Located in New York City, Gallagher was a former police officer coached onto the force with tales told during her childhood by her police officer father before his on-duty death. The owner-operator of New York City-based Acme Investigating Bureau, Gallagher's office was complete with a secretary-assistant and a caseload that demonstrated a specialization in the location of missing persons. She was young, in her 30s, attractive, and of average height. She was a woman who understood and accepted the dangers associated with her career though she did have an aversion to gun play. Styled conservatively in stereotypically feminine dress and

manner, Gallagher maintained her gun-license, contemplated a painting on her office wall for its calming effects when troubling thoughts overcame her, dated and went to clubs, listened to jazz music, and carried herself with the same wit exhibited both in the hard-boiled tradition and by her male-authored female PI precursors. Her independence and justice-minded impetus joined with her good looks and intellectual angst were further reflective of the hard-boiled tradition but also a looking-glass view of future female and Lesbian representations in the genre.

Slower yet to appear was the hard-boiled, comic character of pseudonymous G. G. Fickling[41], California PI Honey West[42] (1957). Like Gallagher, Frances A. DellaCava and Madeline E. Engel point out that West was the daughter of a police officer and holds the distinction of being the first female PI to mention having a license (3). Attractive and trendy, marked by the same descriptors found in Gallagher's text, though parodically emulative of the hard-boiled tradition and the anti-feminist trio, West was portrayed in laughable style. Frequently naked and unable to find her clothing, featuring much sexual innuendo, West was ineffectual, incompetent, and always in need of a male counter-figure to bail her out of trouble. As an overdrawn

image of the stereotypical female, West satirically exposes and ridicules the folly and shortcomings in such characters as Cool, Van Doren, and Brewster. West used back talk, sarcasm, intimation, and female-ness much the same way future female and Lesbian PIs would, incongruously. Both Gallagher and Fickling enacted definitions of "woman" demonstrating the inappropriateness and absurdity of restrictive gender designations.

More relative precursors to hard-boiled Lesbian private investigators are the female-authored PIs, with hard-boiled conventions, who appeared during the 1970s. Evoking the traditions of the genre and accenting them subtly with feminist tones were: Maxine O'Callaghan's Delilah West (1974)[43]; Janice Law's Anna Peters (1976); and, Marcia Muller's Sharon McCone (1977). Like Honey West, Delilah West was a consciously hard-boiled female with a PI license. Frances A. DellaCava and Madeline E. Engel point out that though Delilah West begins her agency in partnership with her husband, he dies and leaves her with the barely feasible business (214, 6). And again like Honey West, Delilah West is at the mercy of male assistants who come to her aid and rescue during field investigations. Peters follows and is a former international oil company

administrative assistant turned private investigator. She, like West and the anti-feminist trio, maintains her own agency. However, Frances A. DellaCava and Madeline E. Engel point out that during the course of her series, Peters marries her sometimes assistant and boyfriend, eventually leaving the trade to two of her hired staff members so that she can pursue wedded life (191). Though the male assistance and rescues of West and Peters is in opposition to PI tradition and their marriages seemingly thwart traditional expectations of the independent, virulently single hard-boiled investigator, they inadvertently established both females as sexual beings with intimate needs in a socially acceptable manner for their era. Despite their dependence on male counterparts, they frequently began their investigations alone and aware of gender-implied dangers. But West and Peters did follow hard-boiled traditions by attempting to purposefully overcome their fears, to confront potentially dodgy situations, and to thereby stretch the social definition of "woman" and its associated implications. Taking their representations and motivations into consideration, West and Peters exhibited much referential relatedness to the hard-boiled genre.

Recognized as the first formal, hard-boiled female PI, Marcia Muller's Sharon McCone appeared equipped with field training reminiscent of Popkin's Mary Carner. McCone was a former department store security staff member turned investigator who represented a "nonviolent bunch: solid citizens, often minority group members, with lower to middle incomes" and "'alternative' lifestyle" clients (Muller 11). Living in fictional Santa Teresa, California, McCone was a self-described loner (Muller 2) who wrestles with anti-feminist attitudes from male police detectives asking the typical doubt-ridden, "Do you really have a private investigator's license?" (Muller 25). Qualifying her professional knowledge with allusions to experience and higher education, McCone demonstrated motivations that reinforced her participation in the PI profession as integral and deliberate:

> I couldn't see spending my life snooping through racks of dresses with a walkie-talkie in my purse. So I went to college and studied Sociology. …When I got out of school, I couldn't get a job. Nobody wants a college graduate with a lot of vague textbook knowledge. So I went to work in security again, for one of the big

> outfits here in the city, and eventually they tried me for detective work. [. . . .] I'm competent. I'd say my strong point is knowing how to ask the right questions. Without trying to cram my words into other people's mouth. (Muller 25-26)

Paired with her confession that she would rather be fired from a job than risk self-humiliation or jeopardize an innocent (Muller 25-26), McCone evidenced ethical fiber. In addition, she had a sexual appetite and a desire for intimacy that played across her interactions with male counterparts, specifically with Lieutenant Gregory Marcus, an effective change from the traditional enmity found between hard-boiled PIs and law enforcement agents. Just as Delilah West's and Peters' narratives supported themes of social and familial connectedness, mention of McCone's co-workers was frequently warm and supportive. Though often noticeably turbulent, relations with her relatives did exist and accented the novel with domestic features. Evidencing a type of humor that Brian Luke Seward identifies as relief based, Muller's feminist PIs sagaciously manifested female repression (3). Doing so McCone released tension and directed her energy against

implications and expectations that intended to direct her performance in a direction that threatened her as a female, as a professional, and as a private investigator.

Female PIs like Marcia Muller's racially diverse Sharon McCone, Sara Paretsky's Polish-Italian-Jewish V[ictoria] I[phegenia] Warshawski and Sue Grafton's urban politico Kinsey Millhone garnered places on serious mystery readers bookshelves, with expanded gender definitions and broader expectations in their roles as professionals in the genre. Augmenting the precepts lain by Zelda Popkin's Mary Carner and adhering to the same gender irreverence found in the anti-feminist trio of Cool, Van Doren, and Brewster, while observing Gallagher's transitions and the comedy of West, as well as the politics of early feminist females written by Muller, Paretsky, and Grafton, were Canadian Lesbian PIs Eve Zaremba and Caitlin Reece writing at the same time as American Emma Victor. All three appeared through the 1980s and were recognizably valid in presentation while transcendent in context.[44]

By 1990 J.M. Redmann's mystery featuring Micky Knight appeared, as did Karen Saum's unlicensed Brigid Donovan, Dorothy Tell's sixty-five year old Poppy Dillworth, and Pat Welch's Helen Black. Thereafter, almost a dozen new

Lesbian PI series were published until the end of 1999. Through 1991, Jaye Maiman's romance-writer turned PI Robin Miller appeared. At the same time, Sandra Scoppettone's Lauren Laurano appeared as well. Nineteen-ninety-two brought Phyllis Knight's Lil Ritchie, Elizabeth Pincus' Nell Fury, and Penny Sumner's English Tor Cross, while Sydney Sloane came out during 1993 thanks to creator Randye Lordon. And, by the tail end of the decade, Kate Calloway's teacher turned PI, Cassidy James appeared. Barbara Johnson's femme insurance investigator Colleen Fitzgerald, Marsha Mildon's Canadian Cal Meredith, plus Jean Taylor's Maggie Garrett were available as well.

Primarily concerned with crimes against women and children, Keremos' series opens with the disappearance and subsequent murder of a Gay teenager. Her second book delves into themes of homophobia and Un-closeting, even in the face of internalized self-hate, against the backdrop of Gay community. Keremos' third appearance finds her tracking down the missing daughter of a prominent political candidate for the U.S. presidency. Then murder takes a front seat with an AIDS theme in the fourth book. The last two mysteries leave Keremos free to expound upon her sexual orientation, sexism, and Lesbian separatism.

Footwear conscious, Frye boot wearing, reservedly unemotional, licensed private investigator, Helen Keremos was a single, socially conscious feminist and Lesbian living in Vancouver, British Columbia. Though Eve Zaremba's character was Closeted for her first appearance in A Reason to Kill (1978), subtle indications alluded to her homosexual orientation: a visit to a female friend that ends in a emotional "old times trip" can be construed as her temporary return to a former Lesbian lover (Zaremba 20). The brief mention, by a sideline Gay male, of their shared outsider-status seems to indicate that she is not heterosexual in orientation (Zaremba 46). And, reference to her being a something other than a decent woman, made by a suspect, also alludes to her homosexuality (Zaremba 56) as does a client's indication that a woman like her suited the investigation better than a male cop since the case involved the retrieval of a missing Gay teenager (71). In fact, Keremos' character is not wholly out-of-the-Closet in any of the first three novels. It is not until the fourth, Uneasy Lies (1990), that previous lovers are mentioned and Keremos takes a female lover. However, as in the first through the second and third installments of the series, allusions to Keremos' Lesbianism are made liberally.

Acknowledging instincts and hunches as tools of her trade, Keremos is "up from the streets" (Zaremba 47) and speaks in the slang of her time. Insistently confronting dangerous uncertainty and the treacherous unknown (Zaremba 19, 25), she does her job "no different from any other, except cleaner than most" (42). While she "listen[s] to people run off at the mouth" for a living (Zaremba 39, 51), Keremos protects her contacts, clients, and research, tempering disclosure and granting full release only with purpose (36). Fending off words reminiscent of Marcia Muller's narrative in which a male law enforcement officer questions Sharon McCone's involvement, Keremos endures male expressions of incredulity concerning her participation in crime investigation as well. To queries such as, "What's a broad doing in [the private-eye] business?" she responds with retorts styled in the tradition: "No 'broads', 'chicks', or little ladies. I'm doing a job" (Zaremba 45). When pressed she admits to garnering enjoyment from the physical beating of uncooperative informants (Zaremba 60).

As Zaremba's Keremos, Douglas' Caitlin Reece was hired, for the most part, to solve crimes against women, children, and animals. Reece's six novel series opens with the blackmail of a Lesbian-feminist. The second deals with

the murder of an animal rights activist and the cosmetic industry's illegal testing of products. Revenge and rape are main themes in Reece's third appearance, as are the repercussions of "might makes right" thinking. Then, domestic violence and the murder of a friend brings the victim's young daughter to Reece's doorstep; Reece helps the young girl deal with the less than professional attitudes of unhelpful police officers investigating the "death." The second to last of the series echoes the domestic violence theme of the previous novel; the series ends with sexual assault and the destructive ripples endured by the community of family and friends related to the victims of such crimes.

Caitlin Reece was a "Washed-up, burned out," disillusioned, Prosecutor's Office lawyer working within the criminal justice system for seven years (Douglas 11) before turning valiant PI, both compliment to and adjunct of the criminal system (29). Echoing sentiments akin to the male hard-boiled and male-authored female investigators, Reece's choice to participate in the PI profession stemmed from her desire to help people with problems, people who did not know how to help themselves and for whom there was no conventional help in appealing to

"the system" (Douglas 4). When pushed to explain her motivation, she further echoes the tradition by retorting that her aim is to "Deprive the predators of their prey. Intervene. Rescue. Recover. Interdict. Thwart. Deny the vultures their carrion. In plain English, render assistance to those who ask it" (Douglas 29). Readily admitting that she alone dictates how far she goes to ensure that a criminal meets with justice, Reece had "will" and "power" and "determination" to drive her past "fear" and heartlessness and indifference (Douglas 29-30). Like her precursors, Reece viewed criminals as "inhabitants of the world's id," "scum," "economic opportunists," and "psychic vampires," whose only language was violence and whose end means closure and peace for their victims (Douglas 31).

Working out of her home in Victoria, British Columbia, she met clients at designated public locales (Douglas 5), and expected her clients to do as she dictated which was to give her total disclosure with concern to case-related details, plus follow her tailored back-up plans in the event that her investigative services did not aid them as she wished (6). In return, as do those before her in the genre, Reece rendered her services without question and

established her business promises solely by way of word and wallet, preferring not to work with a contract but with verbal agreement and proof of payment upfront (Douglas 7). Unlicensed to carry her concealed Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum, Reece armed herself with the intent of making her target "go down and stay down" (Douglas 24) though she would rather find other ways to solve problems, including the option of running away (48).

Following in what seemed to be the stylistics of Raymond Chandler, the character of Emma Victor began not as a PI but as an emergency hotline counselor for women in Boston, Massachusetts. While there, a caller asks specifically for her help and then turns up dead a short time later. Victor finds herself wrapped in the mystery of the caller's murder, a politically vulnerable women's clinic, and drug trafficking in high society. By the second book, in the five book series, she relocated to "Gaylandia," California, otherwise known as San Francisco, and worked as a publicist for a women's benefit concert meant to raise money for a battered women's shelter, a women's crisis phone line, and cost-effective day care. Meanwhile, the mystery is how to remove her friend's kid-sister from the clutches of a California-based cult without

falling into harm's way herself. However, she ends up investigating the murder of the young girl instead. Much of Victor's character was developed actively, rather than through concrete descriptions until she officially becomes a PI in the third book, She Came By the Book (1996), at which point Victor is fleetingly described as looking like a "working girl with hairy legs and no haircut" (Wings 21). Victor was hired to protect the private papers of a Gay male politician but the story soon shifts to her investigation of murder, which is the cyanide poisoning of the chief archivist in charge of the politician's papers. Another political person appears as Victor's client in her fourth mystery. She finds herself trying to run interference for a Gay male whom someone has managed to film in a sexually explicit situation and whom someone is blackmailing. Closing the series is Victor's appearance, on Halloween, with the Lesbian Revengers at a militant demonstration in San Francisco. During the course of the book, Victor eats a hallucinogenic mushroom, is hired to protect a research-scientist from her angry, Outed ex-girlfriend, and finds the research-scientist's romantic rival dead.

From their character descriptions and active content it is obvious that Keremos, Reece and Victor are defined within and referentially related to the genre's context. Following tradition, all three had principled characters and qualified training that bound them to their clients even in the midst of violence. Effectively they function as representationally valid investigators in that they relied on orderly deductive methods to discover the identities of the criminals they pursued, personified reason and fit certainly into an ethically upright, unmarried, eccentric, intellectual mold. Moreover, they worked in metropolitan environments, crossing both homosexual and heterosexual populations in an open-stage marred by urban violence. In such, they pursued perpetrators from a vast larger group than that of early founders and followers. Though they were sexually-Other, not the traditional heterosexual, their sense of right and wrong as well as their sense of how people should behave, while in part conscience driven, was attuned to the legal system of standards and principles. Yet, transcendent in content, their tough driving senses of justice and courage were not based in excessive virility but on the peaceful reinforcement and protection of female independence and

individuality. Because the three Lesbian investigators did the looking, while heterosexual men were often the objects at which they looked, they were typically distrustful of males. Further, their distrust for heterosexual males did not preclude intimate involvement or a lack of sincere sexual intimacy at any time during the course of their investigation, because their attraction was to women. Unlike the hard-boiled male, whose distrust of females often resulted in his alienation from women, his lack of marriage and his lack of family bonds, all three Lesbian investigators were free to experience love, sex, and family-communities. They and their feminist precursors align with the type of comedy that Brian Luke Seward says has the ability to employ divinity humor which "make[s] order out of chaos, promote[s] unity and connectedness through shared amusement while uncovering the naked truth of a situation and lifting spirits," (3).

Bakhtin wrote that not every age is fortunate enough to have an element on which to focus the power of its laughter (474). I argue that the post-Stonewall Lesbian community is fortunate to have an element to focus the power of its laughter in the narrative of the Lesbian investigator. In fact, I argue that the foundation of

women-specific publishing houses, Feminist movements, and the subsequent creation of a women's canon were all indispensable elements that worked to form a basis for Lesbian laughter. As such, it is the power of laughter in her narrative and the laughter generated by her narrative that are the foci of this study.

Laughter restores social order, is subversive, is revolutionary, and cathartically separates us from our past. It maintains relationships in conflict while aggressively exerting power and control. It is used as an act of assertive dominance. Lesbian writers often use humor as a tool against oppression. Three most apparent forms of humor perceptible in the Lesbian's narrative are superiority, repression/release, and incongruity. All effectively establish and maintain relationships between women in the texts as well as with the women outside the text, its readers. The relationships then become pivotal in the establishment and maintenance of identity and the expression of social situations.

The humor of superiority is such that Linda Naranjo-Huebl expresses laughter as the "glorification of the self, usually at the expense of others" (3). The very notion of the Lesbian laughing at the expense of white, male

heterosexuals is priceless. Further the laughter evoked in the unfolding of the Lesbian's narrative is expected, as they are members of a marginalized social group. Since Lesbian readers experience the same, or similar, social limitations that the Lesbian PI faces, laughter is generated often as the Dyke-dick exposes the weaknesses of white, male heterosexuals. According to Linda Naranjo-Huebl, this type of laughter plays a part in "establishing identity and warding off perceived threats" (4). In this manner, Lesbian PIs thereby utilize laughter-evoking comedy as a defense mechanism.

Repression/release theory describes laughter as an outlet for socially unacceptable emotions such as aggression and sexual frustration. In the Lesbian text it also allows the Lesbian characters to express their frustration and hostility in a productive manner. Too, their physical tension is made normal.

Incongruity theory defines laughter as an expression of the absurdity of a situation. Situations that are incongruous in the Lesbian PI text are those that defy logic based on female experience. Incongruous humor comes in the form of cognitive, ethical, and formal

discontinuity, all of which are apparent in the Lesbian PI's narrative.

The Lesbian PI's comedy restores social order in a subversive and reactionary manner. Because the same things do not typically amuse the white, heterosexual male that Lesbian readers of Lesbian PI novels find laughable, the Dyke-dick's narrative refuses to resolve itself within the status quo. In this way, the Lesbian PI separates cathartically from her past while amusingly maintaining present relationships in conflict, acting as an example for her readers. Her sense of comedy is aggressive and exerts power and control, acts dominantly and assertively. In conversation while male characters tend to talk more and interrupt Lesbian PI speakers, ignore her contributions and compete with her. They are perceivable as performers attempting to manipulate social interactions in an effort to enforce a positive self-presentation and preservation. While in oral interactions, females tend to talk less and allow for interruptions, often finding themselves ignored. Lesbian PIs typically behave as a forceful conversational player and more frequently manipulate social interactions for the benefit of their social standing. In additiona, Lesbian PIs forcefully incorporate personal stories into

their narratives and evidence a supportive sense of "Being" for other females, co-characters and readers alike. By collaborating with female experience, refusing to yield to males, Lesbian PI mystery novel readers are more than audience members. They become helpers with who the comedic Lesbian PI joins forces and makes connections, establishing and maintaining powerful, healing intimate relationships. It is in this fashion that the Lesbian PI's tradition is powerful.

In the steps of Helen Keremos, Caitlin Reece, and Emma Victor, that J.M. Redmann wrote Michele "Mickey" Knight. In 1990, J[ean] M[arie] Redmann wrote the first novel in a series of four featuring New Orleans-based Lesbian PI, Michele "Micky" Knight. A "derelict detective" (Death By the Riverside 89), much of her surface description is reminiscent of the aggressive, hard-boiled male PIs and the anti-feminist trio. Her cunning wit is accented by biting sarcasm from the backwater bayou; Knight is literate and college educated but uncultured and alcoholic. Working out of her office/apartment, Knight is trained in Karate and Aikido, finds respite with her housecat, "Repo," and peace in her rustic, private shipyard property away from the city.

When asked why she became a PI, Knight sums up her rationale with, "Why not?" (Death By the Riverside 90). Initially implying no real impetus or cogent reason, her explanation is actually philosophically based; for, she adds, "because" which implies a positive sense of reason (Death By the Riverside 90). Flippant retorts aside, Knight's intentions, rationales, decisions, and actions, evidence motivations like that of her hard-boiled precursors. She pursues justice for those who are too weak or too battered to win it for themselves, and that usually places her on the side of women and children against men and their institutions. In Death By the Riverside (1990), Knight detects and single-handedly wrangles with an underground drug ring. In her second appearance, Deaths of Jocasta (1992), Knight identifies and collars a male antagonist who attempts to scare a women's health care clinic into changing its abortion policies. She also investigates the serial murders of health care patients who received services at the same clinic, run by a Lesbian doctor friend of hers.

Of course, Knight is a quester, situated in a world of violence, experiencing threats and misdirection at the hands of clients and criminals alike. Emulating hard-

boiled mystery, she walks mean city streets and the seedy underbelly of the bayou. And while she has lived a harsh life, she is not mean. Tarnished and afraid, Knight suffers from childhood ghosts who cause her grief and pain well into adulthood; yet, she is a hero. While not capable of rescuing her self, she works tirelessly on behalf of those she sees in need of rescue. Like the hard-boiled precursors, she is poor; but, unlike the hard-boiled precursors, she is not common. Her sense of character is shaky but she knows to what end she intends to serve her clients and takes what financial reward she can. When there is a question as to the veracity of a client's request, she works tirelessly to find the truth and to right wrongs that she makes in the course of her misdirected work. True to the genre's characterization of the PI, Knight is a lonely woman. Her sarcasm is a defense mechanism and her alcoholism is self-medication against the memories and emotional scarring from her early years. Because Knight has not dealt with her personal traumas, she wards off well-intentioned friends and heads off would-be lovers before they have an opportunity to affect her. She is therefore alone and lonely. Fueled by the memories of her own hurt, Knight suffers no one's disrespect without

retribution. Though she is not wholly white or excessively virile, Knight is, in the tradition of Hammett, Chandler, Macdonald, and Spillane, a depressed stoic with a tough driving sense of justice and courage.

Evidence of parodic self-reference by Knight occurs quickly in the first novel. Introducing herself as "M. Knight, Private Investigator," she opens her first-person narrative with an explanation for the "M": it stands for "Michele." Rather than lose potential clients who may be unwilling to hire a female PI, Knight uses the first letter of her first name instead of her full name, thereby un-gendered, she affords herself the opportunity to impress clients in person. Because the "racket is tough enough as it is," she would rather have paying patrons make a trip to her office and meet her before judging her professional quality on the basis of her gender, and "dancing off to some all-male dick shop" (Death By the Riverside 2). Deflecting sexism in a practical manner, Knight accepts the difficulty that she faces by virtue of her gender, but refuses to yield to prejudice that would prevent her from practicing the trade. Playing on the word for detective by using the word "dick," Knight dually references the slang

word for penis while implying the low quality of male private investigators.

A variation of Closeting, using the first initial of her first name instead of her entire first name, Knight hides her true gender with hope for professional acceptance. Supplementary Closeting comes in Knight's performance as the secretary she can't afford (Death By the Riverside 1). When clients do telephone the agency, Mickey pretends to be the secretary who will passed on the caller's concern to "M. Knight, Private Investigator." In a traditional hard-boiled narrative, Knight would have played the tomboyish secretary who not only assisted with office work and dealt in occasional information gathering, but also acted as the PI's one true and loyal admirer. But Knight is alone. She is her own assistant, her own information gatherer, and her own admirer.

Knight reveals that co-professionals only steer potential customers to her when it involves Gayborhood related crime (Death By the Riverside 2). There is inherent trade insensitivity, an unprofessional attitude toward homosexuals and a veiled disrespect for Knight. Even though the types of people who patronize PIs are not typically "tasteful ladies" (Death By the Riverside 2),

there is a hierarchy to hard-boiled performance and field violence.

In a surveillance episode, the theme of Closeting is further expounded paired with an episode of cross-dressing when Knight does literally don male clothing and an Ace bandage to tape her chest flat in order to gain access to an all male club (Death By the Riverside 4-9). Later, in an attempt to flee potential capture and discovery at the club, when the subject of her investigation realizes that she is not what she seems, Knight escapes by pretending to engage in Gay sex in a back room of the very club she has infiltrated. Going so far as to throw a "used" condom in a garbage can as she exits the club, Knight plays the role of "male" flawlessly. Her disguise is so perfect that the subject of her investigation identifies her as a "faggot goon" (Death By the Riverside 11), and the realism of Knight's performance garners her safety. Redmann's message here is three-fold.

In order to gain access to male experiences, females must first don traditionally masculine physical markers and manner. Second, to be successful interlopers, females must perform believably as a male. Third, real accomplishment is only certain when the very population that females

attempt to deceive is won over. However, just as Lesbian appearances affect the definitions and values of all female performance, Knight is not alone in her exploits. The client who hired her services, a heterosexual female, is along on the job. While Knight is successful at dressing herself in male markers and manner, the heterosexual female client is not. In fact, Knight is both titillated and upset because the "lady" is not capable of disguise and therefore not able to easily access male experience. Rather she dresses like a "pretty boy" and "can't even put on an Ace bandage by [her]self" (Death By the Riverside 4). When the client needs help to tape her chest flat, Knight takes the opportunity to assess the physical attractiveness of the client's breasts. Further, partner to Knight's mock sexual performance, the heterosexual female actually aggressively pursues Lesbian intercourse following the acted scene. Knight then doubles back with intertextual parody and reinforces that her male experience-performance was so authentic that even heterosexual females can be impressed by the Lesbian's presentation. Being a realistic trespasser earns Knight not just the privileges of male experience but the pleasures as well.

However, tongue-in-cheek integrity prompts Knight to initially deny both privilege and pleasure, as she metatextually references Chandler's virgin and intends not to spoil one herself. For instance, when she is solicited by the heterosexual female client Knight responds, "I never jump into bed (or the back seat of a car) with virgins" (Death By the Riverside 9). Bastardizing the definition of virgin, Knight means that she would never allow herself to engage in a sex act with a heterosexual female, to take the heterosexual female's Lesbian-virginity. Moments later she turns hard-boiled integrity on its head by reconsidering, "I never, ever touch virgins unless they're very sure of what they want and they practically beg me" (Death By the Riverside 10). After which she fully partakes in intercourse in the front seat of a car. She doesn't just mock her own parameters for behavior by adjusting her standards to allow her to engage in car sex, she further breaks the code of hard-boiled sexual conduct by bragging about her conquest. In a conversation with a male acquaintance, she intertextually self-references her self saying that she taught "a hetero girl a new form of birth control" (Death By the Riverside 11). Knight's irreverence is completely contradictory to the moral standards sought

and protected by the early hard-boiled fathers. More in line with the sacrilegious anti-feminist trio of Fair, Babcock, and Merwin, Jr., Knight also expands upon Honey West's sexually charged performance and pushes the feminist investigators with all-inclusive performative equality. Explaining why she sleeps on a couch, Knight further pushes equalization through sexual experience by relating intercourse with a six-foot-three-inch tall rugby playing female during which they broke the legs of her bed (Death By the Riverside 10). Casting off the importance of the bed by implying irreverence for materials and preferential treatment for activity, Knight denies any potential heterosexual symbolism associated with the bed. Refusing to have it fixed or replaced, she accepts the desecration of traditional sexual locale and rejects traditional expectations that assign activity to specific conditions just as she did when she had intercourse with her virginal client in a car seat.

True to genre expectations, Knight's heterosexual female client proves to be a femme fatale with a twist; she is actually not who she claims to be in name and is also a very experienced Lesbian of high social and political standing. Having lied about her name, the nature of her

case, and her sexual orientation, there exists yet another version of Un-closeting when Knight discovers these deceptions. In the client's masking of identity, she maintains control of not just Knight's case related interaction but also of her reactive actions. Rather than sacrifice Knight's potential assistance, the true nature of her case is veiled and then presented in such a way as to beg Knight's emotive sympathy. Deflecting Knight's potential self-hate related sexism in a practical manner, the pseudo-heterosexual client accepts the difficulty that she faces by virtue of her orientation and refuses to allow Knight's prejudice to prevent her from realizing her case goal. Playing on Knight's preconceived images of heterosexuality, the client assumes the role of virginal but Lesbian-curious, potential-sexual-experimenter to capitalize on reverse discrimination, reverse orientation insensitivity and a stereotyped predatory attitude toward heterosexual "virgins" expected of homosexuals. Here parody plays the part of a mirror.

CHAPTER 3

CRIMINAL MALES AND VILLAINOUS HIERARCHIES VERSUS SOVEREIGN WARRIORS AND TYRANNICAL SAINTS

In much of Lesbian mystery fiction's initial and early development, heterosexual white males were frequently characterized as corrupt crooks and depraved criminals. In Lesbian mystery's, however, the traditionally privileged male is relieved of his expected position as a morally upright intellectual and is replaced by the Dyke-dick. Departing from the genre's founders, Lesbian authors writing Queer mysteries do not typically place males in their traditional roles as just or courageous, virile or noble. Rather, in Lesbian mystery fiction, male purpose and judgment are questioned, as are male motives and methods. Rewritten as harbingers of moral decay, heterosexual white males replace the long-established and time-honored place of homosexual males and Lesbians in the genre in a reversal of values and roles. Therefore the resituation, detection, discovery, and arrest of heterosexual white males in Lesbian mysteries is one way in which Lesbian authors manipulate the genre to suit their own end: to create a place where Dyke-dicks appear as

respectable heroes. Furthermore, they create a place from which to launch clever and disparaging attacks against the defects of male performances, highlighting the thoughtless recklessness of hierarchical heterosexual white male hegemony and the manner in which its structures marginalize and invalidate those who are not representatives of its construction. Such attacks warp genre expectations and provide a place to raise questions concerning the validity of the controls created and supported by a heterosexual white male hegemony.

While the Dyke-dick detects within the established framework of the genre, she does not comply with conventions that suggest, promote, or preserve hegemonic structures that benefit heterosexual white men; nor does she reflect, support, or safeguard the hierarchical group behaviors that foster the continuation of a patriarchic politic. Instead she works to prove the flaws in the arrangements, constructions, and strategies in which heterosexual white males are able to practice corruption and commit crimes. The Lesbian PI's narrative thereby effectively undermines genre expectations, while moving to the forefront an underlying sense of Gayborhood order that

reinforces the significance of "family" loyalty and the preservation of Queer rights.

Dyke-dicks also solve crimes against Queers, and those who do not readily fit the dominant hegemony, with sensitivity previously unseen in Golden Age or early hard-boiled novels. Working as a "sovereign" power, the Lesbian PI is self-governing with both supreme authority and outstanding power. From this position the Lesbian PI is an operant with dynamic personal strength, effective in the collection and analytical processing of evidence, and unquestionably competent in suspect evaluation. She is a "warrior" typically experienced in battle against threats to her, her community, and clients who are incapable of protecting themselves. The Lesbian PI is a trained professional whose intent is to establish a new order that recognizes the value of humanity without qualification. By the power of her license, she engages criminals, brings them to justice, and thereby establishes a new and favorable social condition for homosexuals. In contradistinction to the Lesbian PI as "Sovereign Warrior," the private investigator as "saint" suggests that she is more than an investigator; she is also an interlocutor for the wrongly accused and the troubled. As a "tyrant," the

Lesbian PI works arbitrarily and exercises her power subjectively over those whom she pursues. Oftentimes acting in a dishonest manner, her course is to deceive the bad guy(s) into surrender. Here examples from J.M. Redmann, Phyllis Knight, and Elizabeth Pincus, demonstrate the inclusion of heterosexual white male characters as symbols of corruption or as secondary support for instructive statements that construct assertions concerning the invalidity of traditional, heterosexual white male authority.

Acting as both "Sovereign Warrior" and "Saintly Tyrant" during the course of the novel Death by the Riverside (1990), J. M. Redmann's Michele "Micky" Knight (birth name Robedeaux) cases the offices of a business that acts as a cover for a drug-running scheme. In Redmann's novel, and in much Lesbian mystery fiction, most males appear as dishonest and evil figures, absent of morals and intellect. They are perfectly reckless and thoughtless, with concern for nothing except their own promotion. Characterized as such are corrupt crooks Raul Lafitte, Alphonse Kirby, and Sylvester Milo. The three are partners in a scheme to steal property from a withered old man, Ignatious Holloway, thereby creating a safe haven for their

heroin distribution operation. Immediately it is worth noting that their scheme hinges on the dishonest acquisition of property, the lack of concern for the social effects of such a business, and the absence of honorable intentions concerning the man whose estate they intend to steal.

New Orleans Police Lieutenant Raul Lafitte initially appears as a comforting personality described as "one decent male" (Death By the Riverside 141) who offers Micky Knight his support. However, he turns out to be a double-dealing informant who carefully eavesdrops on conversations that provide him with information necessary to further his diabolical plot and the plans of his associates. Alphonse Kirby is the bedside assistant and trusted confidant of Igantious Holloway. Using his proximity to Holloway, Kirby is able to monitor the old man's health and note periods of weakness during which he seizes control of the estate and makes firm his claim to the location for the heroin distribution site. Sylvester Milo is the muscle behind the operation; he also assails and kidnaps Micky when she gets too close to their secret. The three heterosexual white male characters who appear in Redmann's novel are evil, selfish, and indifferent in the plan, approach, and

execution of their plans. From their vulture-like methods in using Holloway to strong-arm an attack on Micky, and the friends who aid her in her investigation, their approach and tactics are aggressively predatory and misogynist.

Righting the mal-intentions of Lafitte, Kirby, and Milo, Redmann pens a miserable end for the villains, lending humor to resolution that comes by way of their deaths. "Sovereign Warrior" Micky traps two rattlesnakes in the vehicle that the three use for their escape once they become aware that their operation is terminally compromised. When found, Lafitte is pronounced dead owing to the vehicle's crash; Milo and Korby were killed by snakebites. Redmann laces this scene with irony and humor. Micky requests that the reward for her "capture" of Milo be sent, not to her as payment for her work but, to the reptile house of a nearby zoo that houses snakes such as the ones which she used to kill him. In this, Redmann lampoons the drug dealing operation and its distribution of the poisonous heroin into the body of the population by having two of the men die from the poisonous venom that the snakebites inject into them.

Continuing down the pecking order of the organization, evidencing the characteristics of depraved criminals are

hired-thug Elmo Turner and several men whom Micky dubs "Goon Boy(s)." While Turner serves a more pronounced purpose in the narrative, the "Goon Boys" are expendable figures whose purpose is to behave badly. And, their bad behavior leads them all to end miserably. They function incidentally and not integrally. Not the strategically placed informants, the brains, or the brawn, Turner and the "Goon Boys" are not the apex of the heroin operation. They run errands, play at body guarding, and perform short-order hooligan work. Their expendability is highlighted when, as the story progresses, goons are no longer needed and are thus eliminated by the three masterminds.

Turner and the "Goon Boys" are utilities through which readers are able to see just how insignificant the lives of Others are when evaluated by top-of-the-hierarchy white males. Because Turner and the "Goon Boys" lack financial strength and tend to possess predispositions for physically violent behavior, they are disposable. Compared to brassy and capable social climbers like Lafitte, Kirby, and Milo, Turner and the "Goon Boys" are unrefined and seem unaware of their potential. When they fail to control women or Others, they are punished or eliminated. Here Redmann rights the social wrongs intended by these characters when

she writes their deaths at the hands of their bosses or ironically are killed by stray bullets haphazardly fired from "Sovereign Warrior" Micky Knight's gun. Additionally, like the villainous trio, Turner and the "Goon Boys" appear without any heterosexual attachments or ability to relate to others beyond a "what's-in-it for-me" attitude.

Absent of morals, both reckless and thoughtless, Ignatious Holloway's son is thus demonstrating that male pursuits and gratification hold priority while women exist expressly to accentuate male pleasure and provide them entertainment. Describing the actions of this "charming scoundrel" (Death By the Riverside 179), Redmann informs the reader that Holloway's son regularly kept the company of prostitutes despite being married and having a family. Worse, Holloway's son thought of his mistresses as expendable and believed that such women—whores—could "be trampled underfoot" without recourse because one "can't really murder a prostitute" (Death By the Riverside 180). Paradoxically, Holloway's son is the opposite of Micky's father, Lemoyne Robedeaux, who marries a young girl carrying the child of another. Ensuring that the child is born in wedlock, Lemoyne gives the baby a name and raises her, Micky, as his own. Lemoyne is a man whose pursuits

and gratification come from the pleasures of his family. Therefore Lemoyne's death at the hands of Holloway's son is the cause of Micky's emotional turmoil and subsequent alcoholism. Literarily canceling the just and courageous virility and nobility of Micky's father, Holloway rights heterosexual male privilege by killing Robedeaux. Holloway's action then serves two additional purposes. First, it denies Micky a male figure from which she may receive access to opportunities not typically granted to females. And secondly it destroys her chances to experience social validation. However as a witness to her father's death, young "Saintly Tyrant" Micky wreaks vengeance when she shoots and kills Holloway. Neither the premise nor the struggles she endures are amusing; however Micky's dialogue while drunk calls for laughter. Turning tragedy on its head with less pity and more comical retorts, Micky's alcohol-laden quips reflect a sharp self-awareness stemming from her experiences as an outsider in a world that privileges wealthy, heterosexual white males over working-class, bayou-born, Queer women such as herself.

The position of absent intellect goes to the minor character Thoreau Hathaway. Providing comic relief in

juxtaposition to the seriousness of the other male characters, Hathaway is pitifully pathetic. From his inability to accurately reference intellectual properties or to contribute seriously developed and educationally based conversation, Hathaway is a half-wit. His girlfriend prepares his dinner plate and arranges his food as a mother would for a child; she does so not as a servile woman but as someone who understands his limited capabilities. Still, Hathaway's feebly childish existence is highlighted. His politically incorrect views are not well received and "Sovereign Warrior" Micky's attempts to silence his uninformed input are foiled by his inability to interpret social niceties. Worse are his ethnocentric utterances that speak largely of his position as one who easily fits the hierarchy and is representative of heterosexual white male privilege. Considering all of his physical and social bungling, in tandem with his status, his appearance is one that facilitates clever and disparaging attacks against the failings and defects of male performance. Neither athletic in ability nor masculine in appearance, Holloway's son and Hathaway are anything but curious and quaint. Holloway's son exhibits a sick and misogynist predilection for the

sexually abusive consumption of women while Hathaway is a humorous but repulsive image of male impotence.

Two years later Micky returns in Deaths of Jocasta (1992). With her second appearance she brings more raw humor styled in the tone of hard-boiled mystery fiction. Her narrative unfolds again to implicate males and the dominant hegemony as culprits of crimes against Other-oriented people who fail to represent, support, or promote heterosexuality and white male power. Creating a mirror image of control and abuse in Micky's personal and professional lives, Redmann demonstrates how childhood traumas reflect in the adult behavior of her private investigator and how they cause Micky to both function and fail. Bathed in trauma and wading in its effects, Micky's impetus and incentive for her profession becomes clear. As an "Other" who has suffered the effects of heterosexual white male power and control, Micky effectively and sensitively neutralizes the power of harmful social elements for her clients. She is then able to internalize a sense of freedom based on the outcomes of her cases and the resolution that she offers her clients. In this manner Micky overcomes traumas that influence her personal life in the process of offering a valid service to those who cannot

serve themselves because their placement in the hierarchy prohibits them from doing so.

Identifiably corrupt are Randall "Sarry" Sarafin, Bill "Choirboy" Dolton, and Bill "Frankenstein" Mahoney. The three are partners in a plan to shut down a medical practice that occasionally performs abortions and to punish women for "having their babies killed" (Deaths of Jocasta 241). They seek retribution against the woman who spurned the love of Sarry some twenty years prior. Sheltering themselves from discovery by aligning themselves with a group of already established non-violent clinic protestors, they devise a scheme which hinges on disguise, lack of concern for human lives lost as collateral damage, and the absence of honorable intentions concerning the woman upon whom Sarry seeks revenge.

Randall Sarafin, ironically mistaken for an invalid woman, appears as a potential client seeking Micky's professional services. At the outset of their first meeting, Micky mistakenly assumes that Sarry is a "harmless old redneck" (Deaths of Jocasta 240). However, he turns out to be the person for whom she is searching: the mastermind behind the murders she is investigating and the primary force behind the medical clinic's troubles. Bill

Dolton is one of Sarry's "self-righteous" assistants (Deaths of Jocasta 241). Manipulated into believing Sarry's ideas, Dolton is a pawn used to gather information about the clinic, its clients, and its medical staff, as well as about the woman from whom Sarry seeks revenge. Using his social proximity to one of the women who works for the clinic, his girlfriend, Dolton is able to steal reports, forms, and personal information on its clients. Bill Mahoney is the brawn of the trio. Not only does he deliver a bomb to Micky's home in an attempt to end her snooping, but he is also responsible for the kidnapping and killing of five clinic patients. Each of his victims were women who sought medical care at the clinic but whom he wrongly assumed had abortions while there. Sarafin, Dolton, and Mahoney are far-right-wing religious-radicals. They are heterosexual white male characters who personify evil, who are self-interested, and who are gravely unsympathetic toward women. Their deception of Dolton's girlfriend, whom they eventually murder, and their intent to bomb both Micky's home and the clinic for which she works, demonstrates their wanton disrespect for women, for women's rights, and for those who both appear and think unlike themselves. Further, Dolton's treatment of his

girlfriend evidences his inability to maintain relationships, while his assistance in her murder implicates him as predatory. Righting the social harm intended by Sarafin, Dolton, and Mahoney, Redmann writes the anti-woman trio's destruction by providing painfully amusing but mournful quirks-of-fate to their endings.

"Sovereign Warrior" Micky traps and leaves Sarry to a bomb meant for her. As "Saintly Tyrant," she then seeks and finds a smug "Choirboy" Bill at the site of the final attempted clinic bombing. There she deceives him into admitting his involvement in a series of murders and attempted bombings, and then physically beats him mercilessly as any sovereign warrior would. Telling Micky that her behavior is "Police brutality" (Deaths of Jocasta 256) and that her pounding is "not legal" (257), Bill begs privilege even as he is, in part, responsible for ending the lives of half a dozen women whose pleas for mercy he has ignored. Mahoney gets "an easier death than the women he murdered" (Deaths of Jocasta 266); he was shot eight times, taking one bullet for each of the women he tormented. Asking for a priest as he lies dying, "Frankenstein" Bill is told to "go to hell" (Deaths of Jocasta 266) and is left lying in his own blood much in the

manner that he left the women he murdered. Ironically murdering "murderers" in the interest of saving lives, Micky is responsible for the deaths of two of the three killers before the final scene. The black humor with which Redmann writes is laced with irony.

Representatives of depravity are Micky's "despised cousin Bayard" (Deaths of Jocasta 260) and Joanne's stepfather. Nineteen-year-old Bayard and several of his male-teenager friends cornered a fourteen-year-old Micky and demands that she perform oral sex on all of them. When she failed to please them, an embarrassed Bayard physically attacks her and punishes her for failing in her performance. As a child, Joanne was sexually molested by her stepfather and conceived his child by the time she was fourteen. Despite his participation and responsibility, Joanne's stepfather blamed her for the pregnancy and accused her of being a "slut" (Deaths of Jocasta 142). The two sexual aggressors function incidentally and not integrally in the unfolding of the main plot as neither is a current character active in the lives of either Micky or Joanne. They are therefore not immediate threats or pertinent to the outcome of the case on which the novel centers. However, both of the men function as traumatic

stressors whose influence bears upon both Micky and Joanne's perspectives and performances. The recounting of their rapes and the supportive evaluations of each other's subsequent emotional abuses serve as a means through which readers see the effects that the cruel mistreatment of women, by males, carries. Their personal stories speak to the existence of long-lasting repercussions. Also, their stories demonstrate the victimology of abuse and its dependence on the maintenance of hierarchical structures. Like Sarry, Choir Boy, and Frankenstein, Micky's cousin and Joanne's stepfather are incapable of selflessly relating to others, specifically to females. Rather they are marauders who sexualize and then devour the youngest of females who are not yet mature enough to comprehend the condition of their assaults. It is because Micky and Joanne are able to identify each other's trauma and to share their pain, operating as mirrors of "saintly" interlocution for each other, that they offer each other support and an opportunity for a glimpse at emotional resolution.

Morally bereft, reckless, and thoughtless describes Father Flynn. Siding with authorities who chose "convenience over truth" (Deaths of Jocasta 97) in their murder investigation, Father Flynn readily assumes power in

situations where he is the only male present though not truly commanding the right to do so. He fails to give due measure for the words that women speak unless they are words that he wishes to hear. He routinely speaks to women as though they are intellectually inferior unless in agreement with him. And, he expects to be obeyed unquestioningly. If the women with whom he speaks fail to submit to his expectations, he quotes scripture as a means to validate himself and his desires. Ably demonstrating male priority and female servitude, Father Flynn's character is abhorrent. Turning on Father Flynn, Micky's retorts reflect defiance and irreverence as well as a flat refusal to yield to the institution he represents. She rejects the institution that values and privileges heterosexuality and male dominion over females rather than diversity of expression and inclusion of difference.

Detective O'Connor is a character with absent intellect who is charged with managing the same murder investigation that Micky was privately hired to solve. Miserably useless and mean-spirited, O'Connor is unable to see clearly what is plainly in front of him; blinded by the prejudices of sexism and racism, he inaccurately undervalues the capabilities of those with whom he works.

Not only does he spout off-putting, politically incorrect perceptions concerning women and minorities, he damages his credibility among those he believes inferior to himself and is angered by their consequent lack of respect for him. Though his character's ineptitude makes him the perfect instrument against which Micky is able to prove her "sovereignty," demonstrate her superior "warrior" ability, and act yet again as "saintly" interlocutor, she attacks hierarchical institutions of male privilege with the fervor of a "tyrant."

The purpose and judgment of prominent male characters in Redmann's novel are questionable. And, their development speaks volumes for what is profoundly immoral and intensely wrong with a heterosexual white male-based society, as well as its structure. Further, Redmann's Micky Knight offers assessments of the effects that criminal acts have on the status of victims, who are typically female and Other, as well as the subsequent communal instability.

During the same year that Redmann's second Micky Knight novel was published, private investigator Lillian "Lil" Ritchie appeared in Switching the Odds (1992) by Phyllis Knight. Like Redmann's Dyke-dick, Lil begins her

narrative with descriptions of stakeouts including her photographing the amorous activities of a cheating husband. Lending authority to her role as the "Sovereign Warrior," Lil's telling of her work confirms that she is not merely a one-time investigator nor is she at play as an amateur sleuth. Her role is that of interlocutor for the troubled. On behalf of the wife who hired her to find proof of her husband's indiscretions, she worked to free the woman from her bondage to an adulterous spouse; and, for the missing person she was hired to locate, she works to resolve the situation from which he ran.

Agreeing to locate the teenage son of wealthy businessman, James Cooper, Lil's authority as a private investigator is confirmed. Her account of the case becomes the body of a long narrative that eventually leads Lil into an extensive murder investigation punctuated by questionable real estate transfers and the shocking discovery of the set of a "snuff" film used for filming the sexual assault and murder of bound females.

Initially wondering if James Cooper is involved with the illegal business dealings at the heart of his sons flight, Lil questions whether James hires her to go "after his own flesh and blood," noting that "some humans are just

that twisted" (Knight 39). Though she finds the father's intentions sincere and follows through with her job, Lil has reservations about his motives and her suspicion stems from real concern. Speaking largely to the practice of parental-cannibalism, Lil reminds us that often even the most well intentioned and protective sounding pitches hold ulterior motives, selfish intent, indifference, and predatory violence from which even loved ones cannot escape in a heterosexual, white male hegemony.

As Lil's case clues grow in depth and detail, she finds herself threatened and her cover compromised. At one point, breaking into her personal space and attacking her physically while she sleeps, a "guy" beats Lil and leaves her with the message, "Stop your snooping, you Yankee bitch. Go back home" (Knight 55) in an attempt to dissuade Lil from moving forward with her investigation. Retelling the incident of her assault, Lil commands humor to diffuse the ruffian's threat and gendered insult by informing the people with whom she is speaking that "my great-great-grandfather must be cursing me from his grave over it" (Knight 70): "it" being the use of the word "Yankee" in reference to her origin. For, Lil is a native southerner with family roots in the state of Virginia. While she

lives in the north, specifically "down east" Maine (Knight 1), she does not think of her self as a "Yankee"; and, she is more upset by the thought of being mistaken for a northerner than by being referred to as a "bitch." Concerning the destruction of her hotel room and the pounding she endures, Lil promises that someone is "really going to regret having done this to me. `Little creepy coward bastards'," she says to no one but herself, "just try me sometime when I'm standing on my feet" (Knight 64). At this point, it seems painfully comical that Lil is thinking of how her next contact with the ruffian will occur, despite the damage she has already incurred. Particularly amusing is the manner in which she minimizes the encounter by insinuating that her assailant had the upper hand only because she was lying down and asleep, not because the person was an armed male.

It is significant to evaluate the events that lay the foundation for the runaway's flight and the subsequent effects that his disappearance has for countless others, including Lil. Though Jesse may initially be interpreted as a hero, without whom none of the investigation would take place and without whom the "snuff" films would not end, such a benign evaluation of heroism is dubious in

light of the manner he became a "missing person." Jesse's judgment is questionable and his behavior is subject to scrutiny for, at closer look, he is representative of the heterosexual white male society from which he comes and for which he is a successor. His characterization is that of a morally decaying person in descent.

While at boarding school, Jesse and his classmate Greg made frequent visits to the Fan, a seamy area of Richmond, Virginia. In the Fan, the boys found it easy to make underage purchases of alcohol and "dirty magazines" (Knight 33) without difficulty. Their interest in pornographic materials was piqued so they pursued more exciting experiences. Eventually, their visits led them to the inside of a "girly parlor" (Knight 34). At this point, the boys might be applauded, in a typical male mystery based on the dominant hegemony, for pushing themselves to "know [. . .] about the possibilities in life" (Knight 34). But more realistically what Jesse and Greg did was pay to consume objectified and sexualized female bodies.

Because the underage boys were in the "girly parlor" during a shipment dispute between the owner of the business and the distributor of the "snuff" films, they were witnesses to murder, after which they were seen fleeing the

scene by the murderer and his partner. Realizing that one of the men involved in the "girly parlor" deaths was his father's business partner and that the man surely identified him on sight, Jesse felt forced to flee the area for fear that his life was in danger. Concocting a lie for his boarding school, Jesse deceived both his teachers and his parents in his plan to run away. Anything but heroic, Jesse's character is selfishly pleasure-centered, untrustworthy, and therefore unreliable. Yet, being a young, heterosexual white male, fathered by a successful and prosperous heterosexual white male, Jesse is pleasure-centered and his impulses reflect an appropriately virile young man in the making. His deceit would be noble if his flight would be courageous which would make his purpose just.

Greg, though pitiable, is nonetheless as disconcerting as Jesse because Greg is an orphaned child. His guardian-uncle provides him only with somewhere to stay, leaving his care in the hands of housekeepers and his boarding school teachers. Wealthy and powerful, "stodgy," "pompous and used to giving orders right and left" (Knight 69), Greg's uncle is as non-existent in the story as he is in the boy's life. He is therefore unaware of the boy's adventures in

the Fan, his absence from school, and his underground cross-country escape from the "bad guys" who would execute him for bearing witness to their activities in the "girly parlor." Both Greg's uncle and Greg may be viewed as flawed and deficient characters as their male performances evidence thoughtlessness and recklessness for others. They are as pleasure-centered and as vainly impulsive as Jesse, representative of heterosexual white male hegemony that promotes only what pertains to the endorsement and advancement of heterosexual white male gratification.

More examples of such are evident when a naïve Jesse spouts on about freedom being available to everyone in the United States. Lil confronts Jesse's youthful inexperience asking, if by "free country" he means the kind of place where foreign workers who are "up to their arms in pesticides" are free to "work for the kind of shit we pay them" or if by "free country" he means the kind of place where people who are homeless "are free to sleep outdoors because they like it" (Knight 32). Later she muses over an anthem-like musical refrain that encourages hope for remembrance "that there was always a chance for the downtrodden to triumph" despite that triumph not coming easily (Knight 74). It is Lil, as "Sovereign Warrior," who

champions the fight against lopsided authority and unbalanced power. And it is Lil as "Saintly Tyrant" who speaks with bold sharpness and expressive disapproval against the failings and defects of heterosexual white male privilege as it applies to thoughtless and reckless behavioral prescriptions for others who are unlike themselves and unable to meet their terms as such.

Topping off the images of Jesse and Greg as intellectually and emotionally undeveloped is the description of their behavior as they prepare for and endure their trip to a safe house that Lil painstakingly arranges for them. Meeting Lil, Greg's response is not to thank her for making efforts to keep him out of harm's way but to question her authenticity as a PI. Typical of genre expectations, it is usually a male character who questions the authenticity of the female investigator, Lesbian or not. Greg's queries are representative of traditionally authoritarian male scrutiny even as he expresses disbelief for her realism and capability with, "You don't look much like Magnum, P.I." (Knight 82). Diffusing and undermining Greg and the whole of traditional authoritarian male scrutiny, Lil comically responds, "We're different types" (Knight 82). When Greg proceeds to inform her that he has

taken driver's education classes at school and that he is available to help her with the driving on their journey to the safe house, Lil's retorts that "it could come to that" (Knight 82). And, within the next few lines, she appears as a first-person narrator telling the reader, "Teenage boys, by and large, aren't my favorite drivers" because "a carload of them" was killed "every few years, drag racing down curvy roads" (Knight 82). Speaking on the miserable end of teen boys left to their own device, Lil trivializes Greg's attempt to assert himself as an able contributor to her work; she effectively makes him no more than a diversion and an amusement at whom readers are free to chuckle. While her response to both Jesse and Greg is acerbic, her first-person interaction with the reader is serious, making the two boys more explicitly selfish, untrustworthy, and unreliable by virtue of their gender. Finally departing, the two boys alternately writhe in the backseat of the car transporting them, or sleep when they aren't wide-eyed over the areas through which they are traveling. They are immature and not morally upright intellectuals.

Jesse's father's partner, Donald "Donny" Lukas, is the lead business partner in the plan to promote the "snuff"

films and the man whom Jesse witnesses at the "girly parlor" murder scene. The ultimate depraved criminal, Lukas begins by covering up real estate purchases that shelter the locations of his execution sets. Together with one other male, John Maupin, Jr., Donny Lucas is despicable as a sure example of male corruption.

Having served in Vietnam, Donny returns to his pre-war home in Richmond to find the traumatic stress of battle punctuated by an unwelcoming public who are often embarrassed or angry and openly hostile because of his Vietnam involvement. In Richmond, a city fiercely proud of its military history, Donny experiences confusingly disrespectful contempt for his service. And though this is not the place for a psychological analysis of Donny as a survivor of war, or for guessing whether his predilection for violence is an effect of war or the impetus for his participation, he has a fondness for brutality and is himself a sexist who finds women "stupid" (Knight 69), making them reasonable targets for his personal and professional activities. Even so, Donny's characterization seems that of a long-time wounded casualty of war.

John Maupin, Jr.'s characterization is similar to that of Lukas'. While his history is not that of a soldier, he

has a liking for excessively rough treatment of women. Described as a "jerk with a capital J" (Knight 140) with the "personality of an irritable weasel" (141), John is far from being a respectable or acceptable community member because he is known for soliciting drunken women in bars and driving them to isolated areas with the intent of raping and beating them. One woman, who managed to escape from him, reported that "the more frightened she got, the more excited he became" (Knight 142). A second woman reported largely the same story but neither reported John, Jr. to the police or pursued him retributively for the damage he caused her. In fact, during the course of the second woman's retelling, when Lil asks why neither women reported John, Jr.'s assaults, she is informed, "They wouldn't have done jack shit, except treat her like a whore" (Knight 148); "they" are the police to whom either would have reported the attacks. Speaking disparagingly about a justice system that serves the dominant heterosexual, white male hegemony and the manner in which it protects men like Donny and John, Jr., Lil's narrative is plainly clear in its demonstration that women are often sacrificed as objects of scorn. And often in the process of serving the privileged, all others—including women—are

subject to question as is the legitimacy of their charges. Finding fault with the assaulted woman, breaking down the authenticity of her claim and victimizing the victim, the white male hegemony ensures that many females will not ever come forward with such stories and those who do will pay dearly for their attempt. Further, such behavior ensures that the status quo will be preserved and that no Other will ever garner enough power to incite change. Lil's pursuit and capture of Lukas and Maupin evidences her position as a warrior and a saint, for she goes to battle on behalf of her clients against those who threaten her, the abused, and murdered women.

Why would women consult a legal system that treats them as second-class citizens or that seeks to destroy their claim for equality under the law? Or that is headed by the likes of anyone remotely similar to District Court Justice Boynton? Described by Lil and her lawyer friend, Molly Byrne, Judge Boynton is "the kind of little man who gives all men a bad name" with his hatred of women in general and his hatred of "smart women in particular" (Knight 16). He is an "alcoholic, racist, sexist" (17) who would "banish" capable women to the "coldest Siberia if he'd had the slightest chance in hell of pulling it off"

(Knight 16). According to Molly, Boynton is the kind of judge who finds "simple people—poor people," with the misfortune of having him as their audience, "guilty if he doesn't like their face or their lawyer" (Knight 17). Such descriptions serve as statements concerning the lack of justice available for those who do not represent or are not representative of the heterosexual white male hegemony. Lesbian mystery fiction reminds us that the system charged with responsibility for making legal decisions with impartiality and integrity fails in its capacity and is far from its theoretical frame. It further reminds us that our social system is reflective of the country's cultural climate where the powers in control still actively seek to keep "the blacks and Chicanos busy scrambling for a place on the lower rungs of the economic ladder" (Knight 101). It is a system that effectively establishes "the kind of feelings that emerge when the pecking order" is enforced, a situation of "at odds" existence (Knight 101) in which any semblance of uprising or overthrow is impossible as long as there is frantic scrambling at the bottom. The comic intervention comes by way of sovereign and tyrant Lil in conversation with her friend and business contact, Molly. The two lampoon previous courtroom interactions with Judge

Boynton, retelling courtroom performances with irreverent wit and disparaging wisecracks, evaluating him with suspicion, and exercising their subjective opinion of him freely without fear of reprisal.

If the traditional, heterosexual white male character is defined by pleasure-centered impulsivity, untrustworthiness, and unreliability, both Donny and John, Jr. certainly comply. If defined by thoughtlessness and recklessness, the character of Judge Boynton certainly complies. All three men, like Jesse and Greg, consume women selfishly, for their own pleasure and promotion. By virtue of their deceit, the manner in which they approach women and acquire their company or discard their value, expresses the ideal that the men are not trustworthy. And, because of the enjoyment that the men express when a woman is subject to their whim, males again prove to be emotionally predatory and unreliable. It is unnecessary to point out that these men are not shining examples of morally upright intellectualism. While all are flawed and deficient examples of male power, Donny and John, Jr., are maliciously sadistic and inhumanly savage. But they are no more devastating to the lives of females than the power-wielding and capricious judge.

In the first of the three-book Nell Fury series by Elizabeth Pincus, The Two-Bit Tango (1992), features a missing person's case that leads to the investigation of murder and the discovery of a prostitution ring. Much like the themes in J.M. Redmann's first two installments of the Micky Knight series and Phyllis Knight's Switching the Odds, so, too, are Nell's experiences and the people whom she meets. Beginning with exotic dance club owner Geoffrey Bellinski, and his guard-dog employee Melvin Held, Nell deals with the attitudes of males steeped in the management of sex industry enterprises and whose interests lie in both consumption of and profit from the sale of objectified females.

Bellinski and Held are the kind of men who have a "genetic condition that makes their eyeballs rove and their necks crane whenever women are around" (Two-Bit Tango 18); they are sexists. Boldly disrespectful of women, Bellinski defends his establishment saying, "some of the ladies find the dancing… erotically pleasing" (Two-Bit Tango 19) in a way that seems to invite exoneration; how can he be held accountable for running a club if the women he employs want to perform live, nude dances for the pleasure of his male clientele? At one point, Bellinski proudly informs Nell

that he not only treats the dancers well, but also allows the women to have their own union, to which she responds, "How progressive of you" (Two-Bit Tango 19). Of course her comeback is sarcastic, but her mockery is lost on Bellinski. Later readers learn that Bellinski's business, Club Femmes, is the intended source of prostitutes for a brothel that he and Held intend to establish and not the type of pro-woman enterprise he would have Nell believe it to be.

Nell's interactions with Held are even less charming than those with Bellinski. Upon first meeting Nell, Held assesses Nell as "chunky" but points out that she has "nice jugs" (Two-Bit Tango 18), despite her weighty body. Nell's response is to tell Held that he has "one ugly puss" (Two-Bit Tango 18). Acerbically accused of being "real cute" (Two-Bit Tango 18), she informs Held that she is not "cute" but does have a "good personality" (18). First, humorously using the quantifying term "good personality," typically reserved for average and less-than average appearing females—per high-gloss paper, fashion industry standards driven by male preference—as a rebuttal, Nell comically turns a customarily derogatory assessment of an ordinary-appearing woman on its head. She also takes control of the

interactions. Traditionally males lead interactions with females and steer the direction of the conversation. Nell disallows such a situation by forcing her lead in the exchange and guiding the conversations direction, diffusing Held's power by claiming the language of male retorts criticizing women. When females balk at aggressive male comments, they often find themselves verbally insulted which is a backlash for not behaving according to expectations. Sidestepping gender implications, Nell allows neither Bellinski nor Held to address her in whatever fashion they deem fit or to pommel her with insults without putting up a fight replete with retorts. Nell controls her coming and going, as well as their exchanges; she is a "Sovereign Warrior," self-governing with dynamic personal strength, refusing to allow social conditions to remain unfavorable as they are, neutralizing threats and commanding control. When Bellinski and Held turn up, separately, as victims of murder (Two-Bit Tango 42-43, 74-75), misogynism is nicely bashed and traditional heterosexual white male hegemony is temporarily arrested.

The nastiest of the male characters in The Two-Bit Tango are Armand Laws and his bodyguard Monty, "Leadfoot" to Nell. Kidnapped and beaten by a semi-automatic wielding

"Leadfoot," Nell endures Monty's sexist "Andrew Dice Clay" comedics laced with Lesbian-bashing (Two-Bit Tango 113-114) plus his offensive use of the words "girl," "lady," and "dames," in reference to females. Abducted and held as bait for Nell's cooperation is ex-lover and long-time platonic companion, Phoebe Grahame. Wearing a "Queer and Present Danger" t-shirt to accent Nell's work shirt with the name "Bob" stitched above one breast, Phoebe's clothing is a humorous and ironic intervention during this extended scene featuring male power and control. While the two are in captivity, "Warrior" and "Saint" Nell demonstrates concern and care for Phoebe; she consoles and attempts to cheer Phoebe with both insider Queer humor and subtle suggestions for escape.

But Laws and "Leadfoot" are not the worst of the male characters; those roles are reserved for men at the heart of the brothel business. Learning that the sex industry is "a Disneyland for johns," Nell finds that thriving establishments follow "an old boys network" protected by "regular payoffs from brothel owners to politicians" who make it "virtually impossible for outsiders to break in" (Two-Bit Tango 109). Their business is a more sophisticated version of street-corner territorialism based

on male profit from female suffering. Joe Lockenwood and the political provisions of Jed Marshall Flack, San Francisco City Supervisor, direct Bellinski's and Held's bosses, Armand Laws and Monty "Leadfoot."

Lockenwood, arsonist and criminal mastermind, began laying-up funding for the brothel business by burning down several smaller businesses to collect insurance payouts. The insurance payouts then were invested in larger businesses, which were also burned down for insurance payouts (Two-Bit Tango 62-63). Spending money to make money takes on a different meaning here. As Nell uncovers more information concerning the establishment of the brothel, she learns that Flack: (1) is Closeted-Gay; (2) was formerly married to "beard" his homosexual relationships; (3) is instrumental in the establishment of the sex-ring; (4) is an investor in the sex-ring; (5) will profit greatly from the brothel; and, (6) will "decimat[e] affordable housing and wip[e] out jobs" for non-white and non-male members of lower socio-economic strata in the process. Lockenwood's and Flack's profit, at the expense and to the detriment of all others, demonstrates a single-minded selfishness equal only to the egocentrism of the crooked and corrupt male characters of J.M. Redmann,

Phyllis Knight, and a host of other Lesbian mystery authors who responsibly distort the genre's expectations and rewrite gender implications.

Elizabeth Pincus' second book in the Fury series, The Solitary Twist (1993), begins as did her first: with a missing person's case that leads to the investigation of murder. As well as varying her themes from crimes committed against women and the Queer community, the ring that Pincus' PI investigates is one of corporate corruption. The shift of attention from women and Gayborhood concerns is in no way a departure from the revolutionary Dyke-dick framework transforming conventional genre expectations, nor is it a shift that returns to hegemonic structures for the benefit of heterosexual white men. Rather the crux of Pincus' second novel is such that it questions hierarchical group behaviors and severely problematizes patriarchal politics while implicating capitalism as injurious to society, with a 'profit for one at the expense of the many' mission.

Investigating the disappearance of a wealthy, newly-engaged young woman, Nell finds herself in the midst of a more complex scheme involving bribery, coercion and corner-cutting corporate enterprises attempting to circumvent

public policy for the sake of protecting company proceeds and increasing profit margins. Budget Barn, a "wildly successful suburban [discount store]" that is "a notorious union-buster," makes a practice of hiring part-time help for low pay and no benefits (Solitary Twist 61). In an effort to expand their business reach, the company intends to ensure the quick building of additional stores without adhering to regulations. To do so, the head of Budget Barn's operation, Leonard Galle, intimidates illegal immigrant Tony Rodriguez into acting as his middleman who carries pay-offs to city planning committee chair Philip Gold. In return for Galle's bribe via Rodriguez, Gold supports the erection of Budget Barn's newest storefronts, ensuring that construction plans will not be interrupted by citations for building violations. And, in turn for Rodriguez's cooperation, Galle ensures that he is not reported to the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. The structure of this second novel follows that of many Lesbian mysteries, including Switching the Odds, Death by the Riverside, and Deaths of Jocasta. This novel follows that there is one mastermind aligned with two assistants and at least one disposable flunky who carries out small orders.

Not in itself evil, the Budget Barn is an archetypal business. Most likely promoting from within those who move its interests forward by any means necessary, Budget Barn supports the existence of men like Galle and the study of what is overwhelmingly dishonest and overpoweringly unfair with society and its structure, allowing for an assessment of how such behavior acts on the status of victims. Bypassing environmental regulations, city ordinances, and design review processes, Galle's deceitful means ensures the company for which he works financial returns and guarantees himself compensation as well. Paying bribes to Gold provides him with material comfort and on-sale privileged circumstances. The balance of power, dictated by wealth and position, is tipped in favor of the few who labor the least to the detriment of those who are least capable of garnering power to protect themselves. Galle's, and Gold's purpose and judgment are questionable, as are goal achieving motives and methods. Galle's performance is thoughtless and reckless, giving no consideration to others outside of his moneymaking ventures except in the manner that he may benefit. His actions are malevolent and selfish, indifferent to the danger and damage his intentions pose. His arrest and implication in illegal

activities establishes some semblance of social safety and security. As a "Sovereign Warrior," when Nell battles against Galle—true to her Dyke-dick role—she protects that which threatens her self, her community, and her clients while bashing hierarchical group behaviors, problematizing patriarchal politics, and implicating capitalism as injurious.

Gold's position, though less prominent that Galle's, allows him to profit threefold: as a lawful employee of a government office, as a bribed actor in Galle's scheme, and as the embezzler of public funds. Having misappropriated public funds, Gold attempts to marry a wealthy young woman, most likely with the intent of stealing from her to replace previously stolen funds before being formally implicated in their theft. The woman is kidnapped which leaves Gold vulnerable to blame without a way of covering his financial indiscretions, repaying the funds he stole, or of hiding his criminal work. Possibly trying to enact damage control in the event of his arrest for misusing public money, Gold withdraws from his arrangement with Galle. However, he ends up precariously balanced between guilt for embezzlement and his bribe taking. Of course, there is no hope of retribution for his actions, recovery of the funds,

or the rehabilitation of his character, so Gold's inevitable death reestablishes order.

Concerning Rodriguez, it is significant to evaluate his citizenship status and how it lays the foundation for Galle's ability to control him. Not a commentary on the legitimacy of immigration or the existence of illegal immigrants in the United States, Rodriguez' non-authorized standing bears significant effects for numerous people, including Nell. Potentially interpretable as a hero for risking much to enter and live in this country, Rodriguez is the reason that Galle is able to operate, profit, and circumvent laws for the benefit of Budget Barn and to the detriment of its clients and neighbors. Translating Rodriguez as a benign hero who only seeks only to improve his life potential is dubious in light of the manner by which he ensures his survival while here. Rodriguez' judgment is problematic and his behavior is at issue because his actions promote and preserve the dominant hegemony while supporting and safeguarding heterosexual white male power. Rodriguez' profit from such work is exemplary of absent morals and decayed principles. Further, his behavior is as selfish as Galle's and Gold's; basically, his wanton, capricious, intentional, and willful

disregard of the country's laws, the country in which he intends to live, demonstrates his lack of intent to interact lawfully in the community where he is determined to live.

True to the Sovereign Warrior model, Nell exhibits ability and poise as she investigates Budget Barn, Galle, Gold, and Rodriguez. She is successful in the collection of evidence and in its analysis, conveying a sense of responsibility and command as she works to right social injustices. Moreover, her unrelenting defense of the people who help her is typical of the "Saintly Tyrant" role.

The final installment of Pincus' Nell Fury series, The Hangdog Hustle (1995), again focuses less on crimes against women and the Queer community and more on organizational, white-collar crime. Once more, the shifting awareness from women's issues and Queer concerns is neither a departure from the rebellious Dyke-dick's genre reconstruction, nor is it a rejection of the defiant Dyke-dick's gender reforms. Rather, it reinforces Pincus' second novel's assertion that hierarchical group behaviors and patriarchal politics are severely problematic.

Initially hired to investigate the death of a young Gay, Japanese-Latino, Kent Kishida, Nell is drawn into a more extravagant plot that revolves around the investigation of a private, radical, environmental group at "war" with a public, army-owned, military base. The private, radical environmental group is a team comprised of five males who work together to sabotage and expose the ill practices of the army-owned military base in its illegal disposal of toxic waste. Attempting to damage the reputation of the base, the environmental group plans to wreak deadly ecological havoc by spilling poisonous chemical contaminants into the area they claim to protect! Christopher Mason, Stuart Clemens, DeWayne Miller, Dickie, and Kevin (aka, Carrot Head) are the five. True to form, there is one mastermind aligned with two assistants and a set of disposable flunkies who carry out small orders, respectively.

Following previously highlighted formats, it is obvious that Mason, Clemens, and Miller operate in a malevolent, self-interested, and shockingly oppositional mode. It is also obvious, in view of their plan, that they are cavalier concerning the dangers that they pose to others or to the environment they claim to defend. Their

dishonest infiltration of army operations coupled with their lack of concern for the amount of life—human, plant, and animal—that will suffer as a result of their actions indicates an absence of principled and respectable intentions on their behalf. Like Redmann and Knight, Pincus presents readers with a platform from which to raise questions that examine the rationale and decision-making processes of males by pointing out their failing and their flaws. She showing once again that a social structure based on inequality and inequity creates deadly imbalances. Also true to form, when Sovereign Warrior Nell is misdirected and attacked, she functions as Micky and Lil did by demonstrating competence and composure, by continuing her investigation with effective evidence collection and analysis, and by maintaining integrity and order. Moreover, Nell's persistent protection of informants while in pursuit of Mason, Clemens, Miller, and their flunkies, fosters more images of the Dyke-dick as "Saintly Tyrant."

Though I have only dealt with a small selection of examples, considering the potential number available in Lesbian mystery fiction, this half-dozen collection of novels is representative of the manner in which

heterosexual white males are re-presented against genre expectations. Contrary to tradition, Dyke-dick narratives relieve heterosexual white males of their privilege and reposition them as harbingers of moral decay, a condition formerly reserved for homosexuals. No longer observed unquestioningly, heterosexual white males are problematic as are the structures in which they operate and the roles in which they perform. Perverting genre expectations, Lesbian mystery fiction provides space to express doubt and to take apart the prevailing social conditions while dismantling elementary operations produced and upheld by heterosexual white males for heterosexual white males.

Detecting within recognized genre structures, the Dyke-dick intentionally refuses to reproduce dominant hegemony or defend hierarchical group behaviors that foster a patriarchic politic. The Lesbian PI thereby successfully undermines expectations and replaces them with Gayborhood-oriented order, the observation of "family" values, and the preservation of Queer rights. As a "sovereign" power, the Lesbian PI's self-governance exemplifies both authority and power operating with strength; her effectiveness demonstrates an unquestionable competence. A "warrior" whose duty is to recover her clients integrity and dignity,

the Dyke-dick establishes new social standing for those who seek her services. As "saint," the Dyke-dick revels in her function as interlocutor; but as "tyrant," she works personally to overturn the social balance of power.

CHAPTER 4

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY:

DYKE-DICKS IN LOVE AND DYKE-DICK LOVERS

While the initial appearances of early professional female and feminist investigators did generate challenges for established gender implications, thereby altering time-honored genre expectations, they did little to defy male hierarchy or the dominant hegemony. They often deferred to male structures, regularly withstanding confrontational conditions that were invalidating. And, they tended toward graceful capitulation with regard to male authority, habitually enduring contradictory attitudes that were minimizing. Moreover, most heterosexual female PIs associated themselves romantically with at least one male during the course of their series thereby giving in to and negating the very gender restrictions and roles they initially challenged. Heterosexual intercourse placed female investigators in problematic positions that made them subject to objectification and vulnerable to gender inequity. By contrast, Lesbian PIs are typically unapologetically defiant toward male structures; they rarely yield submissively to male authority. They are not

open emotionally or physically to relationships with men, and their inaccessibility punctuates their denial of heterosexual hierarchy and hegemony. Such action reduces the Lesbian PI's susceptibility to and the effects of male objectification and gender inequity.

Because the body of "woman" is burdened by restrictions relative to its function and purpose, the manner in which Lesbian PIs enact their own definitions is significant. The Lesbian PI radically challenges the tenets of mystery fiction in ways that were largely unsuccessful to heterosexual females. Thus, the Lesbian private investigator dismantles old prescriptions and employs new Queer implications for "woman." Balking at the Dyke-dick's tactics and their intended results, heterosexual males deem her "not natural" and cite her refusal to adopt and adapt to heterosexual definitions established by the dominant hegemony. But again, just as the Lesbian PI's narrative employs humor to resituate the "male" from his traditional seat as a just, courageous, and noble custodian of order to that of corrupt and depraved harbinger of moral decay, her narrative plays a significant part in the process of redefining "woman" and in resituating "Lesbian." Attentive to both physical function

and purpose, the Dyke-dick employs what Marilyn Frye describes as "new uses of words on those affected" (97). Doing so, she powerfully redesigns performance.

Challenging the heterosexual ideology of what Monique Wittig calls a "natural group" (103) the Dyke-dick calls attention to disproportionate behavioral allowances contrived to restrict females. She defies definitions of "natural" by demonstrating its inadequacy and resists classifications of "group" by indicating its derisory spirit. Aptly challenging "natural group," the Dyke-dick supports Simone de Bouvoir's point that "One is not born, but becomes a woman" (249). Doing as much, she determines her own "biological, psychological, and economic fate" and makes a place for herself outside of traditional parameters with only a "male and eunuch" scope (de Beauvouir 249). For Lesbian PIs, the challenge to resist the fate of naturally grouped females is uncomplicated. First, she establishes rules of access and then redefines gender through performance. Habilitating the mystery genre, the Dyke-dick tips the scales of privilege by challenging what Monique Wittig calls "the sex of the oppressor" (104). She acknowledges the traditional definitions of female-versus-

male, girl-versus-boy, woman-versus-man, feminine-versus-masculine, and refuses to subscribe to them.

Unreceptive to subjectively defined prescriptions concerning female bodies, their function, and their purpose, the Dyke-dick actively establishes emotional ties and sexual relationships with women. Subsequently, she is inaccessible to men. Marilyn Frye points out that, "When those who control access have made you totally accessible, your first act of taking control must be denying access, or must have denial of access as one of its aspects" (96); readers can interpret that accessibility measures control. During the course of the Lesbian PIs narrative, males who intend to control her, by forcefully imposing themselves on her, often test the Lesbian PI. While her resistance to male impositions provokes their attacks, the Lesbian PI's inaccessibility is her salvation. Her establishment of emotional ties and physical relationships with women is often the first act in redefining "female," in resituating "Lesbian," in revolutionizing male hierarchy and heterosexual hegemony.

Many critics have attempted to discredit the Lesbian mystery fiction novel as nothing more than a pornographic variation of the romance novel, based solely on sexual

performance, with gratuitous descriptions of detection amidst bold exploits in homosexual intercourse; it is not so. Not only are Dyke-dick novels valid, legitimately expanding the mystery canon, the Lesbian PI's narrative exemplifies emotional ties and sexual relationships in a manner that serves to normalize homosexuality and same-sex intercourse. Further, Gail S. Rubin notes that in the process of negotiating "being-Out" and acting legitimately, their narratives "convey the barbarity of sexual persecution" (9) endured as a consequence of performance. Therefore, Dyke-dicks foster not only contextual conflicts relative to gender and genre shifts relative to Lesbian existence, they also promote textual disagreements relative to same-sex physical interaction. Rubin notes that illustrations of Lesbian intercourse encourage "Disputes over sexual behavior [which] often become the vehicles for displacing social anxieties, and discharging their attendant emotional intensity" (4). So it is here that discussion of the Dyke-dick's sexual performance serves to supplant heterosexual-based gender implications and early mystery genre expectations of homosexuality as a deviant perversion. Displacing societal concerns that precede what Gail S. Rubin terms "sexual apartheid" (21), Lesbian PIs

combat invalidation based on gender or orientation. As such, the Dyke-dick's exploits in homosexual intercourse are legitimate elements of Lesbian mystery narratives.

Not performed in marriage or for procreation, Lesbian emotional attachments and sexual activity are yet written as viable and stimulating even as they hold no social substantiation or reproductive promise. Unlike their heterosexual counterparts, Dyke-dicks carry no burden of extraneous significance into their exploits. They are free to express desire and receive pleasure without obligation or consequence. While traditional mystery fiction has promoted values and ideals based on male hegemony, the Lesbian PI's narrative functions to erase homosexual inferiority and imposes a progressive measure of intimacy. Significantly less than a decade after the initial appearance of the Lesbian mystery novel, Un-closeted Dyke-dicks literarily do what Gail S. Rubin claimed feminists did: They "denounc[ed] erotic injustice and sexual oppression" (9) with barefaced and unashamed performances.

Appearing during the most gender-politicized and sexually volatile period in United States history and subsequently maturing over the succeeding decades, Lesbian mystery fiction has progressed from the use of subtle hints

with nonchalant innuendo, that Bonnie Zimmerman seems to interpret as the clumsy coming-Out of the homosexual investigators (210), to bold indications confirming the Queerness of its sheroes. Eve Zaremba, Valerie Miner, and Vicki McConnell, are three authors who contributed to the canon of Lesbian mystery fiction at its emergent stage and who were primarily concerned with issues of "coming-Out." All three focused on the process of establishing identity based on orientation and "coming-Out," laying the groundwork for later authors, such as Katherine Forrest, to shift themes focusing on the relevance of "being-Out."

Eve Zaremba's "coming-Out" novel, A Reason to Kill (1978) featured PI Helen Keremos. Readers found scant clues that the heroine was a Lesbian and indications that she was sexually active were nonexistent. However quips from male clients and male suspects alike suggested that they were able to deduce that Keremos was a homosexual. Even though Zaremba's second novel, Work for a Million (1986), was outfitted with a cast of Queer characters, Keremos was as equally asexual as she was in the first. Again, quips from clients and criminals led readers to infer the PI's Lesbianism though no direct confirmation came from Keremos herself. The same "discretion" exists in

Beyond Hope (1987), the third novel in Zaremba's series. Still, her character's refusal to yield to male hierarchy, to offer regular resistance when confronted by male authorities, and to suffer from a lack of heterosexual romance, demonstrates a cautious dismantling of gender implications and tentative enactments of redefinition. Though it took Zaremba twelve years, from 1978 until 1990, to write her character's "Outing," Keremos formally acknowledged her homosexuality in Uneasy Lies; with her acknowledgement came the beginning of a physically intimate same-sex relationship in which performances of new, Queer implications for "female" and "Lesbian" appeared.

Echoing Keremos' cautiously homosexual identity was Valerie Miner's Nan Weaver in Murder in the English Department (1982). Focused more on the physical brutality of men toward female bodies and related issues of access, Miner's novel demonstrates a male-warped sense of physical entitlement to use "women's" bodies. Weaver's narrative perverted heterosexual intercourse and questioned established rules of power and control. Following suit with feminist perspectives, Weaver's investigative account problematizes the male body, highlighted social and political ramifications of female subjugation, and

emphasized women's vulnerability to male violence. Here, with men in control, women were powerless against unwelcome sexual advances; male bodies were depicted as destructive and repulsive. Consequently, Nan Weaver's Lesbianism was largely left by the wayside, though her sexual identity was arguably homosexual. Yet, her defiance was unapologetic as was her refusal to submit; and, her emotional rejection of male authority, coupled with her physical inaccessibility to men, heralded the kind of performance that later Dyke-dicks enacted to resist hierarchy and hegemony.

Similarly, Vicki McConnell's first mystery novel, Mrs. Porter's Letter (1982), introduced a shakily heterosexual Nyla Wade, bereft of sexual activity and heavily lamenting her life's direction. Though Wade's character eventually wrestled with issues of same-sex attraction, she ended the series by confronting her own sexual identity; and, her narrative was concerned with the Un-closeting of Lesbians rather than with the normalization of Queer intercourse. "Outed" by the end of the first installment of the three book series, Nyla's Lesbian experience was never sexually explicit. Rather, she simply gave consideration to definitions of "woman" that were hierarchically oppositional and hegemonically defiant.

Shifting concern to "being-Out," Katherine Forrest's character, Kate Delafield, was identifiably Queer and sexually active as early as the series' first installment. Appearing as a grieving "widow" in Amateur City (1984), Delafield is faced with the death of her long-term lover, Anne, which leaves her with all of the resultant issues of losing a spouse. Normalizing same-sex feelings and serving as a valid example of an appropriate response to the loss of a partner, Kate reacts emotionally in the manner that a heterosexual widow is expected to behave after the loss of a marital mate. Faced with grief and loneliness, Kate craves a salve. And, she finds comfort in the familiarity of a woman, Ellen, who reminds her of Anne. As a consequence of repeated contact during the process of Kate's investigation, she develops a physical longing for Ellen, which intensifies until they consummate their relationship with emotionally charged sexual intercourse. Descriptions of Kate's fingertips "enveloped in warm wetness" causing "ever-widening erotic waves" (Forrest 129) give readers a glimpse of Lesbians engaged in digital vaginal penetration; while, Kate's "ecstasy of tasting" Ellen, "inhaling her" (129), are indicative of Lesbians engaged in oral sex. After which, Ellen's stimulation of

Kate with "satin friction" (Forrest 131) exemplifies the practice of frottage. All depictions of Lesbian intercourse employ the use of ordinary words in a manner that dually challenges the traditionally defined purpose and the traditionally defined function of the female body. The descriptive words themselves are ordinary, not risqué, though they graphically introduce readers to Lesbian practices and physical performances that depict normal examples of intercourse between homosexual women. "Emboldened by her knowledge of Ellen, Kate took new and deeper pleasure in her" (Forrest 132); this exemplifies homosexual experience, demonstrating that it is proficient at more than expressing carnal desire, that it functions on a level of emotional exchange. Therefore, Kate and Ellen's mutually consensual physical and emotional performances create a vehicle through which same-sex relationships can be viewed as normal and appropriate; they are liberating and restorative rather than oppressive or exploitative.

Progressing beyond the seriousness of "being-Out" to simply "being," Lesbian mystery fiction authors began to use the Dyke-dick's narrative as a vehicle through which they employed humor to diffuse heterosexuality's groundlessly ignorant and overly generalized anxiety

concerning Queer redefinitions of gender and homosexual performance. As such, Dyke-dicks diffuse related emotional intensities that otherwise are the precursor to social devastation and internalized self-hateful destruction. Sabotaging heterosexuality's "erotic hysteria" (Rubin 6) with self-deprecating satire and parody, the Dyke-dick participates in increasingly explicit homosexual sex acts thereby forcing an even broader redefinition of "female" and a more compelling study of "being." By re-examining the same authors used in the previous chapter, the narratives of J.M. Redmann's Micky Knight, Phyllis Knight's Lil Ritchie, and Elizabeth Pincus' Nell Fury, this study demonstrates that graphically erotic examples of same-sex intercourse are easily interpretable as a venue through which the Lesbian body is legitimized and validated.

At the beginning of Death By the Riverside (1990), Micky Knight is approached by a woman who appears in a "tastefully conservative suit" with hair that is "tastefully done", accompanied by "shoes and purse matched, tastefully" (2). The double entendre, a reference to cunnilingus, is supported when the "tasteful" lady later suggests that Micky has made her excited about the possibility of experiencing Lesbian sex and propositions

her. Mocking the tradition, Micky's first response is to speak in first person, confiding to the reader, "I never ever jump into bed (or the backseat of a car) with virgins" (Death By the Riverside 9). She humorously pokes fun at Raymond Chandler's definition of the hard-boiled dick as "a man of honor" (Death By the Riverside 20), a man who "would not spoil a virgin" (21). Following her parody of the hard-boiled dick's code with regard to women, she amends her confession adding:

> I never, ever touch virgins unless they're very sure of what they want and they practically beg me. (This happens more often than you think.) (Death By the Riverside 10)

The term "virgins," as used by Micky is a satirical definition is a heterosexual woman who has never experienced sexual intercourse with another woman; it is of no concern whether the "virgin" has ever experienced sexual intercourse with a man. Her humor and first person address serve multiple purposes. First, she redefines the function of "honor" with regard to her PI status, with consideration for her gender, and with respect to her sexual orientation; then, she draws the reading audience into her exploit, employing the tone of a co-conspirator, establishing a

sense of community and belonging. Plus, she mocks the myth that homosexuals prey on naive and unsuspecting heterosexuals, making them targets for same-sex intercourse against their will. Pointing out that she is propositioned, to engage in intercourse with "virgins" more often than the reader might think, she turns the myth on its head and employs satirical humor to relieve herself of the anxiety associated with the heterosexual characterization of Lesbians as predators. Later, after spoiling the "virgin," Micky describes her sexual adventure to a bartender friend. She tells him that she spent the previous evening "teaching a hetero girl a new form of birth control" (Riverside 11). She stabs at the anxious heart of heterosexual scrutiny which decries the validity of homosexual behavior because it is incapable of procreating in and of itself. Therefore, Micky is free to express desire and receive pleasure without obligation or consequence, imposing a progressive measure of "female."

Continuing in the same vein, promoting sexual innuendo and comic catharsis using a heterosexual woman as her vehicle for humor, Micky spends time with Barbara, whom she describes as someone who "was possibly going to be a very good friend" (Riverside 45). During a social meeting,

Barbara confides to Micky that she is "on the wrong side of forty, size fourteen, and [has] two kids" (Riverside 35-36), making her unappealing to most heterosexual men. In disbelief, Micky bungles as she flirts with Barbara, telling her that she has "beautiful eyes," the kind that resemble those of "a horse that knows so much more than the rider she's stuck with" (Death By the Riverside 36). In response, Barbara, not yet aware of Micky's homosexuality, asks about her relationship status. Here absurd comedy diffuses a potentially volatile interaction; Micky answers that her last boyfriend was a sixth grader who ended their relationship because she grew taller than him over their summer break after fifth grade (Death By the Riverside 36). Micky's good humor sets the stage for Barbara to experience her "Outing" in non-threatening conversational space.

Not imposing any danger to Barbara's heterosexuality, Micky thankfully compliments her for not "call[ing] in the Marine Corps" to protect her "against deviant, communistic, secular, humanist perverts, such as [her]self" (Death By the Riverside 37). Barbara returns the compliment by suggesting that "An affair with a good-looking woman fifteen years younger than [she is] sounds like a wonderful adventure" and one that she'd "much rather turn down than

not have" (Death By the Riverside 37). Micky's reference to "deviant," with regard to her Lesbianism, reflects the heterosexual stereotype that homosexuals are abnormal. Her reference to "communistic" implies an unsavory political perspective while "secular" refers to her worldly knowledge and more-than-conventional social awareness. As a "humanist pervert," Micky is aware of the non-heirarchical, non-hegemonic principles and attitudes that are primarily concerned with divergent ideals, differing abilities, and a sense of accomplishment that deviates from what is socially prescribed. Barbara's reaction, to feel flattered at the prospect of Micky's proposition, indicates that the effect of her flirting is complimentary regardless of her gender. The sense of significance that Barbara gets from their exchange is unlike any she knows in her interactions with heterosexual males who have found her age, body size, and status as a mother are unattractive to them. In contrast, as a woman, Micky's understanding of Barbara's female body, its purpose and function, lends to its attractiveness.

Later, based on Micky's hope for a long-lived friendship with Barbara, she practices firm impulse control when presented with the possibility of kissing Barbara. Micky is more concerned with Barbara's comfort zone, her

potential as a supportive alliance, and their budding companionship. Not all homosexual-heterosexual contact must be sexual in nature. Humorously diffusing sexual tension that arises from unrequited attraction to heterosexual women, playing on the angst-ridden question concerning the nature versus nurture foundation of homosexuality, Micky states, "Damn heteros, [. . . .] Some people are just born straight" (Death By the Riverside 160). Also taking a stab at the manner in which heterosexuals assault the dignity of homosexuals—with abusive language meant to lessen self-confidence, sense of worth, and self-respect—Micky's use of the word "heteros" humorously mimics the tone of heterosexual aggression. Changing the traditional insult "homos," which negatively refers to a group of homosexuals, Micky diffuses and then redirects hostility. Her use indicates that verbal attacks can and do function for the abused as well as for the abuser. Micky's performance is exemplary in that she evidences her unwillingness to yield to male hierarchy and demonstrates a defiant rejection for their authority while steadily habilitating the definitions "female" and "Lesbian." She vigilantly shuns graceful capitulation and remains physically inaccessible to males.

Micky's relationship with Cordelia, the woman she desires, is initially tumultuous because Cordelia is engaged to a man, Thoreau. Micky assumes that Cordelia is heterosexual and attempts to respect boundaries despite her passionate attraction; but as the novel progresses, Cordelia "comes Out" and confesses that her engagement is a matter of convenience. Because her long-term Lesbian partner committed suicide, leaving her with the same type of unresolved emotional hurt experienced by Katherine Forrest's "widow," Cordelia intends to hide from love, shielding herself with heterosexual marriage. By the time that Cordelia makes her confession, Micky has already fallen in love with her:

> I suddenly felt like I was falling, as I had just stepped off the edge of a cliff. Even though I hadn't moved, I had that feeling, that physical feeling of falling in the pit of my stomach. Part of it was sexual, I knew that, a rush of desire for her. But it was much more than that. I was falling in love and I had no idea where I would land. Based on what I knew about both of us, we didn't have a chance. But I knew I would follow this to the end. I could no more stop

> this falling than I could have stopped any physical fall. And I was scared. (Death By the Riverside 184)

By the time that they make love, Micky has distinguished her feelings for Cordelia as "love." And, it is lovingly, that they touch, explore, and familiarize themselves with each other's bodies.

Taking control of their lovemaking, Cordelia "tops" Micky; "topping" her, Cordelia initiates digital vaginal penetration. Experiencing "a climax, a long shudder that spread through [her] whole body" (Death By the Riverside 189), Micky becomes aware that in romantic relationships, "We sometimes forget the power of sex, or rather we avoid acknowledging it," and she marvels at the power that sexual partners have "to give pleasure, heady sensual rapture" and "reassurance of physical touch" (189). She becomes aware of how much authentic affection she feels for Cordelia and how much joy she feels as Cordelia touches her. Micky's sharpest desire is to reciprocate physically with as much depth and breadth of emotional passion that she experiences from Cordelia's touch. The second time that they sexually share themselves, they do so with Cordelia's impending wedding in mind. This time, they perform "slowly, gently,

as if savoring the last strawberries of the season" (Death By the Riverside 194). In this text, it is Cordelia's wedding to Thoreau that is unnatural, not the physical expression of emotional affection that she and Micky experience for one another. When Cordelia breaks her engagement to Thoreau, she confesses to Micky, "I've learned my lesson. I thought I could put my life in a neat little box, isolated from shock and pain. But that's not possible" (Death By the Riverside 242). She confesses that her emotions for Micky betray her intentions to marry Thoreau, and to live free from the sensations of passionate love. Cordelia is a Lesbian, not a Lesbian by choice but by design, and she acknowledges that anything other than the recognition of her true orientation would be disastrous. Realizing that establishing a relationship with Micky before she has reconciled the pain of losing her partner to suicide, Cordelia needs time to heal or else she will have only emotional co-dependence to contribute to a relationship and not healthy autonomy. So, in contrast to the tradition, the valiant PI does not get the girl at the novel's close.

In Redmann's second Micky Knight novel, Deaths of Jocasta (1992), the Dyke-dick is forlorn. Thinking

constantly about Cordelia and hoping to hear from her, Micky fruitlessly attempts to detach from her emotions and to move on with her life without love. But, the investigation of murders linked to the health clinic managed by Cordelia positions Micky in close proximity with her. Over time, the two nurture a mutual sense of trust and security in each other's company, with strong emotions from their first encounters resurfacing to affect their interactions. Of course, the two again make love.

As she did in the previous novel, Cordelia "tops" Micky during their first physical encounter. Readily offering herself to Cordelia's touch, Micky grants access to her body and thereby demonstrates that issues of control and power do not contaminate their experience. That Cordelia initiates sex with Micky is indicative of her willingness to give pleasure selflessly. Independent from her own physical enjoyment is the sexual satisfaction that Cordelia intends to offer Micky. Her body is unlike a male body in that she is unable to penetrate Micky and therefore cannot experience penetration dependent sensations. Beginning with simple touch, Cordelia escalates their contact until she positions Micky for vaginal digital penetration. Descriptions of their intercourse include, "I

felt her finger slowly enter me," and, "I shuddered as her finger started to move in and out" (Deaths of Jocasta 200). Both exemplify use of language through which the Lesbian PI's body and sexual performance may be mediated and made normal, through which the Dyke-dick is made valid. There are no grand preparations, no indications of ulterior motive, and no extended depictions of Micky's response to Cordelia's access. What does become apparent is that their sexual contact is sensitive and demonstrative of sincere attraction based on a viable and stimulating relationship they love despite the apparent absence of social substantiation or reproductive promise that authenticates heterosexual relationships.

In Switching the Odds (1992), Lil Ritchie, created by Phyllis Knight, keeps social company with a heterosexual friend, Molly. During the course of their contact, the two play with sexual innuendo and double entendre as a means of cathartically diffusing heterosexuality's hierarchical anxiety and hegemonic apprehension concerning Lesbian "womanhood" and female empowerment to the benefit of them both. In one such instance, Lil notes that Molly's "long, bright red nails would certainly give one cause to pause" (Knight 16), indirectly insinuating that Molly's

fingernails are problematic from a Lesbian perspective. Considering that Lesbian performance can include digital vaginal penetration, long fingernails pose multiple threats: unclean introduction of infection-causing bacteria to mucus membranes, potential internal scratching, and likely unpleasant physical discomfort. However, the fact that Molly displays her "long, bright red nails" in the process of "holding out the middle digit of her left hand" (Knight 16) is comical in that, it is directed at an older, privileged male who holds a powerful professional position over her, and who harbors an intense hatred for women. Molly's brave defiance is both fearsome for Lil and threatening toward her superior, evidence of emotional rejection for male authority punctuated by body language indicating inaccessibility.

Recalling past relationships, Molly talks about Lil's previous girlfriend, a woman who "just loved [her] little Victorian bed with the red Christmas lights strung around the headboard" (Knight 19). Conjuring images of a red-light district, the string on Lil's headboard is a droll allusion that her bed served as the stage for Lesbian sexual performance. Later Lil recalls in "crystal-clear vision" how the woman spent "long, slow, luxurious

afternoons in that oak Victorian bed" and how the woman's "legs wrapped tightly around [Lil], her soft hair and mouth and knowing, experienced hands all over [Lil], claiming every bit of attention [Lil] had" (Knight 19). Such descriptions of same-sex intercourse are not explicit but remain graphic. Like Ellen was for Kate Delafield, Lil's girlfriend was a "doctor of love" (Knight 19), liberating her from emotionally repressed hurt with restorative physical catharsis at a time when she suffered from a broken heart.

Prompted by reminiscence, Lil makes a phone call to a number selected from her "little book" in search of female companionship. Taking a first person tone, she states: "it's not black, but it does have some interesting numbers in it" (Knight 30). Lil's account of the "little book's" purpose suggests that it is indeed her rendering of the interpretably male version of a 'little black book' meant for recording and sometimes rating females with whom they have kept social and sexual company. That she would keep a record of the women she has dated, in a "little book," is amusing; for, it is an example of the manner in which she has usurped a traditionally male tool, appropriating it for her own social use and to her own sexual benefit. Lil is

not chaste and does not exist peaceably alongside heterosexuals; she announces her intended sexual exploits and feelings for women without a nod to heterosexual sensitivities or contrived definitions of social decency. Later, remembering the words of her mother, "Honey, life's for the living" (Knight 194), Lil actively accepts the company of a woman who asks her to dance, showing that interest and approach are not delineated in terms of gender but in terms of daring. Where a heterosexual male might be expected to approach a heterosexual female, not vice versa, there is no structure for initiating interactions among Lesbians. Same-sex relations do not carry the burden of gender implications.

Written by Elizabeth Pincus, the Nell Fury series investigations found in the first two novels begin with pleas for help from mysterious female clients and parodies the traditional femme fatale. Fashioned in the hard-boiled tradition and reminiscent of Micky Knight's tone, in The Two-Bit Tango (1992), Nell is approached by a "lanky, scared looking brunette" who causes the Dyke-dick's "philandering heart" to leap (3). Desperately, Olive Jones solicits Nell's agency because she requires the service of "someone who's, ah, partial to women" (Two-Bit Tango 5).

Indicating that her desire is to locate a missing person, who is also a Lesbian, Olive endures the "quick tongue" (Two-Bit Tango 5) of Nell's smart-alecky double entendre references to cunnilingus. In addition, the slogan on Nell's business card, which she offers to Olive, reads "Nell Fury, Private Investigator — 'I like to Watch'" (Two-Bit Tango 6) can be interpreted as sexual innuendo. Nell's business card also serves to subvert male heterosexuals' fascination with watching Lesbian lovemaking, reinscribing sexist voyeurism.

As the investigation progresses, Nell is solicited by Olive who "trailing her fingertips across the nape of [Nell's] neck" (Two-Bit Tango 12) insinuates that she's not had experience with same-sex intercourse but that the prospect is exciting. Satirizing the tradition and parodying Micky Knight, Nell's response is to inform Olive that she's "been reading too much Raymond Chandler" and sharply notes "I only sleep with clients if they're ex-clients; and, then only if they're lesbians" (Two-Bit Tango 12). Of course Nell is an honorable PI and a principled Lesbian, unlike the mythical homosexual who wantonly lures innocent heterosexuals into experimental same-sex encounters, shattering the foundation of their orientation.

Nell rejects Olive. Like Micky Knight, Nell perceives differences between a heterosexual woman who intends to experiment with same-sex intercourse and Lesbianism. Defined by the mystery genre's version of "honor," Nell ably mocks the myth that homosexuals prey on heterosexuals, seducing them forcibly for same-sex intercourse. Later, after concluding their investigative fact-finding session, Nell describes Olive's proposition to a bartender friend, explaining that she turned down the prospect of having sexual intercourse with a woman because the woman is not a Lesbian. Joking, the bartender asks, "Since when are you so fussy?" (Two-Bit Tango 13), satirically relieving Nell of anxiety associated with sexual predators. Together their humor stabs at the anxious heart of heterosexual concern that condemns the legitimacy of homosexuality and suspects its motives.

The mysterious female client who appears in The Solitary Twist (1993) is "Grey Eyes" (2), or Christa Lovett. Offering her business card to Christa, Nell notes, "It was time for a fresh design" (Solitary Twist 5), for Nell's innuendo laden slogan is lost again, as it was with Olive Jones, because Christa fails to react. Also interested in hiring Nell because she hopes to locate a

missing person who is also a homosexual woman, Christa wants an investigator who will demonstrate sensitivity to the nature of the case. She specifically wants to hire a Lesbian. Of course, the parallels between Olive and Christa are evident, as are their concerns for fair treatment and desire for sensitivity to same-sex issues. Their reluctance to involve police, most likely to be male and homophobic, is evident and indicative of the long-lasting sentiment that crimes involving homosexuals are not as important as those which transgress the heterosexual hegemony. Problematizing the tenets of heterosexuality, it is evident that Lesbian Gayborhood's depicted in mystery fiction are aware of female subjugation and women's vulnerability to the institutionalized discrimination of heterosexuality.

Replacing the femme fatale is Merle, who appears "improbably tan for December," this "buxom gal" neighbor is a "Barbie" with a "lascivious lilt" (Solitary Twist 9). Merle has "scarlet lips" with "generous breasts" (Solitary Twist 57). When Nell "Outs" herself, Merle's reaction is to "put a hand on her hip and [nod] sagely" saying "'Ahhh'" (Solitary Twist 61) with a tone of awareness. Both the Dyke-dick and her neighbor work in good-humor to set the

stage for Merle to experience Nell's "Outing" in non-threatening space. Still, Nell notes, "It's weird, no matter how many times you come out of the closet, each episode carries a little tinge of danger" (Solitary Twist 61) indicating her awareness of the potential for backlash from heterosexuals, including rejection and injurious "bashing." Frequently it is assumed that a person is heterosexual until they confirm otherwise, and Merle does just that with Nell when she assumes that Nell is "straight" until she indicates that she is not. To Nell's relief, Merle responds, "Hey, it's cool, I've been around the block, know what I mean?" (Solitary Twist 61). But, it is evident that Nell does not know what Merle means until much later in the text when she disturbs Merle's tête-à-tête with another woman (Solitary Twist 179). Merle is Queer as well. Humorously, in the haste of "Outing" herself and in feeling a "little tinge of danger" in the process, Nell assumes that Merle is heterosexual until she confirms otherwise. Caught up in her own fear and self-loathing, Nell misses Merle's initially subtle "Outing," comically demonstrating that even Dyke-dicks have a tendency to think in terms of the very hierarchy and hegemony that they work against.

Throughout the three book series, Nell keeps company with Phoebe Grahame: best friend, favorite ex-lover, and "comeliest taxi driver" (Two-Bit Tango 26). As did Lil Ritchie with her friend Molly, Nell and Phoebe operate on sexual overtone and double entendre, adding platonic displays of affection and mutual caretaking to their repertoire. Importantly, their exchanges foster humorously stabilizing catharsis and normalize Lesbian interaction. An example of such, from the first novel, is found in Nell's exchange with Phoebe following their narrow escape from kidnappers. As Nell and Phoebe rest at a coffee shop, Nell asks if Phoebe will spend the night with her supposedly to ensure her friend's continued safety. Phoebe will have none of Nell's coddling, she answers: "No way [. . .] I'll be fine. They'll be looking for you, not me. Besides . . . I've got a date." (Two-Bit Tango 126). Humorously confirming that Lesbian performance includes dating in a social context, with the potential for romance, Phoebe jokes about her own well-being and implies that Nell's safety is not her concern so long as the opportunity for her to instigate a love affair is present. Of course Nell's welfare is important to Phoebe, and before they part company, they dub themselves "Bonnie and Bonnie" (Two-Bit

Tango 127), playing on the name of the old-time duo, Bonnie and Clyde. Their touching is platonic and their affection is mutual. Their wit diffuses the trauma of their experience, the fear of future attacks, and the resultant anxiety in their separation. They are valid and legitimate "women" and they are convincing and appealing Lesbians.

Again referring to Phoebe in The Solitary Twist, Nell describes her as "a Jean Seberg knockoff with a brunette dye job" (42). The two maintain a platonic "standing Thursday-night date" during which they "pass the time and dish the dirt at the neighborhood watering hole" (Solitary Twist 42). Nell recognizes the non-judgmental space in which she may perform when in Phoebe's company. The space allows for amusing behavior and jesting comedy on both parts, such as that found a passage from The Hang-Dog Hustle when, "At the stroke of midnight, [Nell] was gnawing on Phoebe's neck and mugging, 'I am Draaa-coo-lah'" (14) or when Phoebe calls Nell "Robo-Dyke" (106) in reference to her profession. Nell's relationship with Phoebe is a supportive alliance and their companionship demonstrates that not all Queer contact must be sexual in nature. Though the humor may be filled with innuendo, it operates as a means through which the Dyke-dick may displace her own

anxiety for her own homosexuality and offer readers an opportunity for non-aggressive catharsis of their own. Humorously their exchanges frequently diffuse each other's tension and play on the angst-ridden question concerning the nature versus nurture foundation of homosexuality.

Kindling a relationship with Tammy Rae Tinkers, Nell describes her girlfriend's voice as "mellifluous" (Two-Bit 47); the feelings she experiences for Rae are "piqued and contented" (99) meaning that her attraction is satisfying. Further indicating that the sight of Rae is enough to make her faint from pleasure, Nell confides to the reader that:

> Her lashes were curves of thick black brush, the eyes themselves like a couple of periwinkle orbs [. . .]. Her lips were pinkish and her skin glowed with the alabaster sheen of a well-polished statuette. [. . . .] Rae was shorter than me and a little plumper, but we otherwise shared the same build. Lots of hip, lots of breast, and the kind of strapping musculature that would have made us hits during the Marilyn Monroe era. Rae was a hit with me, just walking across the room [. . .]. (Two-Bit Tango 78)

Listening to Rae's "throaty laughter," Nell feels nervous. When the two engage in sexual intercourse, Nell tells the reader that her feelings for Rae "came welling forward and caught [her] in a chokehold. It was hard to breathe for a minute, but [she] didn't care, and [they] stayed smashed together for a countless bit of time" (Two-Bit Tango 145). She describes a normal physical response to a normal emotional sensation; Nell describes passion.

Enjoying the feel of each other's bodies and the awareness of each other's touch, the two begin to laugh, "a good kind of funny" (Two-Bit Tango 146). As women, they share privileged knowledge of the female body; and as partners, they feel confident enough with each other to reveal personal information. Rae tells Nell that she is menstruating, and Nell tells Rae that she has Herpes. The two make adjustments for each other and then "sweated the bed up pretty thoroughly before the night was out" (Two-Bit Tango 146). Their mutual accommodation comes from their personal understanding of female bodies and their ability to relate to other female bodies. Lying together, enjoying the closeness of each other, Nell jokes with Rae about her occupation. Claiming that one advantage she appreciates about her PI profession is that she gets "to meet beautiful

women and bed down with them" (Two-Bit Tango 146). Nell is pleasantly surprised when Rae follows along with her humor, retorting: "I get to do that in my profession, too" (146). Humorously, Rae's "field" is "left field" (Two-Bit Tango 146). Earlier when Nell was propositioned by a heterosexual client interested in experimenting with Lesbian sex, Nell responded saying: "I only sleep with clients if they're ex-clients; and, then only if they're lesbians" (Two-Bit Tango 12). Nell's honor and principles necessarily reject the heterosexual woman's intention. She is anything but a predator seducing heterosexuals forcibly. First, subverting the stereotype depicting Queers as sexual marauders, Nell acknowledges that attractive women are everywhere and that she is more than happy to find pleasure in their company, but only if they are Lesbians, too. Then Rae follows Nell's verbal play, adding that she is also prefers the company of women she finds in "left field" (Two-Bit Tango 146); she advocates the well-being of women who do not support conservative opinions and females who are also Lesbians.

In their second encounter, Rae again asks Nell why she works as a PI and if her professional enjoyment comes from the opportunity to "stamp out corruption [. . .]. Like a

modern Wonder Woman?' (Two-Bit Tango 184). Nell's laughing response indicates her acute awareness that her status as a homosexual overshadows her potential to be a traditional PI upholding order, for performing as a Lesbian she is a criminal herself. Adding "sodomy is still illegal in about half the states" (Two-Bit Tango 184), she confesses that her homosexuality makes her "a bit of a lawbreaker" (Two-Bit Tango 184). Comically diffusing the seriousness of Nell's observation, Phoebe dares her demanding: "Oh yeah? Show me" (Two-Bit Tango 184). They forge ahead breaking the law, an act that is redemptive and restorative because it allows them to literarily "denounce erotic injustice and sexual oppression" (Rubin 9) with their unapologetic performance.

More evidence of Nell's unapologetic performance comes when she tells a heterosexual friend, "It's been a busy week...whew!" (Two-Bit Tango 64) and then breaks into first-person narrative, satirically making fun of her friend's sense of nervousness concerning homosexuality. Nell tells the reader:

> I didn't mention that all the action was between me and my dual-speed 'Reach Easy' electric

> massage unit with the extra wide head and the special pleasure ridges. (Two-Bit Tango 64)

She is neither Closeted nor fearful of punishment but performs both as one who works to right injustice and who defies hegemony. Nell does as she pleases with her body by not subscribing to gender implications or expectations. Acting appropriately, as a Lesbian, Nell rebuts the principles that denounce her; she is in control of her self, her definition, and her accessibility.

Additionally, Nell engages in at least two affairs with women she barely knows. One, during The Solitary Twist, is with a woman named "Princess"; and the other, in The Hang-Dog Hustle, was a woman whom she refers to as "Raccoon Eyes." When Nell meets Princess, Nell is on the job and in search of clues at a construction site. A man yells for "Princess," a woman Nell identifies as one of the construction crewmembers. Hearing what she initially assumes is an insult, Nell asks the woman, "You let him call you 'princess'?" to which the woman "turn[s] up one corner of her mouth" and replies, "It's my name" (Solitary Twist 79). To a shocked Nell she explains, "Well it's my nickname. Really, it's Diana, but…Princess stuck" (Solitary Twist 80). The comedy here is in the divergent

images of a woman working at a construction site where anything but the stereotype of a "princess" would be found. Moreover, the woman is "maybe 5'10," with gelled hair, dramatic cheekbones, and a set of muscles rippling beneath her blue denim" (Solitary Twist 80). Of course this is "female" redefinition of function and purpose as well as witty relief for women who work in traditionally male-gendered jobs. With Princess, there is some semblance of a date that precursors intercourse. But, once engaged in physical activity, Diana exhibits behavior which is anything but that of a "Princess" for she "tops" Nell at her "Seventies bachelor pad—er, make that a bachelorette pad" (Solitary Twist 145). Nell experiences the woman as "soft and hard all at once" (Solitary Twist 146). Equipped with "a pastel assortment of gloves, condoms, and rectangular swatches" (Solitary Twist 147) Princess is anything but wantonly carefree about casual sex. Though through their sex act, neither could conceivably become pregnant, there is still a risk of sexually transmitted venereal diseases and the autoimmune deficiency syndrome, AIDS. Nell confesses that she has herpes; Princess confesses that she's slept with men; and they laugh about being "a safer sex TV ad" (Solitary Twist 148). Princess

is "one of those multi-orgasmic types who could probably come in five seconds with the aid of a feather duster" and Nell participated, "enjoying the novelty of [. . .] the unfamiliar rhythms of a near stranger" (Solitary Twist 148). Nell has many opportunities to practice and normalize Lesbian sexuality in her experience with Princess.

Nell's second affair with a stranger, "Raccoon Eyes," is one in which the description of Lesbian sex includes both women engaging in cunnilingus without name introductions or familiarizing conversation. But, departing, Nell notes, "I loved her fiercely then, in that fragile moment" (Hang-Dog Hustle 86). Redefining "love" and emotional expression, Nell yet confirms that she is able to experience affection for Raccoon Eyes. Though there is no promise for permanence in their relationship, Nell's experience is not necessarily casual.

Notably working as an agent of the law, the Lesbian PI often stands on frustrating crossroads violating social expectations when engaged in intercourse. Her professional status as an agent of the law, inconsistent with her personal status as a member of a sexually marginalized and erotically persecuted people, make her the most ideal

subject to challenge ideology reflected in traditional mystery fictions embodying mainstream prejudice and intolerance for and against homosexuality and its performance. The sexually active Lesbian PI, simultaneously an agent of the law and an outlaw, disobediently defies ideologies that brand her body, her emotive properties, and her sexual expression as inferior. The Dyke-dick, defined independently from heterosexual hegemony, embraces same-sex affection and intercourse freely with her refusal to conform means liberation for her and for her partner(s). She saves them from conservative, anti-sexual discourses, dismantling traditional male privilege, and distorting gender implications by failing to meet expectations for female performance.

Without concern for religiously defined decency or socially proposed propriety, without grave concern for hierarchical precepts or hegemonic ideology, the Dyke-dick is a sexually expressive woman attracted to women. Not Closeted in fear of reprisal, the Lesbian PI boldly stands on both sides of the law, performing with privilege, doing as she pleases with her body, out of accordance with socially defined gender implications and genre expectations. By virtue of her "being," the Lesbian PI

rebuts the principles that denounce her, refusing to be coerced into a political construct of "normal." And, she rejects the construct of "abnormal" as her identity. Not separating gender from sexuality, she controls definition and identity. Not allowing criticism for her same-sex performance to poison her existence or the enjoyment she gives and receives acting on her body's natural impulses or desires; she commandingly enacts resistance and ensures her own survival.

AFTERWARD:

LESBIAN DETECTIVES IN MYSTERY FICTION AFTER STONEWALL: THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF COMMUNITY BUILDING CHARACTERS

From 1961, the year that Lou Rand's The Gay Detective appeared and officially Queered the hard-boiled genre, until 1993 there was only one published text that contained significant information relative to Gay and Lesbian characters and themes in mystery fiction. That text, written by Anthony Slide and titled Gay and Lesbian Characters and Themes in Mystery Novels: A Critical Guide to Over 500 Works in English (1993), was the first mainstream evidence that Queer characters were plentiful in mystery fiction.

From 1961 until 1993, an entire sub-genre of Queer authored mystery fiction emerged featuring Queer protagonists. Gayborhood bookstores shelved the novels, promoting and supporting the presses that published them. Even so, Queer mystery fiction remained largely ghettoized. Though it was an integral part of the Gayborhood's reading community, Queer mystery contributions were incidental to mainstream mystery readers. In an attempt to preserve and promote a Lesbian mystery fiction canon, I include a

bibliography of Lesbian-authored Lesbian mystery novels published from 1969 to 2004 in the appendix. It is divided into two parts and features novel series first. Following the series contributions is a list of one-shot publications: novels that are not part of a series.

Assembling the bibliography took almost as much energy as the actual research for this dissertation because many of the books are out of print and difficult to locate. Exclusively produced by feminist presses, the founding novels were manufactured in small quantities; and, though many of the titles are now being released in reprints by larger presses, the less successful ones have disappeared from sight. More troublesome was the discovery that many of the feminist presses are now defunct. Having traded hands and changed names, or completely retired, their books are difficult to acquire. Fortunately the more prominent titles, published by the more prolific authors, originally contained publisher's printing lists that pointed to the discovery of less popular authors and less prominent titles.

Though the bibliography initially began as a personal compilation of Lesbian-authored novels, which I intended to collect, I soon realized that the publication list was more

extensive that I could have reasonably estimated. Indicating a very prolific period, the collection, printed exclusively by Feminist presses, produced all of the initial novels. Large, mainstream-publishing houses distributed none. Whether the lack of mainstream publishing support was politically motivated press snobbery or the authors' own apprehensions to approach the large houses, I cannot confirm. Though I suspect a bit of both.

I have observed that published works present both writers and readers with the opportunity to cooperate in significant ways; in addition, printed material has a great deal of power in society. When books—including those of the mystery genre—are published, they become valid venues through which culture is later assessed and evaluated by readers. Therefore, a published book—especially in context with other publications of its type—constructs reality, such as publishers intend reality to be for the consumer population at large. With this understanding, I have come to realize how little Lesbian mystery fiction was able to interact in an accomplished way with the dominant culture. Therefore, Lesbians as a whole have been suppressed and subsequently underrated.

Until the appearance of Feminist presses, the mainstream publishing houses controlled the definition of literature. It was the feminist and independent presses that took on the role and risk of encouraging unknown Lesbian authors to submit their writing for review. They also took the chance to publish work relative to topics that concerned the Lesbian community while also providing the platform for the cultivation of new, positive, and pro-Queer lesbian archetypes. It is from this view that I perceive the Lesbian's place in publishing is more than creating literature but about fostering new standards for communication and acknowledgment. Rather than submit to any notion that Lesbian voices should be silent, they rather take control and yield a non-traditional form of power to legitimize their own kind of knowledge, disseminate their own kind of experience, and share a different kind of awareness with Lesbian and non-Lesbian readers alike. They convey unapproved, non-dominant forms of culture and social positions, functions, and responsibilities. Further, the feminist presses who published Lesbian mystery fiction also helped to guide discourse related to authority and order, affecting social change and conceptions of truth.

I have come to happily realize that the influx of Dyke-dick mystery novels into the mainstream is perhaps signaling not only increased awareness but also increased acceptance of the larger Queer community. In turn, the publication of Lesbian mystery novels by large publishing houses also signals a move from the margins, from the less valid position of sub-genre, to inclusion under the umbrella of the main genre. As such, the center no longer holds, for the boundaries of acceptance dictate that adjustments must be made to make room for these new additions. The products of Feminist presses have fashioned ongoing achievements.

Many authors of Lesbian mystery fiction now publish Un-closeted PIs with confidence that early founders did not unanimously display. Some of the early author's names are pseudonyms; and, a number of the titles are only identifiably Queer because their publication histories begin with Feminist presses that included Lesbian texts and Lesbian-feminist publishers. The content of the bibliography in the appendix demonstrates that Lesbian mystery fiction does exist in respectably significant numbers and assures the existence of a Lesbian-authored mystery fiction community.

For the reader's convenience, the works are numbered. There are nearly 100 series and over 100 one-shots recorded here. It seemed fitting to end this work with a beginning: a beginning point through which other researchers may garner resources for further critical contributions.

NOTES

[1] See Lisa Marie Dresner's Woman, Detective, Other: Theorizing the Female Investigator in Literature, Film, and Popular Culture. 2002; Alida Marie Moore's Odd Girl Detectives: Investigators in Sexuality, Popular Narrative, and Identity. 2002; Meredith Ahner Wood's Re/sisters in Crime: Politics and Sexuality in Lesbian Detective Novels. 2000; Karen Michele Cadora's The Limits of Lesbiana: Race and Class in Twentieth Century Lesbian Genre Fiction. 1999; Maureen Murphy's Daughters of Sam Spade: The American Private Eye. 1999; and Magdalena Zchokke's The Other Woman, From Monster to Vampire: The Figure of the Lesbian in Fiction. 1994.

[2] See Bonnie Zimmerman's The Safe Sea of Women: Lesbian Fiction 1969-1989 (Boston: Beacon, 1997) for one such example.

[3] In 1969 a police raid on a New York City Gay bar, called Stonewall Inn, became the impetus for the modern Gay Right's Movement. Homosexual patrons of the bar fought the police and rioted in the streets for many days following the raid. It is out of this Queer uprising that I base the beginning of my literary study, as many independent presses

were established following this historic episode—and I would argue—because of this episode.

[4] "Gayborhood" typically refers to a Gay-friendly or predominately Gay neighborhood. Here, I appropriate it to mean a Gay-friendly literary community, or literary canon, favorably depicting homosexuality favorably.

[5] At the tail end of this project, I found a fantastic book. Dr. Judith A. Markowitz, The Gay Detective Novel: Lesbian and Gay Main Characters and Themes in Mystery Fiction, (New York: Routledge, 2004). The very fact that this text is one of only two that exist of its type speaks largely to the dearth of information available and the need for bibliographic compilations of this material.

[6] Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," 1841, Edgar Allan Poe: Greenwich Unabridged Literary Classics, (New York Chatham River, 1981), featured August Dupin.

[7] Wilkie Collins, The Moonstone, 1868, (New York: Signet, 2002), featured Sergeant Cuff; Conan Doyle's A Study in Scarlet featured Sherlock Holmes.

[8] Anna Katherine Green, The Leavenworth Case: A Lawyer's Story 1978, (New York: Dover, 1981), featured

Ebenezer Gryce. Seeley Register actually wrote The Dead Letter (1867) eleven years before Anna Katherine Green. See B. J. Rahn's, "Seeley Register: America's First American Novelist," The Sleuth and the Scholar: Origins, Evolution and Current Trends in Mystery Fiction, (New York: Greenwood, 1988).

[9] Amelia Butterworth in Anna Katherine Green, That Affair Next Door and Lost Man's Lane, (Durham: Duke UP, 2003) and Violet Strange in Anna Katherine Green, The Golden Slipper and Other Problems for Violet Strange, (New York: A.L. Burt, 1915).

Amelia Butterworth (1897) was an unmarried but respectable lady with manners. She was secretive about her talents and professional goals so critics wouldn't think that she was unladylike. As such, she knew how to balance sleuthing without upsetting her socializing. Violet Strange (1915) was a modern woman during the first wave of feminism. She was successful at fulfilling both her expected social duties and her professional investigative duties. She was attractive, intelligent and humorous, with the manners of a lady. Meaning that, she hid her true mental and physical abilities, as well as her intentions,

from men. (Notably, women detectives existed in the Victorian and Edwardian periods.)

The Pennsylvania legislature questioned Green's authorship believing a woman unable to create a detective story based on concrete legal points. For more information on Green see Patricia D. Maida, Mother of Detective Fiction: The Life and Works of Anna Katherine Green, (Bowling: Bowling Green UP, 1989).

[10] Wilkie Collins, The Queen of Hearts, 1859, (New York: Arno, 1976). Note that he wrote this nine years before The Moonstone was published.). Edgar Allan Poe, "Thou Art the Man," Edgar Allan Poe: Greenwich Unabridged Literary Classics, (New York: Chatham River, 1981).

[11] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Man with the Watches," 1909, The Sherlokian Doyle: The Man with the Watches and the Lost Special, (Culver City: Luther Norris, 1968).

[12] See John G. Cawelti, Kathleen Gregory Klein, Howard Haycraft, Stephen Knight, Sally R. Munt, Maureen T. Reedy, Julian Symons, and Priscilla L. Walton with Manina Jones.

[13] New Historical readings of all the early texts lend themselves to homosexual interpretation as the romantic descriptions and intimate intellectual relationships,

between the detectives and their assistants or the pursued criminals, seem Queer by today's standards.

[14] Dorothy Sayers abandoned detective fiction in 1937, to pursue religious writing instead.

[15] Golden Age men included, but were not limited to: C. Day Lewis, John Dickenson Carr, Michael Innes, Michael Gilbert, Ellis Peters, P. D. James, H. R. F. Keating, A. A. Milne, S. S. Van Dine, C. K. Chesterson. As much as my readings reveal, none of these authors dealt with homosexuality in their novels, neither as victims nor as villains.

[16] Released in the United States as The Dawson Pedigree.

[17] Nurse Mary Whittaker can also be arguably interpretable as Asexual. For, she cast Findlater off when her use was ended and without concern for their relationship. Too, she evidences no care for a heterosexual relationship.

[18] The negative connotations interpretable in the Lesbian Nurse's name: Mary Whittaker. Mary is "bitter" from Hebrew. It can also be interpreted "Merry" meaning "happy." Whittaker can be broken into "whit," or "wit,"

and "taker." The implication is that the Lesbian is a "bitter bit taker," or a "bitter wit taker" who ensnares the unworldly and the innocent, unknowingly. Also, apparent in the character's names is the insinuation that intimate female friendships were thoughtless and sentimental. Notice the connotations in the name of the nurse's friend: Vera Findlater. Vera is "true" from Latin or "faithful" from Russian. This first name can be interpreted to mean that she is a real woman and eventually faithful to her heterosexual nature. Which, according to her last name, Findlater, she will "find later," after her "taken wit" returns.

[19] Humorously notable is that a "Campion" is a type of lychnis plant with red, pink, or white flowers.

[20] Anthony Slide, Gay and Lesbian Characters and Themes in Mystery Novels: A Critical Guide to Over 500 Works in English, (Jefferson: McFarland, 1993) also references this work (41).

[21] Christie's autobiography references her mother's suspicion that she might have been inclined toward lesbianism. See Gillian Gill, Agatha Christie: The Woman and Her Mysteries, (New York: Free P, 1990).

[22] See Lynda Hart, Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994). This book reveals the medical drive behind the creation of "Lesbian" as capriciously criminal and invariably violent.

[23] See Ngaio Marsh, Black Beech and Honeydew: An Autobiography, 1965, (London: HarperCollins, 2002), which contains references that indicate she was a Closeted Lesbian.

[24] See Howard Haycraft's "Rules of the Game," The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays, (New York: Grossett & Dunlap, 1946), for S. S. Van Dine's, Ronald Knox's and the Detection Club's rules for writers writing detective fiction.

[25] For example, Dashiell Hammett, Red Harvest, 1929, (New York: Vintage, 1992), features Sam Spade and Raymond Chandler, The Big Sleep; Farewell, My Lovely; The High Window, (New York: Knopf, 2002) features Philip Marlowe.

[26] See also works by authors Robert B. Parker, Roger L. Simon, and Erle Stanley Gardner, all of whom supported the hard-boiled tradition and modified it per their period.

[27] John Carroll Daly is not included as none of his detective stories dealt with homosexuality. I have read

neither implicit nor explicit Gay or Lesbian victims or villains in his writing.

[28] Note that Hammett wrote this type of relationship into his text forty-one years before Agatha Christie wrote of such a relationship between women in her novel, Nemesis, (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1971).

[29] For discussion on Chandler and homosexuality see Michael Mason "Marlowe, Men and Women," The World of Raymond Chandler, (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1977). Also refer to Chandler's own letters in The Raymond Chandler Papers: Selected Letters and Nonfiction 1909-1959, (New York: Grove P, 2000) and Selected Letters of Raymond Chandler, (New York: Macmillan, 1983).

[30] According to my, albeit limited, readings of the series' written by these three women, homosexuals are noticeably absent as victims and as villains; while each has received a fair amount of speculative guessing, on the part of readers, concerning the sexual orientation's of their PI's.

[31] Hansen was involved in numerous Gay relationships before and during his fifty-one year, marriage to Jane Bancroft. The couple had one child, a daughter, who sought

gender reassignment in adulthood. At the time of Hansen's death in November 2004, Hansen's son was his only survivor. There are a great number of biographical references available for Joseph Hansen, but be careful not to confuse the father of the Gay mystery series with the Socialist Joseph Hansen as they are two different authors.

[32] Humorously, his Scandinavian name means "Daughter of Brand." See Roger Bromley, "Rewriting the Masculine Script: The Novels of Joseph Hansen," Gender, Genre and Narrative Pleasure, (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989). A detail that I suggest parodies uses of character names in crime fiction to highlight personality traits or motivations.

[33] Miss Hinchcliff does a bit of information gathering in Agatha Christie's Murder is Announced, (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1967), evidencing the first interpretable Lesbian investigator complete with partner-sidekick, Miss Murgatroyd. And, Marcia Muller published what is recognized formally as the first female PI with her Sharon McCone series, Edwin of the Iron Shoes, 1977, (New York: Mysterious P, 1993), in this same year.

[34] Beal had a traditional heterosexual marriage to David Schetzline and did have children. Perhaps more a

commentary on the privilege of heterosexuality than anything else, it was on the coattails of this publication that Lesbian authors of Lesbian mysteries appeared. Furthermore, her technique copies that of Ross Macdonald.

[35]Marcia Muller's Shoshone investigator Sharon McCone; Sara Paretsky's Polish-Italian-Jewish V. I. [Victoria Iphegenia] Warshawski; Sue Grafton's urban politico Kinsey Millhone.

[36] See Bonnie Zimmerman, The Safe Sea of Women: Lesbian Fiction 1969-1989, 1990, (Boston: Beacon, 1997). She outlines and details her argument that the Lesbian figure in literature is both a reflection of and an influence on culture.

[37] Though I agreeably see the relatedness between such characterizations by Sally R. Munt who calls Lesbians "tragic, maimed creatures trapped in a world of alcohol, violence, and meaningless sex" (9), Murder by the Book? Feminism and the Crime Novel, (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[38] Here "women" is referred to as a social construct and not a biological truth.

[39] See Sally R. Munt, Murder by the Book? Feminism and the Crime Novel, (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[40] See Penny Coleman, Rosie the Riveter: Women Working on the Home Front in World War II, (New York: Crown, 1995), for some enjoyable and informative period history. Also refer to Lois Sharf, To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism, and the Great Depression, (Westport: Greenwood, 1980).

[41] Husband-wife team.

[42] The subject of a TV series.

[43] This was a short story that eventually led to a series.

[44] Followed by many authors who wrote one-shot contributions from the 1980 through the 1990's such as Elizabeth Bowers, Agnes Bushell, Marian Foster, Lee Lynch, and Sandra Scoppettone's.

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APPENDIX I

Authors with Series Contributions to the Lesbian Mystery Fiction Canon.

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