



Hardboiled Mystery Writers: Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, Ross Macdonald: A Literary Reference

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The action is violent, the characters are tough, the atmosphere's dark, the tone impersonal, the speech colloquial, and the voice of the author, whatever his origins or background, authentically American. Hard-boiled crime fiction, which captured the national imagination in the bitter, hard-bitten 1930s and flourished for many decades after, is a leading example of endemically American literary prose. Certainly, in the work of Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, and Ross Macdonald, which featured maverick, independent-minded private eyes like Philip Marlowe, Sam Spade, and Lew Archer, emerges a distinctively American kind of hero. Amply illustrated with personal photographs and with reproductions of manuscript pages, letters, print ads, movie promotions, dust jackets, and paperback covers, this volume provides a documentary chronicle of the life beyond and the work behind the creation of some of the most masterly detective novels in popular American literature. Correspondence and interviews record the literary tastes and intents of Chandler, Hammett, and Macdonald as well as their responses to judgments of their work in reviews of their books and the movies based on them. A generous selection of the reviews themselves conjure the larger literary climate of the times and provide the evaluations of influential contemporary critics—among them, the distinguished writer Eudora Welty, who initiated a reappraisal of the entire Macdonald canon. In all, this engaging, informative look at Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, and Ross Macdonald and their hard-boiled detective novels offers in a single volume a wide variety of resources by which to view afresh a singularly American literary accomplishment.

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