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Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

**The Detective as Veteran:
The Trauma of War in the Work of
Raymond Chandler**

Sarah Louise Trott

Submitted to the University of Wales in fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2010

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Summary

Raymond Chandler created his detective Philip Marlowe not as the idealisation of heroic individualism as is commonly perceived, but instead as an authentic individual subjected to very real psychological frailties resulting from his traumatic experiences during World War One. Marlowe's characterisation goes beyond the traditional chivalric readings and should instead be interpreted as an authentic representation of a traumatised veteran in American society. Substituting the horror of the trenches for the corruption of the city, Chandler's disillusioned protagonist and his representation of an uncaring American society resonate strongly with the dislocation of the *Lost Generation*. Consequently, it is profitable to consider Chandler not simply as a generic writer but as a genuine literary figure. This thesis re-examines important primary documents highlighting extensive discrepancies in existing biographical narratives of Chandler's war experience, and unveils an account that is significantly different from that of his biographers, revealing the trauma that troubled Chandler throughout his life. The application of psychological behavioural interpretation to interrogate Chandler's novels demonstrates the variety of post-traumatic symptoms that tormented both Chandler and his protagonist. A close reading of his personal papers reveals the psychological symptoms of PTSD that were subconsciously encoded into Marlowe's characterisation. Marlowe can only be understood a character shaped by Chandler's own experiences. This conflation of the hard-boiled style and war experience has influenced many contemporary crime writers, particularly in the traumatic aftermath of the Vietnam War. The sum of this work offers a new understanding of Chandler's traumatic war experience, how that experience established the traditional archetype of detective fiction, and how this reading of his work allows Chandler to transcend generic limitations to be recognised as a key twentieth century literary figure.

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Introduction

CHANDLER AND HEMINGWAY

**“It’s too bad that Chandler and Hemingway never got together.
But maybe they didn’t have to.”¹**

-Wilson Pollock

Raymond Chandler is considered to be one of the originators of the hard-boiled school of crime writing, yet this hard-boiled style could not have existed without the entirely new mode of modern language that developed in the post-World War One era. At the vanguard of this modernist mode of writing were Ernest Hemingway and the American ‘Lost Generation,’ a generation of writers who had experienced the horrors First World War and had returned to be disillusioned by the decadence and self-indulgence that pervaded 1920s American society. Personalising the hard-boiled genre with the use of a first person narrative, Chandler propelled crime fiction further than his predecessor Dashiell Hammett by linking his work to the inner turmoil depicted so vividly by the ‘Lost Generation.’ Although the critical establishment at the time deemed that their work could, and should never intersect, when considered together a case can be made that Chandler’s novels and short stories legitimately resonate with the work of Ernest Hemingway.

Despite experiencing considerable public notoriety, Chandler’s work never received the literary recognition and critical acclaim of many of his contemporaries. This elusive widespread recognition is all the more surprising considering that many of Chandler’s novels were favourably compared with one of America’s most celebrated authors. While the literary and stylistic similarities between the work of Chandler and Hemingway have been noted, the importance of this connection has never been seriously examined or its implications fully considered. It was not until the decade after Chandler’s death that critics such as Wilson Pollock in his 1962 article for *The New Republic* titled ‘Man With a Toy Gun,’ gradually began to appreciate the similarities in the work of the

two authors. Pollock argued that the main differences between the two writers was based solely on genre. While Hemingway's reputation and popularity was grounded in novels that had managed to capture the zeitgeist, Chandler's detective novels written in a genre not normally associated with enduring creative writing, were never able to achieve the same literary status. However, Pollock pointed out that by setting aside the difference in genre, there was actually a strong affinity in their work. Basing this judgement on Hemingway's attempt at the hard-boiled style, Pollock demonstrated their similarity by noting that, "The Killers' could almost be a 'Black Mask' story except that the ending would probably have cost the author a rejection slip... [and] *To Have and Have Not* is not very much better than *Farewell, My Lovely*" (Pollock, 1962, p.22). The only significant difference between the two authors, he concluded, was that while Hemingway was able to crown his literary achievements with one of the twentieth century's most revered novels, Chandler was never quite able to achieve this distinction. Pollock asserted that the only literary achievement that distinguished the reputation and subsequent standing of the two writers was "that Hemingway... wrote *A Farewell to Arms*" (Pollock, 1962, p.22). Pollock's article initiates an intriguing discussion that draws direct parallels between the authors' styles, and concludes that it was Hemingway's war novel that decisively set the two writers apart and thus established Hemingway's place in the American literary canon.

Analogies between the work of Chandler and Hemingway had been casually noted as early as the late-1940s. Literary critics first became aware of the widespread public anticipation that preceded the publication of a new Chandler novel, which they discovered to their surprise, was very similar to that which accompanied the publication of a new Hemingway novel. In October 1949 for example, *Newsweek* announced that, "the publication of Chandler's "The Little Sister" has about the same reclame as would, for another literary set, Ernest Hemingway's long-expected novel" (*Newsweek*, 1949, p.69-70). But while both writers enjoyed a sizeable popular following, Chandler's novels were never able to transcend their generic status and propel him into a similar 'elite' standing as Hemingway. Chandler's novels were written "for another literary set" and sought after by a different type of reader interested in fiction written in a fundamentally different genre. Because the detective genre was not considered capable of making a major contribution to American literature, critics effectively denied Chandler the opportunity of achieving a high cultural standing.

By the turn of the decade comparisons between Chandler and Hemingway had been taken even further. Critics began to assert that the allure of Chandler's style was not only equal to that of Hemingway, it was for some, the representation of Hemingway's voice taken from a 'Lost Generation' context and relocated in the crime genre. The association of Chandler's work with Hemingway and the 'Lost Generation' is a significant achievement for a writer of detective fiction. In 1951 H.A.L Craig, wrote in the British journal *The Listener* that Chandler's style of writing was of "Hemingway and Dashiell Hammett born" (Craig, 1951, p.513), and suggested that Chandler's work had become a representation of Hemingway's influence in a genre never previously associated with the 'Lost Generation'. Although Craig believes that Chandler learnt his stylistic lessons and methodology from authors such as Hemingway and Hammett, it is undeniable that Chandler took the modernist style of both writers and evolved it into something new, imposing his own unique contemporary stamp on the genre through his use of punchy language, staccato sentences and colourful adjectives. Chandler explained his intentions by stating that,

All I wanted to do when I began writing was to play with a fascinating new language, to see what it would do as a means of expression which might remain on the level of unintellectual thinking and yet acquire the power to say things which are usually only said with a literary air... (Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.214).

But Chandler was not alone in his use of this new modernist language and it influenced the styles of many authors. As Roy Meador has noted, like many amongst the 'Lost Generation' that rejected the 'old' forms of literary expression, Hemingway was in the vanguard of those who chose to express themselves in a new style. Meador argued that in his short stories and novels Hemingway "had vividly illustrated the special power of this 'new language'" (Meador, 1982, p.150). The power of the new language that Meador refers to enabled writers to be far more subtle with their style of writing. Hemingway especially is renowned for what he called the 'iceberg style,' a method of writing which enabled the author to use language that was far less embellished but still retained the overall message and tone in his work. He believed that if readers had a certain level of understanding there would be no need for a writer to divulge too many details; the overall meaning would be understood. In *Death in the Afternoon* Hemingway wrote,

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. (Hemingway, 1932, p.169)

It was therefore, a style that did not require elaborate explanation to make the writer's meaning known, it could simply be implied. This style of writing Hemingway likened to an iceberg not only because it had "dignity of movement" but also "due to only one-eighth of it being above water" (Hemingway, 1932, p.183).

Given the similarity in their styles it is hardly surprising then, that Chandler held Hemingway in high regard. In 1942 Chandler noted that his admiration for Hemingway was mainly due to his sense of honesty and realism, commenting that "Hemingway sees it all, not just the flies on the garbage" (MacShane, 1987, p.23). Chandler appreciated Hemingway's writing because it was written in the style that he himself wanted to write. He said, "I wrote melodrama because when I looked around me it was the only kind of writing I saw that was relatively honest and yet was not trying to put over somebody's party line" (Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.214).

Although Pollock believed it was regrettable that Chandler and Hemingway never met, he nonetheless noted that any discussion of the author would be incomplete if it failed to consider the influence of Hemingway's life and accomplishments upon Chandler's work. Pollock was adamant that in any discussion of Chandler's work, it was "only natural that Hemingway's name should come up" (Pollock, 1962, p.22), despite the fact that they were generally exponents of different literary genres.

Taking this as a starting point and concentrating on the life and work of Raymond Chandler, this thesis will explore the notion that Philip Marlowe is much more than simply the battered and disillusioned private eye he is often portrayed to be. By considering the consequences of Chandler's war experience in the same way as critics have deliberated over Hemingway's, and by examining the idiosyncrasies and unconventional behaviour that are so essential in understanding Chandler's character, it will be argued that these individualistic qualities were projected, or encoded, onto his creation Philip Marlowe. As a consequence Marlowe was created not as an ordinary detective but as someone who was a veteran of the First World War and whose experiences and permanent psychological injuries helped to shape his distinctive personality. The characterisation of Chandler's protagonist will be considered throughout this study and it will be argued that his war veteran detective was consequently moulded

from the author's own war trauma and troublesome experiences during the First World War. This examination reveals that Chandler's detective may be understood as an entirely different entity than the conventional 'chivalric' persona portrayed by commentators such as Jerry Spier and Lee Horsley. This thesis proposes that the widely accepted perception of Marlowe as a chivalric knight, usually regarded as the basis for his motivations, must be re-evaluated since it masks the influence of Chandler's own experiences during the First World War. By transplanting the figure of Marlowe from the perspective of medieval mythology to the milieu of post-war America, the detective is revealed not as a knight but as a soldier, a veteran returned from battle, isolated and endeavouring to make sense of the confusion and bewilderment of post-war society. As Marlowe clings to his code of values he struggles to come to terms with the modern America in which he now finds himself.

Expanding on the theme of disillusionment and decadence of the 'Roaring 20s,' this thesis will seek to locate Chandler alongside the elite writers who experienced the First World War at close quarters and were subsequently labelled the 'Lost Generation.' It will be argued that when identifying writers of the 'Lost Generation' it becomes meaningless to discriminate on the basis of genre alone because the concept of genre had, by this time, already become blurred and imprecise as a direct result of the war and its aftermath.

If Chandler can be legitimately critiqued alongside writers such as Hemingway, then it is reasonable that he should be considered as part of the 'Lost Generation.' As the author Gertrude Stein, writing of the returning soldiers of the First World War, noted, "all of [the] young people who served in the war" returned to America a "lost generation" (cited in Lynn, 1995, p.333). This generation, as F. Scott Fitzgerald's character Amory Blaine noted in *This Side of Paradise*, spoke for American youth: "Here was a new generation... grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p.270). Michael Parish noted that these returning soldiers were men who "struggled to define the relationship between their craft, their lives, and their place in society in the aftermath of the Great War." He further explains that,

They were disillusioned by the savagery of the war and the failure of peacemaking; they rebelled against the moral provincialism and boorishness of their own middle-class upbringing; they distrusted the institutions of mature capitalism and the nation's dominant commercial culture. (Parish, 1994, p.184)

Accepting Malcolm Cowley's argument that the 'Lost Generation' is more accurately described as the World War One generation (Cowley, 1973, p.vii), the grounds for Chandler's inclusion are clear. Irrespective of genre this gifted but traumatised generation of writers symbolised the disillusionment and isolation felt by many in post-First World War American society.

One line of enquiry in this thesis has been to scrutinise the biographical material that exists regarding Chandler. The two prominent biographies, *The Life of Raymond Chandler* (1978) by Frank MacShane and Tom Hiney's *Raymond Chandler: A Biography* (1997), approach their subject from different viewpoints yet have placed their own distinctive (and sometimes misleading) emphases upon differing aspects of Chandler's character and experiences. MacShane, who was approached by Chandler's heir and executrix Helga Green to write his biography, concentrates on Chandler's life in great detail and wrote what is generally considered to be the most exhaustive examination of the author to date. Utilising original sources, MacShane was granted access to Chandler's letters, papers, and also manuscripts from various agents, publishing houses and acquaintances. His analysis of Chandler's war experience relied upon documentary evidence from the Ministry of Defence in London, the Air Historical Branch (later the Royal Air Force), the Ministry of Defence in Ottawa, and the Public Archives of Canada. But despite this wealth of research data, an interrogation of this material reveals that MacShane's biography contains a number of significant inconsistencies and inaccuracies, that will be discussed in chapter three.

In contrast to MacShane, Tom Hiney focuses on creating a cultural and social framework through which to examine Chandler's works. He notes interesting connections between Chandler's experiences during the First World War and the depiction of violence in his novels, as well as drawing attention to the psychological and behavioural difficulties that Chandler suffered later in life. But similarly to MacShane's account of Chandler's life, Hiney's biography also falls short, containing a number of inconsistencies uncovered by the original research undertaken in the preparation of this thesis. It should also be noted that Hiney appears to have taken much of MacShane's original information and reproduced it without re-examination or authentication.

In addition to the two principal biographies, Jerry Speir has also made a unique and important contribution to understanding Philip Marlowe's character in his book *Raymond Chandler* (1981). Providing only a brief biography of Chandler, Speir concentrates instead on the reoccurring themes that are apparent in the author's works. Examining

each of the novels in its own individual context, he provides a persuasive and intelligent argument of how each story should be read and understood. He explains that by examining Marlowe in this way many of the arguments posited by critics regarding the detective's temperament should be either re-evaluated or dismissed. By placing particular emphasis on investigating individual scenarios and examining Marlowe's reactions, the detective appears a far more authentic and sympathetic character than previously acknowledged.

It should be noted that any attempt to 'pigeonhole' Chandler's work is an inadequate mode of appraising the value of his achievements. Consequently, this thesis will use the classification 'crime genre' when discussing the broad sweep of the hard-boiled style, and 'detective fiction' when discussing Chandler's work specifically. As well as Chandler-specific contributions, many writers over the past two decades have attempted to re-evaluate the cultural importance of crime fiction, and to document just how much the genre has changed and broadened its boundaries. Works by Andrew Pepper, Lee Horsley, Paul Cobby, Hans Bertens, Theo D'haen and Peter Messent, have all discussed twentieth century detective literature. They identify key themes and issues that have shaped the character of the detective, including race, gender, sexuality, class, and politics.

Lee Horsley's *Twentieth Century Crime Fiction* (2005) is an analysis of both American and British detective fiction in the twentieth century, and is a focussed attempt to bring together various theoretical approaches to the study of crime fiction. By incorporating, for example, feminist, psychoanalytic, or historical views, the text is a chronological review of forty-seven short stories and novels from the twentieth century, beginning with classic detective fiction and concluding with the feminist resurgence in the 1990s. Bringing together the views of some of the field's most noted critics, Horsley uses their arguments to create a historical framework for the analysis of the contemporary crime novel. Arguing that each mutation of the genre has its roots in previous phases of the evolutionary process, Horsley contends that the 'tough guy writing' of traditional crime fiction is comprised of both the typical masculine idealisation of the detective and also "private eyes of all descriptions," many of whom can be considered "downtrodden victims" (Horsley, 2005, p.68) of the world they live in. In the inter-war years, Horsley argues that "hard-boiled writers addressed the problems of their society explicitly" (Horsley, 2005, p.68) and by doing so subtly changed the form of crime fiction. These changes "were seen primarily as moves in an ever-evolving game played with readers whose interest could be kept alive by the ingenious modification of existing conventions"

(Horsley, 2005, p.68-9). Accordingly, the post-World War One era saw an increased diversity in the creation of fictional detectives. Chandler played his part in this development, and illustrated this in his article 'The Simple Art of Murder.' As Horsley notes, "his condemnation of [the] limited sphere of interest signalled a shift that did in fact constitute an opening out of the genre, a new responsiveness to altered socio-political circumstances" (Horsley, 2005, p.69).

Acknowledging that critics have attempted to classify the "different shoots of crime writing" (Horsley, 2005, p.1), Horsley uses Chandler's own words to demonstrate that crime fiction is a form that cannot simply be categorised. Instead it is a style that is continuously evolving and expanding. Chandler argued that the crime genre was a form,

...which has never really been licked, and those who have prophesied its decline and fall have been wrong for that exact reason. Since its form has never been perfected, it has never become fixed. The academicians have never got their dead hands on it. It is still fluid, still too various for easy classification, still putting out shoots in all directions. (cited in Horsley, 2005, p.1)

By stressing that the detective genre is far more fluid than previously thought, Horsley has made an important contribution to the understanding of crime fiction and the development of the genre through the twentieth century.

Paul Cobby notes in *The American Thriller: Generic Innovation and Social Change in the 1970s* (2000), that the term 'genre' is an ineffective literary categorisation because by definition it does not allow writers the freedom to expand their thoughts and opinions. Cobby traces the suggestion that the political and social crises of confidence that gripped the United States during the 1970s have effected the way detective fiction has been written. The political corruption epitomised by events such as Watergate, and the general disenchantment following the Vietnam War cultivated a sense of national trauma that pushed hard-boiled fiction in a new direction. The deceptions and unrestrained violence that had hitherto been meticulously concealed suddenly emerged and for many these representations became a shocking but accurate depiction of the American political system and way of life. These strongly negative perceptions were quickly adopted as the lynchpins of the 'new' type of crime literature.

Cobby also believes that literature can be "hetero-glossic," having more than one voice and more than one origin. He argues that the origins of many types of literature "can be found not just in one genre as is often argued... but in many genres" (Cobby,

2000, p.27). The social factors that had influenced writers since the turn of the twentieth century suddenly became far more explicit in the 1970s with stunningly brutal effect. Cobley's work is notable because it recognises that social stimuli and particularly social instability play an important part in determining the type and style of literature that each generation of writers produce. Many of the issues and arguments Cobley raises are relevant not just to the post-Vietnam era but also to the social trauma experienced by the World War One generation. He notes that the main feature of crime fiction in the post-World War One era is,

...a special clipped and laconic prose style thought to be appropriate to depicting the hard realities of the modern world. Derived from journalism, American literary naturalism and the work of Hemingway, this style developed in America between the wars as a kind of 'pure' prose, an almost transparent vehicle for the reporting of 'objective' facts (Cobley, 2000, p. 55).

Therefore, as Chandler reiterated, it was a style of writing that seemed to embrace a sense of 'honesty.'

Cobley's conclusions in relation to the more general classification of detectives are not, however, universally accepted. Critics such as Peter Messent have yet to acknowledge that in male-specific detective literature there are characters that do not fit the traditional mould of the 'macho' detective. Messent's *Criminal Proceedings: The Contemporary American Crime Novel* (1997) is a collection of eight critical essays that examine the influence of some of the genre's most important themes. His subject matter includes such topics as the 'Black Noir' of Walter Mosley, the feminist detective hero, the lesbian thriller, and the crisis of masculinity in the novels of James Ellroy. This concentration on the distinct voices of post-1980s crime fiction creates a distinct landscape in which to place this thesis.

With an approach similar to Messent, Hans Bertens and Theo D'haen evaluate the detective novels published during the 1990s in their text *Contemporary American Crime Fiction* (2001). The work provides considerable coverage of fictional detectives who cannot be satisfactorily placed into the mould of the traditional detective character. Women feature particularly strongly here and they include a discussion of female private investigators, lesbian detectives, and women who are not involved in law enforcement but play a part in solving cases.² There is also a specific focus on male detectives that come from ethnic backgrounds.³ However, Bertens and D'haen place disproportionate

emphasis on analysing how believable the characters are rather than their motivations. As a result they do not consider the actual characterisation, style, or social implications arising from the novels.

In *The Contemporary American Crime Novel: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Class* (2000) Andrew Pepper examines four themes that have been increasingly important in modern society. In a similar manner to Horsley and Cobby, Pepper recognises that different themes compete and often overlap within a given genre, and is concerned that this blending of genres has not been acknowledged as a natural and beneficial development. He says that, “while a diversity of voices and viewpoints is an inexorable feature of contemporary American crime novels and contemporary American life, to conceive of this diversity in harmonious, mannered terms is, at best, naïve and, at worst, dishonest” (Pepper, 2000, p.6). Pepper argues for example, that “the fictions of Hammett and Chandler are not interchangeable simply on the grounds of their belonging to the same genre,” and believes that the kind of “elasticity” associated with this apparent interchangeability, “allows for a definition of hard-boiled crime fiction that embraces, rather than closes off, its inherent ambiguities and contradictions” (Pepper, 2000, p.13). In this sense, works like those by Pepper or Bertens and D’haen have been instrumental in stimulating the evolution of the crime genre. Specific generic expectations and themes are usually taken for granted by many readers, yet these critics have expanded the sometimes arbitrary boundaries and have encouraged further discussion of detectives who do not fit into the ‘macho’ heterosexual white male stereotype. This has helped make crime fiction one of the broadest literary representations of contemporary American society.

Critics have added greatly to the understanding of the genre by examining the key themes that define it, such as race, gender and class. However, issues such as ‘class-based assumptions,’ ‘economic determinism,’ ‘Cold War paranoia,’ ‘racism,’ ‘Reaganomics’ or ‘rampant consumerism’ are still regarded the most influential factors on twentieth-century crime fiction (Horsley, 2005, p.69). The concentration on these social themes is relatively modern and has helped to provide a socio-historical context through which to view the literature, but it is the *consequences* of these ideologies, resulting all too often in physical conflict, that have had an equal if not greater psychological impact on the genre. By focussing entirely on these social themes critics appear to have neglected the effect of psychological trauma upon literature. Although recognised as a legitimate medical condition in the 1980s, critics have been slow in considering the effects that post-

traumatic stress can have upon literature. The frequency of war and its emotional repercussions throughout the twentieth century have had a profound effect upon the American psyche. For while the consequences that can be seen and felt have received recognition by commentators on the genre, the personal and emotional effects have remained hidden and unexamined. The psychological repercussions have therefore taken a backseat to the more obvious physical effects that war can have on an individual and also the larger community. There are, however, a small number of critics who are beginning to explore the connections between traumatic injury and creative writing. Nevertheless, these critics rarely focus on the psychological impact upon style and characterisation in crime fiction, and instead concentrate mainly on the literary representations of warfare.

The concept of a detective who is also a war-veteran is an aspect of the genre that critics have almost universally overlooked. Many have written of the destabilising effects of war on literature in general, and critics such as Stanley Cooperman and Jeffrey Walsh have examined the intrinsic relevance of such trauma on society, but only Woody Haut in his work *Neon Noir: Contemporary American Crime Fiction* (1999) has examined the impact of war specifically on detective fiction. Haut has shown in his perceptive study that post-Vietnam detective fiction has developed into something more than a literary form that belongs to single genre. In his work he credits Vietnam chroniclers such as Michael Herr and Gustav Hasford with paving the way and influencing the style of the generation's 'hard-boiled' detective fiction. Although Haut offers a perceptive insight into the social effects of war he fails to fully explore the relationship between individual psychological trauma caused by war and the development of the crime genre. However, while he fails to emphasise the psychological connection, he does draw attention to contemporary writers who display in their work an obvious and categorical connection between war literature and the crime genre. Haut believes the work of Hasford, Philip Caputo and Tim O'Brien especially to be the first step in the creation of a link between the two styles because their novels initiated the concept of the Vietnam War as a 'crime.' However, Haut also acknowledges writers who have taken this connection a step further by consciously attempting to bridge the gap between the two genres. Haut argues that war veteran writers such as James Crumley, Newton Thornburg and Robert Stone consciously located a traumatised war veteran protagonist into an anxious and equally war-traumatised urban America, highlighting the ills facing not only returning soldiers but also contemporary society. Nevertheless, Haut does not develop this important argument.

Rather than discussing the emotional influences upon their work he instead concentrates largely on the style of writing used by these writers to convey their experiences.

Presenting a rational interpretation of the connection between individual trauma and its cultural representation, Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* (2004) examines certain traumatic occurrences and argues that it is possible for a 'survivor' group to develop its own particular form of creative writing. Furthermore, Tal argues that those suffering the effects of a traumatic event can be grouped together as the exponents of a new literary form, which she calls a 'literature of trauma.' She believes that, "multiple meanings encoded in particular 'loaded' signifiers (*blood, terror, murder*) characterize survivor writing, and distinguish it from other genres" (Tal, 2004, p.17). She also contends that the literature arising from trauma is "defined by the identity of its author" (Tal, 2004, p.17). Although this form of literature is an attempt to re-live and relieve a traumatic event, it is also an endeavour to integrate trauma into a 'mainstream' form of literature. Tal maintains that "literature of trauma holds at its centre the reconstruction and recuperation of the traumatic experience, but it is also actively engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the writings and representations of nontraumatized authors" (Tal, 2004, p.17).

In order to examine the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) it has been necessary to consult numerous texts written on the condition. One of the best contemporary discussions can be found in Judith Lewis Herman's *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (2001). In her work Herman considers those who have experienced warfare, sexual abuse and torture, and examines the trauma suffered by each. She considers the spectrum of post-traumatic symptoms and shows how they apply to each of the groups she discusses. Bringing together many notable psychologists from across the field this book presents a concise but detailed picture of the symptoms that Chandler would have experienced, including the three main PTSD categorisations - intrusion, hyperarousal and constriction. Along with Herman's work, texts also important in establishing Chandler's post-traumatic symptoms include Lieutenant Dave Grossman's *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (1996), Robert Jay Lifton's *Home From the War: Learning from Vietnam Veterans* (2005), and Edward Tick's *War and the Soul: Healing our Nation's Veterans and their Families* (2005). Each of these has provided a contemporary view and interpretation of not only how war affects soldiers on a basic emotional level, but also the

symptoms suffered and healing process required in order to successfully reintegrate them back into society.

Various journal articles have also proved extremely useful in providing details of specific symptoms and the critical debate surrounding the diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder. J.W Appel and G.W. Bebbe's early-twentieth century article 'Preventive Psychiatry: An Epidemiological Approach' in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (1946) provided a discussion of the effects of 'war neuroses' as it was considered after the Second World War. More contemporary articles that have proved useful are Bessel van der Kolk's 'The Trauma Spectrum: The Interaction of Biological and Social Events in the Genesis of the Trauma Response' from the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* (1988) and also Herbert Hendin and Ann Pollinger Haas's article 'Suicide and Guilt as Manifestations of PTSD in Vietnam Combat Veterans' from the *American Journal of Psychiatry* (1984). Each of these greatly contributed to the argument that Chandler's erratic behaviour and eccentricities can be interpreted as symptoms of PTSD, and consequently Marlowe was moulded out of Chandler's post-traumatic experiences.

Chandler's work occupies a unique position in the development of the American crime genre. As this thesis will show, Chandler's novels synthesise the key components of detective fiction genre and the war genre by integrating a war damaged and traumatised protagonist into the complexity of post war American society. In order to develop this argument the first chapter will consider the relationship between detective fiction and war fiction and the effect of one style upon the other. At the centre of this discussion, it will consider the concept of 'genre.' By taking examples from renowned First World War novels it will show that the same disillusionment and despair prevalent in the 'Lost Generation' is also visible in Chandler's novels. When reconsidered in light of this, Chandler's work becomes a literature devoid of genre and represents the angst and trauma of a specific moment in time. His novels should therefore be viewed as a convergence of the war novel and crime fiction, and should be reconsidered as a legitimate representation of both society and the trauma of war. Consequentially, Chandler should legitimately be considered alongside Hemingway and the 'Lost Generation.'

Examining Chandler's biography, chapter two questions the established view of the author's life and experiences. By using a psychological framework to view Chandler's experience during the First World War and the effect it had on his life, a fresh

new insight into the effects of war upon his writing, and crucially into the motivations of his fictional detective is provided. The primary research undertaken recognises Chandler as a psychologically scarred veteran who projected his own psychological frailties into his writing. Accordingly his detective fiction appears less like the narrative of a selfless and idealised hero and more that of a traumatised individual attempting to find meaning for his war experience in a society that completely overlooked his sacrifices. It appears that Chandler used his fictional detective as an attempt to bridge a gap between the noble ideals for which war was fought and the indifference of contemporary society. Marlowe strives to ameliorate society's ills against seemingly overwhelming odds, because if he does not he feels his sacrifices will have been in vain. After reconsidering the effects of Chandler's own war trauma this thesis argues that his detective fiction is a literature of traumatic war experience. Philip Marlowe is not the gallant knight he is traditionally perceived to be, but is instead a disillusioned and shattered war veteran struggling to find a sense of identity amongst the disorder and dislocation of post-war American society.

Chandler's experiences during the First World War were instrumental in forming the psychological flaws that would later emerge from his detective Philip Marlowe. Chapter three will discuss the account of Chandler's experiences as presented by his official biographers Frank MacShane and Tom Hiney, before conducting a new and original investigation into the accuracy of their research. MacShane and Hiney used Chandler's own correspondence to recount what they believed was an accurate account of his experiences in France. In an effort to delve deeper into Chandler's biography, his letters, which are held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and at the University of California Los Angeles, were re-examined and particular attention was paid to the author's state of mind at the time of writing. To fully appreciate the nature of the trauma suffered during the war, Chandler's war records were obtained from the Canadian Archives in Ottawa and research conducted into the precise circumstances of his wounding and subsequent reassignment.⁴ This aspect of Chandler's life is an area that has not previously been examined in great detail by any biographer and obtaining the relevant material was achieved by consulting the Directorate of History and Heritage in Ottawa, Canada, to gain vital documentary evidence. By reviewing the evidence in Chandler's military records and medical files, chapter three establishes a far more tangible version of his wartime experience. Examining an area of Chandler's biography that has been overlooked by previous biographers, it ascertains the exact location of his battalion on the front and examines the circumstances surrounding his return to England in June 1918.

In the same way that chapter two concentrates on the peculiar idiosyncrasies of Chandler as a person, chapters four, five and six explore how these characteristics have been projected onto his protagonist Philip Marlowe. In the first of these chapters Marlowe's character traits will be closely examined by considering certain notable features, such as the detective's origins, characterisation, disillusionment and his chivalric code of honour. A careful examination of Chandler's work, including his short stories, reveals that Marlowe's character is very different from the generally accepted image and his personality and motivation are far more complex than that of the stereotypical hard-boiled detective. Instead, like Chandler, it becomes possible to identify Marlowe as a psychologically damaged war veteran fighting new battles on a different front.

Chapter five conducts an exploration of Marlowe's love of the board game chess and the meaning it has within the stories themselves. According to the conventional view Marlowe suffers rejection and disillusionment with every case he solves, and appears to take comfort in the chivalric values of the game. But while Marlowe possesses a certain chivalrous quality, Chandler did not originally intend for Marlowe to be interpreted as a knight. Instead chess becomes a metaphor for the city of Los Angeles that enables the troubled detective to locate himself within a structured and orderly environment. The game of chess also allows Marlowe to reassess and review his actions in his cases by evaluating his movements on the chessboard. The chessboard becomes a metaphorical device for conveying Marlowe and Chandler's opinions of the society that they live in.

By reconsidering Chandler's own war experience, it is possible to show in chapter six that Marlowe, like his creator, displayed symptoms of combat related PTSD. Examining the novels for manifestations of these, Marlowe's symptoms appear to fall into the three separate symptom-related categorisations of PTSD. Over the course of the novels Marlowe reveals many physical and psychological indicators that are attributable to the harrowing experience of warfare, which have been overlooked by previous critics. Marlowe and also the other veteran characters in the novels, unwittingly suffer the symptoms of Chandler's own psychological trauma.

This thesis will conclude by arguing that Chandler's pronounced and recognisable symptoms of PTSD manifest in his novels and have created a lasting legacy in contemporary fiction. The Vietnam War and the revival of the 'traditional' hard-boiled detective during the 1970s signalled a considerable change in the image of the detective and the crime genre in general. In the aftermath of Vietnam, renewed interest in Chandler's novels brought with it a revival of the character of the veteran detective, with

contemporary writers taking Chandler and Marlowe as their models. Chandler's novels showed that veterans had a place in society and that their work could serve as a platform to voice their discontent. However, the new detectives of the post-Vietnam era had one obvious difference, unlike Marlowe they were deliberately characterised as veterans, traumatised not just by their own experiences of war, but also by the disregarding attitudes of society. Just like these new war veteran detectives, psychologists Roy Grinker and John Spiegel note that soldiers returning from battle, "particularly those suffering from war neuroses show much more aggressiveness and hostility in their verbalizations and behaviour... They are resentful and openly angry... and are freely and destructively critical of what they see and hear at home" (Grinker and Spiegel, 1945, p.308). Rather than concealing their trauma like Marlowe, contemporary detectives instead wore their trauma on their sleeves. Reflecting this, characters became hard-hitting, hard-drinking, drug-taking, embittered characters, who were unafraid to voice their aversion towards society and the government. They developed an almost psychopathic personality that swung between aggressiveness and submission. Grinker and Spiegel stated that the "psychopathic personality vacillate[s] between an aggressive hostility, overcompensated independence and a passive drive, which [is] always frustrated... The result [is] a dangerous character, who [is] likely to commit either suicide or homicide" (Grinker and Spiegel, 1945, p.342).

Within the framework of a war veteran detective, this research aims to challenge the conventionally portrayed picture of Raymond Chandler. Just as contemporary Hemingway biographer Kenneth Lynn used original documents and testimony to challenge and expose the shortcomings in Carlos Baker's decades-old accepted view of the writer,⁵ this thesis aims to go beyond the commonly accepted interpretation to find the genuine Chandler. The trauma Chandler suffered in combat affected the writer to such a degree that it became impossible to avoid the transference of traumatic symptoms into his work. The troubled life he led and the symptoms he suffered after his experience in the war is testimony to the fact that his trauma was real. But through his trauma came creativity and originality, and Chandler came to view Marlowe as far more than a protagonist in his novels. The detective became a major source of comfort and a cathartic device from which Chandler could evade, but never fully escape his troubling symptoms. Like the 'Lost Generation,' Chandler's work became a platform capable of depicting the emotional consequences of war and its brutal impact upon the individual. Chandler's lasting legacy remains his creation of a vehicle for the representation of veterans, their

trauma, and their dislocation from the wider society. These significant similarities with the themes of the 'Lost Generation' present a strong argument for his inclusion. Raymond Chandler incorporated his own psychological trauma into his work, creating in the process a character that epitomised the disillusionment of an entire generation sent to war, and propelled into a maelstrom of emotional trauma, social change and human indifference.

¹ *The New Republic*, 1962, p.22

² The female detectives or private-eyes discussed by Bertens and D'haen include Marcia Muller's Sharon McCone, Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone, Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski, and Lynn S. Hightower's single parent detective Sonora Blair. The lesbian detectives noted are Katherine V. Forrest's Kate Delafield (who incidentally also served in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War, a notion that opens up an alternate shoot of the soldier/veteran detective theme). And their discussion of non-detective specific characters includes Mary Willis Walker's reporter Molly Cates, Patricia Cornwell's pathologist Kay Scarpetta, Barbara Neely's domestic worker Blanche White, and Terris McMahan Grimes' personnel officer Teresa Galloway.

³ For example, Walter Mosley's *Easy Rawlins*, and Dale Furutani's *Ken Tanaka*.

⁴ MacShane's version of events can be found on page 30 in *The Life of Raymond Chandler*, while Hiney's account can be found in *Raymond Chandler: A Biography* on page 43.

⁵ Carlos Baker was acquainted with Ernest Hemingway and so much of the biographical material he used, especially regarding his war experience, came from Hemingway himself. When writing a biography this is not advisable because he assumes that details are correct when, as in Hemingway's case, they were severely exaggerated. Chandler himself once noted of Budd Schulberg's novel about F. Scott Fitzgerald, "[Schulberg] knew Fitzgerald personally, which is probably a disadvantage, since knowing Fitzgerald as a man probably blinded one to what he was or could be as a writer" (UCLA, 638,10, 3: 335).

Chapter One

PHILIP MARLOWE'S CHARACTERISATION AND THE TRAUMATISATION OF CRIME FICTION

“There is nothing worse than war.”¹

-Fredric Henry

For much of the twentieth century the character of the detective in traditional crime fiction has been widely perceived as an iconic and mostly mythic individual, an “American image of heroic manhood,” and a “cowboy adapted to life on the city streets” (Horsley, 2005, p.74). He was assumed to be “tough [and] modern but also traditional” (Knight, 2004, p.111). Some believed that the detective needed to be a coarse and brutal figure, who had an instinct for danger. Julian Symons, for example, argued that the detective’s language was raw and unrefined, “as pungent as cigar smoke,” while his use of physical violence was “as natural as drinking” (Symons, 1992, p.154). Often operating at the very edge of the law, the detective was considered to be well connected, hard-headed, and unorthodox. Andrew Pepper stated that the character was “usually violent...[and] operates out of selfish as well as selfless motives” (Pepper, 2000, p.6). Yet, in common with many other generalisations, this notion often underestimates the inner aspects of the detective’s character.

When applied to Raymond Chandler and the complex motivations of Philip Marlowe in particular, this oversimplification becomes immediately apparent. Pepper’s notion of the conflict between ‘selfish’ and ‘selfless’ motives is unworkable when trying to comprehend Chandler’s detective because by acting selfishly it contradicts the notion that Marlowe adheres to knightly values, which prohibit him from acting in any way but selflessly. This concept of ‘selfish vs. selfless’ raises important questions regarding the actual disposition of Marlowe’s character. If the detective were acting for himself it

would suggest that his sense 'self' has been somehow altered, and indicates that the detective's psychological state has shifted away from the chivalric traditions we associate with his character.

On the surface, Marlowe is driven by his honourable quest to uncover the truth and attain justice for his clients. As Philip Durham noted, "Marlowe rescued ladies who did not deserve it," he protected the frail and innocent and saw to it that "some of the criminal element received its due" (Durham, 1963, pg.32). The detective is not superhuman and regularly admits to being scared, which attests to the reality of his character and establishes a sympathetic connection with the reader. Durham argues that Marlowe has the appearance of an ordinary man simplistically trying to restore what he perceives as the balance between 'good' and 'evil,' often ending with him "trying to mete out simple justice" (Durham, 1963, pg. 92, 91). This interpretation is not, however, a strictly accurate image of Marlowe. Throughout the novels Chandler rarely grants Marlowe the satisfaction of a sense of closure, and contrary to Durham's remarks the detective seldom dispenses his own form of justice. In fact, he is often responsible for doing the opposite. Although giving the appearance of trying to redress the balance, Marlowe rarely brings a felon to justice. Instead he allows many of those guilty of a crime to escape or to avoid punishment, including Carmen Sternwood in *The Big Sleep*, Velma Valento in *Farewell, My Lovely*, Elizabeth and Leslie Murdock in *The High Window*, Al Dergamo in *The Lady in the Lake*, and Eileen Wade in *The Long Goodbye*. He also assists in Terry Lennox's escape to Mexico when he is implicated in the murder of his wife in *The Long Goodbye*.

Commentators including Philip Durham, Russell Davies and Jerry Speir have offered theories detailing Chandler's characterisation of Marlowe that place the detective in various critical contexts to accentuate certain facets of his character, and which have become accepted as the primary contexts for studying the writer's works. Richard Slotkin has noted that when considering the foundation of many of America's most celebrated and mythical characters, they often originate with, "stories drawn from a society's history that have acquired through persistent usage the power of symbolizing that society's ideology and of dramatizing its moral consciousness" (Slotkin, 1998, p.5). While Slotkin's observation concerns the relevance of the gunfighter in American history, his assessment is also relevant in depicting the character of the detective, who is often perceived as a modern urban cowboy. The often exaggerated representations of both the gunfighter and the detective are vitally important, symbolising the quintessential essence

of the mythic American hero. Horsley contends that “the private eye, as has often been observed, is... an updated, cynical version of the frontier scout or lawman, patrolling the border between civilization and savagery” (Horsley, 2005, p.74). It can also therefore be argued that under a macho façade, there is an aspect of an exaggerated characterisation that gives the detective, “a core of romantic yearning for a lost ideal” (Horsley, 2005, p.74). This notion is an important component that represents a key theme in Chandler criticism, providing by far the most instructive context to understand Philip Marlowe.

Two further theories that have attempted to provide an explanation of Marlowe’s character are, principally drawn from “the [crime] genre’s frontier heritage” and are “related to what are often seen as marked anti-feminist and homoerotic tendencies” (Horsley, 2005, p.74). Horsley notes that this may be observed in many of Marlowe’s social anxieties over gender and the yearning for a male ideal because the detective has frequently been categorised as both a misogynist and homosexual. Critics have sought to justify Marlowe’s affinity for masculine men, and have reached for the most obvious conclusion. Michael Mason has noted Marlowe’s “mixture of tenderness and boyish admiration” (cited in Speir, 1981, p.110) for Moose Malloy in *Farewell, My Lovely*, while Gershon Legman believed that the detective “moons over...big men.” Legman claims that the “true explanation of Marlowe’s temperamental disinterest in women is not ‘honor,’ but his interest in men” concluding that the only possible explanation is that, “Chandler’s Marlowe is clearly homosexual” (Legman, 1949, p.70). Chandler vehemently rejected this suggestion and responded by contending that, “Mr. Legman seems to me to belong to that rather numerous class of American neurotics which cannot conceive of a close relationship between a couple of men as other than homosexual” (cited in Speir, 1981, p.111).

While it cannot be denied that Marlowe does in a real sense idealise men, Jerry Speir contends that “to construe that admiration as homosexual lust is to misconstrue an essential facet of Marlowe’s character” (Speir, 1981, p.111). Marlowe’s character makes him prone to an exaggerated idealisation of most things, a feature that becomes particularly noticeable in his relationship with women. However, as will be discussed later, Marlowe’s identification resonates with his military experience and the bonding that occurs between soldiers during times of combat, men upon whose actions life might depend. Herman has noted that, “the situation of constant danger [leads] soldiers to develop extreme emotional dependency upon their peer group and leaders” (Herman, 2001, p.25). These wartime bonds, which will also be further examined later in this

thesis, are borne of mutual dependency and shared adversity, and are often far more intense than anything experienced in civilian life. This is a far more legitimate explanation for Marlowe's affinity for veterans in the novels, given Chandler's own comments upon the subject.

As well as the suggestion that Marlowe is a homosexual, critics such as Geoffrey Hartmann have also accused Chandler of "conventional woman hating" (Hartman, 1975, p.220). Mason has further noted that the "moral scheme" of Chandler's novels "is in truth pathologically harsh on women, and pathologically lenient towards men" (cited in Gross, 1977, p.95). This argument is flawed however, because it ignores Marlowe's actual characterisation in the novels, which in turn flows from flawed assumptions regarding both Chandler and Marlowe. Marlowe is not 'harsh' or unreasonable towards women. In fact he is far more sympathetic than almost any other detective, allowing them in almost every instance to avoid being brought to justice by the police. In the novels of Dashiell Hammett and Mickey Spillane for example, the detectives ruthlessly pursue the criminals and bring swift and deliberate punishment, without feeling and regardless of sex. Marlowe on the other hand is far more empathic, allowing his emotions and thoughts to give him a moral guide. While many of the perpetrators are in fact women, Carmen Sternwood, Velma Valento, Elizabeth Murdock, Orfamay Quest and Eileen Wade all avoid punishment for their various crimes and misdemeanours. This open-mindedness towards female characters is also confirmed by the fact that some of Marlowe's close personal acquaintances are women, such as Anne Riordan and Linda Loring.

But, while Hartmann and Mason's proposition may be regarded as an oversimplification, it does focus attention on the undeniable awkwardness that Marlowe feels when in female company. Horsley believes that, his "tortured self perceives women as threatening his identity and [he] fears losing control" (Horsley, 2005, p.82). This fear however, has little to do with the women in his life, and more to do with the fact that he simply identifies more closely with the male characters. Like many other veterans, Marlowe finds it difficult to form close attachments, especially with those who have never experienced warfare. The detective recognises those who have undergone similar experiences to his and as such considers men to be more psychologically accessible. For example, Bill Chess, Terry Lennox and Roger Wade are all willing to open up to the detective regarding their war experiences and emotional states, and it is no coincidence that these characters are also veterans.

The misogynist argument can be further discredited because Marlowe's crudeness with women quite often has its basis in the events of the novels and cannot be interpreted as a facet of Marlowe's character. It is therefore imprudent to draw any definitive conclusions without considering Marlowe's circumstances, since there is often a perfectly legitimate reason for his behaviour. Jerry Speir for example, argues that it is understandable to see Marlowe as a woman-hater if the passages that have achieved such notoriety are read without any consideration of their context. He says, "Considered in isolation, as they often are, [Marlowe's] remarks do suggest a man with a revulsion for the opposite sex." However, "such an interpretation neglects the circumstances surrounding the scene" (Speir, 1981, p.112).²

The validity of Speir's observation is substantiated when considering Marlowe's attitude across the novels. The scene in which Marlowe "tore the bed to pieces savagely" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.155) after finding trickster Carmen Sternwood naked in his bed in *The Big Sleep* is in stark contrast to his tenderness at the end of *The Long Goodbye*. After spending the night with Linda Loring, Marlowe says,

We said good-bye. I watched the cab out of sight. I went back up the steps and into the bedroom and pulled the bed to pieces and remade it. There was a long dark hair on one of the pillows. There was a lump of lead at the pit of my stomach.

The French have a phrase for it... To say good-bye is to die a little. (Chandler, *TLG*, p.308-9)

This scene with Linda Loring illustrates that Marlowe is capable of feeling genuine affection for women, a feature that he also demonstrates in his friendships with Merle Davies and Anne Riordan. Marlowe feels protective towards them and is comfortable in their company because they do not have ulterior sexual motives. Unlike Carmen and Vivian Sternwood, Orfamay Quest or Eileen Wade, Davies and Riordan do not flirt with him or use their sexuality to gain control over him to further their own agendas. Despite sometimes being portrayed as prudish characters, Davies and Riordan retain a sense of virtue in the eyes of the detective by not throwing themselves at him. This is also true of Linda Loring, who shows a level of intelligence and mystique that attracts Marlowe. His admiration of virtuous and pure women corresponds with the chivalric notion of Marlowe as a knight, and he further demonstrates his respect for the opposite sex when Terry Lennox begins to complain about "goddamn women... waving their hands and screwing up their faces and tinkling their goddam bracelets and making with the packaged charm."

To this Marlowe calmly replies “Take it easy... So they’re human... What did you expect – golden butterflies hovering in a rosy mist?” (Chandler, *TLG*, p.21-2).

The notion of ‘courtly love’ is strongly represented in the two most widely accepted explanations for the motivation behind Marlowe’s characterisation. The first of these is based on the theory of an ‘anachronistic Marlowe’ put forward by Speir and Horsley, which asserts that Marlowe is a man of chivalric values abiding by the rigid code of the knight in his quest for justice. Belonging to a bygone age, his strong sense of duty and his chivalric code of honour possess a mythic and romantic quality. Armed only with his personal valour that makes him, as Horsley notes, resistant to the depraved society around him, Marlowe “assumes a role often compared to that of the questing knight, undergoing tests that involve skill in arms, fearlessness, and integrity” (Horsley, 2005, p.82). Marlowe is, according to Speir, “a character whose values are of another age, dropped down amid the relative valuelessness of the present” (Speir, 1981, p.143). Durham also accepts that as a knight, Marlowe “work[s] for good rather than for money” (Durham, 1963, p.97), which accounts for his numerous noble and chivalric gestures in his battle against the corrupting forces of society.

In Chandler’s 1944 essay ‘The Simple Art of Murder’ Chandler noted that the hero goes down “mean streets” but “is not himself mean... [and] is neither tarnished nor afraid.” He believed the detective should have,

...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 a due and dispassionate revenge. He is a lonely man and his pride is that you will treat him as a proud man or be sorry you ever saw him. He talks as a man of his age talks – that is, with rude wit, a lively sense of the grotesque, a disgust for sham, and a contempt for pettiness. (Chandler, 1988, p.18)

In this passage Chandler’s choice of language resonates with the romantic ideals of Sir Thomas Malory’s fifteenth century tales of *Le Mort D’Arthur* (1485). King Arthur tells his knights that they should ‘never commit outrageous deeds nor murder, and always flee from treason; also, by no means be cruel, but to give mercy to those that ask for mercy, and always provide assistance to ladies, damsels, gentlewomen and widows, and treat them with respect and never force them, upon pain of death. Also that no man should fight in a wrongful quarrel for love, nor for worldly goods’ (interpreted from Vinaver, 1971, p.75).³ Chandler gives Marlowe this idealised code to serve as his moral compass and guide him through his investigations. MacShane has noted that Marlowe’s

qualities “would appear to be a sentimental position, because it puts Marlowe on a higher plane than any of the other characters.” Chandler acknowledged this weakness, but responded to the charge by saying, “I don’t mind Marlowe being a sentimentalist because he always has been. His toughness has always been more or less a surface bluff” (MacShane, 1976, p.206). Reinforcing this, Chandler argued that in order to understand Marlowe the reader had to realise that,

...the detective exists complete and entire and unchanged by anything that happens, that he is, as detective, outside the story and above it, and always will be. That is why he never gets the girl, never marries, never really has any private life, except insofar as he must eat and sleep and have a place to keep his clothes. His moral and intellectual force is that he gets nothing but his fee, for which he will if he can protect the innocent, guard the helpless and destroy the wicked, and the fact that he must do this while earning a meagre living in a corrupt world is what makes him stand out. (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.115)

While it is undeniable that Marlowe appears to stand alone in the world, as will be argued in chapters four, five and six, it is not for the reasons widely accepted.

In contrast to the image of the detective as a chivalric champion, the second major characterisation of Marlowe asserts that the detective lives by a modern code of values. According to this view Marlowe is not an anachronism but a contemporary man racing to catch up with modernity and suffering its effects upon identity. Woody Haut believes that Chandler “single handedly reinvent[ed] the genre” by “successfully decoding the culture,” revealing the sordid reality of a society “saturated with crime and corruption” (Haut, 1995, p.68-69). Arguing Marlowe’s success in deciphering the era, Haut believes the detective’s discovery of “crimes within crimes and investigations within investigations” (Haut, 1995, p.72) is indicative of the growing sense of paranoia that prevailed during the early Cold War era. This interpretation is, however, contrary to Chandler’s own view that the detective was egocentric: “P. Marlowe has as much social conscience as a horse. He has a personal conscience, which is an entirely different matter” (Gardner and Walker, 1971, p.214). It is probably more accurate to claim that Marlowe’s discontent and disillusionment provide clues as to the broad social reaction from the 1930s onward. By this time America had become a land of contradiction where men had gone to war expecting adventure and bravery, but had instead returned broken and traumatised by their experiences. Veterans returned home to be confronted by a ‘land

of plenty' that was driven by consumer greed, and a 'land of the free' where many suffered the trauma of segregation.

Roy Meador argues that "In the 1930s, failure and fear suddenly became avenues of life in America for people who had never met such strange enemies before. Raymond Chandler sent Marlowe to battle them" (Meador, 1982, p.152). In an expression of his own war experiences and subsequent disillusionment and cynicism, Chandler reflects that,

[L]ong before the atom bomb, civilization had created the machinery for its own destruction, and was learning to use it with all the moronic delight of a gangster trying out his first machine gun. The law was something to be manipulated for profit and power. The streets were dark with something more than night. (Chandler, 1983, p.9)

Sean McCann believes that many of Chandler's novels bring together a wide selection of downtrodden civilians from across Los Angeles, highlighting the plight of the era's most demoralised and dejected people. McCann argues that the essential novel for recognising this is *Farewell, My Lovely*, in which Philip Marlowe "draws the disparate features of Los Angeles into something that looks like a new deal coalition" (McCann, 2000, p.159). In this novel,

His travels take him from a hotel clerk in Watts; to Jesse Florian, an impoverished and alcoholic widow; to Anne Riordan, the spunky daughter of an honest cop; to Red Norgaard, the operator of a boat taxi – a collection that, along with Moose Malloy, links African Americans, the urban poor, the white ethnics of the working class, and honest middle Americans in a community of sympathy. (McCann, 2000, p.159)

McCann creates an image of Los Angeles as, "an idealized version of the welfare state," with Marlowe "feel[ing] the pain of working stiffs and those who have been neglected by an unjust society, thus tying the fragmented landscape of Los Angeles into a more or less coherent narrative of victimization" (McCann, 2000, p.159). There may be some truth in this interpretation since Chandler clearly had a social conscience (even if Marlowe did not), once remarking, "there are people who think I dwell on the ugly side of life. God help them! If they had any idea how little I have told them about it!" (Gardner and Walker, 1971, p.214).

But Marlowe cannot live without the city and its deprivation. His attempts to escape the urban squalor and to rationalise the events that have shaped America are repeatedly thwarted and he is habitually drawn back into the quagmire. He manages only brief respite from the city in *The Lady in the Lake* and *Playback* but on all other occasions he is drawn to the city like a magnet.⁴

Anxiety caused by contemporary change and the widespread corruption of the inner city are themes explored by many 'Lost Generation' writers, writers who had returned from Europe and were trying to come to terms with the implications of modernity. That Marlowe suffers similar disillusionment are notable indicators that Chandler's literature could be interpreted as belonging to a similar category. Chandler wrote in 'The Simple Art of Murder' that "There are no vital and significant forms of art... there is only art" (Chandler, 1988, p.2). McCann similarly argues that,

The achievement of the hard-boiled crime story... proved that "important writing" could be done in popular genres. All that prevented our full realization of the fact was the hidebound prejudice of the cultural elite, on the one hand, and the banal commercial production of mass media on the other. (McCann, 2000, p.152)

Raymond Chandler and the 'Lost Generation'

Chandler's private eye, the investigator Philip Marlowe, stands alone not out of choice but because the society he lives in has disregarded him. He is a character from a generation lost to war, a veteran returned from battle and set down in a community that does not wish to acknowledge his sacrifices. Chandler created a character that, like himself, suffered the post-traumatic effects of his experiences during the war. Transposing his own symptoms onto his creation, Marlowe became an archetypal 'Lost Generation' character filled with the disillusionment and emotional trauma that plagued his creator.

The argument for Chandler's inclusion in the 'Lost Generation' brings the discussion back to generic categorisation. If a style of literature shares similar themes with that of the 'Lost Generation' it should not be excluded for consideration simply because it is a form of popular writing. Chandler and Hemingway incorporated similar themes in their work, yet both writers are considered in two very distinct and separate literary categories. Despite being largely unsuccessful with literary critics at the time, Chandler's work was far more popular with the general public because it had the general appeal to reach a far

wider audience. Chandler tactfully brought 'Lost Generation' themes to the mass population via an appealing genre.

Malcolm Cowley argues that a more accurate description of those writing in this era is "the World War One generation" (Cowley, 1973, p.vii). He notes that it was "the First World War that made... a generation, by changing their world and by giving them shares, as it were, in a rich fund of common emotions" (Cowley, 1973, p.3). The war "gave them the feeling of having lived in two eras, almost on two different planets. The second era seemed tawdrier in many ways, when they judged it by standards retained from an earlier time..." (Cowley, 1973, p.vii). By articulating themes common to the 'Lost Generation', and by belonging what Cowley called 'the World War One generation,' Chandler can be considered amongst this group of writers. The traumatising convergence of emotions that defined the writers of the 'Lost Generation', and their shared experience signified that, "those authors were speaking for all for us" (Cowley, 1973, p.viii). Chandler can justifiably be included amongst acknowledged 'Lost Generation' writers such as Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos and William Faulkner because, "a generation, in historical terms, is no more a matter of dates than it is one of ideology" (Cowley, 1973, p.238). Arguing that the concept of the 'Lost Generation' arose out of very specific circumstances Cowley notes that the aspirations and discontent of a 'generation' are what defines it. He says, "A new generation... appears when writers of the same age join in a common revolt..., [and] in the process of adopting a new lifestyle, they find their own models and spokesmen" (Cowley, 1973, p.238). Writing of their physical or psychological experiences of war, writers in this era voiced their subsequent disillusionment with post-war American society. They had become a generation 'lost' to the war, with little acceptance or recognition of their sacrifices.

Cowley argued that the writers of the 'Lost Generation' are generally classified as those who were born between 1894 and 1900, yet he concedes that older and younger writers (such as Archibald MacLeish or Nathanael West) have been included on certain occasions⁵ (Cowley, 1973, p.240). Although older than most of the writers of the 'Lost Generation', Chandler's experience as a soldier during the war and his subsequent psychological trauma are extremely relevant insofar as the post-war torment that he suffered was just as debilitating and intense as many other writers of the time. His trauma and reception upon return to America would have given him a unique insight into the effect of warfare on society. By contrast, although F. Scott Fitzgerald and William Faulkner are included amongst the 'Lost Generation', neither writer experienced combat.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, “marched on board a transport with full equipment, helmet banging at his side, and was then marched off because the Germans had begged for an armistice” (Cowley, 1973, p.10). But undeterred by this inconvenient detail Fitzgerald drew upon his “lively imagination” and the social discontent among returning soldiers to portray himself as someone who had suffered “the wounds of an infantry officer in combat” (Cowley, 1973, p.10). William Faulkner, who served out his military experience as a Royal Canadian Air Force cadet and who never actually experienced combat was even “more imaginative,” writing “vivid and persuasive stories that ended with dogfights over the German lines” (Cowley, 1973, p.10). This apparent blurring of eligibility shows that those who did not experience combat or write about their war experiences can be included amongst the ‘Lost Generation’.

Equally valid should be those writers who were excluded from the ‘Lost Generation’ simply on basis of the genre they chose to express themselves. As such, consideration should be extended to those who wrote in a variety of styles, including the crime genre. Given the similarity of background and experiences, Chandler’s choice of literary genre emerges as the single reason for his exclusion from this distinguished group of writers. D.C Russell noted that Chandler’s writing has a “beauty which shows that [he]... cannot be pigeonholed, merely as an expert in tough language” (Russell, 1945, p.123), and the psychological context of his writing demonstrates the manifestation of themes far more complex than has been previously recognised.

In its broadest form this argument proposes that the categorisation of literature by ‘genre’ is an imprecise and unsatisfactory method of distinguishing literary works since it attempts to generalise and produce a superficial and often meaningless label to describe the literary form. The crime novel evolved by incorporating social themes and issues, making the style a far more relevant representation of society, and Chandler’s work clearly shows that the same disillusionment represented by the ‘Lost Generation’ could be successfully channelled into detective fiction. Woody Haut has noted that “contemporary crime writers, seeking to replicate life at street level, have created a genre whose predominant artifice is its apparent lack of artifice; consequently, the line separating fiction and reality has become increasingly blurred” (Haut, 1999, p.2). As the line that separates fiction from reality has blurred so also has the line that separates genres, allowing for a far wider range of works to be considered crime fiction. By including elements of witnessed reality to their fiction, writers since the First World War have, perhaps unconsciously, altered the generic expectation of detective fiction.

According to Paul Cobley it is simply not possible to maintain a 'pure genre,' and he provides two reasons why this is so. Firstly, he notes that genres, "are decidedly prone to overlaps" (Cobley, 2000, pg.4). Stephen Knight appears to concur, claiming that, "mysteries, detectives and crimes interweave" (Knight, 2004, p.xii) in varying ways that move the genre forward. As with all other styles of fictional writing, the crime genre is not a static representation and its conformity and distinctiveness can easily alter as it evolves to reflect new social influences. This blurring of generic styles is a particular feature of Chandler's fictional work. The author incorporated certain facets of the war genre, most notably through the characterisation and psychology of his protagonist, but also through secondary means such as the physical injuries suffered by secondary characters such as Bill Chess in *The Lady in the Lake* and Terry Lennox in *The Long Goodbye*. The inclusion of combat-related trauma in a crime novel indicates a transformation into a style of trauma-related fiction.

Cobley's second point is that the actual study of a 'genre' as an autonomous entity, "represents a narrowing of focus which does not fairly reflect the breadth of the generic corpus of texts" (Cobley, 2000, pg.4). Detective fiction is based on the underlying assumption that in order to be successful it should combine, as Lee Horsley notes, "familiarity and uniqueness." This combination must be capable of "producing tension within the work itself and generating a constant process of transformation" (Horsley, 2005, p.2). When classifying genre Knight has argued that arbitrary categorisation can often be extremely ambiguous, and in some instances misleading. He says a major obstacle facing authors and readers alike, is "which terms to use to describe, and so sort, its varying forms." (Knight, 2004, p.xii) He identifies that problems may arise when certain terminology is used either as a blanket term for the entire genre, or alternatively as a description of specific parts of the genre. "Some people use the term 'detective fiction' for the whole genre," he says, "others call it 'mystery fiction.' But as a reader soon discovers, there are plenty of novels...without a detective and nearly as many without even a mystery..." (Knight, 2004, p.xii). At the heart of a story or novel, however, there is always a crime.

The difficulty surrounding specific genres also has a further implication. If Cobley's argument is correct, then it is possible to argue for the existence of a writing style that deliberately defies categorisation and becomes an 'anti-genre.' This style of writing blurs generic classifications by converging themes and issues from different genres, which consciously develops a writing technique that goes against type or

expectation. The subversion of established expectation in a form of writing is important as it reinforces and furthers the concept of verisimilitude within fictional works. Chandler may have adopted this technique along with Hemingway's 'iceberg' style to introduce and discuss issues that were considered embarrassing reminders of society's inability to acknowledge them. By making Marlowe a veteran of war Chandler altered the generic mode of crime writing. Removing the restrictive notion of genre from Chandler's work, what remains are distinctive 'Lost Generation' themes. By removing the generic confinements Marlowe can instead be viewed as a broken and disillusioned man on a quest to find some sort of justice and decency in an increasingly corrupt and selfish society. He is a 'Lost Generation' character in a hard-boiled crime fiction setting.

World War One and the Traumatization of Detective Fiction

Detective fiction and war writing have traditionally been perceived as separate genres. However, when considering the aftermath of the First World War this division appears increasingly unsatisfactory as both forms of literature began to represent their protagonist in a similar way, as individuals troubled by traumatic events beyond their control and grappling to make sense of their surroundings. Peter Aichinger has noted that after the war, "novels reflected the horror and chagrin of people who had tasted combat for the first time" (Aichinger, 1975, p.x), and Horsley indicates that many crime fiction writers, including Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, set in motion a new phase of detective fiction emphasising the trauma that haunted society (Horsley, 2005, p.82). Coping with personal trauma therefore became an integral part of the post-war detective genre.

As the emphasis in literature altered, the conventional description of war literature as tales of soldiers and battles became inadequate because it failed to recognise the psychological effect that war could have. This development influenced many American authors, including those whose work is not normally recognised as war literature in the traditional sense. Although 'war' is a broad literary theme, the narrow categorisation of 'war literature' implies a separateness which "sounds too prescriptive, as though war literature exists in a vacuum as a genre hived-off from other forms of writing" (Walsh, 1983, p.1). Even Chandler argued that, "our [American] instinct for classification is too strong" (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.62), and insisted "it doesn't matter a damn what a novel is about, ...the only fiction of any moment in any age is that which does magic with words, and that the subject matter is merely the springboard for the writer's

imagination” (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.59-60). In terms of writing style, commentators have noted that the meaning of the term war *novel* already allows “a degree of flexibility” over what may be considered war *literature*. As Aichinger states,

I would describe the term ‘war novel’ as any long work of prose fiction in which the lives and actions of the characters are principally affected by warfare or the military establishment... [and where] war is the primordial fact dominating the lives of... the characters. (Aichinger, 1975, p.xi, x)

With combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder now recognised as a legitimate war injury, Aichinger’s assertion that a ‘war novel’ comprises of written work in which the “lives and actions” of the protagonist are “principally affected by warfare or the military,” allows for the theme of war to be continued outside of the regular theatre of war. War is not now confined to battlefields or foreign countries; it remains indelibly imprinted in the minds and behaviour of individual protagonists. It is therefore unrealistic to assume that the psychological trauma experienced by writers *not* normally associated with the war genre should fail to find expression somewhere in their work.

Jeffrey Walsh has noted that “the apprehension of war constitutes a distinctive and central element in the modern American literary consciousness” (Walsh, 1973, p.1). The First World War produced “a collective trauma such as the world had never known” (Cooperman, 1967, p.7), and as the world changed American fiction changed with it, becoming polarised into two opposing camps. Much of the fiction produced by writers who had no experience of war was decidedly pro-war in tone and mood. Their stories were a celebration of American patriotism, focusing on protagonists who saw it as a noble duty to fight and when necessary sacrifice their lives for their country. Willa Cather’s *One of Ours* (1922) and Edith Wharton’s *A Son at the Front* (1923) are two examples of this trend that implied it was a soldier’s duty to die for his country in a war that would ultimately achieve the idealistic objective of making a world safe for democracy. The death of Cather’s soldier Claude Wheeler spared him from experiencing the disillusionment of post-war life: “He died believing his country better than it is, and France better than any country can ever be” (Cather, 1922, p.458). Similarly, the father of Wharton’s character George Campton accepts the death of his son as a divine and meaningful sacrifice. He believes that great things always come from self-sacrifice, and finds solace in his belief that, “the efficacy of the sacrifice was always in proportion to the worth of the victim” (Wharton, 1923, p.166). As Aichinger notes, both Cather and

Wharton “emphasise the crusading element in the American war effort... [as] America’s youth is sent forth not merely to fight a war but to fulfil a sacred trust of heroic magnitude” (Aichinger, 1975, p.5).

At the other extreme were those whose own experiences of war radically shattered the conviction that battle was a noble enterprise. These writers repudiated the idealistic notion that there was anything romantic to be found in battle, which they knew to be a dehumanising and meaningless carnage, and completely rejected the idea that death in combat was a worthwhile sacrifice. While vehemently protesting the futility of war they did however believe that the experience of coming face-to-face with death had given them a greater appreciation of life and made them better writers. John Dos Passos, for example, although a pacifist, believed that “a young man hoping to be a writer... must experience the war in some fashion” (Dos Passos, 1921, p.viii), and likewise, Ernest Hemingway believed, “you have to hurt like hell before you can write seriously” (cited in Meyers, 1999, p.36). Those who wrote of their experiences, including Hemingway, Dos Passos and William Faulkner, composed graphically realistic accounts that fumed with the horrific reality of warfare and its consequences. For those who had volunteered in search of a romantic adventure and heroism, the reality of combat quickly proved to be a shocking experience, and their view of war became one of “accidental, meaningless, [and] purely gratuitous death” (Aichinger, 1975, p.10). As Aichinger argued, “The sensation of being trapped by a huge and ruthless machine... [became] particularly horrifying to a generation that went to war as they might have gone to a picnic” (Aichinger, 1975, p.11).

To such authors, war became “the most pointless and destructive of all human activities,” frequently “inculcat[ing] in the front-line writer a feeling of existential loss and disorientation, a dawning awareness that the exemplary sacrifice of troops is meaningless and utterly futile” (Walsh, 1983, p.3). The accepted rules of pre-twentieth century warfare and the associated rhetoric acquired new meaning during the war. The existence of a “bleak and nihilistic recognition... confirms the deep sense harboured by the intellectual of his own alienation,” (Walsh, 1983, p.3) and a profound sense of futility in many of the era’s war novels and poetry. Stanley Cooperman asserts that, “A combination of horror, dehumanization, numbness, and absurdity is the heritage that World War I novelists brought back from their broken world of combat and military glory” (Cooperman, 1967, p.97). Combined with this was the belief that the,

...total violence, machine civilization, futile terror, and mass death could not be...simply accepted. The impact of World War I was unparalleled; it shattered a cultural universe and in the United States shaped the literature of a generation (Cooperman, 1967, p.vii).

It was therefore, “the Great Crusade which gave to American literature an art not simply “influenced” by war, but in a vital sense created by it” (Cooperman, 1967, p.vii). The experience shattered the romanticism of war for both the soldiers at the front and civilians at home, a sentiment captured by Faulkner’s protagonist Joe Gilligan in *Soldier’s Pay* when he declares that “the romance of battle” is “bunk” (Faulkner, 1926, p.40). Hemingway also summed-up the futility and absurdity of war in *A Farewell to Arms* during a scene where Captain Rinaldi questions Fredric Henry on the circumstances of his wounding:

“They say if you can prove you did any heroic act you can get the silver [medal]. Otherwise it will be the bronze. Tell me exactly what happened. Did you do any heroic act?”

“No” I said. “I was blown up while we were eating cheese.” (Hemingway, 1929, p.59)

Hemingway’s observation on the absurdity of war is furthered by Aichinger’s contention that “the conflict introduced perhaps the most demoralising aspect of modern war: the dehumanisation of combat” (Aichinger, 1975, p.11). Soldiers began to believe they were “degraded slave[s], a number, mere cannonfodder” (cited in Dos Passos, 1921 p.xvii). As Dos Passos’s protagonist John Andrews says in *Three Soldiers*, “[we] were all so alike, [we] seemed at moments to be one organism” (Dos Passos, 1921, p.21). The level of individual dehumanisation increasingly troubles Andrews, and as he watches a young boy fishing, he says,

And that boy, too, would be a soldier; the lithe body would be thrown into a mould to be made the same as other bodies, the quick movements would be standardised into the manual arms, the inquisitive, petulant mind would be battered into servility. The stockade was built; not one of the sheep would escape. (Dos Passos, 1921, p.349)

Bitterness and detachment are themes that reoccur throughout *Three Soldiers*, emphasised when Andrews remarks, “how strange it was that he was not thinking of anything. In the

last few days his mind seemed to have become a hard meaningless core” (Dos Passos, 1921, p.16).

The work of more traditional war writers exposes not just the physical injuries but also the psychological effects of war, emphasised by the debilitating injuries suffered by Fredric Henry, John Andrews, and Faulkner’s Donald Mahon. As the character of Margaret Powers says of Mahon in *Soldier’s Pay*, “The man that was wounded is dead, and this is another person, a grown child. It’s his apathy, his detachment, that’s terrible. He doesn’t seem to care where he is or what he does” (Faulkner, 1926, p.114). Similar psychological scarring is conspicuous in *Three Soldiers* where Andrews,

... stretched his legs out across the floor in front of him; strange, stiff, tremulous legs they were, but it was not the wounds that gave them their leaden weight. It was the stagnation of the life about him that he felt sinking into every crevasse of his spirit, so that he could never shake it off, the stagnation of dusty ruined automatons that had lost all life of their own, whose limbs had practised the drill manual so long that they had no movement of their own left, who sank limply, sunk in boredom, waiting for orders. (Dos Passos, 1921, p.180)

However, Aichinger believes that the most complete use of the First World War as a metaphor appears in Hemingway’s collection of short stories *In Our Time* where,

The limitless violence of the war counterpoints the routine violence of the peacetime world; the mules drowning with their legs broken reproduce the agony of the grasshopper impaled on a fishhook; the fisherman’s thoughtless cruelty is only a microcosm of the larger barbarity of mankind. (Aichinger, 1975, p.20)

In Our Time paints a distressing image of the senseless carnage of war where death is raised to the ultimate act of heroism and survivors are permanently altered to adjudge themselves as “Not patriots” (Hemingway, 1925, p.63). In the short story ‘Soldier’s Home,’ as war’s romanticism turns to hopelessness and terror, the veteran Krebs is overcome with a sense of “nausea in regard to his [war] experience” (Hemingway, 1925, p.70), which is also reflected by the soldiers’ plea:

Dear Jesus please get me out. Christ please please please Christ. If you’ll only keep me from getting killed I’ll do anything you say. I believe in you and I’ll tell every one in the world that you are the only one that matters. Please please dear Jesus (Hemingway, 1925, 67).

Noticeably in this passage, the lack of capital letters for 'jesus' and 'christ' indicates the soldier's (and Hemingway's) loss of faith and trust in religion. Judith Lewis Herman explains that "In situations of terror, people spontaneously seek their first source of comfort and protection. Wounded soldiers... cry for their mothers, or for God. When this cry is not answered, the sense of basic trust is shattered" (Herman, 2001, p.51-52).

Reviewing the literature arising from the First World War, Edmund Wilson said, "The most remarkable effects of this fiction [is that]... we are made to feel, behind the appetite for the physical world, the tragedy or the falsity of the moral relation" (Wilson, 1961, p.101). Not only do soldiers in battle experience a sense of betrayal but also when returning from war they perceive a disaffection and encounter an inexplicable feeling of estrangement from their own community. Returning soldiers do not seek gratification, but anticipate acceptance and respect in order to re-establish their self-esteem and re-build their shattered lives. But a homecoming fit for heroes is often short-lived and quickly becomes a nightmare where they are seen as carriers of contagion. In William March's novel *Company K*, for example, the reaction of Private Webster's fiancée Effie to his wounds is cutting. Greeting him upon his return from the war, she says, "If you touch me...I'll vomit" (cited in Cooperman, 1967, p.99). Moreover, returning soldiers also become a source of embarrassment and chagrin, and as Aichinger states, the war "provided an adequate symbol of the selfishness of society" (Aichinger, 1975, p.18). Hemingway's short story 'Soldier's Home' once again portrays this as officer Krebs, who returns to his hometown in 1919, a year after the war has ended, realises:

By the time...[he] returned to his home town in Oklahoma the greetings of heroes was over. He came back too late. The men from the town who had been drafted had all been welcomed elaborately on their return. There had been a great deal of hysteria. Now the reaction had set in. People seemed to think it was rather ridiculous for Krebs to be getting back so late, years after the war was over. (Hemingway, 1925, p.69)

This sense of isolation is prevalent among the 'Lost Generation', who saw the war as "a soul-shattering absurdity beyond the comprehension or control of the human intellect" (Aichinger, 1975, p.14). It was a negation of everything they had once believed, and produced what Cooperman called "a psychic emasculation inherent in the combat environment itself, a sense of violation which had... vitally important results" (Aichinger, 1975, p.64). This post-war fiction painfully displayed a society that is "totally unaware of how soldiers have been re-created spiritually by the war and how they are consequently

marked off from society's materialistic concerns" they are "like classroom examples of lost generation attitudes" (Walsh, 1983, p.89, 88). It is this post-war disillusionment and insensitivity that provides the link between the combat-related trauma of the war genre and the work of Raymond Chandler. Both portray 'lost' individuals in a society that cannot acknowledge the horrific consequences of warfare and the enormity of individual sacrifice. After war, many returning veterans, frustrated by society's reaction to them, referred bitterly to World War One as "The Great Unmentionable" (Herman, 2001, p.70). In such a society, Marlowe feels 'lost' and confused as he tries to come to terms with the fact that he has been left behind. With the exception of fellow veterans he meets in the novels, society has little sympathy for his experiences, and is instead self-centred and more concerned with self-indulgence.

In the post-war era the strong literary bond that had previously linked American intellectuals and their counterparts in the Old World, symbolised by their common values and aspirations, became increasingly untenable (Aichinger, 1975, p.6). The war had irreversibly changed America, and similarly, American crime writers began to question the traditional 'rules' of their genre, which had been established by British writers at the turn of the century. As the British clung to the familiarity of the form in the turmoil of the post-war era, American authors mounted a challenge that resulted in a decisive split from the traditional style, which no longer adequately reflected an increasingly turbulent American society (Symons, 1992, p.153). D.C. Russell noted that Chandler's work uses "characteristic American speech and ...characteristic American humor. In doing this he comes closer to literature than other writers who disdain the native brand of thoughts and language" (Russell, 1945, p.123).

Many of those writers now considered as comprising the American 'Lost Generation' also reacted in the same manner, and against the traditional style of language used in the literature of the time. Like the evolving crime genre, Cowley notes that the 'Lost Generation', "wanted to redeem the language by getting rid of what they often called "the big words"" (Cowley, 1973, p.16). In order to understand what writers meant by this phrase, Cowley explains that many military disasters were disguised by "lofty" language calculated to mislead both the soldiers and those at home (Cowley, 1973, p.16). In *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway sums up his recoil from this 'loftiness' when, after listening to the haughty remarks of his Italian comrade Gino, Fredric Henry responds by saying,

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain... I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene besides the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the number of regiments and the dates. (Hemingway, 1929, p.165)

However, the backlash against arrogant language and sweeping sentiments was so “much more than a subject of poems and paragraphs.” As Cowley says,

It also helped to shape the prose style of a generation... Outraged by the fake sentiments expressed in wartime...the generation was trying to learn what it really felt, no matter how simple or shameful, and then, in Hemingway’s words, “to put down what really happened in action... the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion.” That search for concrete words to express “what really happened in action” became a distinguished feature of the new literary age. (Cowley, 1973, p.18)

In the post-war era, not only did language begin to change in the crime genre, but also the emphasis on plot, puzzles and clues became less important than characterisation, resulting in protagonists that were far more credible and lifelike. Stories became accounts of bad things happening to good people, or good people doing bad things. The incorporation of realism prompted hard-boiled writers to switch from the British third-person narrative to the more distinct first-person narrative as stories became more authentic and moulded to suit an American audience. Stories incorporated accent and regional dialect, and integrated colloquial speech by dropping the ‘g’ at the end of certain words, such as doin’ or goin’. Private eyes became more internalised, becoming more ‘I’ than ‘eye’ to reflect the changing dynamic of the detective. Consequently their traumas could be witnessed from within through the use of a probing first person narrative. As stories became more about the ‘self,’ Stephen Knight notes that,

It is through this sense of isolation that the private-eye story is in fact more innovative, bespeaking a sense that social values, communal mores, have no real value.... The world-weary feeling of the Hammett-Chandler detective seems related to a growing dismay with modern mercantile society... but also the post-war period, with its sense of lost dreams and the dangers of over-sophistication... the between-wars private-eye has a much more personal quest and a much more individualistic set of values. (Knight, 2004, p.112-3)

The transformation in the fictional detective that had started as a reaction to the British style of writing quickly developed into a response against the cynicism and materialistic order that dominated post-war America. This environment prompted writers from any genre to create a new generation of fictional characters traumatised by the war, who thought and behaved differently from their predecessors, and exhibited a diminished sense of identity and masculinity. Like real veterans, these characters struggled to reintegrate themselves into an increasingly amoral nation that was indifferent and ignorant of their suffering and trauma, and where they were shunned and forgotten. Jeffrey Walsh has argued that traditionally, “writers... have envisioned the soldier as an image of man in society” (Walsh, 1983, p.ix). Yet the virtues for which soldiers had fought and suffered in war were absent in the post-war world, and their sacrifices became immaterial, and cynically ignored as a social embarrassment. As Aichinger states, in the post-war era, “bravery did not matter, professional competence did not matter, devotion and self-sacrifice did not matter” (Aichinger, 1975, p.11).

It is hardly surprising then, that writers of the era would create a new generation of fictional characters unable to reintegrate and suffering profound disillusionment. These were characters who felt compelled to pursue a type of justice which although not shared by the wider society, gave expression to their personalised moral code and individual values. In the era of prohibition, with gangsters prowling the streets and the authorities portrayed as inept, private agencies and detectives “filled the void created by the widespread corruption found in local police and their geographical jurisdiction limitations” (Fagin, 2003, p.191).

It was in these changing social conditions that Raymond Chandler created his fictional detective Philip Marlowe. Yet while Marlowe’s personal sense of justice and code of honour resonate with mythic and romantic qualities, they also suggest a warrior mentality. Aichinger has noted that this combination was a common theme in the years following the First World War, when novels “equate[d] the possibility of romantic love with heroism on the battlefield – of modern-day knight errantry” (Aichinger, 1975, p.19). However, as will be discussed later, this is a notion that does not rest easily with Chandler’s detective. Marlowe’s knight errantry comes from a much darker place, and his inner conflict and sense of estrangement are suggestive of a far more complex cause. These reoccurring themes in Chandler’s novels are instead significant indicators of Chandler’s resonance with the ‘Lost Generation’ and the trauma suffered by those who experienced the war first-hand. Chandler’s own experiences in the war appear to be every

bit as injurious as the recognisable work of those who wrote of war such as Hemingway, Dos Passos, and Faulkner. The influence of war upon Chandler's work is equally revealing, containing numerous examples of both physical and psychological trauma. Yet rather than recount his wartime experiences in a manner similar to the 'Lost Generation', Chandler instead chose to express himself through a protagonist that had, like his creator, encountered numerous obstacles while trying to reintegrate into a world he considered corrupt and heartless. Marlowe became Chandler's cathartic response to the selfish and unyielding urban America, where it appeared that virtue and honour had lost their importance.

Aichinger maintained that "the American writer who had been in action adopted an attitude... in accordance with a national mythos" (Aichinger, 1975, p.xxiii). The experience of World War One "shatter[ed]... the American attitude towards warfare[,] and the mood of the literature that came out of the war" effectively became a literature of protest (Aichinger, 1975, p.xxv). The undercurrent of protest encouraged many writers in the inter-war period to go "beyond realism [and] take the war as a metaphor for the ills besetting their era" (Aichinger, 1975, p.15). Drawing upon his experience of war, Marlowe attempts to re-introduce a sense of justice into an urban landscape that he feels has been blighted by cynicism and moral decay. He is still a soldier, but his theatre of war has been transformed from the battlefield to a hostile inner city.

Ralph Willett argues that detective fiction can be used to "display the fragmentation and complexity of modern life and to undermine the tendency of narrative to achieve control and closure" (Willett, 1996, p.8). In Chandler's novels, the urban environment has become decayed; the city of Los Angeles has become a void, colourless place without a soul, whose inhabitants have been stripped of identity and compassion. Feelings of "melancholy, regret and emptiness" (Willett, 1996, p.8) are common in the early post-war form of the American hard-boiled genre. This fragmentation, complexity, and diversity, which is unique to early American crime fiction, is characterised by violent tensions and occasional irreconcilable contradictions. In this turbulent urban landscape, Chandler created a war veteran detective who has been robbed of any recognition of 'self' in exactly the same way as he had been robbed of his individuality while a cog in the nation's war machine. He cannot accept that his sacrifices and hardships have been for nothing and must find a worthy cause to redeem himself and to restore a sense of purpose and meaning to his life.

Chandler's fictional detective is therefore an attempt to bridge the gap between the noble ideals for which war was fought and the degrading actuality of contemporary society. Marlowe strives to work to ameliorate society's ills against seemingly overwhelming corruption because if he does not, he believes his sacrifices have been in vain. Chandler's own traumatic war experience becomes extremely significant when considering Marlowe's characterisation. By recognising how Chandler's own post-traumatic symptoms were transferred onto his detective, it offers a fresh new insight into his writing, and more pertinently presents an original understanding of Marlowe's motivations. Reconsidering the effects of Chandler's own war trauma, this research suggests that his detective fiction should be interpreted as a literature of traumatic experience located in a crime-fiction setting. Philip Marlowe is not a hard-boiled hero, but a genuine war veteran of a 'lost' generation struggling for recognition and unable to accept the disorder of post-war American society.

By utilising certain facets of each of the previously presented critical theories, it is possible to suggest a more convincing and sympathetic context in which to view Marlowe's character. Although he is a heroic man driven by a noble code, his compulsions and motivations are driven by his need to make sense of his past experiences. Marlowe, like Chandler, should be considered as a veteran of the First World War thrust into a changed and expanded post-war Los Angeles, and forced to accept the changing social dynamic while yearning for the male company he relied on so heavily during wartime. This view of Marlowe as a traumatised veteran is an original critical approach towards Chandler's work. It is a context that holds new resonance in the study of crime fiction not only because it demands a re-examination of the Marlowe novels, but also because it necessitates a re-consideration of the traumatising effects of war upon Chandler himself. Chandler's devastating experience during World War One defines the essence of Marlowe's disillusioned and tormented identity, and consequently his post-traumatic symptoms lie at the very core of Marlowe's troubled character.

¹ Hemingway, 1929, p.46

² For example, in *The Big Sleep*, after discovering Carmen Sternwood in his bed and promptly removing her from his apartment, Marlowe tells us, "I walked to the windows and pulled the shades up and opened the windows wide. The night air came drifting in with a kind of stale sweetness that still remembered automobile exhausts and the streets of the city. I reached for my drink and drank it slowly. The apartment house door closed itself down below me... I went back to the bed and looked down at it. The imprint of her head was still in the pillow, of her small corrupt body still on the sheets... I put my empty glass down and tore the bed to pieces savagely" (*TBS*, 154-155). During his encounter with Carmen he says "Its so hard for women – even nice women – to realize that their bodies are not irresistible" (*TBS*, 153), and the next morning he comments that "You can have a hangover from other things than alcohol. I had one from women. Women made me sick" (*TBS*, 156). Yet, if we consider the events preceding these passages they give a far better understanding of Marlowe's feelings at the time. Speir tells us, "Just prior to his encounter with Carmen, Marlowe has come from one roughly parallel with Carmen's sister Vivian, who has also attempted to use her sexuality on him to extract the information and cooperation she desires. And this is not the first time Marlowe has found Carmen nude and playing games of sexual coercion. She has in fact, been throwing herself at him ever since he walked into the door of the Sternwood mansion in Chapter 1. And finally, it is at about this point, halfway through the novel, that Marlowe is beginning to perceive that this sort of sexual gamesmanship was at the root of one of the book's essential puzzles, the disappearance of Rusty Regan" (Speir, 112-3). So it is no wonder that Marlowe feels 'sick' of women, they have been attempting to use him for their own purposes from the first page of the novel.

³ The original appears as "...never do outrage nothir mourthir, and allwayes to fle treson, and to gyff mercy unto hym that askith mercy..., and allwayes to do ladyes, damesels, and jantilwomen and wydowes [socour:] strengthe hem in hir ryghtes, and never to enforce them, uppon payne of dethe. Also, that no man take no batayles in a wrongfull quarell for no love ne for no worldis goodis" (Cited in Vinaver, p.75).

⁴ In *The Lady in the Lake* Marlowe's case takes him to Puma Lake where he is confronted with the laid back environment of the lake-side town, and in *Playback* where he follows Betty Mayfield to Esmerelda, a town which was supposed to represent Chandler's own shore-side La Jolla. The notion of the Pastoral versus the Urban is a tradition of American literature that has captured the imagination of many American writers. The escape from the urban landscape to the pastoral is a literary cry against the waves of modernity washing the United States in the early decades of twentieth century by those who considered American innocence to be lost. This is seen in some of the most troublesome later 'Lost Generation' literature such as Nathanael West's 1933 novel *Miss Lonelyhearts*.

⁵ In *A Second Flowering*, Cowley emphasises that he has included certain 'Lost Generation' authors in his book based on the eight that best represented the literary scene at the time. These are F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, Edward Estlin Cummings, Thornton Wilder, William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, and Hart Crane. Cowley acknowledges that he excludes many other respected 'Lost Generation' writers including Katherine Anne Porter, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Henry Miller, Djuana Barnes, Archibald MacLeish, John Steinbeck, James Gould Cozzens and Nathanael West. Although he notes that at the time of the First World War the writers he includes were "the right age for soldiering," (p.3) those who are generally considered part of the 'Lost Generation' were not necessarily war writers. Despite saying that a more accurate description would be the First World War generation, this does not mean that they would have had to witness the war firsthand, only be aware of how it had effected American society. It is in this light that the older or younger members of the 'Generation' become relevant. As Cowley has shown, despite being out of the generally accepted age-range for the 'Lost Generation', and not writing war material, it is possible for a writer to be included among this prolific 'Generation.' Therefore an argument can be made for Raymond Chandler's inclusion amongst the writers of the 'Lost Generation'.

Chapter Two

THE TRAUMA OF WAR: THE LIFE OF RAYMOND CHANDLER

“I should guess that all in all he has had a lonely life, that his declared attitude of not caring much emotionally about people is a defence mechanism, that he lacks the kind of surface warmth that attracts people, and at the same time is such a wise man that he knows that however superficial and accidental most friendships are, life is a pretty gloomy affair without them... In a conventional sense he probably has many friends. But I don’t think they build much of a fire against the darkness for him. He’s a lonely old eagle.”¹

- Raymond Chandler

Such a description of W. Somerset Maugham is ironic because it also fittingly describes Chandler’s own existence. In 1957, two years before he died, Chandler gave an illuminating summation of his troubled life in a letter to his London solicitor Michael Gilbert. He wrote, “I have lived on the edge of nothing” (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.242), a description suggestive of a life marred by torment and lacking lasting contentment. He lived, as Frank MacShane says, “a tortured and lonely life only temporarily relieved by moments of happiness,” when he would, like his fictional detective Philip Marlowe, become an “effective Galahad” (MacShane, 1976, p.268, 246). The knightly façade that Chandler created for himself concealed an individual who was deeply wounded by traumatic experience and psychologically scarred by an intense period on the front lines during the First World War.

Like many veterans of war, Chandler was never able to fully erase the memory of his wartime experience. Judith Lewis Herman makes the assertion that while the normal response to atrocities is to “banish them from consciousness,” quite often these horrors “refuse to be buried” and in time “the story of the traumatic events surface not as verbal narrative but as a symptom” (Herman, 2001, p.1). Chandler’s post-war life is a catalogue of erratic behaviour, mood swings, alcoholism, oscillations between intimacy and loneliness, attempted suicide and recklessness, all of which are symptomatic of a deep

psychological neurosis. Although not recognised institutionally as a medical condition at the time, it now seems certain that Chandler suffered combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder, the debilitating psychological condition prevalent in veterans of war, and which for Chandler would re-emerge during times of stress throughout the rest of his life.

Born in Chicago on 23 July 1888, Raymond Thornton Chandler was the only son of Maurice and Florence Chandler. His otherwise contented childhood was punctuated at the age of seven when his parents divorced because of his father's frequent absences and drinking. Shortly afterward mother and son moved to England where they settled on the outskirts of London in a house owned by Chandler's Irish uncle, Ernest Thornton. Growing up dominated by his Quaker grandmother and aunt, Chandler quickly became accustomed to social isolation and developed an extreme sense of loneliness. Tom Hiney notes,

In both suburban South London and Quaker Waterford, Chandler was an anomaly – an American-sounding boy with a pretty Irish mother about whom people, including her own family, gossiped... In late Victorian England, he was without a clear social class, nationality or male role model. (Hiney, 1997, p.11)

This solitude and seclusion in his early life meant Chandler “developed an extraordinary sense of loyalty... and a sense of justice that became a central part of his character and gave him the attitudes he was to express later through his character Philip Marlowe” (MacShane, 1976, p.5). The experience of being thrust into the role of ‘man of the house’ and the demoralisation he suffered in the company of his relatives left a permanent mark on the young Chandler. Natasha Spender, Chandler's close friend during his later life recounts how, living at Dulwich “he could hardly have failed to acquire a self-punishing conscience so that he was not only anxious, but also anxious to succeed, to gain approval” (cited in Speir, 1981, p.2).

At the age of twelve Chandler attended Dulwich College, where he was educated between 1900 and 1905 under the tutelage of A. H. Gilkes, himself a published novelist. Under his guidance Chandler developed a passion for literature and language, and acquired the belief that, as Gilkes's own motto described, a man of honour was one who was “capable of understanding that which was good” (MacShane, 1976, p.9). It was a quality that Chandler identified with and which would later be developed as the thread that links all of his fictional detectives. Although a gifted student, Chandler was denied the opportunity to attend university by the sudden termination of his uncle's funding and

the family's decision that he should continue his studies in France and Germany before joining the civil service. He sat the civil service entry exam a year after returning from Europe in the spring of 1907, finishing third overall among six hundred candidates, and first in the classics exam. However, after reluctantly joining the Admiralty, Chandler quickly realised that being a career civil servant would never fulfil the intellectual challenge he craved. Intent on pursuing a literary career, he rebelled against his family's wishes and resigned his position after six months to write poetry and articles for newspapers and magazines such as *Academy* and the *Westminster Gazette*. His poetry was highly romanticised and conventional, and which invariably explored the theme of knights and ladies, nobility and honourable sacrifice. Although MacShane believes that, "The less said of Chandler's poetry the better" (MacShane, 1976, p.16), the verses are the first expression of the code of chivalry that would later form a facet of Philip Marlowe's character.

In the five years that followed, Chandler wrote twenty-seven poems, seven essays, and numerous reviews. But despite this achievement he continued to feel restless and unfulfilled, and yearned to return to the land of his birth, declaring that, "America seemed to call to me in some mysterious way" (cited in Gardiner and Walker, p.25). But far from being the satisfying encounter he had hoped for, his experience of America became a catalyst for further disappointment. He quickly realised that he "had no feeling of identity with the United States" yet at the same time did not feel English. Feeling as though he had become "a man without a country" (cited in Gardiner and Walker, p.24, 25), Chandler would remark later in his life that, "to be homesick for a home you haven't got is rather poignant" (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.206). The lack of any biographical identity is a prominent feature of Marlowe's personality, and although Chandler always denied any direct autobiographical connection between himself and his fictional detective, years later he would admit, "there's a lot of him in me," especially "his loneliness" (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.253).

After arriving in America Chandler travelled across the United States, stopping in St. Louis and Omaha, finally reaching Los Angeles in 1913 where he began work as an accountant and bookkeeper at the Los Angeles Creamery. By 1916 Chandler's mother joined him in California, but the tranquillity of their new life together was prematurely dashed when a year later Chandler decided to return to Europe following America's entrance into the First World War. Choosing to enlist with the Canadian army because they paid a separation allowance to his mother, something the American army would not

do, Chandler travelled to Victoria, British Columbia where he joined the Fiftieth Regiment of the Canadian Army. Declaring that “it was still natural for me to prefer a British uniform” (MacShane, 1976, p.27), he received a brief induction before sailing to Liverpool on 7 November 1917.

After training in Seaford, Sussex, Chandler was assigned to the Seventh Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, which was ordered to the French front line in March 1918. Chandler’s Battalion had fought in some of the fiercest fighting on the western front and his assignment was as a replacement for the thousands of soldiers who had been killed in the defence of Vimy Ridge and the battles at Passchendaele. It was a shocking experience, and one that would remain with him for the rest of his life. For the young Chandler, “as for most soldiers brought so quickly to the front, his experiences were too overwhelming to digest” (MacShane, 1976, p.28-9), and just as it had been for the ‘Lost Generation’ the carnage around him soon shattered “the illusion of manly honour and glory in battle” (Herman, 2001, p.20). According to psychiatrists J.W Appel and G.W Bebbe, in such surroundings where devastation and horror were everyday occurrences, “There is no such thing as ‘getting used to combat.’... Each moment of combat imposes a strain so great that men will break down” (Appel and Bebbe, 1946, p.1470). It is a shocking statistic that,

...in every war in which American soldiers have fought in [the twentieth century], the chances of becoming a psychiatric casualty – of being debilitated for some period of time as a consequence of the stresses of military life – were greater than the chances of being killed by enemy fire. (cited in Grossman, 1996, p.43)

Similarly, in a study conducted by R.L Swank and W.E Marchand on the psychological effects of World War Two, it was concluded that as a rule, at least 98% of soldiers involved in combat suffered some form of psychological breakdown. They noted that when it came to combat, “One thing alone seems certain: Practically all infantry soldiers suffer from a neurotic reaction eventually if they are subjected to the stress of modern combat continuously enough” (Swank and Marchand, 1946, p.243).

Throughout the First World War and for most of the twentieth century the political and military establishment denied any connection between psychological disorder and combat, and the complaint remained unrecognised as a legitimate form of ‘injury.’ Viewed by the military as the male counterpart of female disorder ‘hysteria,’ it became a symptom of weakness and cowardice, treated with a brief rest period, or in

more severe instances a 'treatment,' "based on shaming, threats, and punishment" (Herman, 2001, p.21). Post-war research brought about a gradual appreciation of 'war trauma,'² but these developments had little lasting effect. In 1941, Abram Kardiner and Herbert Spiegel published a comprehensive clinical and theoretical study of "war neuroses," in which they protested that,

The subject of neurotic disturbances consequent upon war has, in the past twenty-five years, been submitted to a good deal of capriciousness in public interest and psychiatric whims. The public does not sustain its interest... and neither does psychiatry. Hence these conditions are not subject to continuous study... but only to periodic efforts which cannot be described as very diligent. (Kardiner and Spiegel, 1947, p.1)

They further maintained that to incorrectly diagnose patients suffering from war neuroses as 'hysterical' could in itself be extremely injurious and impede a normal recovery. They claimed that when the word is used,

...its social meaning is that the subject is a predatory individual, trying to get something for nothing. The victim of such a neurosis is, therefore, without sympathy in court, and... without sympathy from his physicians, who often take... 'hysterical' to mean that the individual is suffering from some persistent form of wickedness, perversity, or weakness of will. (Kardiner and Spiegel, 1947, p.406)

It was not until the years following the Vietnam War that it finally became institutionally "possible to recognise psychological trauma as a lasting and inevitable legacy of war" (Herman, p.27). In 1980, "the characteristic syndrome of psychological trauma became a 'real' diagnosis... [when] the American Psychiatric Association included in its official manual of medical disorders a new category, called 'post-traumatic stress disorder'" (Herman, p.28). Yet many veterans from the First World War were aware at the time of their psychological trauma and articulated their troubles through their work. Writers such as Chandler and also Hemingway, who violently committed suicide in 1961, would die before any solid connections were made between combat and psychological trauma, and before PTSD would gain social recognition as an injury equally as damaging as the severest of physical injuries.

Even as recently as the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, confusion and debate over PTSD has raged in the media. But as Bridget O'Connell from the mental health charity Mind has argued, it is an issue that has spanned the better part of a century.

“The idea that it is not a “real” condition,” she says, “is inherited from the First World War, where shell-shock among troops was thought to be a sign of weakness.” But she says, “with a better understanding of the way trauma affects us, this notion is [now] long-since outdated” (cited by Doward, 2008, p.11).

According to MacShane and Hiney’s biographies, Chandler’s military service apparently came to an end in June 1918. MacShane notes that “Chandler’s service in France ended abruptly when an artillery barrage of eleven-inch German shells blew up everyone in his outfit, leaving him the sole survivor” (MacShane 1976, p.29). Hiney also notes that “Chandler was knocked unconscious... He was concussed and taken behind lines. The bombardment so depleted his outfit that it was disbanded and survivors, including Chandler, were transferred back to England” (Hiney, 1997, p.43). They state that Chandler was evacuated to Britain concussed and “shell-shocked” (Hiney, 1997, p.43) where he began drinking heavily as a release. Upon being discharged from hospital Chandler requested a transfer to the Royal Flying Corp (the predecessor of the Royal Air Force), but the war ended before he was able to complete his training. Although there is no doubt that the experience of war was traumatic, the biographical material presented by Hiney and MacShane has serious flaws and inconsistencies which impede our understanding of the severity of Chandler’s war experiences. As such the biographers’ account will be thoroughly examined and challenged in chapter three.

The First World War was a pivotal point for the twenty-eight year old Chandler. MacShane argues that “The psychological effect of this brutal war was to make Chandler block out the memory of it” (MacShane, 1976, p.29). Yet many have overlooked the experience as a key influence on Chandler’s writing. Critics including MacShane, Speir, and Hiney, have all misdirected their understanding of his complex personality, believing his eccentricity to stem either from his upbringing, his education and relationship with women, and his belief that he lacked a definite sense of identity. Citing Chandler’s only depiction of warfare, a short piece of prose titled ‘Trench Raid,’ the accepted view is that this was Chandler’s only attempt to exorcise his demons. Written sometime between June and December 1918 while supposedly recuperating in England, ‘Trench Raid’ is the only work in which Chandler explicitly attempted to recount his war experiences. The piece, which is only 352 words long, is direct and displays the first signs of the coldness and a detachment with which he would deal with unpleasant realities. This section combines the opening and ending of the piece:

As he pushed aside the dirty blanket that served for a gas curtain the force of the bombardment hit him like the blow of a club to the base of the brain. He grovelled against the wall of the trench, nauseated by the din. He seemed to be alone in a universe of incredibly brutal noise... Time to move on. Mustn't stay too long in one place. He groped round the corner of the bay to the Lewis gun post. On the firing step the Number One of the gun crew was standing to with half of his body silhouetted above the parapet, motionless against the glare of the lights except that his hand was playing scales on the butt of his gun. (cited in Moss, 2003, pg. 33)

The detached but precise writing presented in this piece is the first example of the style and imagery that would later be used to great effect in the Philip Marlowe stories.

When observing why 'Trench Raid' was never completed, or why Chandler never attempted any other work in this style again, MacShane believed that suffering "bombardment was not as unbearable a memory as leading other men to their deaths in an infantry attack" (MacShane, 1976, p.29). By making such a comment MacShane suggests that enduring the constant bombardment of artillery was not as unpleasant an experience as going 'over-the-top,' and that if Chandler had led men to their deaths he would have been able to complete 'Trench Raid'. However, because of the prevailing medical and psychological opinions regarding military psychiatry and PTSD at the time his biography was published, it is likely that MacShane did not understand how devastating warfare could be, whatever a soldier's location in battle. As such completing 'Trench Raid' was not simply a matter of choosing to leave it unfinished it was instead a choice made based on a desire not to revisit such painful memories. As will be revealed in chapter three, whether a soldier is involved in an infantry attack or an artillery bombardment, both situations will result in some form of traumatic neuroses. Herman explains that, "No two people have identical reactions [to a traumatic incident], even to the same event... [a] traumatic syndrome, despite its many constant features is not the same for everyone" (Herman, 2001, p.58). It is therefore extremely doubtful that Chandler emerged from the war *without* suffering from some emotional trauma. Although MacShane's biography was published before PTSD became widely accepted as a legitimate injury, critics since then have overlooked the crucial role that Chandler's war experience played in the development of the psychology of his fictional characters, and the style and realism of his work. Such an oversight not only fails to consider the intensity of Chandler's own psychological suffering but completely fails to discern Chandler's motivation in creating the flawed character of Philip Marlowe.

Further insight may be gained from Herbert Hendin and Ann Pollinger Haas's study, *Wounds of War: The Psychological Aftermath of Combat in Vietnam*. Discussing a study conducted after World War Two in order to determine the variables for a person's susceptibility to PTSD, Hendin and Haas cite various analysts' discoveries of increased levels of trauma among those who had endured a troublesome childhood. In a study of combat veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, it was argued that each man's main pattern of symptoms was related to his individual childhood history, previous emotional conflicts, and his method of adaptation. Post-war analysts Leon Saul and Theodore Lidz believed that those who had suffered from antisocial behaviour before going to war were more likely to suffer symptoms of irritability and anger following their experience. Conversely, those who had had high moral expectations of themselves (like Chandler) and a strong compassion for others were likely to suffer predominantly from symptoms of depression after their return from combat (cited in Hendin and Haas, 1984, p.33-4).

Accordingly, Chandler's war experience would have greatly exacerbated his early childhood tensions and insecurities. Exaggerated moral imperatives and an introverted demeanour had been etched on his character as a young man, and after the war these personality traits would have transformed themselves into bouts of extreme depression, despair and emotional instability. This altered behaviour, which was previously dismissed simply as eccentricities, is consistent with PTSD. However, Hendin and Haas also note in their study that this theory has not been definitively proven, and some analysts have argued that childhood history plays less of a role in the development of trauma than does the severity of the traumatic event itself (Hendin and Hass, 1984, p.34). Kardiner for example, argued simply that with sufficient stress, 'war neuroses' could effect anyone exposed to combat, no matter what war they fought in, the methods used, or the location of battle (Kardiner and Speigel, 1947, p.2-7).

Nonetheless, the trouble with diagnosing PTSD is that, "With the passage of time... negative symptoms become the most prominent feature of the post-traumatic disorder, [and] the diagnosis becomes increasingly easy to overlook." Herman has noted that, "Because post-traumatic symptoms are so persistent and so wide-ranging, they may be mistaken for enduring characteristics of the victim's personality." However, dismissing these symptoms as simply peculiarities or eccentricities of a person's character can be extremely destructive to the sufferer. Herman further argues that disregarding a sufferer's symptoms can be "a costly error, for the person with

unrecognized post-traumatic stress disorder is condemned to a diminished life, tormented by memory and bounded by helplessness and fear” (Herman, 2001, p.49).

In his later years Chandler acknowledged the lasting effects of his war experience when he wrote in 1957, “Once you have led a platoon into direct machine gun fire, nothing is ever the same again” (cited in Moss, 2003, p.32). In this extremely rare insight into Chandler’s mind, he openly expressed his feelings about the war, acknowledging that it had fundamentally changed him. Grossman argues that, “When people become angry, or frightened, they... become, quite simply ‘scared out of their wits’” (Grossman, 1996, p.xviii). Herman similarly notes that enduring horrific events will predictably lead to some form of psychological harm, and in extreme cases trauma can literally become ‘unspeakable’ (Herman, 2001, p.3, 1). Extreme heightening of the senses can cause a profound inexpressibility, or as Elaine Scarry states, it can “actively destroy” basic human expression (Scarry, 1998, p.4). Under these conditions a person can literally become ‘scared senseless.’ There is no doubt therefore, that like so many other veterans of war, Chandler’s war experience shaped his emotional state for the rest of his life. Roy Grinker and John Spiegel maintained that the effect of combat “is not like the writing on a slate that can be erased, leaving the slate as it was before. Combat leaves a lasting impression on men’s minds, changing them as radically as any crucial experience through which they live” (Grinker and Spiegel, 1945, p.371). The horror he witnessed inflicted psychological scarring that moulded his subsequent behaviour and profoundly influenced his self-expression through his later writing.

Officially discharged from the Canadian Army on 20 February 1919, Chandler became quickly disillusioned, realising that “he had advanced little from where he was in 1913” (MacShane, 1976, p.31), the year he had returned to America from London. Following the war Chandler grew increasingly restless, a trait that would remain with him until the end of his life. He travelled the Pacific Coast and became particularly familiar with Washington State, knowledge he would later use in his short story ‘Goldfish’ (1936). Disenchanted with life, he was by this time undoubtedly suffering the now-recognisable symptoms of PTSD, which would have been worsened by his withdrawal from society and refusal to discuss his war experiences. Yet despite his troubles he was considered an eligible bachelor and “his natural shyness made him attractive to women” (MacShane, 1976, p.31). Upon his arrival back in Los Angeles he renewed and deepened his relationship with his married friend Cissy Pascal. Their friendship had developed while Chandler had been stationed in France, sharing news of Cissy’s stepson Gordon,

with whom Chandler had enlisted in Victoria. Although Cissy was eighteen years his senior, they quickly fell in love and Cissy's husband granted her a divorce in 1920. Since Florence Chandler had disapproved of the match, their wedding was postponed in compliance with her wishes. They were eventually married on 6 February 1924, two weeks after Florence's death.

Chandler's relationship with a woman nearly twenty years his senior has always attracted attention and speculation. Jerry Speir noted that,

Inevitably, pseudo-psychological commentaries on Chandler make much of the age discrepancy. The impulse is to say something like 'Chandler married his mother' and then to use that idea to try to explain the mind of the novelist. (Speir, p.8)

Speir and also MacShane argue that the contention that 'Chandler married his mother' contains little merit. MacShane especially notes that Cissy was a lively, intelligent, mature and youthful-looking woman who provided a stable and grounded environment for the troubled Chandler, and as such was an ideal companion. While there is no doubt that Chandler was deeply in love with Cissy, the theory that 'Chandler married his mother' should not be rejected out of hand as it is possible that his insecurities may have prompted him to seek out a maternal figure. It certainly gives credence to the notion that he viewed Cissy as someone to 'protect' in much the same way as he had protected and provided for his mother.

By the time of his marriage, Chandler had been employed at the Dabney Oil Syndicate for two years and had risen quickly to the position of company vice-president. Outwardly he seemed relatively contented, he was married, had a good job with an excellent salary, and was enjoying the vitality of Los Angeles that he would later describe in his stories. It became evident, however, that his marriage and current stability had done little to alleviate the tensions that haunted him. At work colleagues regarded Chandler as "a lonely man who did little consulting before he acted and who was always on guard" (MacShane, 1976, p.36). His behaviour suggests a man who was ill at ease when required to interact with others during social situations, and his uneasiness would have certainly heightened his mood swings. Herman and Grossman have both noted that oscillating emotions and character disorders can manifest as a consequence of combat-related trauma and are symptoms commonly associated with PTSD.³ For most sufferers these emotional 'swings' generally present themselves in more intimate relationships, but they can also

surface in relationships of a professional and social nature where close interaction with others is required (Herman, 2001, p.56). As an adolescent Chandler had suffered from shyness and a lack of confidence, and despite having grown up surrounded by women he felt uneasy in female company. As a result he was often frustrated in love, once confessing, “When I was about sixteen... I had an infatuation for a girl, but was too shy even to speak to her about it” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.11). His poem ‘Nocturne from Nowhere’, written as he was beginning to write his successful short stories in 1932, took thwarted love as its theme, and interestingly introduced the image of an unattainable blond with ‘cornflower-blue’ eyes whom Marlowe frequently encounters but never wins:

There are no women as tender as this woman
Whose cornflower-blue eyes look at me
With the magic of frustration
And the promise of an impossible paradise.
(cited in MacShane, 1976, p.21)

Chandler frequently felt uncomfortable in the company of others and would invariably avoid drawing unnecessary attention to himself. “I’m strictly the background type” he once said, “and my character is an unbecoming mixture of outer diffidence and inward arrogance” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.2). As Chandler grew older his shyness became so acute that it verged on being antisocial and even hostile. Those who knew him described him as someone who “detested loneliness yet found it difficult to be at ease with strangers” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.231). This internal conflict indicates an emotional duality that certainly accounts for Chandler’s obsession for letter writing because it satisfied his desire for social interaction and eased his loneliness, while at the same time avoided direct personal contact. In later years, even his close friends such as W.T. Ballard claimed he, “was a very retiring person who would sit at the dinners after the table had been cleared, sucking on his pipe and offering very little comment. Most writers like to talk about their own work... Ray seldom did” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.74). Chandler’s fellow *Black Mask* writer Dwight Babcock said, “I could never get close to him,” and even when Chandler dined with Cissy and other couples he “always remained somewhat apart... [he] was not intimate with anyone” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.74-5). Herman suggests that emotional trauma of any kind can accentuate such feelings, someone who was merely shy before a traumatic event may become increasingly reclusive and introverted afterwards. There is a specific duality to this type

of trauma which “impels people both to withdraw from close relationships and to seek them desperately.” She says,

The profound disruption in basic trust, the common feelings of shame, guilt, and inferiority, and the need to avoid reminders of the trauma that might be found in social life, all foster withdrawal from close relationships. But the terror of the traumatic event intensifies the need for protective attachments. The traumatised person therefore frequently alternates between isolation and anxious clinging to others. (Herman, 2001, p.56)

Chandler’s erratic behaviour may have also been aggravated by a growing awareness of the age difference between himself and his wife, Cissy. By the late 1920s she was approaching sixty while he was not yet forty. Cissy’s illnesses were becoming more persistent and their marriage went through one of its most troubled periods. Chandler began to drink heavily, something he had not done since the war, and when he drank, “he would drink too much and become morose and gloomy, thereby destroying the genial atmosphere of [an] occasion” (MacShane, 1976, p.38). His excessive drinking also began to jeopardise his position at Dabney’s, and he would sometimes disappear for days on end to indulge his habit. MacShane says,

The drinking, brought on initially by a nervous shyness with other people, which he believed whiskey would diminish, plunged him into a black Irish depression. Sometimes he would go off for days at a time, without telling Cissy or anybody else where he was. (MacShane, 1976, p.39)

It is evident that Chandler was far from contented with his life, and his reliance upon alcohol “gave him an energy and a self-assurance that he could achieve in no other way” (cited in Moss, 2003, p.131). This type of behaviour is not uncommon among veterans, and a predilection for alcohol or narcotics among soldiers can often lead to a severe dependency once removed from the combat environment. This is because during wartime, “When a person is completely powerless... [they] go into a state of surrender. The system of self-defence shuts down completely. The helpless person escapes from... [their] situation not by action in the real world but rather by altering... [their] state of consciousness” (Herman, 2001, p.42). For veterans these detached states of consciousness are often similar to hypnotic trances, and reliance upon alcohol resonates closely with Chandler’s experiences. Herman notes, “Traumatised people who cannot

spontaneously dissociate may attempt to produce similar numbing effects by using alcohol or narcotics” (Herman, 2001, p.44). She continues by saying that,

...[a] soldiers’s use of alcohol appear[s] to be an attempt to obliterate their growing sense of helplessness and terror. It seems clear that traumatised people run a high risk of compounding their difficulties by developing a dependence on alcohol or drugs (Herman, 2001, p.44)

In addition to a predilection for alcohol, Chandler’s psychological injuries also appear to have manifested themselves in his frequent suicide threats. While still an executive at Dabney’s, his excessive drinking aggravated his moods to the point where he would,

... phone up the office and say he was about to jump out of the window of a room in the Mayfair Hotel on West Seventh Street in Los Angeles. These suicide threats became so frequent that after a while his friends ignored them, believing that he was just calling attention to himself in a childish way. (MacShane, 1976, p.39)

Psychiatrists have noted that an increased level of suicidal tendencies exist among those who suffer from combat-related trauma which would suggest that Chandler’s depression and suicide threats originate in his wartime experiences. Although estimates of actual suicide following a severe traumatic experience are controversial, Herman argues that it does nevertheless suggest that, “combat trauma may indeed increase the risk of suicide” (Herman, 2001, p.50). In their article ‘Suicide and Guilt as Manifestations of PTSD in Vietnam Combat Veterans,’ Hendin and Haas noted that in a post-combat-related study of suicide rates among veterans those who had endured heavy combat exposure, all suffered from permanent unresolved wartime guilt and severe unremitting anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic symptoms. More than 19% of the men had made suicide attempts, while 15% were constantly preoccupied with taking their lives. During the course of their study three of the men committed suicide (Hendin and Haas, 1991, p.586-91).

Suicide and attempted suicide are far more prevalent amongst sufferers of psychological trauma and PTSD than for the population as a whole, with the biggest single cause of suicide among veterans being survivor guilt. As Herman notes,

Feelings of guilt are especially severe when the survivor has been a witness to the suffering or death of other people. To be spared oneself in the knowledge that

others have met a worse fate, creates a severe burden of conscience...In combat, witnessing the death of a buddy places the soldier at particularly high risk for developing post-traumatic stress disorder. (Herman, 2001, p.54)

In the aftermath of traumatic events, veterans doubt themselves and those around them to such an extent that they must continually seek reassurance and recognition for their sacrifices. This deep psychological need, however, is completely alien to the rest of society, "War and victims are something the community wants to forget; a veil of oblivion drawn over everything painful and unpleasant." It is an antagonism that is sensed by veterans as they "look for tangible evidence of public recognition... [fearful] their sacrifices will be quickly forgotten" (Herman, 2001, p.8, 70). A caring community encourages the reintegration of soldiers into civilian life, while a community that excludes and rejects veterans will drive them into solitude and compound their isolation. Without assistance veterans are forced to re-live the memory of their trauma alone. Herman notes the example of the First World War poet Siegfried Sassoon who, because of shell-shock, was, "condemned to relive [his experiences] for the rest of his life... devot[ing] himself to writing and rewriting his war memoirs, to preserve the memory of the fallen" (Herman, 2001, p.22-3).

In 1932 Chandler was dismissed from his job at Dabney's because of his alcohol dependency and unpredictable behaviour. Although not an entirely unexpected act, it compounded his sense of rejection and magnified his misery and unhappiness. As MacShane notes,

The dismissal was a terrible blow, for it destroyed his sense of identity. Exactly twenty years after his return to America he was back where he began, except that he had a bad reputation, fewer possibilities, and less energy than before. (MacShane, 1976, p.40)

Chandler's dismissal provoked dramatic mood swings which his friend Natasha Spender noted, "alternated quite wildly between exuberance and depression" (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.234). According to MacShane this indicates that he "was undergoing considerable strain...[and] was subject to a wild feeling of despair" (MacShane, 1976, p.39). His erratic behaviour, especially after drinking, also made him capable of taking extraordinary risks. Having served in the Royal Flying Corps, Chandler found flying an exhilarating experience that appealed to his sense of recklessness. On one occasion while flying, Chandler undid his seatbelt and stood up in the cockpit, refusing to return to his

seat until the pilot threatened to soak him with the contents of a fire extinguisher (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.38). This kind of thrill-seeking behaviour has precedent in a soldier's wartime experiences. For example, Cowley remarked that during warfare the threat of death became "something to be courted like a woman" (Cowley, 1973, p.7). He explained that "the risk of death exerts a magnetic attraction on young men" and even John Dos Passos declared that, "the winey thought of death sings in the spring blood" (cited in Cowley, 1973, p.13). Later, Dos Passos wrote that the immediate threat of death "sharpened the senses. The sweetness of white roses, the shape and striping of a snail shell, the taste of an omelet, the most casual sight or sound appeared desperately intense against the background of the great massacres" (cited in Cowley, 1973, p.13).

A turning point in Chandler's life occurred when he made the decision to rekindle his dream of writing and began studying the work of writers including Dashiell Hammett and Ernest Hemingway for inspiration (MacShane, 1976, p.47). Tellingly, they too were writers who had been to war, and in Hemingway's case, had also written about it. Chandler's first story 'Blackmailers Don't Shoot' took five months to write, and was finished in December 1933. *Black Mask* magazine, specialising in detective stories, welcomed his contributions and he began to finally feel a degree of acceptance that psychiatrists contend is vital for recovery. For the next six years Chandler's stories were regularly published in *Black Mask* and he became something of a celebrity, regarded as a 'genius' among his contemporaries who envied the realism of his writing. Chandler's cynicism combined with his detectives' moral code and chivalrous nature became a constant thread that ran throughout his stories, which finally reached maturity in the Marlowe novels. But despite the acceptance he received in the company of his contemporaries, the absence of a regular income became a severe psychological strain and his moods fluctuated with every story he wrote. Nevertheless, Chandler's determination paid off. During the 1930s he completed seventeen stories for various magazines and as his work improved he felt confident enough, by the age of fifty, to attempt his first novel.

MacShane believes that Chandler's novels were so successful because of, "his decision to use Philip Marlowe as his first-person narrator." He says,

...Marlowe was an ordinary *Black Mask* character: tough, strong, attractive to women, an honest man in a crooked trade. This kind of hero is common in

American literature and seems to represent a faith in the incorruptibility of at least part of the population. (MacShane, 1976, p.69)

Although his character is damaged, Marlowe represented a feeling of lone morality in an America that had become too decayed for many to comprehend. In a letter to Edgar Carter in 1957, Chandler described what it was that Marlowe stood for. He said,

...to me Marlowe is a character of some nobility, of scorching wit, sad but not defeated, lonely but never really sure of himself. He will at any time, because he is that sort of man, meet any danger, since he thinks that is what he was created for, and because he knows the corruption of his country can only be cured by men who are determined if necessary to sacrifice themselves to cure it. He doesn't talk or behave like an idealist, but I think that he is one at heart... (UCLA, 638, 9, 15: 2)

Chandler's words are suggestive of a warrior mentality. Like a soldier, Chandler notes that Marlowe will meet any danger because that is what he was created for, and is willing to sacrifice himself in order to bring about a sense of moral balance. Marlowe not only becomes the embodiment of Chandler's concerns about society, but is also, like the 'Lost Generation', a product of the author's personal trauma and disillusionment, he is a fictional extension of Chandler's own character. As the *London Daily Express* journalist Merrick Winn noted during an interview with the author in 1956, "What kind of man is Raymond Chandler? Well, what kind of man is Philip Marlowe? For these two are head and tail of the same coin." During the same interview, after years of denying that his detective was in fact a representation of himself, Chandler conceded by saying, "I suppose Marlowe really is a sort of secret me... I wouldn't see it as clearly as other people, but I can see quite a lot of me in him. We're both lonely, sentimental, cynical – and we're both incorruptible" (Winn, 1956, p.4). While this view may be true of Marlowe, whether Chandler was incorruptible is open to argument. According to Hiney and MacShane, numerous accounts exist of the author's infidelities, occurrences that although Chandler denied, seemed to be supported by his conscious and continuous flirtations with women later in life.

Critical of many of his contemporaries for their characterisation of their detectives, Chandler often claimed that their depictions "[do] not and could not exist... [The detective] is the personification of an attitude, the exaggeration of a possibility" (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.70). When creating Marlowe, Chandler consciously avoided these caricatures and tried to create an authentic individual. Chandler tried to bridge the

gap between detective fiction and regular fiction by developing a believable and convincing individual that happened to earn his living as a detective. The detective, Chandler claimed, “must be a complete man, and a common man, and yet an unusual man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honour – by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it, and certainly without saying it” (Chandler, *TSAM*, p.18).

His first novel, *The Big Sleep* (1939), was ‘cannibalised’ from his short stories ‘Killer in the Rain’ and ‘The Curtain,’ and published in 1939. The novel was generally well received but its ‘gritty’ realism also attracted some hostile reviews, including accusations that it was “nasty and perverted” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.73). This criticism surprised and upset Chandler, and dented his fragile confidence. The novel had taken three months to complete and he immediately felt under pressure to finish a second novel in a similar time frame, yet he felt hesitant to do so. Because the mixed reviews had compelled him to question his unique style of writing, he feared what it might do to his reputation, declaring, “I do not want to write depraved books” (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.15). However, despite undermining his confidence, the success of the book also had another effect. Chandler was trying to live a contradiction, for although he sought recognition and social acceptance through his writing, the fame that accompanied the book’s publication limited his solitude and anonymity. It is significant to note that in the same year as the publication of *The Big Sleep*, Chandler also wrote a fantasy tale entitled ‘The Bronze Door.’ In this short story a man installs an antique bronze door in his house only to discover anyone who passes through it disappears. Chandler would write a similarly themed story, ‘Professor Bingo’s Snuff,’ in 1951 in which a man is capable of rendering himself invisible by using magic snuff. During both of these periods the desire to literally ‘disappear’ must have been strong for a man sensitive to criticism and intrusion into his personal life, and it is tempting to make a connection between the author’s state of mind and the desperate need to escape.

By mid-1939 work on his next two novels, *The Lady in the Lake* and *Farewell, My Lovely* (originally intended to be published in this order) was well underway when the prospect of war in Europe stirred up unwanted memories. Chandler became so distracted for much of this period that he lost the ability to write coherently. As he watched Adolf Hitler occupy one European country after another Chandler remarked in August 1939 that, “effort[s] to keep my mind off the war has reduced me to the mental age of seven...I know how to write, but I have momentarily mislaid the urge” (cited by Gardiner and

Walker, 1971, p.210). As Herman has noted, although some post-traumatic symptoms may fade over time, “they can be revived, years after the event, by reminders of the original trauma” (Herman, 2001, p.48).

The thirties were an anxious decade for the writer, which explains why the Chandlers moved house nine times during the decade. These moves had varying causes, as Roy Meador notes, “At one place the children were noisy, at another the traffic distracted. Sometimes the neighbours were difficult or the climate was inhospitable” (Meador, 1982, p.146). Such sensitivity suggests that Chandler did not feel settled or secure in his surroundings and was beginning to suffer a lack of peace and quiet that he desperately craved. His restlessness indicates a similarity to those who suffer the effects of trauma. As Robert J. Lifton has noted, a “restless shifting of jobs and living arrangements” as well as “degrees of bitterness, distrust, and suspicion” all resonate with combat trauma, and in varying degrees are all common among veterans (Lifton, 2005, p.35). However, one advantage of relocating so frequently was that Chandler, “absorbed the whole of Los Angeles through his pores. He added to his already substantial knowledge of the city until his familiarity with the area was encyclopedic, covering the mood, look, temper, moral attitudes, and social realities of the place” (Meador, 1982, p.146).

During this period of global turmoil Chandler suffered severe insomnia which is indicative of a lasting traumatic experience. Widespread media coverage of events in Europe appears to have unsettled Chandler further and suggests a growing re-awareness of his own troubling war experience. During this time Chandler suffered extreme melancholy and by 1946 complained regularly of exhaustion. He noted to Charles Morton, the associate editor of *Atlantic Monthly*, “Can’t sleep, can’t eat, can’t make a decision, can hardly get out of a chair,” and even contemplated admitting himself to a clinic where in his words, “they take in decayed personalities and try to find out if it is any use letting them live” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.128). Chandler’s emotional inability to work during the duration of the Second World War is clearly reflected in the draft copy of a letter written in reference to a tax refund claim. In it he writes, “the year 1940, partly from reasons of health and still more from the state of the world, seems to have contained an abnormal amount of vacillation” (cited by Gardiner and Walker, p.246).

By the end of the Second World War Chandler had accomplished an extraordinary amount considering his worsening psychological health. He had published

five short stories and three novels, *Farewell My Lovely* in 1940, *The High Window* in 1942, and *The Lady in the Lake* in 1943, all of which received cautious but satisfactory reviews. But by this time Chandler had grown disenchanted with Los Angeles and his growing frustration with the city is palpable in his novels. The war had almost certainly taken its toll. He yearned to escape the vulgarity of Los Angeles, and by 1946 he and Cissy moved to La Jolla in southern California.

The war years had also been fruitful in other ways. Hollywood had beckoned and by 1943 film studios had bought the rights to *The Big Sleep*, *Farewell, My Lovely*, and *The High Window*. Paramount Studios, recognising Chandler's writing talent, repeatedly requested his assistance in adapting screenplays, and his first opportunity came in mid-1943 when he collaborated with Billy Wilder on an adaptation of James Cain's *Double Indemnity*. In reference to the ongoing war in Europe, the screenplay included on its opening page the words, "Save Film! Win the war!" (UCLA, 638, 9: 1) But while appreciating the regular income, Chandler was initially ill at ease in Hollywood and found it difficult to work with others writers. Gradually, however, he overcame this sensitivity and his time at the studio appears to have done "him a great deal of good. For the first time in a decade, apart from conversations with his wife and rare meetings with pulp writers, he was involved in intellectual conversations as a normal part of his daily life. He belonged to a society of fellow writers, and their company brought him out" (MacShane, 1976, p.110). His recognition and 'acceptance' into a group of professional people at his own intellectual level stimulated him and enabled him regain a degree of self-confidence. As Herman has noted, acceptance and positive judgement from others is of great psychological importance in repairing "the sense of connection between the combat veteran and those closest to him." She continues, "The veteran is isolated... [and] Too often, this view of the veteran as a man apart is shared by civilians, who are content to idealise or disparage his military service while avoiding detailed knowledge of what that service entailed" (Herman, 2001, p.66).

However, as the studios applied more pressure and deadlines, Chandler's sense of stability began to falter to such a degree that Billy Wilder, his one-time screen-writing partner, was prompted to later describe him as "bad tempered – kind of acid, sour, grouchy" (cited in Speir, 1981, p.12). Chandler's forth novel, *The Lady in the Lake* (1943), exhibits these feelings more than any other of his crime works, with his state of mind also clearly visible in his second screenplay *The Blue Dahlia* (1945), a film that considers psychological injuries inflicted by warfare. In *The Blue Dahlia* the plot

revolves around Johnny, a U.S. Navy sailor played by Alan Ladd who has returned from war to find his wife having an affair, and who becomes the main suspect when she is murdered. In Chandler's original version of the script the murderer was to have been the shell-shocked character 'Buzz,' one of Johnny's two naval friends with whom he returned. Unaware he is the killer, Buzz was meant to have committed the murder during a blackout brought on as a result of suffering a head wound during the war. However, the U.S. Navy demanded that the plot be altered, declaring that a psychologically traumatised naval officer who committed a murder would be devastating for morale in the armed forces. Consequently, in the re-drafted final version of the film a hotel detective is revealed as the true killer.

The script-changes forced upon *The Blue Dahlia* extremely upset Chandler. Angry at being forced to re-write the film's ending, he remarked, "What the Navy department did to *The Blue Dahlia* was a little thing like making me change the murderer and hence make a routine whodunit out of a fairly original idea" (UCLA 638, 10, 2: 90). This 'fairly original idea' that Chandler refers to was the notion that a man suffering traumatic effects of 'shell-shock' could do something unknowingly during a flashback or blackout. It was one of the first attempts to bring about a mainstream discussion of psychiatric illness, and specifically the psychological effects of war.

While writing the screenplay for *The Blue Dahlia*, Chandler appears to have found it increasingly difficult to detach his state of mind from his writing because, "The war depressed him, and the solitude of his life dried him out" (MacShane, 1976, p.103). *The Blue Dahlia* had a significant effect upon Chandler's physical and psychological wellbeing, with him more or less completing the script at the risk of his own life. Further stress was placed upon the author when it was revealed that the star of the film Alan Ladd, had been drafted into the army for almost immediate deployment to Europe. By using a bribe of five thousand dollars, production managers at Paramount urged Chandler to complete the script as soon as possible. However, as Chandler's friend and fellow public school man John Houseman recalled, what they succeeded in doing instead was causing more distress to an already fragile personality. Houseman believed that because of Chandler's belief system, the bribe destroyed his faith in himself to complete the project on time. He felt that the money was an insult, and it would be dishonourable to accept it. The actions of those at Paramount severely upset Chandler's sense of honour and responsibility, and as a result left him in such a state of nervous despair and humiliation that he immediately resigned (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.115-6).

However, Chandler suggested to Houseman in a private meeting that he could complete the screenplay if he were allowed to do so at home, drunk. Although Cissy bitterly opposed the idea, Chandler convinced her that, in Houseman's words, "duty came before safety and that his honor was deeply engaged...in *The Blue Dahlia*." For eight days "Chandler did not draw a sober breath," (cited in Moss, 2003, p.131, 132) and the script was completed with two days to spare. Houseman stated that "Ray had not exaggerated when he said that he was risking his life for *The Blue Dahlia*." His honourable and self-sacrificing objectives were similar to those of Philip Marlowe, and were not only the author's personal beliefs but also the views of those who came to know him personally. Although Houseman says the effects of his 'sacrifice' "seriously weakened him, and it took him almost a month to recover...[he] acknowledged my expressions of gratitude with the modest smile of a gravely wounded hero who has shown courage far beyond the call of duty" (cited in Moss, 2003, p.133). Chandler's 'sacrifice' for his art would later be honoured through Academy Award nominations for the screenplays for both *Double Indemnity* and *The Blue Dahlia*.

Nonetheless, Chandler's frustration and dark moods would also occasionally surface in his articles. The best example of this practice was in his famous article for *Atlantic Monthly* entitled 'The Simple Art of Murder.' Published in 1944, the article mocked the traditional British style of detective and clue puzzle stories of authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers, and praised the new hard-boiled form of Dashiell Hammett. Although still considering himself an Englishman, Chandler had no qualms about ridiculing the British style of writing. Applauding the new American style for its realism, he proclaimed in his own inimitable manner that Hammett and American detective writers had taken "murder out of the Venetian vase and dropped it into the alley" (Chandler, *TSAM*, p.14). His fundamental argument was that writing should not be mass-produced or written to make money. Instead he believed that writing was something far more worthwhile. Although Hammett created works that were considered literary equals to his contemporaries, he viewed what he did with cynicism. Shortly after Hammett's death, his friend Nunnally Johnson wrote in 1961 that Hammett, "saw no more reason to write when he not only had all the money he needed but was assured of all that he would even need for the remainder of his life." Johnson continues,

... Apparently there was nothing in writing that interested him but the money. He had none of the usual incentives that keep writers at their typewriters for as long

as they have the strength to hit the keys. He had no impulse to tell any more stories, no ambition to accomplish more as a writer, no interest in keeping his mane alive... once he had made his pile, that was all there was to it. (cited in Symons, 1985, p.120-1)

In contrast, commenting on the writers who appeared to 'churn' out novels Chandler would later write that, "The Gardners and the Christies can go on for ever, but Chandler has to believe in something. To me writing is not a business or a racket, it is an art" (UCLA 638, 9, 13: 9).

But the exertion of completing three novels, two screenplays, two articles, and four short stories during the war while attempting to keep his own insecurities in check drained Chandler, and it would take him a further four years to recover sufficiently to complete his next novel. By this time, although no longer living in Los Angeles, Chandler was still a writer in demand. In 1947 Universal Studios, in a huge leap of faith, asked Chandler to write his own screenplay. Disenchanted by the seedy streets of Los Angeles, he set *Playback* in the city of Vancouver. It took only eight months to complete, but claiming a lack of funding the studio eventually shelved the project. Despite this disappointing setback Chandler was not deterred, and years later the *Playback* screenplay was resurrected and reworked to become his seventh and final novel.

After years of anticipation, Chandler's fifth novel *The Little Sister* was published in 1949. The dispiriting effect Hollywood had had on Chandler is evident throughout the novel as Marlowe gradually becomes "depressed by the restless emptiness of everything, the lack of human communication, the indifference and the ugliness" (MacShane, 1976, p.151) of the world about him. *The Little Sister* received muted acclaim as well as some negative criticism mainly because the actual 'detecting' in the story was minimal. Chandler deflected this criticism with a defence mechanism that allowed him to pretend that "his book [was] being criticised because it [was] too good" (MacShane, 1976, p.156). Inwardly, however, his confidence slumped because "he knew the faults of *The Little Sister*... [and] what upset him was the doubt these reviews created that he would be able to do what he wanted to do with the mystery story" (MacShane, 1976, p.156-7). He wrote to his publisher,

I am very uneasy in mind. I seem to have lost ambition and have no ideas any more. I don't really want to do anything, or rather one part of me does and the other doesn't. One of the penalties of even a mild success is an indifference to it, and the effort to do something that will attract interest and praise is really something it is a pity to lose. (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.118.)

At the same time Chandler felt increasingly protective towards his detective as the lines between author and character began to blur. In a letter to Charles Morton in 1948 Chandler believed that “the trouble with the Marlowe character is he has been written and talked about too much. He’s getting self-conscious, trying to live up to his reputation among the quasi-intellectuals. The boy is bothered” (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.220). What is interesting here is how Chandler gives Marlowe real human qualities and refers to the detective as though he were a real person and a friend. Yet Chandler’s own words apply not only to Marlowe but also to himself, for as he admitted to Hamish Hamilton in the same year, “I have a very, very tired mind” (cited in Gardiner and Walker, p.220). Even later, after complaining to the creators of the Philip Marlowe television series in 1959, Chandler justified his interference by arguing that “If I am critical of any writer of the show, it is only because I know my character so well, so very much better than anyone else could” (cited in Gardiner and Walker, p.144). Chandler’s defence of Marlowe ran extremely deep, not only from a literary point of view but also psychologically. It suggests that Chandler viewed Marlowe as much more than simply a fictional character, it appears that the detective was a catharsis to the troubled writer, who once admitted, “It begins to look as though I were tied to this fellow for life. I simply cannot function without him” (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.166).

By 1949 however, Chandler’s physical health had begun to deteriorate and he suffered various illnesses including bronchitis, sore throats, skin allergies, shingles and painful rashes for which he was prescribed morphine. The psychological effects of these complaints left him “nervous, tired, discouraged, sick... bored... disgusted,” and he remarked “I seem to be crumbling slowly” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.159). His weakened psychological state left him feeling vulnerable and fragile, and according to MacShane after agreeing to undertake the film adaptation of *Strangers on a Train* in 1950, Chandler became fascinated by “the theme of hidden guilt that lies at the heart of Patricia Highsmith’s novel” (MacShane, 1976, p.170).

In 1951 Chandler wrote a story, which for the first time explicitly discussed veteran status. The story ‘A Couple of Writers,’ which will be discussed later in more detail, was written in 1951 and is a simple tale of a married couple who are both struggling writers. The notable difference between this story and the Marlowe novels is that Chandler explicitly made the protagonist, Hank Bruton, a war veteran who suffers from combat-related injuries. Hank suffers insecurity and confusion over his wife

Marion's uncaring and indifferent attitude, and is unable to make her understand his state of mind. MacShane notes that the lack of support provided by Marion in this story appears to be in contrast to that provided by Chandler's own wife Cissy. He says, Cissy's "willingness to endure hardships spurred him on," and his strength as a writer was stimulated "through the knowledge that his wife believed in him. There was a passion that encompassed the thing itself and the artist who created it, working with the help of his wife" (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.60). Rather than represent his wife in the role of Marion, Chandler appears to have created the character as an illustration of the general attitude of society and the isolation felt by veterans once they have returned home. Comparing the veteran Hank before and after he went to war, Marion shouts hysterically,

I thought you were quite a fellow then... You had wit and imagination and a sort of buccaneering gaiety... [But now you] get drunk every night and every morning [you] start to get drunk again. ...And then comes that day when everything happens all at once that ought with a normal person to happen slowly, over the months and years, reasonable steps in reasonable time. One minute you're looking at a healthy man and then next you're looking at a shrivelled up horror that reeks of whiskey. Do you expect me to wait for that? (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.106)

Hank's response is numbed silence. Marion's feelings towards Hank are of absolute anger and ignorance. She epitomises the reaction that society has towards returning veterans, which leaves them feeling unappreciated and unwelcome in society. Her reaction is indicative of the desire to ignore the underlying problem related to Hank's state of mind, yet it also reflects the confusion of the era with regard to how exactly to respond to a generation of men changed by their experiences of war.

Cissy's deteriorating health due to degenerative lung disease during this time once again put an immense strain on the tired and troubled writer, both physically and psychologically. In the last years of Cissy's life Chandler became involved in all of the domestic chores as well as taking around-the-clock care of his wife. The effect of Cissy's declining health care had on Chandler's work during this period appears to have been detrimental. In 1952 while he was writing his penultimate novel *The Long Goodbye*, he wrote to Bernice Baumgarten, an associate of his agent Carl Brandt, saying, "My kind of writing demands a certain amount of dash and high spirits – the word is gusto... and you could not know the bitter struggle I have had in the past year even to achieve enough cheerfulness to live on, much less to put into a book" (cited in Hiney and MacShane,

2000, p.183). Yet Chandler refused to complain. In 1957 he said, "I guess I don't mind being destroyed very much any more. After all, I was a loving and faithful husband for almost thirty-one years, and I watched my wife die by half-inches and I wrote my best book in the agony of that knowledge, and yet I wrote it. I don't know how" (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.228).

While his wife became progressively worse, Chandler's short story 'A Couple of Writers' was being circulated to various magazines, but it was rejected by all. Although he recognised that the story had "no commercial value whatever," he still considered it a "fancy piece of writing all the same" (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.99). Disappointed, Chandler told Baumgarten, that "if a thing is well written and penetrating and at the same time as lightly handled as cannot find a home, why go on trying?" She replied that the magazines had all found the story too depressing and suggested altering the story to give it a happier ending. This proposal enraged Chandler, and he had only one reply:

"How the hell would you put a happy ending on that story? What is 'happy'?... The trouble is you don't care enough for the characters to worry about what happens to them. They are in a trap they have created for themselves and have no alternatives." (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.178-9)

Chandler's stinging response to Baumgarten's suggestion stems from the story's suggestive depiction of both the physical and psychological troubles endured by the veteran writer. Although not intended to be autobiographical in any way, the story accurately depicts the lack of understanding and tolerance from society, especially those closest to Hank, and also connects to Chandler's reaction at being told to re-write *The Blue Dahlia* screenplay. The fact that Chandler refused to alter 'A Couple of Writers' shows it had a personal value, the story was real and altering it would have nullified the intimate emotions Chandler was trying to evoke. His reply to Baumgarten indicates the exact point Chandler was trying to make in the story regarding veterans' experience of war and how they are received back into society: "you don't care enough for the characters to worry about what happens to them." Baumgarten's suggested alterations combined with the story's rejection by various magazines would have compounded Chandler's empathy with the ignorance suffered by Hank Bruton and provoked the outburst which followed. Showing his personal connection to his works, Chandler always believed,

I am a writer, and there comes a time when that which I write has to belong to me, has to be written alone and in silence with no one looking over my shoulder, no one telling me a better way to write it. It doesn't have to be great writing, it doesn't have to be terribly good. It just has to be mine. (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.192)

'A Couple of Writers' is very different to the work that Chandler is typically known for, but the issues he broached in the story were familiar enough and sufficiently important for Chandler to write about.

While Chandler was denied the opportunity to publish a piece of work that held a personal relevance, however obliquely it was presented, his temper was easily provoked by what he believed to be less than honest descriptions of soldiering, or even ignorance of what war was really like. In a letter to Jamie Hamilton discussing Armistice Day in 1949 he described it as, "a sort of mixed holiday... Big parade of troops and marines and sailors, none of them have any idea what the first world war was like. It was a damn sight worse than they think..." (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.127). This is a rare example of Chandler making specific reference to the war. As well as this it also appears that even the literary language used in war novels came under Chandler's scrutiny. In a letter to Hamish Hamilton in May 1950 for example, Chandler discusses in great detail the work of New Zealand lexicographer Eric Partridge, who had served in the Australian infantry during World War One and who had been struck by the soldiers' use of language during wartime. Chandler described his work as "interesting," but criticised him for,

...overlook[ing] some of the most commonly used words of soldier-slang...e.g 'bomb-proofer', 'cushy-job', 'bivvy', and above all 'napoo', 'strafe', long a, for bombardment (the morning strafe), 'street cars' or 'tram cars' for heavy long range shells, 'whizzbangs' for rapid small shells, and the inimitable American 'goldbrick' which is as superior to English 'lead-swinger' as 'milk run' (from the last war) is to 'piece of cake' (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.88).

It would seem that even though Partridge was a veteran of the First and Second World Wars, his use of words made Chandler "uneasy" (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.88). This was mainly down to his grievance that "these scholarly excursions into the language of the underworld, so to speak...smell of the dictionary. The so-called experts in this line have their ear to the library, very seldom to the ground" (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.88). These 'scholarly excursions' as he called them, rarely used a

realistic vernacular, and Chandler was adamant that whatever an author chose to write about, “it must be about real people in a real world” (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.63). He believed that “no amount of editing or polishing will have any appreciable effect on the flavour of how a man writes.” (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.76).

Chandler’s lifelong emotional despair, disillusionment, loneliness and reoccurring physical illness peaked in 1954. It is hard to imagine a more destructive psychological combination of problems than those that beset Chandler as he wrote his most acclaimed novel *The Long Goodbye*. Cissy, now in her eighties was terminally ill, and the anxiety over her illness seriously threatened to completely undermine Chandler’s confidence in his work. Making light of his disintegrating psychological state, he wrote, “I’m caught talking to myself quite a lot lately. They say that is not too bad unless you answer back. I not only answer back, I argue and get mad” (cited by Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.197). However, in a letter to his publisher he disclosed the full extent of his misgivings when he confessed, “In bad moods, which are not too infrequent, I feel the icy touch of despair” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.192). The agony of watching his wife’s slow and painful decline put immense pressure on Chandler’s already fragile state of mind. Yet in light of these concerns, he managed to produce a novel that commentators argue is his finest piece of writing. *The Long Goodbye* can be interpreted as Marlowe’s drawn-out farewell to his war veteran friend Terry Lennox, which takes the length of the novel to achieve. Moreover, considering the trauma represented in the novel, it suggests that it is also a prolonged attempt to be rid of the psychological symptoms of post-combat stress. Despite this however, both objectives are never achieved, and the end of the novel sees Marlowe more disillusioned than ever, having been deceived by Lennox and still suffering a sense of despair.

Chandler received his biggest blow in December 1954 when after long periods of hospitalisation Cissy died. Her death drove Chandler into deep depression and he again turned to drink in an attempt to cope with his loss. Alcohol abuse worsened his already erratic behaviour and in the weeks that followed he threatened suicide on a number of occasions. At first these cries for help from a man lonely and distressed were not treated seriously and eventually ignored. It was not until his fourth suicide threat on 22 February 1955, when Chandler actually attempted to shoot himself while in a drunken stupor, that those closest to him actively took notice. Sympathetic police officers in attendance determined that Chandler should be committed to the psychiatric ward of the county hospital for his own safety, and later Chandler candidly admitted, “I couldn’t for the life

of me tell you whether I really intended to go through with it or whether my subconscious was putting on a cheap dramatic performance” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.226).

Whatever his thoughts at the time, judging by his actions it is certain that his wife’s death was one of the most devastating events of his later life and undoubtedly tipped him over the edge. Under the influence of such an enormous stressor, it is highly likely that the trauma Chandler had suffered jumped from his subconscious to his conscious, bringing to the surface emotions that had lain dormant for years. Grossman has noted that, “Often you can keep things out of your mind when you are young and active, but they came back to haunt your nights in your old age” (Grossman, 1996, p.75). Cissy had been Chandler’s only companion and the major stabilising influence on his troubled life. With her death his depression and suffering came flooding back with devastating effect.

The remaining five years of Chandler’s life proved to be his most destructive, and it was a period in which he suffered profound psychological stress. The overwhelming sensation of despair and loneliness reached the point where, “life was empty in every respect, and the future seemed completely without purpose” (MacShane, 1976, p.227). As Jerry Speir has noted, Chandler’s last lonely years “serve as an indicator of the depths of the frustration of this man” (Speir, 1981, p.17). Chandler confessed, “I don’t sleep more than four hours a night. Often not at all. There are ghosts. Memories that keep me awake... Life has lost something” (MacShane, 1976, p.232). After Cissy’s death he was often incredibly open and honest in interviews, and as Patrick Doncaster of the *Daily Mail* recounted, when prompted about Cissy in an interview in 1955, the response was surprising:

“Mrs. Chandler,” I said gently....

“What about Mrs. Chandler?” Chandler said edgily. “She’s dead. Died last year.” He looked away across the bar. He twitched a little, jumpy. Then something choked in his throat.

“I’ve not got over it yet,” he said quietly. And a big tear rolled down his cheek. (Cited in MacShane, 1976, p.232)

MacShane believes that around this time Chandler may have begun to realise the “therapeutic value of talk” (MacShane, 1976, p.232). In terms of trauma, whether public or private, Herman maintains that talking can be a “prerequisite both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of [the] individual” (Herman, 2001, p.1). But this

respite was only temporary, and although Chandler's sense of loss was never completely erased, frequent visits to London kept him occupied during his final few years.

Although Chandler frequently threatened suicide while in London, his female friends there felt compelled to operate what they described as a 'shuttle service' to ensure he was not neglected. As his friend Jocelyn Richards reasoned, the 'shuttle service' was an effort "to keep him socially engaged" (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.234). Natasha Spender hoped their attention would "see him through to a point where he would want to go on living... [and] reverse the process of slowly killing himself with drink" (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.234). Alison Hooper, another friend, recalls they would,

...take turns to keep him company at crucial hours – such as mealtimes when the idea was to get him to eat at least something, since like many alcoholics he tended to starve. There was a lunch hour patrol, a drinks-and-dinner shift – even on occasions a dawn watch. (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.234)

The women he dined and socialised with were painfully aware of his loneliness and suffering. Their companionship and concern was much appreciated by Chandler because it appealed to his gentlemanly side and enabled him to act out the role of the mythic 'Galahad' of his poetry for his female friends.

Herman states that the response of those around a PTSD sufferer, "has a powerful influence on the ultimate resolution of the trauma" (Herman, 2001, p.70). However, Chandler's female friends realised that "the oscillation of his mood between exuberance and despair" was that of a "concealed nervous breakdown, concealed in that he could put up a good superficial show on social occasions, but in private he was resolutely and scornfully impervious to our suggestions that he consult medical advice for these extreme episodes" (cited in Gross, 1977, p.130). Spender has noted that Chandler's friends admired the courage and humour with which he fought through "alarming roller-coaster changes of mood, the plunging into loneliness and illness, the zooming up into deliciously irresistible sagas of outrageous nonsense; the bullying contentiousness swivelling suddenly to the disarming repartee, and all as if it was happening to him entirely outside of his control" (cited by Gross, 1977, p.136). Yet however valiant his efforts at keeping his demons at bay, she notes how in "both despairing and exuberant phases he seemed propelled by anxiety" (cited in Gross, 1977, p.130).

While Chandler's social interaction may have eased his traumatic symptoms, his worsening addiction to alcohol, which had made him forgetful and irritable, did

irreparable damage to his health. Shortly after returning to New York in 1956 he was again hospitalised, and after being discharged he returned to California but was forced almost immediately to seek help in August for alcoholism and extreme depression at the Las Encinas Sanatorium in Pasadena. He later said, “What was the matter with me – and has been for some time, was a total mental, physical and emotional exhaustion masked by my drinking enough whiskey to keep me on my feet, and then a severe malnutrition” (cited in Gardiner and Walker, p. 40). His physician Dr. Whitelaw Birss told him that he was,

...one of the most highly-stung and emotional people he ever met, that alcohol can never give me any real relaxation because my mind operates mostly on the subconscious level, which alcohol can't reach, while it merely irritates the emotions it can reach. (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.250)

However, Chandler appears to have begun to accept the way he was and all that he had suffered. In 1956 he admitted, “I used, like most people, to dramatise myself in all sorts of heroic situations. As a great athlete or war hero. Now I've come to terms with the real me” (cited in Moss, p.245). This suggests that Chandler had, in his past, defined himself as such things, but now they were irrelevant. He had finally accepted that he could no longer be dramatic, and was not these things any more.

The fatigue, anxiety and character disorder that Chandler suffered during this time however, are further indicators of the persistent PTSD brought about by combat experience. In terms of recovery for a manifestation of symptoms, the only possible option is total rest, without which the sufferer will experience a complete psychological collapse and a permanent alteration of the personality. The effects of warfare can be so severe that as Grinker and Spiegel noted, “there can be no erasure because the experience acts profoundly on the individual's personality, causing significant alteration” (Grinker and Spiegel, 1945, p.371). Evelyn Hooker, a close friend of Natasha Spender, and a trained psychologist, “could immediately detect how close Chandler had become to insanity... and was convinced that he needed professional help” (Hiney, 1997, p.246). However, there are two reasons why Chandler was able to avoid a complete and permanent breakdown. The first was the diversion and companionship that came from his frequent visits to London after Cissy's death. The second reason was his work. By reworking his final novel *Playback* during this time, it became “clear to him... that he was far more stable when he was writing” (Hiney, 1997, p.245). In this period Chandler

also toyed with the idea of writing a novel situated in England called *English Summer*, and what is interesting about this novel is the way Chandler described the intended protagonist. He described him as a man that,

... feels lost in a society he doesn't quite understand, and among people he will never understand, but he nevertheless can't just walk out. He has to do something. He has, according to his code and mine, incurred an obligation... when we have that feeling we are willing to destroy ourselves rather than let someone down. (cited in Gardiner and Walker, p.240)

Symbolically and characteristically identical to Philip Marlowe, it would appear that the motif of the gallant hero is one that Chandler was unwilling to discard because it struck a chord with the author's own sense of righteousness and honour. The notion of laying one's life down for the greater good is also characteristically and intrinsically indicative of a warrior mentality.

In his final years it appears that Chandler became a person tormented by contradiction, he was both hopeful that he might find someone with whom he could share his life, yet saddened by the thought of replacing Cissy. As Speir says, "whatever conflicts and difficulties he and Cissy may have shared, she was for him the force that made his life worth the effort" (Spier, p.17). With Cissy gone, Chandler's life seemed to lose its purpose. He returned to California where he cultivated friendships with a number of women but which always ended in disappointment and became a source of psychological pain. It was during this period that Chandler admitted, "I don't miss alcohol physically at all... I do miss it mentally and spiritually" (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.248). By 1959 his health had greatly deteriorated and many of his friends became worried that he had all but lost the will to live. His English agent Helga Green worried over Chandler's psychological state stayed with him during his last months, helping to restore a degree of stability to his life, and it was she who encouraged him to fly to New York to accept the presidency of the Mystery Writers of America in 1959. While in New York Chandler met Helga's father and asked for her hand in marriage, but when he was refused he returned to California utterly broken and dejected.

This was to be Chandler's final rejection. On 23 March, after yet another heavy bout of drinking, he was admitted to La Jolla Convalescent Hospital suffering from pneumonia. Two days later he was transferred to the Scripps Clinic where he died on 26

March 1959. After a funeral service that was attended by just seventeen people, he was buried in a small plot in Mount Hope Cemetery in San Diego.

Chandler's lonely existence was echoed in his death. Traumatized by his experiences in the war, he chose writing as a way to achieve a sense of catharsis and acceptance. Yet his demons could not be completely laid to rest and they continued to torment him throughout his life. Although he is remembered "as a premier detective novelist," the main force of his novels owes something to the experiences that blighted his existence, and his incorporation of trauma into "his persistent struggle to get beyond the severe limitations of [the generic] form" (Speir, 1981, p.17). As Hiney and MacShane have noted, "The qualities and attributes he held are often found on the boundaries of sanity, and Chandler held those in spades." They believe that, "The payback for a life of odd ends was the sort of raw wit that appears in print only once or twice a century. The sort of eye that can see straight through what people say to what they mean. Few writers of his own generation have dated so little" (Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.xi). Thus, as the creator of a unique detective, Chandler's undoubted genius owes much to the transference of his tormented self, his trauma, his cynicism, and his despair, onto his veteran detective Philip Marlowe.

¹ MacShane, 1976, p.205

² Throughout the latter twentieth century this research was mainly conducted by Abraham Kardiner, J.W Appel and G.W Bebbe, Roy Grinker and John Spiegel, Robert Jay Lifton and Chaim Shatan, who have all furthered the understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder, its causes and treatment.

³ A full discussion of the symptoms associated with war trauma and the resulting post-traumatic stress disorders are given by Grossman on pages 45-48. Judith Lewis Herman also discusses the 'oscillation' between different emotions and reactions in chapter 3 of her book, and she gives a detailed analysis of the key psychological symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder on pages 35-50.

Chapter Three

RAYMOND CHANDLER AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

“...you have to hurt like hell before you can write seriously.”¹

- Ernest Hemingway

When Frank MacShane and Tom Hiney came to describe Raymond Chandler's experiences during World War One, neither paused to consider how these events would have effected the author's psychological state, nor the part his encounters would have played in the subsequent development and characterisation of his detective Philip Marlowe. Both biographers overlooked the psychological effects and focussed almost exclusively on the contention that the only influence the war had on Chandler's writing was to make his depictions of crime scenes far more gruesome. Portrayed in this way his combat experience is presented not as an extremely distressing occurrence in his life, but instead as an event that created a rich reserve of imagery from which he would later draw for his novels. As well as neglecting the potentially devastating psychological effects that the war would have had, both MacShane and Hiney place their complete confidence in Chandler's apparent first-hand testimony of his experiences, which in light of further examination appears extremely ambiguous and occasionally misleading.

Although Ernest Hemingway exaggerated and magnified his own wartime exploits in order to portray himself as a masculine veteran, Chandler did not refer to his experiences until later in his life, and only then were they recited as a method of awing women. As will be discussed, in his letters to an Australian correspondent Deirdre Gartrell, which MacShane and Hiney have used as the basis for their version of Chandler's war, the author briefly describes his experiences in a manner calculated to impress her. Because of the context of these letters, the wartime account provided by

Chandler's biographers becomes ambiguous and misleading. In light of historical and documentary evidence regarding Chandler's specific location on the front line and the intensity of battle that he actually witnessed, as well as his supposed wounding during an artillery barrage in June 1918, their account appears increasingly inadequate. The relevant factual evidence is readily available from the Canadian Archive in Ottawa and historical accounts of the Canadian experience of the war have proved invaluable in establishing the actual events. Copies of Canadian archival material, including Chandler's military file, have provided details of his battalion assignments and his health throughout the war. Further evidence has been utilised from the Seventh Canadian Infantry Battalion War Diaries, and also a rare pamphlet published in 1930 titled *A Short History of the 7th Battalion C.E.F* by Major T.V. Scudamore. These additional sources provide details of the precise movements of Chandler's battalion, including their location and details of the injuries and fatalities suffered. As well as these, Colonel G.W.L Nicholson's *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919* has been an important reference for gaining a broader picture of the Canadian Army's movements on the western Front.

A thorough examination of these sources has made it possible to accomplish something that MacShane and Hiney did not attempt. By painstakingly tracking the location and advance of the First Canadian Division on the Western Front, it has been possible to pinpoint Chandler's precise whereabouts during his time in France between March and June 1918. By re-examining Chandler's military records and cross-referencing with his medical file, it is possible to shed new light upon the circumstances of his return to England and to provide a more accurate account of his transfer to the Royal Air Force. Not only does the evidence demonstrate that the version of events provided by MacShane and Hiney was misleading, it also reveals that both biographers accounts of the war were inaccurate on almost every point of fundamental importance.

A re-examination Chandler's war experience suggests that unlike Hemingway, who was wounded as the result of an *active* traumatic event arising from an artillery explosion, Chandler may have suffered a far more *passive* transference of trauma that would have occurred as a result of waiting or anticipating an attack in a hostile environment. This severely heightens a soldier's belief in the threat of imminent death, and in this precarious situation a person can feel "intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and [the] threat of annihilation" (Herman, 2001, pg.33). The sensation of overpowering apprehension is extremely psychologically destructive and a significant factor in the development of traumatic neuroses. Judith Lewis Herman notes that,

Traumatic events produce profound and lasting changes in psychological arousal, emotion, cognition, and memory. Moreover, traumatic events may sever these normally integrated functions from one another... This kind of fragmentation, whereby trauma tears apart a complex system of self-protection that normally functions in an integrated fashion is central to the historic observations of post-traumatic stress disorder. (Herman, 2001, pg.34)

There is no doubt that a soldier's experience of war, however short, can prove traumatic. As we have seen previously, Chandler's experience in France indicates the origin of the psychological troubles and erratic behaviour that came to define his life. Conducting a fresh examination of Chandler's time in France is therefore essential in order to understand the nature of the trauma and disillusionment that came to be represented by Philip Marlowe.

The style and voice of countless writers has been shaped and defined by the experience of war and in the United States the most renowned writers for achieving this were those of the 'Lost Generation'. Not only do they represent a generation that went to war, but also a generation that captured the changing face of contemporary America and the dislocation many veterans felt towards their society upon their return. As well as this disillusioned outpouring was the belief that "they were an oppressed minority, orphans and strangers in their own country" (Cowley, 1973, p.13). In 1915 Sigmund Freud posited the view that the "most potent factors in the mental distress felt by non-combatants" was "the disillusionment which this war has evoked; and the altered attitude towards death" (Rickman, 1939, p.2). As far as combat itself was concerned, Freud affirmed that "never has any event been destructive of so much that is valuable in the common wealth of humanity, not so misleading to many of the clearest intelligences, nor so debasing to the highest that we know" (Rickman, 1939, p.1). Although some of the 'Lost Generation' writers did not actually experience warfare firsthand, after the war they were all able to tap into the discontent and frustration felt by many that had.

However, with the decadence of the jazz age and a general feeling of exuberance after the war, the 1920s were not considered a time of disillusionment for America as a whole. Yet for the 'Lost Generation' the dislocation they felt stemmed from the feeling that they did not belong, they felt lost and estranged in what for many was the carefree abandon of post-war American society. This contrasting image of the 'Roaring 20s' and the disillusionment of veterans is summed up by F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Remarkably, Fitzgerald was able to combine both social moods in the novel, and made it

a 'war' story without any explicit reference to the subject of war or its aftermath. In a manner similar to Chandler's detective, Gatsby is a disillusioned veteran surrounded by decadence. But unlike Marlowe, the decadence surrounding Gatsby is of his own making. His desperate attempt to hold on to Daisy Fay Buchanan has forced him "steadily upwards" to become "a 'success' – but as a bootlegger and possibly as a swindler" (cited in Prigozy, 2002, p.83). Daisy represents the one 'good' thing from Gatsby's pre-war existence, and his attempt to keep her in his life results in his acceptance of 1920s decadence and his use of the era's consumption to propel him to his desired destination. Gatsby uses the very decadence that Marlowe considers 'phoney' in order to cling on to the only remnant of his pre-war past he considers worthwhile, his love for Daisy.

The Great Gatsby is considered a war novel because it combines the story of two veterans, the protagonist Jay Gatsby and the narrator Nick Carraway, into the pervading post-war sense of social indifference towards those who fought in the war. Gatsby and Carraway strike-up a friendship based on the fact that they were members of the same Infantry Division of the American Army and fellow First World War veterans. They have a shared experience and as such appear to have a sympathetic understanding of one another. During Gatsby's funeral at the end of the novel, Carraway sums up the bond they shared when he declares "I began to have a feeling of defiance, of scornful solidarity between Gatsby and me against them all" (Fitzgerald, 1925, pg.157). This attitude can be similarly perceived in Philip Marlowe. Although he has no real friends throughout the series of novels, his recognition and acknowledgement of a character's war experience appears to bind the detective to numerous veterans he meets, especially Roger Wade and Terry Lennox in *The Long Goodbye*.

If Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby* as a novel about the effects of war, then Chandler can also be considered to have done something very similar in his own writing. However, the major difference between Fitzgerald and Chandler lies in the fact that while Fitzgerald did not experience combat, Chandler did, and was therefore able to draw from a far deeper well of personal and emotional experience. The use of a noticeably descriptive and discontented first-person narrative links Chandler more closely with Fitzgerald and the 'Lost Generation', than to Hammett and the crime genre.

While many 'Lost Generation' writers chose to experience the war by becoming ambulance drivers because, "rescue work offered a splendid way to get close to the fighting without actually being a foot soldier" (Lynn, 1995, p.73), Chandler enlisted in the Canadian infantry and saw action. Yet even being on the periphery of the fighting had

its dangers as Ernest Hemingway discovered in July 1918 when he was injured delivering chocolate to frontline troops. However, while admitting that he had been terrified by his wounding on the Italian front, he believed that “serious injuries purified men who endured them, enabling them to transcend the brutal and destructive side of war” (Meyers, 1999, p.35). Hemingway was convinced that by incorporating such terrifying experiences and emotions into his work he could produce a far more honest and realistic form of literature.

Chandler rarely discussed his war experiences, doing so only “obliquely” (MacShane, 1976, p.29) in letters towards the end of his life. While it is difficult to gain an understanding of an individual’s actual experience of the war, Chandler does provide a small insight in his later correspondence. Many of his key allusions towards the war and his feelings regarding his experiences in France appear in sections of letters written to one particular correspondent in the three years before his death. His correspondence with the Australian student Deirdre Gartrell was initiated in 1956 through letters regarding Chandler’s work and the importance of his novels to her in times of depression and anxiety. Gartrell’s vulnerability appealed to Chandler’s sense of honour, and bolstered by his desire to comfort and protect her, a flirtatious correspondence began which lasted until the end of his life. However, because of their introspective and sentimental nature the content of these letters should be approached with caution.

Despite recognising that letter writing was “an important outlet for a writer who... had restricted himself to detective stories,” MacShane left the context of the Gartrell letters unconsidered and unexplored. It is unsurprising that letter writing became a cathartic outlet for the troubled writer. MacShane noted that “There was so much left over, crying to get out” (MacShane, 1976, p.xvi). In the introduction to his collection *Selected Letters of Raymond Chandler*, MacShane reveals what Chandler thought about his letters, he said, “I suppose in my letters I more or less revealed those facets of my mind which had to be obscured or distorted in what I wrote for publication” (MacShane, 1976, p.xvi). MacShane drew upon the content of Chandler’s letters to Gartrell as his primary source of evidence to document the author’s wartime experience without paying due regard to the relationship that existed between the two and the impact this may have had on what Chandler wrote. As a result the credibility of Chandler’s letters to Gartrell has remained unchallenged.

Acknowledging that Chandler was a romantic and a flirt during his final years, MacShane would have known of Chandler’s propensity for embellishing stories with

fantasy and should have considered the letters to Gartrell as another example of this tendency. In his biography however, MacShane does not even acknowledge Gartrell and cites the content of Chandler's letters to her as fact. By refusing to acknowledge the flirtatious context in which the letters were written, the biographical account he constructs of Chandler's war is compromised.

In a letter to Gartrell in March 1957 Chandler included some thoughts on his wartime experiences. However, without questioning Chandler's accuracy MacShane uses this as the basis for Chandler's involvement in the First World War. Chandler wrote,

Courage is a strange thing: one can never be sure of it. As a platoon commander very many years ago, I never seemed to be afraid, and yet I have been afraid of the most insignificant risks. If you had to go over the top somehow all you seemed to think of was trying to keep the men spaced, in order to reduce casualties. It was always very difficult, especially if you had replacements or men who had been wounded. It's only human to want to bunch for companionship in the face of heavy fire. Nowadays war is very different. In some ways it's much worse, but the casualties don't compare with those in trench warfare. My battalion (Canadian) had a normal strength of 1200 men and it had over 14,000 casualties. (cited in MacShane, 1976, 29)

From this passage we are able to gain a sense of Chandler's character and the emotions connected to his experience. We learn that Chandler was a platoon commander with the responsibility of taking roughly thirty men into action. He notes that he has been 'over the top,' and in all likelihood this was not an exaggeration as the Seventh Battalion War Diaries show that scouting and raiding parties were very active during the time Chandler spent in the battalion. He also displays his awareness of human reactions during traumatising situations, noting the hopeless sensation of trying to keep soldiers spaced to avoid unnecessary casualties which goes against the natural human instinct to cluster together when frightened or under stress.

Considering Chandler's words, his dramatic experience of war would surely be worthy of further investigation. From his apparent first-hand knowledge of fighting on the frontline it appears that Chandler's war record surpasses many of the so-called 'Lost Generation', including Ernest Hemingway. As Cowley has noted, many of the 'Lost Generation' returned to America "never know[ing] whether or not they were brave men" (Cowley, 1973, p.12). Courage and valour is something that many veterans find difficult to comprehend, and as Chandler notes, "one can never be sure of it." Yet in such devastating wartime surroundings, bravery is not always achieved by advancing into

direct machine gun fire. Instead, acts of courage can be accomplished merely by staying safe in the combat environment. As America's most decorated soldier of World War Two, Hollywood actor Audie Murphy commented, "Bravery under fire sometimes happens because a soldier, particularly an infantryman, is actually safer lying flat on his belly firing his rifle than running away" (cited in Joiner, 2006, p.151).

One inconsistency in Chandler's account above however, appears to be in his recollection of the 14,000 casualties suffered by the Seventh Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force (C.E.F). According to Major T.V. Scudamore in *A Short History of the 7th Battalion C.E.F* there were approximately 1,380 soldiers either killed or declared missing from the Seventh Battalion between 1915 and 1918 (Scudamore, 1930, appendix). One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that Chandler rounded up the total number of casualties to 1400 but accidentally added an extra digit to the figure through a typing error. Another possibility is that he may have confused the battalion figure with the larger number of casualties for the entire First Division. It proves, however, that research and clarification are vital when considering personal correspondence, and shows the importance of regarding the letters Chandler wrote in later life with caution.

It is evident that Chandler's correspondence with Gartrell provides an important insight into the author's state of mind during his later life, and because of their significance, Gartrell herself deserves some discussion. But while Hiney acknowledges Gartrell and provides a brief discussion of her relevance, MacShane does not, even though he cites freely from Chandler's letters to her. Yet the context in which the letters were written reveal an entirely different understanding of the author's experience in Europe, and also demonstrate the inaccuracies which have arisen regarding the documented version of Chandler's war. The letters to Gartrell are important because although they were written almost forty years after the event, they offer Chandler's interpretation of his wartime experiences. He divulges information that reveals how these events shaped his emotions and his post-war life, and displays his emotional state at the time of writing. In short, they demonstrate the psychologically troubled behaviour in his final years.

These letters make it apparent that Chandler's mind had become fragile and erratic, and he appears increasingly infatuated with his female correspondents. They also make it clear he had become lonely, unpredictable, and contradictory. Chandler appears to have been reaching out to those around him for more meaningful connections.

Showing a sense of desperation, in a letter from 1948 Chandler noted that “Friends are too scarce these days,” (Bodleian, 57: 5) and by 1952 he believed that in years to come “Letters are going to be my greatest burden” (Bodleian, 41: 100).

Chandler’s grief and sense of loss following Cissy’s death aroused conflicting emotions that made him behave erratically, especially towards women. According to a theory put forward by Freud in 1920, Chandler’s war experience may have contributed to this. Freud believed that love and death could become extremely conflicted in the wake of a traumatic event. He argued shortly after World War One that a traumatic stressor was enough to force these twin emotions to the forefront of the human psyche and trigger extreme psychological behaviour. According to his theory, which he named ‘The Pleasure Principle,’ within every person there exists the conflicting forces of the life drive *Eros*, and the death drive *Thanatos*, which he declared were dual aspects of one life force. While *Eros* was at the core of the sexual drive and love, Freud believed *Thanatos* was the root cause of suicide if turned against the self, and violence if deflected onto others. Placed in a war context, love and death therefore have a symbiotic relationship. As Edward Tick has explained, “War brings us into the most intense engagement with other human beings. It demands that we love some of our neighbours and destroy others. And it asks us to align ourselves – to love and hate thus – in the most uncompromising terms” (Tick, 2005, p.119). In an environment where the forces of love and death connect so completely, warfare radically transforms and confuses not only combatants’ relationship with people, but also attitudes towards love and sex. Tick notes that, “Developing an abnormal sex drive is [an]...example of how war can transform one’s relation to love and passion,” (Tick, 2005, p.123) and the primeval instinct awakened by war transfers to a combatant’s sexuality when the combatant returns home. As a result, promiscuity and increased sexual appetite are common as veterans develop a “hunger for the restoration of life that only the intensity of erotic arousal could promise to fulfil” (Tick, p.124). ‘The Pleasure Principle’ suggests that engaging the sex drive can be the primary means by which a trauma victim is able to feel alive whilst suffering a fear of death.

Freud’s theory certainly sheds light upon Chandler’s attitude towards women. Hiney and MacShane both note that after only three years of marriage to Cissy Chandler became restless and eager to “find women who might give him what was not provided in the pink boudoir at home” (MacShane, 1976, p.39). Despite acting the chivalric knight towards Cissy, he apparently began having affairs with the secretaries at the Dabney Oil Company. A colleague of Chandler’s at Dabney’s, John Abrams, commented that during

many oil and gas banquets he became “a shadowy figure, stinko drunk and hovering in the wings with a bevy of showgirls, a nuisance” (MacShane, 1976, p.39). His drinking and womanising became so extreme that he moved out of the home he shared with Cissy and into a hotel, visiting his secretary on weekends to binge drink in an apartment he had rented for her. At this point in his life, Chandler appeared to have hit rock bottom. Yet it seems to have been his concern for his wife’s failing health and his writing that pulled him back from the brink of submitting to the conflicting destructive forces of *Eros* and *Thanatos*.

The pleasure principle not only gives a reason for Chandler’s extramarital affairs and destructive nature in the years after the war, but it also explains Chandler’s extreme reaction to, and attention towards women after Cissy’s death in 1954. On a trip to London in 1955 he exclaimed,

But the women! If they ever had buck teeth I don’t see them now. I’ve seen glamour girls at parties that would stun Hollywood. And they are so damn honest they won’t even let you pay their taxi fares... If you want them to go to bed with you, you have to say “please” five times... Americans are not as a rule successful with the best type of English girls and women. They move too fast and too roughly. There is far too much of this “Come on, baby, let’s hit they hay” motif. They don’t like it. They expect to be treated as ladies. They are perfectly willing to sleep with you if they like you and if you treat them with deference, because... they don’t want to be treated like easy lays. They want you to work up to it slowly and fastidiously, and I certainly think they are right. (MacShane, 1982, p.390-1)

Even after meeting the writer Marcel Duhamel and his wife in New York in 1956, Chandler wrote to Helga Green declaring, “His wife is charming. I’d like to sleep with her. Right now I’d like to sleep with almost any pretty soft gentle woman,” yet, the ever-romantic Chandler admitted, “but of course I shan’t do it (even if I had the chance) because there has to be love. Without that it is nothing” (MacShane, 1987, p.401). Despite his lust for women he insisted to Green that there was “nothing predatory” (MacShane, 1987, p.402) about his feelings and behaviour.

After Cissy’s death his sole stabilising influence disappeared and he was left to fend for himself. A lonely Chandler admitted this to Jessica Tyndale in 1956, in a letter he wrote shortly after a nervous breakdown. He said “...I had been married so long and so happily that after the slow torture of my wife’s death it seemed at first treason to look at another woman, and then suddenly I seemed to be in love with all women” (MacShane, 1987, p.408). His sudden sexual urges, whether real or fantasy, emerged in numerous

letters to female friends. To Tyndale he again divulged information that makes him appear once again as a philanderer, but also, curiously, as a romantic:

I had no idea what I had to give them that they gave so much to me, that the most strict and puritanical woman I had ever met had been in bed with me a week after I met her. That the strange thing was that such affairs as I had had never ended. There was never any bitterness or boredom. I loved them all still and they seemed to love me. But I could not live alone. It destroyed me. Therefore I could not be completely faithful to any woman who could not share my life, but that I didn't regard this as infidelity, because after all sex is only a rather minor part of love, delicious as it is when it is right. I said I really didn't want to get married again because my heart was in too many places and a wife would never have more than a part of me. (MacShane, 1987, p.408-9)

Yet, the catastrophe of Cissy's death sent Chandler into a downward spiral of erratic behaviour and traumatic symptoms that would last for the rest of his life.

What is striking about Chandler's dialogue in his letters, and especially with Gartrell, is how quickly and fluidly he moves between subjects, and also how he manages to manipulate the feelings of his correspondent. He also manages to insert references to war in the most simple of conversations. In July 1957 for example, Chandler wrote to Gartrell regarding his health, but ended up comparing it to his war experience. He said,

It seems that I have a serious anaemic condition. Not fatal, but quite serious. These diagnoses never make much impression on me, since I have lived my whole life on the edge of nothing. Once you have had to lead a platoon into direct machine-gun fire, nothing is ever the same again. (Bodleian 75, 35-62: 42)

In this small insightful passage Chandler shows just how much of an impact his war experience had on his life. It is the only time that Chandler admits how deeply his experiences have changed him. Yet while confessing his troubled feelings about his life-altering experience of warfare and the melancholy of his life's worth, he appears to be manipulating Gartrell's emotions by discussing the seriousness of his diagnosed condition. It offers a unique insight not only into Chandler's feelings towards the war but it also reveals his growing emotional attachment towards his correspondent.

Although Chandler's accounts of his war experience appear earnest and sincere, upon closer examination these allusions become less credible and trustworthy. His letters swing between common sense advice for Gartrell, subtle flirtation, and exploitation of her reverence. It appears as though he is playing for her sympathies by trying to present

himself in the role of a hero. Like many of the women he socialised with on his frequent visits to London in his later years, it is as though Chandler looked upon Gartrell as an object to be 'saved.' As with many other women, his charitable advice soon developed sexual undertones, with Chandler later confessing, "I don't quite know why you are so close to my heart, but you are. In some mysterious way you have put me inside of you, so that I have to lie awake at night and worry about you – you a girl I have not ever seen" (Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.243). Chandler's desire to meet her equalled his need to keep her at a distance; she became an object to be worshiped from afar. He said in March 1957: "we may never meet. I rather hope we shall, unless it destroys an illusion. You need the illusion" (MacShane, 1987, p.430). Deirdre Gartrell, a woman less than half his age and whom he had never met, became privileged confidant to the information that MacShane and Hiney consider the basis for Chandler's war experience. His letters to her demonstrate his desperation for admiration and a need to impress, and as such the disclosure of Chandler's war experience becomes problematic and makes his motivation ambiguous.

Chandler's propensity for acting out the role of knight and hero demonstrates that it is entirely possible he felt it necessary to portray the same heroic figure when describing his war exploits. Hemingway admitted in his Spanish War dispatches that he and other soldiers had exaggerated the severity of any injuries, probably to bolster their belief in their own bravery and masculinity. In his dispatch "The Spanish War" in July 1938 Hemingway said, "In the war that I had known, men often lied about the manner of their wounding. Not at first; but later. I'd lied a little myself in my time" (Meyers, 1999, p.33). While incorrectly arguing that Hemingway's "contemporary accounts were generally accurate," Meyers does concede that the writer's later versions have been "exaggerated into myth" (Meyers, 1999, p.33). In a similar manner to the accounts published by MacShane and Hiney, critics and the public had taken for granted the depiction of Hemingway's war experience and wounding until the publication of Kenneth Lynn's biography in 1987. Like the intention of this thesis, Lynn revealed that the level of myth constructed around Hemingway originated from sources that had remained unchecked and unquestioned for almost twenty years. Most astonishing was that the account of Hemingway's wounding emanated from the author himself while recovering in hospital in Italy, and Carlos Baker's 1969 biography *Hemingway: A Life Story* kept alive the notion of his 'heroic' wounding at Fossalta di Piave on July 8th 1918. ² It is possible that in his last few years Chandler adopted a similar behaviour in order to win

the sympathies and admiration of women. Just as he chose to play the role of the knight to his female friends in London and Los Angeles, Chandler may have seen an opportunity to impress Gartrell, the damsel in distress, by dramatising his exploits during the war. To reveal whether Chandler either fabricated or exaggerated event from his past, it is pertinent to consider his letters to both Gartrell and also those written to his British agent Helga Green. In these letters not only does he exaggerate his sexual prowess while reinforcing his chivalric ideals, but he also contrives sexual scenarios that did not happen. Yet, as will be demonstrated, although the letters reveal that he had a tendency fabricate relationships with women, Chandler simply does not divulge enough information in his letters regarding his war experience to garner an accurate or well-rounded picture.

One example of Chandler's tendency to embellish his stories is clear from his correspondence again with Gartrell. Although it was her that instigated their correspondence, Chandler's comforting words began to exploit her adoration and became increasingly intimate. His letters reveal his oscillating emotions, while subtle flirtation and a noticeable sexual dimension are evident in many. Although wanting to adhere to his noble ideals of virtue, Chandler frequently portrays himself as the opposite, as a philanderer. In a letter in 1957 discussing Gartrell's proposed trip to Germany. Chandler said, "If you really do go to Germany while I am in England, I hope you will fly over to London to visit me, as my guest in every sense of course" (Bodleian 58, 183-184: 183). These contrasting fantasies show a striking disparity for someone who has generally been considered such a detached and reserved character. We only have to look at accounts from Chandler's early Hollywood days to realise how shy and retiring he was. Yet, in a letter to Gartrell in March 1957 Chandler speaks of how,

I am more than twice your age and it may be out of place for me to be saying these things to you, but it is nevertheless a simple fact that I could never hurt, cheapen or demean a woman, and often, when I was young and unmarried, I had to think for the girl too, to prevent her sometimes from doing something which I know would shame her later.... I don't go too far with this, because after all I am writing to a well-bred young lady, and I don't want to offend her. I could go much farther, but would it be right? (MacShane, 1987, 430)

Chandler's sexual inference is made all the more knowing and obvious by his acknowledgement that his comments 'may be out of place,' embarrassing or even offensive. He creates a dual persona of himself, on the one hand as a young bachelor with a penchant for flirting, and on the other as a noble protector of female virtue. This sexual

confusion is a theme that reoccurs throughout many of his later letters, and in many the overtly sexual implications would certainly have been enough to make the recipient wonder at the writer's intentions.

In a relatively innocent letter from April 1957 Chandler describes his blissful marriage and says, "I can't, as I think back, find any reason why I should have been so favoured." What is immediately surprising is the reason Chandler gives for this belief. He says that he did not deserve such a happy marriage, because "as a young man I was anything but virginal" (Bodleian 75: 42). Chandler's confused imagery of his endless knightly courtship of his wife is in harsh contrast to his description of a promiscuous youth. And again, just eight months later in December 1957 Chandler wrote to Gartrell, "I was pretty tame at your age, almost afraid to speak to a girl. But I made up for it later" (Bodleian 58: 183). It appears that Chandler genuinely believed he had "a strange sort of instinct for understanding people, especially women" (Bodleian 75, 35-62: 41). At this point in his life Chandler was sixty-nine and two years from death. Yet despite his age it appears as though he relished the notion of being sexually provocative with his female correspondents while at the same time trying to portray someone wise and pure.

In contrast to his letters to Gartrell the tone of Chandler's correspondence changes when writing to his agent Helga Green. Instead of the overtly sexually manner with which he wrote to Gartrell, he adopts a chaste and innocent persona. In July 1956 Chandler had written to Green describing,

When I was a young man and very innocent, I lived in a pension on the Boul' Miche [in Paris] and was very happy wandering around, with very little money, but a sort of starry-eyed love of everything I saw. The only thing that upset me was the whores at the door of the apartment building if I happened to be out a little late. And I was so innocent that I didn't realise that there were two girls at the pension that couldn't keep their feet off mine and were offering themselves to my innocence and I never know it. (MacShane, 1976, p.13)

The contrasting tones of his letters reveal that he embellished his stories depending not only on to whom he was writing but also on his particular frame of mind. However, while he enjoyed his flirtatious correspondence with various women, the changes in his tone and style may demonstrate that he carried a genuine affection for Green. His letters to her show a softer side of himself, one that few correspondents saw. It is possible that with Green his mask of bravado slipped and instead he was willing to lay bare the sincerity and vulnerability of his own character.

In terms of his embellished correspondence and exaggeration of his sexual prowess with female friends in his later years, it is surprising that Chandler did not divulge more regarding his war experience. This is the significant difference between Chandler and Hemingway. While Hemingway completely transformed the story of his wounding in order to play the gallant war hero, Chandler revealed very little of his exploits during the war and that which he did reveal are limited to small slivers of information. It speaks volumes that not much is known about his military career, and that the one real glimpse provided regarding his experiences was Chandler's assertion that, "Once you have had to lead a platoon into direct machine-gun fire, nothing is ever the same again" (Bodleian 75, 35-62: 42). While MacShane and Hiney have used this and other remarks to wrongly insinuate that Chandler's entire platoon was killed by an explosion leaving him the only survivor, his words reveal nothing more than that he endured the experience of commanding a group of men 'over the top' into gunfire. In the letter from which this remark was taken and in all his other correspondence Chandler says nothing of surviving an artillery attack, and if there had been a particular occurrence that he would have been likely to exaggerate, this would have been it. In his letters Chandler provides insufficient detail and information to conjure a full biographical account of his wartime experiences.

Around the time that Chandler was writing these letters to Gartrell and Green, he had also begun writing short stories that differed wildly from any of his previous work. In a letter to Neil Morgan, a columnist at the *San Diego Tribune*, Chandler admitted that "lately I have been indulging in a form of polite pornography... and I am, therefore enclosing a couple of samples" (MacShane, 1987, p.389). In the summer of 1957 he wrote a series of stories which he titled 'A Routine to Shock the Neighbours,' and as Natasha Spender recounted, the title evolved from the 'improvisations' of the sketches that Chandler would give while having lunch at the Connaught Hotel in London, improvisations designed to "titillate those at neighbouring tables" (MacShane, 1976, p.248). Chandler claimed that they had been written as an exercise to test his ear for English dialogue, and comprised of numerous suggestive stories that he nicknamed his 'Pornographic Sketches.' In a letter to his San Diego lawyer Leroy Wright in March 1957, Chandler acknowledged that they "were mildly pornographic" but reasoned that it "was only to make them fun to write" (MacShane, 1987, p.437). He stated that "the basic motif behind [the stories] is an attempt to spoof the upper-middle class sort of talk" (MacShane, 1987, p.389). He sent many of these stories to his closest friends, mainly

female, and requested their advice and asked for their comments. In one of these stories, which he called “Faster, Slower, Neither,” the theme is apparent: “Well, really, much as one hates to interrupt at a time like this, isn’t the tempo – well, one might possibly say a bit *adagio*?” (MacShane, 1976, p.248-9) Even if, as Chandler insisted, these stories had been written for fun, it is not difficult to imagine the emotional state that prompted him to write an assessment of English dialogue in such a format.³

Hiney and MacShane view Chandler’s letters to Gartrell, and Gartrell herself, in very different ways. While MacShane’s biography appears to be the more substantial of the two, he does not, as already noted, refer to at all Chandler’s correspondence with Gartrell. Yet despite this he quotes freely from letters to her in order to build up an almost inflated picture of Chandler’s war experience. Hiney on the other hand acknowledges the relationship between Chandler and Gartrell, but he misleads the reader by portraying Gartrell as a distressed and obsessive fan fuelling Chandler’s ‘knightly’ advances. He does however, state that in the letters “Chandler’s mood swings were transparent” and that he appeared to be exploiting Gartrell’s friendship (Hiney, 1997, p.261). Although MacShane and Hiney’s accounts place differing emphases on this friendship they are both however, at odds with the actuality of the friendship and correspondence that existed between the two. Research conducted at the Bodleian Library in Oxford has uncovered letters from Gartrell describing their relationship and noting that in her opinion Chandler’s psychological state in the last years of his life was anything but stable. It seems that MacShane and Hiney have re-interpreted the content of Chandler’s letters to Gartrell in order to preserve a more enduring image of the author. In reality Chandler appears to have been a far more melancholic character, bordering on a breakdown and suffering the effects of losing his wife.

By making sustained use of Gartrell’s letters in order to formulate a picture of Chandler’s war experience, MacShane omitted any discussion of the author’s psychological condition and as such used the letters in a manner which made them appear as a factual account. In 1960 however, Gartrell shed some light on Chandler’s emotional state in his final years. Corresponding with Helga Green after Chandler’s death, Gartrell confirmed that despite her huge respect for the author, he had an extremely active imagination. She said revealingly, “I never knew how much to believe... his words sometimes ran away with him” (Bodleian 71,146-148: 148). As with most of his other female friends, Gartrell’s relationship with Chandler had been complex. She said “Ray wrote to me more as a father to daughter, than writer to writer,” she said. “He used to

worry about my developmental problems, ... give me advice, sometimes by cable, or even telephone, when I appeared on the brink of some madcap scheme, and sigh with relief when I recovered from my foolishness” (Bodleian 71, 146-148: 146). One of these ‘madcap schemes’ from which Chandler tried to dissuade Gartrell, was her marriage to Walter Stube, a Danish-German building contractor she had met while corresponding with Chandler. His reason to end the engagement, she disclosed to Green, was a warning “that Germans don’t make understanding mates!” (Bodleian 71, 146-148: 146), which might indicate a possible fixation resulting from his war experience.

Although Hiney has noted that their relationship “grew quite intense, with Deirdre confessing emotional crises and Chandler sending her poems” (Hiney, 1997, p.260-1) it appears the attachment was far more one-sided than Hiney and other critics have acknowledged. In 1957 the increasingly troubled Chandler confessed to Gartrell that in his mind their friendship had become something more. He admitted, “In some strange way you have become a part of me, so that I wake in the night and wonder what is Deirdre thinking or doing” (Hiney, 1997, p.261). But Gartrell’s intentions towards the author seem to have been far more innocent than previously established. In her letter to Helga Green, Gartrell states that her sole aim was friendship. “I [only] wanted an anonymous outlet for my writers thoughts,” she said. But as Chandler’s tone changed, so did the nature of their friendship. She continued, “First flattered and then incredulous, then irritated... at losing my iceberg confidante,... gradually we changed; Ray realized I had shown him only one aspect of myself, and so he felt a little cheated and disillusioned. So...[we] drifted apart, letters fizzled out” (Bodleian 71, 146-148: 147). It appears Chandler had become addicted to filling the role of hero. He cherished the attention he received from women and was drawn to those who revered him; the adoration excited him and encouraged him to further embellish his correspondence. But by the time his correspondence with Gartrell had declined, Chandler had already revealed his thoughts about his experience that today we recognise as the basis for his exploits during the First World War.

While reliable as indicators of Chandler’s state of mind during his final years, his letters to Gartrell become problematic if considered as accurate sources of information regarding his actual experience. In addition, because of the date they were written, and because only a small amount of information was divulged, their authenticity must be questioned because of the time-lapse between the original event and Chandler’s written account. Nevertheless, Chandler’s letters do show that the emotional impact of his time

spent with the Canadian Army in France, however short, stayed with him throughout his life. The experience of being so close to the sights, sound, and action of the battlefield created a deep scar in Chandler's psyche, yet his biographers sidelined the importance of his war experiences, and its influence upon his writing has been largely unacknowledged. But the trauma inflicted upon him by his experiences not only moulded his own personality, but it also instigated the creation of a character that had not only survived his experience of war but had emerged a hero, the person Chandler longed to be.

Plotting Chandler's War

In their biographies neither MacShane nor Hiney provide accurate examinations of Chandler's time in France, and neither attempted to plot the course of the First Canadian Division or provide proof of Chandler's supposed wounding. Such a lack of accuracy is dubious when examining how such a crucial event shaped and influenced Chandler's life and writing. While MacShane makes some effort to plot the First Division's location in France, his description of the subject is incredibly vague. He notes that up until the beginning of 1918 and prior to Chandler's arrival in France the Canadians had been heavily involved with some of the bloodiest battles of the war. The Seventh Battalion of the First Canadian Division, the battalion to which Chandler would be assigned, had successfully defended Vimy Ridge in April 1917 and had also emerged triumphant after the battle of Passchendaele in November 1917. However, by the time of Chandler's arrival in France the biographers merely describe the location of the First Division as situated "on either side of the road that linked Arras with Cambrai" (MacShane, 1976, p.28). This description is far too obscure to be meaningful because it provides only *one* location among the numerous deployments made between March and June 1918. Although attempting to ascertain the exact position of Chandler's battalion from such scant detail is troublesome, it is in fact quite possible not only to pinpoint the location of Chandler's division, but also to follow its course as it relocates to various positions along the Western Front. These movements are catalogued and readily accessible in the official War Diaries of the Seventh Infantry Battalion, yet it appears neither biographer consulted them. Even though Chandler's battalion was off-handedly considered as being in a reserve position, MacShane fails to portray the extraordinary amount of heavy fighting and artillery bombardments that Chandler's battalion experienced. As will be shown, neither biographer emphasised the proximity of Canadian

activity to the German front line during these last few months of the war, and consequently underestimated the high degree of danger of being located in such precarious positions.

Although the factual detail provided by Chandler's biographers has proved scant or ambiguous, Hiney does offer a slightly better picture of Chandler's experiences in the First World War and makes some attempt to describe the encounters Chandler witnessed as "sporadic trench warfare" (Hiney, 1997, p.43). This is a relatively accurate account because the Seventh Battalion did sporadically experience trench warfare. Peter Leese has noted that during the First World War even low-level combat, like that experienced by soldiers in reserve, was just as traumatic as the all-out trench warfare witnessed in other areas of the Western Front (Leese, 2002, p.26). Those involved in combat conditions for short periods of time were just as susceptible to suffer its traumatic effects. Richard Gabriel has noted that during any experience of war, "almost everybody exposed to combat will, within a comparatively short period of time, be killed, wounded, or driven mad" (Tick, 2002, p.102).

The transference of a traumatic injury does not only occur through an active combat situation. In fact, it is more likely that passive psychological event is far most damaging, and many soldiers who experience the terror and lack of activity on a front line, such as Chandler, suffer greatly as a result. In his article *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud argued that in cases of 'war neuroses' as it was called at the time, "symptoms sometimes came about without the intervention of any gross mechanical force" (Gay, 1995, p.598). This means that a traumatic event during wartime does not necessarily have to be of the 'active' type in order to inflict serious psychological damage. He considered "the chief weight" in the onset of war neuroses "to rest upon the factor of surprise, of fright" (Gay, 1995, p.589). Freud believed, " 'Fright', 'fear', and 'anxiety' are in fact capable of clear distinction in their relation to danger." He noted that, "'Anxiety' describes a particular state of expecting the danger or preparing for it, even though it may be an unknown one. 'Fear' requires a definite object of which to be afraid. 'Fright'...emphasizes the factor of surprise" (Gay, 1995, p.598). Freud also suggested that the ego had a form of barrier that could control the amount of stimulus entering a person's system, meaning that different people could be affected in different ways, which is the conclusion reached by many contemporary psychologists.⁴ Even Chandler appears to have been aware of the effects of 'active' versus 'passive' trauma. In 1947 while discussing the psychological trauma featured in his film *The Blue Dahlia*, he explained

that “The real point at issue [in the film] is whether physical violence is worse than psychological violence” (MacShane, 1987, p.97). Chandler recognised not only that psychological trauma existed, but also, in terms of its injurious nature, that it should be considered equally as damaging as physical war trauma.

While Freud did not believe ‘anxiety’ could cause war neuroses, it would be proved decades later that unlike physical trauma, the combination of anxiety and fear of a situation beyond a person’s control are in fact the two largest contributors towards the development of PTSD. Patrick Bracken has noted how it is now “acknowledged that being a *witness* to a distressing event can be traumatizing, even in the absence of direct threat to self” (Bracken, 2003, p.48). The 1994 edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual therefore recognised that a post-traumatic reaction could be triggered if,

The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both the following were present:

- (1) The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.
- (2) The person’s response involved fear, helplessness, or horror. (Cited in Bracken, 2003, p.48)

Bracken shows that the fear associated with the threat of destruction can cause PTSD, and that in an environment such as the Western Front it is highly likely that soldiers would have been extremely susceptible to developing severe psychological trauma.

Hiney provides a relatively accurate picture of life in the battalion, noting the especially high turnover rate among commanders, which was indicative of the enormous number of casualties suffered by the Canadians. As a result of this high turnover rate, MacShane asserted that by the time Chandler reached England in June 1918 he had been awarded a “battlefield promotion” (MacShane, 1976, p.30) to acting sergeant, and that his wages proved this. However, by examining the Battalion Orders for June 12th 1918, they show that by the time Chandler left France his rank was still that of a Private. The pay documents for this period prove that Chandler was awarded sergeant’s pay in November 1918, and not June as MacShane believed (DHH, Ottawa, Canada). Although Hiney’s account of Chandler’s experience offers slightly more detail than MacShane’s, it still lacks the vital information to fully understand the extent of the conditions endured by the Canadian soldiers. The amount of consistent factual information concerning Chandler’s

war experience is disappointing for biographers who have paved the way for studies of the author. MacShane seems to have relied too heavily on Chandler's letters to Gartrell written during a time when he was increasingly introspective and melancholy, while Hiney, despite providing a relatively sound cultural context in which to view Chandler's life, has merely re-formatted MacShane's account. Neither provides primary evidence of Chandler's actual experience of war by tracking the First Division. Nor do they provide any details concerning the circumstances of Chandler's transfer back to England, instead providing accounts that are contradicted by the official military documents.

Despite having played an integral role in the British Commonwealth forces since 1914, very little has been published about the progress and fortunes of the Canadian forces during the First World War. One of the few existing accounts of the Canadian experience in the war is Colonel G. W. L. Nicholson's *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919*. Published in 1962 it is a detailed account of every Canadian Division that fought in the war and their locations as decisive battles were fought. Nicholson's work provides an account that differs to that provided by both MacShane and Hiney, and makes it possible to precisely follow the movements of the Seventh Battalion by tracking the activity of the First Canadian Division. By using original and secondary resources, it is possible to present a picture of what Chandler would have experienced during his time in France.

Although the four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (Canadian Corps), were officially in reserve, they were actually on the front line of the Allied defence in an extremely dangerous area for much of the time Chandler was in France. By the beginning of 1918 the location occupied by the Canadian Corps around the town of Arras had become precarious due to events occurring on the Eastern Front. The Russian Revolution in the autumn of 1917 and the subsequent signing of the German-Bolshevik peace treaty on the 3rd March 1918, enabled vast numbers of German troops and artillery pieces to be transferred to the Western Front (Evans, 1996, p.68). By the end of March 1918 the number of German divisions along the Western Front had risen to from 150 to 192 since the previous November. In the early months of 1918 the Canadian divisions worked hard to repair and ready damaged defences in preparation for a German offensive that, according to intelligence, would occur at the end of March. When the offensive finally began on 21st March, the Canadian Corps had three divisions on the front line: "from the north to south the 1st Division opposite Hill 70, the 4th in front of Lens, and the 3rd Division in the Avion-Mericourt sector. The 2nd Division was in the Corps training

area at Auchel, eight miles west of Bethune” (Nicholson, 1962, p.378). Almost immediately the Second Division was ordered forward into G.H.Q reserve in the Mont St. Alois area, while Chandler’s First Division was taken out of the line and placed in First Army reserve. The Fourth Division extended northward to cover the area vacated by the First opposite Hill 70, and the Third Division was called upon to extend southward to cover a British division in the Vimy region. By the 25th March, the Canadian Corps held a 17,000-yard front with only two divisions.

On the 26th March the First and Second Divisions were placed under Lieutenant General Sir Julian Byng’s British Third Army to the south of Arras. The First Division was stationed “astride the Arras-Cambrai road” while the Second Division was located “on its immediate right in the Neuville-Vitasse sector” (Nicholson, 1962, p.379). The contribution of the Canadian army at this point should not be underestimated. Before Chandler arrived in France, during the early months of 1918 their assistance was on a massive scale. Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Currie, commander of the Canadian Corps noted by the end of March, “We are holding a 10 mile front with two divisions” (Nicholson, 1962, p.382).

The separation of the four Canadian Divisions however, caused protest from Currie, who objected to the removal of half of the Corps from his control, but this was remedied by mid-April as the Battle of the Lys worsened to the north. The four Canadian Divisions were returned to Currie’s command in order to relieve battle-weakened British troops. However, as Nicholson states, Currie’s protests created some resentment amongst the Canadians because, “four strong divisions [were] denied a share in the great defensive battles of March and April through his insistence that they fight only as a corps” (Nicholson, 1962, p.380). Yet although this may have caused some bitterness among the troops it had the advantage of keeping the Corps together, which as Canadian Secretary of State for War Sir Edward Kemp pointed out, created a higher efficiency and morale amongst the Corps. This was, he concluded, “undoubtedly due to the fact that it has been kept together as a unit under Lieut.-General Sir Arthur Currie, in whom the troops have unbounded confidence” (Nicholson, 1962, p.381). By mid-April 1918 the Canadian Corps unaided was holding a defensive front of more than 16 miles.

A few weeks later there was a real possibility that Chandler and the Canadian divisions would participate in a counter attack as part of a larger Allied offensive which was being planned for late-April. Operation “Delta” was designed, says Nicholson, “to forestall a renewal of the enemy’s offensive on the Bailleul-Ypres front. The proposed

operation, to be launched on a ten-mile front... was a northward thrust against the left..." (Nicholson, 1962, p.382). Difficulties arose however, when it proved impossible to free Canadian Divisions for the operation because of a lack of reserves. As a result operation "Delta" was suspended, and Chandler lost his chance for front line combat as part of a Canadian division.

Although eventually suspended, "getting ready for the projected attack had been a useful exercise for all the Canadian arms and services." It had, said General Currie, exerted "a most vivifying influence on the training of the Canadian Corps" (Nicholson, 1962, p.382). But during the period the Canadian Corps had been pushed almost to "breaking point and [were] under the continued threat of an overwhelming attack." The front-line section being defended was "altogether too much," said Currie, "but owing to a lack of men in the British Army it cannot be helped" (Nicholson, 1962, p.382). With the Battle of the Lys raging to their north, and ever-decreasing ranks to draw upon, the Canadians along the ten-mile front outside Arras, prepared for the German offensive. As the German offensive progressed the Canadians found themselves in an increasingly unsafe position, and as Nicholson harrowingly describes, "the Canadians found themselves in a dangerously deepening salient. To deceive the enemy regarding the frugality of their dispositions they 'adopted a very aggressive attitude.'" During April and May, "The artillery maintained a vigorous programme of harassing fire, supplemented by the gas shells, while infantry carried out numerous raids and patrols" (Nicholson, 1962, p.382). There is no doubt that the German Army also adopted similar tactics in return. The Seventh Battalion War Diaries show that the Canadians were aware of their weak situation, noting on April 9th 1918 that "retaliation is not strong enough. Our artillery now firing 3 rounds per minute per gun" (DHH, Ottawa, Canada).

Although Chandler had not been involved in what Hiney considers, "the attritional carnage that had characterized the worst battles," (Hiney, 1997, p.43) it is certain that conditions were extremely tough on the Canadian troops. Despite the false sense of aggression that the Canadians tried to portray through their continuous barrage, many of the soldiers contributing to the defence of the line and suffering the constant barrage would have been plagued by physical and psychological exhaustion and suffered a sense of complete helplessness. This feeling of prolonged anticipation would have impacted greatly upon those experiencing the agonising prospect of incoming German shells and the constant explosions around their position. The tension and fear associated

with this sense of passivity combined with the continuous barrage would have been extremely traumatising for those experiencing it.

On the 7th May, Chandler's First Division, as well as the Third and Fourth Divisions of the Canadian Corps were sent into reserve and replaced by five divisions of British soldiers. This respite for the battalion, taken out of the potential range of the German heavy artillery, was however short-lived as the Canadian divisions were ordered to reorganise. As part of the final push against the Germans which would eventually end the war, they were to be sent south to Amiens.

The precise nature of Chandler's actions while in reserve after May 1918 is another point where both MacShane and Hiney's accounts falter. Since the publication of MacShane's biography in 1976, critics have accepted the circumstances surrounding Chandler's departure from the Western Front without question. MacShane notes how in June 1918 a German artillery barrage killed Chandler's platoon of men leaving him the only survivor. He believes this event concussed Chandler sufficiently for him to be transferred out of the front line before being shipped back to the English depot at Seaford. Bearing in mind the effect such an occurrence would have had on any soldier, and since this is supposedly the event that prevented Chandler from further fighting in France, it is surprising that neither MacShane or Hiney explored the circumstances or consequences of this event.

Hiney offers one theory for Chandler's return to England, noting that, "The bombardment had so depleted his own outfit that it was disbanded and survivors, including Chandler, were transferred back to England" (Hiney, 1997, p.43). However, while Hiney indicated that there were survivors to the explosion and that they were returned to England because there were insufficient numbers to make up the outfit, MacShane maintained that Chandler was the only survivor. Although they were officially in a 'reserve' position it was still possible for Chandler's Division to suffer such an attack, and despite its location miles from the front line, it was still vulnerable to both air attacks and long range enemy bombardment. A key "strategic arm" of the German Forces, notes Martin Evans, "was the artillery" which by Spring 1918 had "gathered in unprecedented strength" (Evans, 1996, p.69) along the entire length of the Western Front. This dramatic increase of German artillery pieces brought the prospect of bombardment to a much greater depth behind the Allied lines. "Since the beginning of the German offensive in March," says Nicholson, the time when Chandler arrived in France, the Canadian Divisions "had suffered upwards of 9000 casualties." However, of these only

“5690 had been sustained *up to* the time when the Corps withdrew into reserve” (Nicholson, 1962, p.385, emphasis added). This would indicate that after the beginning of May, a further 3,310 soldiers had been killed while *in reserve*, showing that even being away from the front line brought no guarantee of safety.

Putting to one side the explanations provided by Hiney and MacShane to consider the facts indicated by Nicholson’s mortality rates, it is possible to gain a more plausible picture of the circumstances that confronted Chandler in 1918. Almost one-third of Canadian soldiers killed between 7th May and the end of July 1918 had been reserve, with the possibility that Chandler’s platoon of thirty men was among them. If Chandler survived such an event with only a concussion when many around him lost their lives, it is certainly possible that this ordeal could have returned to haunt him in later life. In Hemingway’s case, Meyers has documented how “The main psychological effects of his concussion did not occur until he returned home, when he suffered long nights of insomnia and could not bear to have the lights out” (Meyers, 1999, p.36). Hemingway incorporated this trauma into his short story “Now I Lay Me” where Nick Adams felt, “if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. I had been that way for a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out me and off and then come back” (Hemingway, 1939, p.340). Insomnia is a symptom that both Hemingway and Chandler suffered in the aftermath of World War One and are clear elements of their fiction.

There is however one major problem with MacShane and Hiney’s account of Chandler’s supposed wounding in an artillery barrage that killed his platoon: there is simply no evidence to support the claim that such an event ever occurred. The official documents plotting the movements of the Seventh Battalion, held by the Canadian Archive, contradict this account of the circumstances of Chandler’s return to England in June 1918. The Archive holds Chandler’s original military record, complete with medical files, as well as the entire Seventh Battalion War Diaries. Together, these documents are enough to provide a different and far more accurate description of the events that led to Chandler’s return to England. While the information gathered from Nicholson’s *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919* provides an invaluable starting point, it by no means supplies the level of detail that is essential for examining and tracing the smaller individual battalions within the Canadian Corps. Although it is possible to know where a certain division was during a particular period, it is impossible to document the location of all battalions, let alone the location of smaller companies and platoons. However, the

Seventh Battalion War Diaries are specific to that battalion and plot their precise location and daily events, as well as recording the companies to which new reinforcements were assigned. The documents indicate that having arrived in the battalion on 16th March, Chandler was officially posted to Number 1 Company of the Seventh Battalion on 23rd March 1918,⁵ a detail that MacShane and Hiney do not provide. Between March and May 1918, Chandler's battalion was situated in various locations behind the front line and to the west of Arras, but on three separate occasions he and his battalion were rotated into the front line. The war diaries show that while located at the front line several soldiers serving in his battalion, men he may have known, were either killed or wounded. After this period of rotation the order was given for the Seventh Battalion to be relieved and they were sent west into reserve.⁶ From the 6th May the Battalion officially began a month of training in Lignereuil and Camblyneul to prepare them for an advance in August further to the south at Amiens, a drive that would eventually end the war.⁷

In the first week of June 1918 the war diaries show that the Seventh Battalion was situated at Camblyneul until 2nd June and at Anzin for the remainder of the week. During this short period the battalion came under fire from artillery and shrapnel bursts on three separate occasions. The first was on 2nd June while the Battalion was passing through the locality of Villers Au Bois and Mont St. Aloy on its way to Anzin. The second attack occurred in Anzin on the afternoon of 3rd June, and the final attack of that week occurred on 7th June while fortification work was being undertaken in the vicinity. However, in none of these dispatches are any casualties recorded. In fact there is no evidence that any soldiers from Chandler's Seventh Battalion were killed for roughly a two-month period, which directly contradicts the accounts provided by MacShane and Hiney regarding Chandler's wounding and the death of his platoon.

The war diaries for June also offer an insight into Chandler's transfer back to England. In his biography MacShane noted that "*By June 11 Chandler was back at the depot of the British Columbia Regiment in Seaford*" (MacShane, 1976, p 30, emphasis added). Yet the 'Battalion's Orders,' where strength increases, decreases, appointments, punishments and honours were reported, show that Chandler actually left France *on* that day. As reported in the Orders on 12th June 1918: "2025271 Pte. Chandler, R.T., No. 1 Coy. – Proceeded to England 11-6-18 to report to R.A.F H.Q., England."⁸ Not only is MacShane's version of events inaccurate, but it indicates that the dates he provided were also misleading. Chandler therefore left the Seventh Battalion in Anzin on 11th June, arriving back in England sometime thereafter. More revealingly it shows that Chandler

was definitely not injured during a shell attack, as any transfer for treatment would be shown in the format, "To Hosp." In the same Battalion Orders that show Chandler's departure, three soldiers are indeed listed as being transferred "To Hosp." It appears therefore that an uninjured Chandler was simply transferred or re-assigned to the R.A.F and returned back to England in accordance with the battalion's orders.

A Short History of the 7th Battalion C.E.F (1930) by First World War veteran Major T.V. Scudamore, V.D., is the only history ever written specifically regarding the Seventh Battalion. In it he provides a first hand account of the trials of the Battalion. He notes how,

The first six months of the last year of the war were quiet ones for the battle-scarred battalion, and we were occupied in holding the trenches around Loos and Vimy Ridge... The great German offensive, their last despairing effort in the war, was expanding its force on others whilst we held our line (Scudamore, 1930, p.20).

As well as providing an invaluable first-hand account and details, Scudamore's pamphlet is important because it also contains an index of casualties suffered by the Battalion during the war. While MacShane and Hiney claim that Chandler's platoon was killed in the first week of June, Scudamore's appendix clearly shows there were no recorded casualties in the Battalion during this period. In fact, this full and detailed index of names shows that no soldiers are recorded to have been killed in action or died of their wounds between 3rd May and 25th July 1918.

However, both the Seventh Battalion War Diaries and Scudamore's pamphlet show numerous dates on which small groups of soldiers were reported killed in action in the month of April and the first few days of May. On several of these occasions clusters of men were killed during raids on enemy positions. If Chandler had commanded a platoon and led soldiers into direct machine-gun fire as he wrote in his letters, it could have been during these months. On 8th, 9th, 21st, 29th April, and 3rd May 1918, between one and five men were killed on each date, giving credence to the suggestion that if Chandler been in command of a platoon facing machine-gun fire, it would have occurred on one of these dates. Yet it is also entirely possible that despite leading men into "direct machine gun fire" none of his platoon were killed or injured. It is likely that MacShane and Hiney are mistaken in their accounts because Chandler's medical records show that he suffered no injuries while in France, which leads us to question Hiney's claim that

Chandler was injured and “shell-shocked” (Hiney, 1997, p.43) immediately following the supposed attack. There is nothing in Chandler’s medical records to indicate he ever suffered any injuries while serving with the army. And as Bill Rawling from the Directorate of History and Heritage in Ottawa has noted, “If he was wounded... a transfer [back to England] would not have been considered until he was able to pass a medical examination...[and] given that antibiotics had not yet been developed, and that even sulfa drugs were decades in the future, convalescence from wounds could take months” (Rawling, DHH, 2008). With the exception of regular vaccinations and injections, Chandler’s records show only two six-day hospital convalescence periods in July and October 1918, each for bouts of influenza (DHH, Ottawa, Canada). Without documentary evidence to support a claim for Chandler’s wounding, it would appear that Hiney misrepresented the circumstances of his transfer.

Taking these facts into consideration, three possible explanations arise regarding Chandler’s return to England, all of which are far less dramatic than the version presented by MacShane or Hiney. Yet each of these possible explanations raises serious doubts and concerns about MacShane’s original research and Hiney’s subsequent repetition of key details. Consequently it calls into question the entire established account of Chandler’s war experience.

Firstly, it is possible that the biographers are incorrect regarding the timeframe of the supposed shell attack and that it happened earlier than they described. The Seventh Battalion War Diaries clearly show that the unit endured much shelling in the period Chandler was at the front, and on many occasions his battalion was caught in the centre of the action. Yet MacShane and Hiney overlook one obvious fact. There were no reported casualties for the whole month preceding Chandler’s transfer to England in June 1918. This would suggest that in all likelihood no such fatal barrage occurred that would have warranted Chandler’s evacuation to England. However, if Chandler had commanded a platoon that suffered casualties, it is likely that it occurred sometime in April or May 1918.

The second explanation for the inconsistencies regarding Chandler’s return to England is that he might have been seconded to another military unit at that time, and any casualties sustained by the other platoon would not show on any record of the Seventh Battalion. This would certainly have been possible as many Canadian Divisions were put under the command of the British Army. However, despite being under a different command, the Canadians would still have fought as a unit and retained their national

status. Also, if Chandler had been transferred out of the Seventh Battalion and into another Canadian Division it would be reflected in his Active Service record as “TOS”, meaning he had been ‘taken on strength’ to another unit. But again this explanation proves unsatisfactory because there is no documentary evidence in Chandler’s records that a “TOS” was issued at the time of his departure from the Seventh Battalion. This hinders Hiney’s contention that Chandler’s departure was due to a depleted outfit. The only “TOS” that appears on Chandler’s record is dated July 8th 1918, after Chandler arrived back in England. It shows that he was taken on strength at the British Columbia regiment Depot in Seaford before being sent as a Command Cadet to the Distribution Depot for the R.A.F in London (DHH, Ottawa, Canada).

The final explanation is by far the simplest and probably the most likely seeing as there is simply no evidence that Chandler was wounded in France. Because the Seventh Battalion suffered no casualties during the period between May and June 1918, it would suggest that Chandler simply transferred to the RAF “as did so many other officers during the First World War” (Rawling, DHH, 2008). Although we must acknowledge that the Seventh Battalion was under almost continuous barrage, without evidence to prove that fatalities occurred we must conclude that the simplest account is the most likely, and credible documentary evidence regarding the actual circumstances of Chandler’s departure from France appears to prove this. Contrary to the version portrayed by the biographers, Chandler’s Casualty Form for Active Service provides no mention of an injury severe enough to warrant field treatment or convalescence, or offer any circumstances that may have caused the death of an entire platoon. Yet more persuasive is the documentary proof showing orders given on 6 June 1918 sending Chandler back to England “for the purpose of obtaining a commission in the R.A.F” (DHH, Ottawa, Canada). The picture of Chandler’s supposed wounding portrayed by MacShane and Hiney is therefore extremely misleading. Evidence drawn from the original documents at the Canadian Archive shows that Chandler’s reason for leaving the front was far more pedestrian than either biographer chose to acknowledge. Their biographies allowed the myth surrounding Chandler’s war experience to be preserved and perpetuated in much the same way that Carlos Baker’s biography of Hemingway allowed his subject’s real war experiences to be overstated and severely embellished.

Seeing as numerous soldiers described the conditions on the front line as a “scary business...the rockets and flares all along the near horizon... the everlasting crack and roar of our own artillery all around us and the wine of the innumerable shells passing

overhead, the sputtering of the Machine-guns” (cited in Freidel, 2003, p.131), it is more than likely that Chandler simply took the opportunity to escape the carnage of the Western Front. Instead of fighting in the trenches of France Chandler may have been persuaded to transfer to the RAF, probably after corresponding with his friend Gordon Pasqual (son of Cissy, Chandler’s future wife) who had joined the Royal Flying Corps soon after his enlistment in Vancouver. Chandler may have wanted to share in the glory of the Canadian aviators who had a reputation for being the best flyers. “Canadians made wonderful fighters,” wrote Colonel George Nasmith in 1919, “and the majority of the greatest fighters in the R.A.F were Canadians” (MacShane, 1976, p.30). The mythology surrounding the pilots may have also appealed to Chandler’s sense of chivalry. Frank Freidel says, “The aviators themselves were knights, the cavalrymen of the war, bringing to it what little chivalry could be rescued from the bygone day when making war was the favourite occupation of the high born, operating in keeping with a gentleman’s code” (Freidel, 2003, p.109).

Shortly after Chandler left France to join the R.A.F the Canadian Divisions were reorganised in readiness for the final offensive that would eventually lead to the Armistice. While he was safely back on British soil, his old division the First Canadian, had had the glory of pushing back the Germans at Amiens and then marching over the Rhine in December 1918. As Nicholson explains, the First and Second Canadian Divisions were then “disposed in depth for the defence of the southern sector of the Cologne-Bonn bridgehead, where their area of responsibility encompassed ground on the east or right bank of the Rhine, including the city of Bonn itself” (Nicholson, 1962, p.527). The Canadian occupation lasted into 1919 until it was withdrawn on the 18th January and sent to Belgium for garrison duty. Chandler therefore missed the Division’s finest moment and undoubtedly would have had mixed emotions regarding his own departure from the front line. Although it is impossible to know for sure, it is feasible to speculate at Chandler’s feelings about the events that would finally end the war. It is likely that he felt the contrasting emotions of disappointment that he could not share the honour, relief at having survived the war, and guilt at having left his battalion just as they were preparing for the final bloody push against the German position.

Recounting the reasons why F. Scott Fitzgerald had enlisted in the American Army during World War One, Jeffrey Meyers notes that the writer had “imagined himself as a war hero...” (Meyers, 1994, p.34). He had “wanted to prove his courage, gain glory and win the acceptance of his comrades,” yet he “never even got close to making the fatal

sacrifice of [those] ... who were killed in the war” (Meyers, 1994, p.39). Fitzgerald “always considered his lack of combat experience one of the deepest disappointments in his life” (Meyers, 1994, p.39). Noting the emotions that beset Fitzgerald upon learning of the Armistice and the end of his military service, Malcolm Cowley summed up the feeling of guilt and frustration that permeated a generation of soldiers at the end of the war. He notes that,

The war ended too soon for many Americans – not for those who had fought at Bellau Wood or in the Argonne, but for others who had only marched and countermarched behind the lines; now they would never know whether or not they were brave men. Some were ashamed of being unmedaled and unwounded. Others, especially the airmen, had lived more intensely than they would ever live again and began to feel vaguely, at intervals, that something in them had died on the eleventh of November 1918. All the young men had been exposed to a variety of strong emotions. Their individualities had been affirmed, even in the anonymous disguise of a uniform, and they had dreamed of peacetime careers in which they would play the part of heroes. Now the war had ended without giving them a chance, as Fitzgerald was to say, of expending all that accumulated nervous energy. Many of them – with Hemingway the most conspicuous example among writers – were to spend the next ten years looking for another stage on which they could re-enact the dangers and recapture the winey taste of war. (Cowley, p.12)

Despite noting that these men would never know whether they were brave or not, it is worth bearing in mind that involvement in such a destructive event was an act of bravery in itself. However, along with a sense of relief at having survived the war, these troublesome and confusing feelings would have undoubtedly also bothered Chandler once the Armistice was declared. He had missed engaging in the carnage of the final push with his comrades of the Seventh Battalion, and had also narrowly missed out on duelling with his German counterparts in the skies over Europe. He was, like Fitzgerald, Hemingway and many others ‘Lost Generation’ soldiers, unable to claim any genuinely heroic action for himself and instead may have dwelled on the guilt at leaving his fellow-soldiers behind at such a crucial moment in history.

While Los Angeles became the “stage” on which Chandler sought to re-create in some small way the dangers he had encountered on the front line in France, Philip Marlowe became the persona on which Chandler set out to highlight the ills besetting society. These feelings of disappointment and lost opportunity flow over into the detective. Marlowe became everything Chandler would like to have been, but he still retains the trauma that was imprinted onto him by his creator. Marlowe embodies the

thousands of men who went to war expecting glory, but instead returned frustrated and traumatised by their experiences. He is therefore a prism through which we can see view the survivor guilt that tormented Chandler. By considering Marlowe in this way we see Chandler's views of a war that many believed would be gentlemanly and honourable, reflected back through the detective's disillusionment and shattered perception of American society. Marlowe becomes the American soldier on a quest for heroism in a battle against an unknown enemy, a man sent to a place he does not fully understand and returns with the vain hope of finding acceptance and glory from those who sent him there in the first place. Yet each new case he accepts only heightens his disillusionment with a changing society, and unsurprisingly his initial idealism is hastily displaced as he becomes resigned to his life of mounting cynicism and frustration.

By interrogating MacShane and Hiney's accounts of Chandler's war experience and re-examining the evidence, it has been possible to construct a far more accurate and sophisticated picture of Chandler's time in northern France. The use of a psychological framework in determining the traumatising effect of such experiences has revealed the devastating scar left upon the author's mind. It is evident that the shocking events of the First World War created turbulent emotions that instigated the creation of Chandler's famous detective. While Marlowe's character is a unique window into Chandler's psychological circumstances, Chandler's war experience is likewise the key to decoding and understanding Marlowe's character traits. The war binds Chandler and his detective together, and as such Philip Marlowe is a character born of severe post-traumatic consequence.

¹ Cited in Meyers, Jeffrey, *Hemingway: A Biography*, pg.36

² Hemingway chose to spin a heroic tale of fighting with the tough Italian Arditi, and of being caught up while fighting in an explosion from a trench mortar shell. Then, according to earlier biographies, “His legs felt as if he were wearing rubber boots filled with warm water. Beside him was a man who made no sound. Just beyond him was another, badly hurt and crying piteously. Ernest groped for his neck and legs, heaved him up in a fireman’s carry, and began to stagger towards the command post. He had covered fifty yards when a round from a heavy machine gun tore into his right leg at the knee. It felt like an icy snowball. He stumbled and fell with the man on his shoulder. He never remembered how he had covered the final hundred yards. But he made it, delivered his man, and lost consciousness.” (Baker, Carlos, *Ernest Hemingway A Life Story*, pg. 45) While it is true that Hemingway was indeed hit by shellfire and had responded bravely enough to allow more severely injured soldiers to be transported first, certain details regarding the event are entirely fictional, added on later while in hospital for the benefit of his family and friends back home – Hemingway had proved his valour and masculinity by being severely wounded in battle. Yet this was not the case. He was in fact injured while handing out chocolate and cigarettes to Italian soldiers behind the front line. Although he was caught in the shell attack and his legs embedded with shrapnel, he was not mown down by a machine gun, and did not carry anyone to safety as many of his biographers have led us to believe. In a letter from Ted Brumback dated July 14, he notes that “Only a few of these [shrapnel] pieces [were] large enough to cut deep; the most serious of these being in the knee and two in the right foot.” Yet Ernest insisted only days later that he had both shrapnel and bullets in his legs – 227 in total – but miraculously none had struck bone, not even the bullet in his kneecap. So the circumstances of Lieutenant Fredrick Henry’s wounding in *A Farewell to Arms* appears to be a fairly accurate account of what *actually* happened to Hemingway at Fossalta, yet as Lynn notes “his readers would by and large refuse to accept [A Farewell to Arms] as a summary of the whole story.” (Lynn, 86) Carlos Baker, Jeffrey Meyers, and Michael Reynolds are among those who have perpetuated the myth surrounding Hemingway’s wounding.

³ It is rather surprising that Chandler chose the subject of sex in order to “test his ear for English dialogue.” (MacShane, 1976, p.248) That he titled them “A Routine to Shock the Neighbours” also shows his intent that these sketches were written to “shock.” The accent and voice of the sketches is distinctly middle to upper class, and may have been designed to shock those he knew. It could also represent the time spent receiving an English middle-class education at Dulwich, where boys were given strict instruction on sex, and taught that masturbation was “dirty” (MacShane, 1978, p.11).

⁴ Judith Lewis Herman, Dave Grossman, Elaine Scarry, and Edward Tick have each reinforced Freud’s original opinion that in most cases psychological trauma during warfare is transferred ‘passively’ through the threat of annihilation.

⁵ <http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/e/e044/e001083875.jpg>. The war diaries can be found on the official website for the Canadian Archives in Ottawa. Documentary resources are slowly being updated and made accessible to the general public.

⁶ <http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/e/e044/e001084023.jpg>

⁷ <http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/e/e044/e001084023.jpg> to <http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/e/e044/e001084026.jpg>.

⁸ <http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/e/e044/e001084159.jpg>

Chapter Four

THE DETECTIVE AS VETERAN: PHILIP MARLOWE'S ORIGIN AND CHARACTERISATION

“Nobody understands me... I'm enigmatic”¹

- Philip Marlowe

“...a novelist lives through his characters.”²

- Ross Macdonald

The known facts surrounding Chandler's wartime experiences have been re-appraised to develop an account of events significantly different from that presented by his two main biographers. By piecing together the documentary evidence and placing Chandler within this context it becomes apparent that the events he experienced would have been extremely distressing. With this in mind, Ross Macdonald's assertion that writers portray aspects of themselves through their characters (Macdonald, 1949, p.28) becomes extremely pertinent. It indicates that Philip Marlowe can be understood as a semi-autobiographical rendering of his creator, and that Chandler consciously or otherwise imbued his detective with individual characteristics similar to his own.

In order to ascertain the extent to which Chandler's traumatic experiences came to converge with his writing it is helpful to first relate a revised version of his experience during the First World War. Taking into account the facts presented in the previous chapter, Chandler's war began when he arrived in France on 16th March 1918 and along with three other replacements, was assigned to Number One Company of the Seventh Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Chandler and the replacements were immediately thrown into action with the Seventh Battalion as they were suffering heavy

bombardment and gas attacks in the reserve position at Loos. Then after being in France for less than four weeks Chandler's battalion was rotated into the front line on the 8th April in the area of Neuville Vitasse and Vimy. According to the official Seventh Battalion War Diaries, during this four-day rotation at the front they endured heavy bombardment that killed five Canadian soldiers and wounded at least five others. The battalion was subjected to almost constant shelling and sniping from German trenches as well as the torrent of noise from the Canadian artillery batteries returning enemy fire. The Seventh Battalion was also rotated into the front line on two further occasions during April and May, and each time suffering similar bombardment.

When the battalion was not at the front line it was held in reserve at various locations in the vicinity of Loos and Arras, but it appears they were never more than a distance of ten kilometres from the front line. In this reserve position, the Battalion conducted training exercises and smaller individual units were assigned to undertake raiding or scouting missions. Even while in reserve however, the troops were never completely safe from bombardment, and the War Diaries show that the battalion came under frequent enemy attack even from these distances, often retaliating with their own artillery fire. The factual evidence drawn from the Seventh Battalion War Diaries and the Battalion Orders show that even away from the front line, in reserve, the experience would have been a harrowing and deeply distressing one. Chandler would have certainly understood the horror of his situation and like so many other soldiers he would have been inevitably disturbed by what he experienced.

The Battalion Orders for 12th June 1918 show that Chandler was transferred back to England in order to report to the headquarters of the newly established Royal Air Force, and his military file shows that he was seconded to the R.A.F on 8th July. This transfer occurred at precisely the time when the four Canadian Divisions in France had been re-organised in preparation for dispatch to Amiens and the final attack against the German line that would end the war. Chandler did not therefore participate in the Canadian offensive that helped secure the allied victory, and was not part of the victorious army that crossed the Rhine in December 1918. Although he survived his front line experience in France, he may have ultimately believed he had been denied the glory of claiming the honourable status of a victorious war hero. As Malcolm Cowley has said, the war ended too soon for some that had not seen action, and many "would never know whether or not they were brave men. Some were ashamed of being unmedaled and unwounded." (Cowley, 1973, p.12)

Nonetheless, Chandler's encounters with the horrors of war were certainly real, and his experiences had such an emotional impact that they revealed themselves in his work. The distress that Chandler suffered suggests that the traumatic symptoms caused by his war experience would have surfaced in any genre or style he chose to write in. One story in particular, the short story 'A Couple of Writers,' is especially revealing and suggests how Chandler felt about his own experiences. Written in 1951 the story depicts the psychological effect that war has on a veteran and the difficulty that people have in understanding what has happened to their loved ones after they return from combat. Like his 1945 screenplay 'The Blue Dahlia,' which revolved around the tight-knit family-like unit of three veterans, 'A Couple of Writers' had a personal significance to Chandler not only because of his affinity with the protagonist, but also because of his compulsion to portray the symptoms he suffered from. His effort to have the story published despite its rejection by numerous American editors is apparent in a letter to the English critic and editor of the Sunday Times, Leonard Russell. In December 1952, Chandler wrote that although he was not "anxious" or "disheartened" at not hearing from Russell, he restlessly questioned why a response was taking so long. He said,

Remember me? Chandler? We met once briefly in London... [and] it led me to send you a story called A COUPLE OF WRITERS, which was dispatched by airmail on October 29, 1952. And the rest is silence... I told you the worst about the story. And after all, you asked me to send it to you. I think some brief acknowledgement might be in order, if the story ever reached you. (Bodleian 58: 46).

Despite remarking otherwise, the letter shows that Chandler was indeed anxious to discover the fate of his story, and his agitated tone suggests the intensity with which he yearned not only for the story to be published, but also his desire to draw attention to the plight of traumatised war veterans.

'A Couple of Writers' is a candid depiction of married writers Hank and Marion Bruton who torment each other over their personal and literary failures. The story is a study of a couple struggling to come to terms with their crumbling marriage, but is set against a complex psychological background. Hank, a traumatised war veteran, desperately looks to his wife for compassion, love and stability, but instead is confronted by indifference and desertion. Marion cannot understand or adjust to her husband's physical and psychological troubles, and is disgusted by his alcohol dependency. Hank's ailments appear to be the psychological legacy of his war experience, with symptoms that

include severe twitching in his legs and thighs, “grinding his teeth,” and a constant “nervous feeling in his stomach.” He also walks “around the house in his bare feet” (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.99, 100, p.99) which is suggestive of the lasting effects of the condition trench foot, an ailment that will be discussed later.

Failing to understand Hank’s psychological need for alcohol, the story begins with Marion once again deciding to leave him. When Hank offers to give up drinking whiskey, Marion’s response is brutal. She replies,

Oh sure. And then what? You’re not a man. You’re just a physically perfect specimen of an alcoholic eunuch. You’re a zombie in top condition. You’re a dead man with an absolutely normal blood pressure. (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.105)

Marion’s outburst is shocking because it is a two-pronged attack. Firstly she cruelly questions Hank’s legitimacy as a male and calls him a ‘eunuch,’ effectively emasculating the already psychologically broken veteran. It is an insult that strongly resonates with Ernest Hemingway’s novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) in which the character Jake Barnes receives a catastrophic wartime wound that effectively castrates him and denies him the ability to demonstrate his sexual masculinity. Both Hemingway’s Barnes and Chandler’s Bruton suffer debilitating injuries that although affecting them in different ways, deprive them both of their sense of masculinity. This connection between Bruton and Barnes not only connects Chandler to Hemingway once again, but also opens Chandler’s work to many different resonances because both characters originate from similar psychological perspectives.

In addition to Marion’s cruel denial of Hank’s masculinity, she also labels him a ‘zombie’ and a ‘dead man,’ providing the reader with a picture of Hank’s detached state of mind. Yet his lethargy is indicative of a common behavioural characteristic amongst many traumatised veterans. Often referring to themselves as the ‘living dead,’ sufferers feel disconnected and estranged from those around them who find it difficult to understand or relate to the veteran’s experiences. To the veteran, civilians are frustratingly disassociated from the brutal reality of what they have experienced in warfare. As Robert Jay Lifton has noted, upon their return from combat the feature that distinguishes veterans from the general public is the physical and psychological burden of comprehending what war is really like. What society “merely sense[s] and resist[s] knowing” contrasts profoundly with the “suffering on the basis of...[wartime] knowledge

and experience” (Lifton, 2005, p.67). Veterans often feel that the public, including family and friends, are profoundly insensitive to their circumstances, and this widespread inability to understand a veteran’s psychological condition is typified by Hank’s wife Marion. Instead of trying to understand his suffering by talking to Hank, Marion claims that his alcohol dependency is a consequence of his flawed character and resorts to cruel personal attacks.

Numerous psychological studies have noted that veterans such as Chandler’s protagonist are denied the very thing they require most, a supportive community to assist in the psychological reintegration.³ This is essential because “a secure sense of connection with caring people is the foundation of personality development. When this connection is shattered, the traumatised person loses... [their] basic sense of self” (Herman, 2001, p.52). Lifton notes that veterans, “feel they have come to difficult truths that adult American society refuses to face. Indeed, in their eyes most of America lives in an illusion... [Veterans] see themselves sometimes as a victimised group unrecognised and rejected by existing society” (Lifton, 2005, p.69).

Although ‘A Couple of Writers’ is clearly not a crime story, Hank’s behaviour manifests similar behavioural traits to Philip Marlowe. This work taken together with Chandler’s other writing shows that the author was not unfamiliar with, and indeed was haunted by, the emotional frailties of war veterans. As a veteran himself, Chandler created war-related stories such as ‘Trench Raid’ and the World War Two-based espionage story ‘No Crime in the Mountains.’ He also developed characters deliberately characterised as veterans such as Hank Bruton, General Sternwood, Bill Chess, Terry Lennox, and Roger Wade. Chandler’s own experiences were channelled through his characters making them not only more personal and autobiographical, but also more realistic, and many of Chandler’s characters are tainted with a sense of discontentment and disillusionment that typifies the state of mind of many veterans. Natasha Spender, a friend of the writer in his later years, noted that Chandler almost certainly placed himself into his novels by creating characters that represented himself. She says that in *The Long Goodbye* especially, the three main characters, Marlowe, Lennox and Wade, each represent a particular facet of Chandler’s character and are in constant conflict with each other (cited by Hiney, 1997, p.248-9).

In the story ‘A Couple of Writers’ Hank Bruton is in many respects very similar to Philip Marlowe, and it can be suggested that the detective is actually an emotionally repressed version of Hank. It is no coincidence that the two characters are similar as they

originate from the same trauma and disillusionment. When Hank refers to his unhappy life, there are numerous semblances to Marlowe:

...[we're] all lonely, all empty, all poor, all gritted with small mean worries that have no dignity. All trying like men caught in a bog to get some firm ground under our feet and knowing all the time it doesn't make a damn bit of difference whether we do or not. (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.59-60)

The notion of being unable to gain a firm footing is a clear articulation of insecurity, and Chandler could almost be referring to Marlowe here. His words are revealing, showing the faltering attitudes that Chandler, Hank, and Marlowe share. Each appears resigned to the view that life has somehow lost its meaning and share a belief that however hard they try they will inevitably fail to achieve that which they set out to accomplish. In the end they feel they will have altered nothing and all of their efforts have been cruelly frustrated.

An insensitive society combined with the lack of individual self-confidence drives both Hank and Marlowe to find solace in the whiskey bottle. In their own way, each feels invisible in a world that has failed to notice their contributions. Their recognition of the terrible and gratuitous loss of life nurtures a sense of resignation towards their own mortality and that of the people they know or have known. As Hank says when he whistles some music from a "symphonic movement" he knows,

...he tried to remember which it was and when he remembered he thought about the composer, the kind of life he had had, the struggles, the misery, and now he was dead and rotten, like so many men Hank Bruton had known in the army. (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.102)

Although Marlowe's ailments are not presented as explicitly as Hank's, the story certainly indicates Chandler's readiness to confront and write about veteran characters.

While there is no explicit evidence to prove that Marion was intended to be representative of Chandler's wife Cissy, by examining how Marion reacts to her husband and his ailments he confers upon the story the recognition of society's general attitude towards soldiers. Marion is intended as the symbolic representation of the indifferent attitude with which society treats its returning war veterans. This reinforces the notion of Chandler's own empathetic recognition of the difficulties facing veterans not only upon their return, but also later in life as their experiences begin to affect them psychologically.

'A Couple of Writers' can legitimately be considered as an in-depth psychological exploration of Chandler's male protagonists. The story is almost the 'Rosetta Stone' to Chandler's work, because it unlocks not only Marlowe's character, but above all, it unlocks the author himself and provides a greater understanding of the depth of Chandler's suffering and his identification towards fellow veterans.

Jerry Speir has noted that "the drive to render the struggle for heroism "reasonable" in the face of certain death in a harsh world can be seen as the central impulse behind both Chandler as author and Marlowe as detective." He notes that the tensions which arise as a result of "noble actions vs. a meaningless end" (Speir, 1981, p.82) are what defines both Chandler's and Marlowe's melancholy. This struggle, "whether Chandler's or Marlowe's, is to maintain an ethic, a code, which is rapidly slipping into the shadows of the past" (Speir, 1981, p.83), and is being rapidly eroded by the encroachment of modernity. A generation becomes 'lost' when "it believes itself to be cut off from the past and unconnected to the future" (Parish, 1994, p.184). A veteran's disillusionment and sense of dejection stem from the realisation that his sacrifices have been for nothing, society simply does not care and has left him behind. Speir argues that this is Marlowe's biggest downfall, the detective "is never able to achieve an understanding of himself as operating within a fallen world" (Speir, 1981, p.116). While this is relatively accurate, Marlowe certainly does acknowledge on many occasions throughout the novels that American society has let itself slide into immorality and corruption. He describes the decline of this 'fallen world' in detail, and reinforces the sense of corruption that lingers in Los Angeles. The city is decaying and has symbolically developed, "the rotten sweetness of a prostitute" (Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, p.15). As Ralph Willet has noted, in *The Big Sleep*, "General Sternwood's forest of orchids with their fleshy leaves and pungent odour... is an index of depravity" and "the insidious taint of urban crime and malice...confronts the protagonist at every turn" (Willett, 1996, p.23, 24). The areas outside Los Angeles, however, are described as being almost 'Edenic.' In contrast to the degenerating urban setting, the location for *The Lady in the Lake* for example, the fictional Little Fawn Lake, is likened to "a drop of dew caught in a curled leaf" (Chandler, *TLL*, pg.34).

Society's fragmentation increasingly disturbed Chandler as it placed the accumulation of wealth and power above all else regardless of the consequences, and to the detriment of moral and ethical values. He used the decaying cityscape as a metaphor for the decline in social accountability, and with it, society's ignorance and renunciation

of veterans. Those who have witnessed warfare are aware of their altered status in society, and feel that “having been to hell and back, they are different.” Society “expect[s] them to put war behind them and rejoin the ordinary flow of civilian life. But it is impossible for them to do so” (Tick, 2005, p.98). The attitudes they encounter upon their return compound this feeling of rejection. To many veterans returning after the First World War, the country seemed dominated by unregulated free market capitalism, and increased mechanisation and social decadence made it seem as though America had abandoned all morality in favour of “a full blown, consumer-oriented economy” (Parish, 1994, p.x). As Michael Parish explains,

In their first sustained experience with consumer culture, Americans learned the truth of the ancient poet Juvenal’s observation that “luxury is more ruthless than war.” A consumer society that sanctioned perpetual technological change, the generation of new fashions and desires, and the ultimate sovereignty of the market did not respect inherited values or the social status quo. (Parish, 1994, p.x)

The decade following the First World War was a time that contrasted “bustling new wealth and dismal poverty.” However, society’s decadence was washed away by the economic crash of October 1929. As Parish has noted, it represented a “curtain call for flush times” (Parish, 1994, p.30, 217). The Great Depression effected the entire country, and Chandler was no different. Chandler’s dismissal in 1932 as a result of heavy drinking severely shocked him, and taught the writer a valuable lesson, he said, it “taught me not to take anything for granted” (Meador, 1982, p.145). However, rather than joining the millions of Americans that waited in “unemployment and bread lines, knocked on doors, applied for relief, sold apples, joined the Marines, hopped freight trains, hitchhiked toward any rumor of work, became prostitutes, begged, borrowed, or stole,” Chandler stayed at home and wrote (Meador, 1982, p.144). Living on an extremely tight budget while learning his craft, he said later, “I never slept in the park, but I came damn close to it. I went five days without anything to eat but soup once... It didn’t kill me, but neither did it increase my love of humanity” (Meador, 1982, p.145-6). Surprisingly however, Chandler’s experiences, “did not produce an anti-business bias in his writing, although the hypocrisies of the rich apparently rankled.” Instead Chandler reserved his bitterness and contempt for society in general and the upper classes in particular, whom he considered “phoney” (Meador, 1982, p.145). As Marlowe says in *The Big Sleep*, “To hell with the rich. They make me sick” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.66).

Charting the city in the aftermath of the Great Depression, Meador argues that “Chandler was not simply a Los Angeles resident. He was a scientist dissecting a native society and recording detailed notes. He classified the facts and resonances of Southern California with the precision of a cultural historian and anthropologist combined” (Meador, 1982, p.146). Meador compares the disillusionment in *The Big Sleep* for example, to John Steinbeck’s equally discontented *The Grapes of Wrath*. Believing that “Both men are crusaders,” Meador observes that “When Tom Joad says goodbye to Ma, telling her that he will be wherever there’s a fight so hungry people can eat, it seems not implausible that Tom Joad, on the run, changes his name to Philip Marlowe and opens an office in Los Angeles” (Meador, 1982, p.151).

Meador’s point is interesting because it connects Chandler’s work with some of the greatest works of the period. Not only does Meador connect the disillusioned affinity between Steinbeck and Chandler’s novels, but with Nathanael West’s *The Day of the Locust* also; all of which were published in 1939. However, among these novels, Meador argues that *The Big Sleep* is by far the most popular because as a character, “Marlowe...encompass[es] the others and reach[es] out to new dimensions” (Meador, 1982, p.151). As a result, *The Big Sleep* has “established as permanent a toehold in American culture as Bogart’s twitch” (Meador, 1982, p.151).

Chandler’s attitude towards affluence endured, and his distaste for wealth and rampant consumerism remained with him for the rest of his life. He captured the essence of this increasingly volatile society and the hypocrisy that lay behind it when he said critically in 1954,

The country through its enormous talent for manufacture has worked itself into an economy of overproduction, which is probably a permanent economy. Half the world is starving, or at any rate badly underfed, yet we have to have a new refrigerator and a new automobile every year or so. If we don’t, we feel inferior because we are made to feel inferior. The kind of economy we have can only continue to exist if there is an enormous artificial wastage of manufactured products. We get that kind of waste in war. In time of peace you have to try to create it artificially by advertising. (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.171)

This increasing decadence and the decline in moral standards is something Marlowe vehemently resists, and he resents the effect modernity and money has had on the changing face of the city. In *The Little Sister*, a novel that deals more freely with Marlowe’s disillusionment towards effects of modernity than any of Chandler’s other

novels, and specifically Hollywood, he says “California, the department-store state... More movie stars. More pink and blue bath-tubs. More tufted beds. More Chanel No. 5. More Lincoln Continentals and Cadillacs. More wind-blown hair and sunglasses and attitudes and pseudo-refined voices and waterfront morals” (Chandler, *The Little Sister*, p.79-80). In *The Little Sister*, contrasting the pre- and post-war city Marlowe laments,

I used to like this town...A long time ago. There were trees along Wilshire Boulevard. Beverly Hills was a country town. Westwood was bare hills and lots offering at eleven hundred dollars and no takers. Hollywood was a bunch of frame houses on the inter-urban line. Los Angeles was just a big dry sunny place with ugly homes and no style, but good hearted and peaceful... Now we've got the big money, the sharp shooters, the percentage workers, the fast dollar boys, the hoodlums out of New York and Chicago and Detroit – and Cleveland. We've got the flash restaurants and night clubs they run, and the hotels and apartment houses they own, and the grifters and con men and female bandits that live in them. The luxury trades, the pansy decorators, the Lesbian dress designers, the riff-raff of a big hard-boiled city with no more personality than a paper cup. Out in the fancy suburbs dear old Dad is reading the sports page in front of a picture window, with his shoes off, thinking he is high class because he has a three-car garage. Mom is in front of her princess dresser trying to paint the suitcases out from under her eyes. And junior is clamped on to the telephone calling up a succession of high-school girls that talk pidgin English and carry contraceptives in their make-up kit. (Chandler, *TLS*, p. 181-2)

Marlowe is clearly able to recognise the difference between pre- and post-war Los Angeles here, which implies that he has been away from the city for a period of time and returned to find Los Angeles a changed place, it is selfish and ugly. The war became a pivotal event for Marlowe because it signalled the advent of a ‘new’ Los Angeles. He notes the contrast from pre-war Los Angeles, a time when he felt comfortable with the city and the state of the city by the 1940s. This passage from *The Little Sister* not only clearly shows that those differences bother the detective, but that war had also become a defining point for Chandler who imprinted this aversion onto his character.

Marlowe shields himself from the excesses of a ‘fallen nation’ by adopting a protective code long-since discarded by the rest of society. This code, according to MacShane, is representative of the education Chandler would have received at Dulwich College, where “the subjects taught were part of a moral order, which was basically Christian with an infusion of Greek and Roman virtues, especially public service, honour, and self-sacrifice” (MacShane, 1976, p.9). He continues by saying that the Bible and the classics would have illustrated these virtues, and that,

...the Public School gentleman was someone who lived by a code embodying them. Manliness meant forgetfulness of self: as Gilkes put it, a man of honour is one who is “capable of understanding that which is good; capable of subordinating the poorer part of his nature to the higher part.” This code...certainly affected Chandler. It helped mould his own character, and, transplanted to America, it helps explain the behaviour of Philip Marlowe, Chandler’s fictional hero. (MacShane, 1976, p.9)

This moral and chivalric code of honour is a theme that permeates all of Chandler’s work, with its earliest emergence in his poetry. Written in the period 1908-1912, Chandler’s early poetry is brought together in Matthew J. Bruccoli’s collection *Chandler Before Marlowe: Raymond Chandler’s Early Prose and Poetry, 1908-1912* (1973). In this collection Jacques Barzun notes that the general consensus regarding Chandler’s poetry is that it is, “without merit of any kind” (cited in Bruccoli, 1973, pp.x). He states that barely any of the writer’s poetry has any lasting effect and is almost instantly forgettable. Yet the poems, although lacking literary excellence, do display Chandler’s romantic flair, with the “recurrent theme of being weighed down by some unnamed tyranny and the equally frequent defiance of it by the heroic ego.” Already showing signs of Chandler’s abhorrence and suspicion of modernity, his poetry “calls upon Art or Thought or some other underdog entity to make war upon the resistless conspiracy of material interests.” These verses, Barzun argues, contain “the root idea of all the later tales” (cited in Bruccoli, 1973, pp.x, x-xi, xi) and became firmly planted in Chandler’s mind long before the conception of Philip Marlowe. Chandler’s poetry is also the perfect platform to evaluate Philip Marlowe’s later attitude towards love, honour and chivalry, but the verses are not however, the key to understanding Marlowe’s character.

Chandler’s twenty-seven poems, “cloying and saccharine” with titles such as ‘The Unknown Love,’ (1908) ‘The Quest,’ (1909) ‘The Perfect Knight,’ (1909) or ‘The Fairy King’ (1911) have a “deep strain of romanticism” which according to MacShane are “conventional in the worst sense” (MacShane, 1976, p.16). They are occupied with courtly sentiments such as forbidden love, fairyland, and melancholy, and set in a world of questing knights and ladies who achieve happiness only in death. Although this melancholic theme of ‘death as a release’ is something he would later come to dwell on, this early poetry was for Chandler an escape from the routine of daily life. It shows that he was content to concentrate on the romantic, almost Arthurian themes that had captured his attention while at college between 1900-1905. MacShane has noted,

Chandler seems to have been quite unaware of the literary revolution underway in England at the time he began to write, represented by the work of Pound, Wells, Ford, Yeats, Lewis, Lawrence, Conrad, and even Hardy and James from an earlier generation. The literary taste of Dulwich, which presumably formed his own, was that of the old guard, and Chandler chose to write in this tradition... (MacShane, 1976, p.16)

Yet this is not entirely accurate. Chandler had indeed been aware of these writers and their 'revolutionary' styles of writing, and appears to have considered them with high regard. In many of Chandler's letters there are numerous references to Ezra Pound, Ford Maddox Ford, D.H Lawrence, Henry James, Cecil Day Lewis and Sinclair Lewis. Joseph Conrad also seems to have had a great influence upon Chandler's work.

Yet while Chandler's poetry seems quite romantic, he certainly understood the importance of realism, and argued its case in his articles. He believed that injecting this authenticity involved possessing a "plodding, mechanical eye" that was able to accurately capture the reality of human existence. In his 1912 article 'Realism and Fairyland' Chandler proclaimed that "realism is essential to art," and argued the moral egalitarian premise of this 'art' by saying, "We are all realists at times, just as we are all sensualists at times, all liars at times, and all cowards at times" (Brucoli, 1973, p.67).

However, his praise for those who attempted this form of writing was surprisingly minimal, believing as he did that being realistic did not necessarily mean writing well. "The most unimaginative or uneducated person in the world can describe a dull scene dully," he said, "just as the worst builder can produce an ugly house" (Brucoli, 1973, p.67). Chandler's criticism stemmed mainly from his belief that realism was often too exaggerated and dishonest, showing unfair representations and scraping up what he called "life's refuse." He complained that these writers,

...rake over the rubbish-heaps of humanity in its close alleys and noisome slums to find fragments of broken moral crockery, to nose out the vices of unfortunate people, to set upon them the worst possible interpretation for the social system, and, by the simple process of multiplication, to construct from them what they consider typical human beings. (Brucoli, 1973, p.66)

Chandler believed that those writers who tried to show the reality of life deliberately "cast aside all factitious optimism...[and] chose the dark aspect of all things," just to "be on the safe side" (Brucoli, 1973, p.66). As a result,

...unpleasantness becomes associated in their minds with the truth, and if they wish to produce a faultlessly exact portrait of a man, all they need do is to paint his weaknesses and then, for the sake of propitiating the instinct of kindness left by some oversight in their hearts, to explain that his shortcomings are the inevitable consequences of a mistaken scheme of life. (Brucoli, 1973, p.66)

Chandler's main criticism was that such 'realism' often produced bad writing. So, while he realised that "realism is a picker-up of life's refuse," Chandler also had great praise for those realists who, by writing well, were able to, "exalt the sordid to a vision of magic, and create pure beauty out of plaster and vile dust" (Brucoli, 1973, p.67). In 'The Genteel Artist,' an article written in 1911, Chandler outlined what must be done in order to become a successful 'artist' of literature. One must, he said,

...throw himself body and soul into his work. He must live with it entirely. All moods and all hours must contribute their inspiration to it, all sensations of the mind and body must wait upon it, every thought and impression must carve some line, however faint, in its ideal structure. (Brucoli, 1973, p.57)

His recognition that life's successes and tragedies provided ample inspiration for realistic literature was noted in an earlier poem from 1909. In the first and final verse of 'The Poet's Knowledge' Chandler wrote,

There is no thought born in man's brain
Which I too have not known;
There is no single joy or pain
I have not made my own...

...I stand behind the judgement seat,
I plunge across hell's brink.
And all to place upon a sheet
A line of fading ink. (Brucoli, 1973, p.5)

Resonating with the issues Chandler would later discuss in 'The Genteel Artist,' the poem notes that to create a work of 'art' a writer must allow himself to span the entire spectrum of emotions in order to bring not only realism to his work, but also aspects of himself. Additionally, in an uncanny forecast of the symptoms that would emerge after his traumatising experience of the First World War, Chandler also wrote in the poem,

Besides the grimmest tragedy
A witness I must stand.
Long buried griefs are near to me
As my ink-spattered hand. (Brucoli, 1973, p.5)

It was Chandler's belief in the commitment and power of realistic writing that would later inspire him to write the ultimately unfinished 'Trench Raid' in 1918 and later his private-eye stories. Himself 'A witness' to the 'grimmest tragedy' of the twentieth century thus far, Chandler's own 'Long buried griefs' would become the key to unlocking Marlowe's motivations.

While the poems that Brucoli features are interesting, they by no means provide a full insight into Chandler's character. His later traumatising experience during the First World War would provide him with the character defining traits for the troubled Philip Marlowe. One of the major casualties of the war was the destruction of an entire generation's sense of self, and as for so many of the 'Lost Generation', the First World War shattered Chandler's entire belief system and brought a cruel realism to his work that his earlier poems had lacked. However, Chandler and Marlowe never gave up on the chivalric code, and in his post-war work can be seen the emergence of a re-worked version of the same code of honour where gallantry is resurrected anew amidst the harsh reality of post-war and post-Depression Los Angeles.

Armed with this new code, Chandler's writing career began in earnest with the publication of his first short story 'Blackmailers Don't Shoot.' He was forty-five years of age and had been searching for inspiration and suitable subject matter for some time when in December 1933 he finally found "something that he could grasp and express with some feeling" (MacShane, 1971, p.43). His short stories were an immediate success with the readers of *Black Mask* magazine, and the gritty realism of his likeable detectives' escapades quickly made him famous.

Creating the Character

Although Chandler's short story detectives display projections of some of his own post-traumatic symptoms, his characters are not simply connected to war by their behaviour or psychology. The connection to war is far more explicit, and may be traced through the development of Chandler's detectives themselves. As well as being recognised by their symptoms, it is also possible to link the names Chandler gave certain

detectives and correlate these names with Chandler's own experiences and influences. His various detectives Mallory, Malvern, and Marlowe especially, have specific connections to Chandler's background, to war, and to the notion of chivalry.

Philip Marlowe's character is the synthesis of a chivalric lineage that began with Chandler's first detective, Mallory. In Chandler's first two stories he gave his detective the name of 'Mallory,' probably in veneration of Sir Thomas Malory and honouring his tales of *Le Mort D'Arthur*. His detective is epitomised by his romantic attitudes and chivalric codes that seem to flow directly from the tales of King Arthur and his gallant Knights of the Round Table. The knights' virtues are a fair summation of the moral code that Chandler gave to his fictional detectives. Chandler had studied Shakespeare, Addison, and Milton at Dulwich, and had a deep appreciation of English literature, which "helped mould his own character," (MacShane, 1971, p.9) and which he would later bestow on his detective creations. Chandler cherished the education he had received at Dulwich, particularly in the classics, and this helps explain why his detective can be perceived as a modern-day knight. The knight's code is one of fearlessness and honour through self-sacrifice and it would have been natural that in a number of the stories and novels Chandler's detectives would be powerfully drawn to the knightly symbols they encounter during their investigations. These scenes conjure up the pageantry of medieval quests of courage and heroism, which are regularly included in Chandler's short stories and later transposed directly into his novels. In the short story 'The Curtain,' for example, detective Carmady notices,

...several suits of time-darkened armour on pedestals of dark wood. High over the huge marble fireplace hung two bullet-torn – or moth eaten – cavalry pennants crossed in a glass case, and below them the painted likeness of a thin, spry-looking man with a black beard and moustachios and full regimentals of about the time of the Mexican War (Chandler, *Killer In The Rain*, p.110).

In another example from *The Big Sleep*, while calling at General Sternwood's mansion Marlowe notices, "a broad stained-glass panel showing a knight in dark armour rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn't have any clothes on but some very long and convenient hair" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.9). In keeping with the chivalric side of his character, Marlowe exclaims,

The knight had pushed the visor of his helmet back to be sociable, and he was fiddling with the knots on the ropes that tied the lady to the tree and not getting

anywhere. I stood there and thought that if I lived in the house, I would sooner or later have to climb up there and help him. He didn't seem to be really trying (Chandler, *TBS*, p.9).

This chivalric motif can also be seen in many of Chandler's character's surnames such as Orrin and Orfamay *Quest* in *The Little Sister*, and Mr and Mrs Lewin Lockridge *Grayle* in *Farewell, My Lovely*. The fact that Mrs Grayle turns out to be the missing woman Marlowe has been searching for conjures vivid resonances with the mythic search for the Holy Grail.

At school Chandler would have undoubtedly been influenced by the English literature of the time. One possible influence, extremely popular in England at the turn of the century, may have been W.S Symonds's *Malvern Chase*. Originally published in 1881 it is a romantic novel set in Herefordshire during the War of the Roses. The characters and surroundings were described vividly and evocatively with the intention of stimulating interest in the area's history and traditions which had become all but extinct. The idealism depicted in this type of classic English literature would have appealed greatly to Chandler, and it is quite conceivable that his character Ted Malvern was named in reverence to Symonds's novel. This passage from *Malvern Chase*, like Chandler's novels, almost has a duality about it:

The companions of his youth are borne to the grave with every passing year, and drop like autumn leaves into their mother earth. But with all this, often... I have slumbered in a sleeping as I rested under a broad bank by a burnside, and dear old faces have come back, and old familiar voices have been again eloquent, faces which are now dust, and voices which have long been silent (Symonds, 1913, p.336).

As well as exhibiting a romanticism that would have appealed to Chandler, this work also has overtones of disillusionment that would later become a powerful theme running through Chandler's own work. The references to 'dear old faces' and 'old familiar voices' that have 'long been silent' also resonate with the suggestion of memory and loss.

By taking as his inspiration the popular classical literature of the time, it is likely that Chandler was stirred into naming his most famous detective, the "shop soiled Galahad" (Chandler, *The High Window*, p.214), Philip Marlowe. Critics have often attributed the surname to Marlowe House, named for the playwright Christopher Marlowe, at Dulwich College where Chandler was educated (Hiney, 1997, p.99). But according to Mrs Calista Lucy, the present keeper of the archives at Dulwich, this is a

mistaken assumption. She notes that although “it has been suggested that Chandler named his detective after Christopher Marlowe because he was in Marlowe House...the House system was introduced in 1919 and Chandler had left Dulwich College in 1905” (Lucy, Dulwich, 2009). As such, it is highly unlikely that the detective was named after Marlowe House.

Despite this however, there is a direct link between Dulwich College itself and the ill-fated Christopher Marlowe. It is believed that the original seventeenth century founder of the college, Edward Alleyn, created Dulwich as a direct result of Marlowe’s 1590s play *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. According to Dulwich legend, after hearing that the play’s satanic content had apparently driven many of its spectators mad, Alleyn, the lead actor of the drama company ‘The Admiral’s Men’ who had performed *Faustus*, devoted his life to charitable enterprises. One of these charitable enterprises was Dulwich College. However, given Chandler’s passion for classical literature there are two other possible explanations for naming his protagonist Marlowe.

In her 2006 exhibition on the Dulwich Houses and the Renaissance Heroes they are named after, Mrs Lucy presented a credible alternative theory to the origins of Philip Marlowe’s name. She believes a more likely scenario was that, “Chandler chose the name from an amalgamation of Philip Sidney and Christopher Marlowe – two English Renaissance gentlemen he admired – who together represented the characteristics he wanted for his fictional hero” (Lucy, Dulwich, 2009). She noted that Sidney struck “a characteristically Renaissance pose of studied negligence” and his style, like Chandler’s, is one of someone “who was extremely clever, with a well-developed sense of humour, he wrote fluently and often with a very light touch” (Lucy, Dulwich, 2009). Sidney appears to have been considered by the Elizabethan court as the very epitome of chivalry. He was an exemplar of the ideal courtier but also a man of contradictions: learned, astute and generous but also naturally impulsive and brave. Christopher Marlowe was not only a notable writer, but is also thought to have been a spy for the British government, and as Mrs Lucy notes, “just one removed from a private detective” (Lucy, Dulwich, 2009).

It is certainly feasible that Chandler named his detective after two of the best known Renaissance writers of the sixteenth century. He would have undoubtedly been aware of Sydney’s and Marlowe’s importance in English literature, and Marlowe’s poem ‘Accurs’d Be He That First Invented War!’ (1587) would have taken on a much greater significance after his experiences during the First World War. As the first monologue of Part I, Act 2, Scene 4 shows:

Accurs'd be he that first invented war!
They knew not, ah, they knew not, simple men,
How those were hit by pelting cannon shot
Stand staggering like a quivering aspen-leaf
Fearing the force of Boreas' boisterous blasts!
(cited in Pendry, 1976, p.23)

Mrs Lucy's supposition is even more plausible when we consider how some characters react to the detective in the novels. For example, after being introduced to a woman at a party in *The Long Goodbye* she reacts dramatically upon hearing the detective's name:

"Ah, Marlowe," she intoned. "Such a sad beautiful name." She put her glass down damn nearly empty and closed her eyes and threw her head back and her arms out, almost hitting me in the eye. Her voice throbbled with emotion, saying:

'Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.'
(Chandler, *The Long Goodbye*, p.153)

These words are taken directly from Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus*, and show not only Chandler's appreciation for his classical sense of poetry, but again reinforces the connection between Chandler, Dulwich and Christopher Marlowe.

A second possible explanation is that Chandler was influenced by certain elements of the work of other writers. There is much to suggest that Joseph Conrad especially influenced Chandler in a number of ways, having used both a first person narrative and also a protagonist called Marlow in his novel *The Heart of Darkness* (1902) which chronicled the effects of European colonialism in Africa. But while Conrad's Marlow lived literally in the jungle, Chandler created his own metaphorical jungle for Philip Marlowe on the streets of Los Angeles. Peter J. Rabinowitz has noted the similarities between the two characters by noting that both Conrad and Chandler, "tell of idealists whose adventures seem destined to bring them in contact with some kind of truth, but who in fact find only a hollowness and a horror (Rabinowitz, 1980, p.235). On his adventures, Conrad's protagonist does not turn away from exposure to murderous horror, but is instead fascinated by it in much the same way as Chandler's Philip Marlowe is keen to expose the same horror on the 'mean streets' of Los Angeles. However, Rabinowitz continues, "both these lovers of truth learn that the only way to

deal with the horrors they have exposed is to bury it once again with a lie, a lie that leaves the hero perhaps wiser, but also more bitter; and a lie that leaves the evil fundamentally untouched” (Rabinowitz, 1980, p.235). These lost causes further add to the sense of frustration that is evident in Chandler’s novels. Herman has argued that, “The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness [because]... Certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud” (Herman, 2001, p.1). Yet by continually burying the horrors they attempt to exorcise through their honourable actions, they are compounding their symptoms further. This is part of the endless cycle associated with the psychological trauma of PTSD. As Gabriel noted, if emotions are continually buried “deep in the soldiers psyche...the overt manifestations become symptoms of deeper symptoms of even deeper underlying causes” (cited in Grossman, 1996, p.48).

Chandler’s short stories show “considerable experimentation in subject matter, style, point of view, and detective types,” (Speir, 1981, p.145) which would be perfected later in the Marlowe novels. Writing in 1950 Chandler stated that, “although he wasn’t called Marlowe until *The Big Sleep*, he certainly had his genesis in two or three of the novelettes; and he probably hadn’t changed any more relatively between say, *Finger Man* and *The High Window* than he will have changed between *Finger Man* and the next one I turn out” (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.226). This ‘genesis’ is reflected in the fact that four of Chandler’s short story detectives were re-named Philip Marlowe for later publications. These were Mallory in ‘Blackmailer’s Don’t Shoot,’ the unnamed detective in ‘Finger Man,’ Ted Carmady in ‘Goldfish,’ and Johnny Dalmas in ‘Red Wind.’

Although Chandler conceded that the character of the private eye was an exaggeration, he also believed that, “at least he’s an exaggeration of the possible” (cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.60). The source of this ‘exaggerated possibility’ was the potential of the literary detective for portraying the honest emotions and injuries of a war veteran, someone who had witnessed and survived the horrors of combat only to encounter similar battles on a smaller scale once he had returned home. Chandler believed that the psychological foundation for the popularity of the murder and crime novel was a topic that had never been fully considered. In 1943 he argued, “There is a lot more to this subject than most people realize... it is just possible that the tensions in a novel of murder are the simplest and yet most complete pattern of the tensions in which we live in this generation” (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p. 95).

Witnessing the Horrors of War

Jerry Speir has used Chandler's own words to create a convincing context in which to examine the reasoning behind the writer's work. He says that Chandler maintained the conviction that, "the best way to comment on the large things is to comment on the small things" (cited in Speir, 1981, p.viii), by which he meant character and language. By "concentrating on the motives of individual characters, he approaches larger themes such as the unpredictability of human emotion under pressure and the manner in which changing times appear to alter one's ethical possibilities" (Speir, 1981, p.viii). These themes are key to understanding the literature that Chandler produced. Chandler had witnessed firsthand the unpredictability of humans under pressure from his experience during World War One and incorporated it into his work. Even in his later life this was still something that deeply affected him, and as Tom Hiney has noted the 'gut wrenching' nature of many of Chandler's short stories can be considered gory even by today's standards. He cites one excerpt from the story 'Bay City Blues' published by *Dime Detective Magazine* in 1938:

Big Chin's face was a mass of blood... His hands were free and what the kick to his groin had done to him was long ago, on the far side of oceans and pain. He made a croaking noise and turned his left hip suddenly against De Spain and went down on his right knee and lunged for the gun.

De Spain kicked him in the face... He twisted the foot quickly, with both hands. Big Chin's body seemed to leap in the air and dive sideways, and his shoulder and face smashed into the ground, but De Spain held onto the foot. He kept on turning it...[and] gave the foot a sudden hard wrench. Big Chin screamed like a dozen sheets tearing (Chandler, *Killer in the Rain*, 292).

Here, as elsewhere in his work, Chandler uses powerful imagery that leaves the reader in no doubt of the degree of pain and the extent of the injuries being suffered. It is extremely suggestive of his own experiences of war, which implanted a brutal realism into his stories that left little to the imagination.

The influence of Chandler's experiences during the First World War is evident in the progression and development of all Chandler's fictional detectives. Its effects are not something that can easily be shaken off. As Kardiner and Speigel noted, during warfare,

...the whole apparatus for concerted, co-ordinated and purposeful activity is smashed. The perceptions become inaccurate and pervaded with terror, the co-

ordinative functions of judgement and discrimination fail... the sense organs may even cease to function... The aggressive impulses become disorganised and unrelated to the situation in hand... The functions of the autonomic nervous system may also become disassociated with the rest of the organism (Kardiner and Speigel, 1947, p.186).

Tick believes that combat veterans often remain immersed in the imagery and emotion of war for years afterwards and sometimes for their entire lives (Tick, 2005, p.1). As detective Carmady confesses in 'Goldfish,' "The quiet of the house made ghosts in my brain, ghosts of a lot of years ago" (Chandler, *The Smell of Fear*, p.459). Chandler's detectives clearly understand the imagery and emotion of war through their recognition and acceptance of death and its unpleasantness. Philip Marlowe in particular, is completely unperturbed by corpses and in almost every novel is quick to recognise the unmistakable "harsh, sharp bitter smell" (Chandler, *The High Window*, p.73) of death, which he says is "not quite like any other smell" (Chandler, *The Lady in the Lake*, p.104). Chandler is very precise with his choice of words to conjure up the image of the "horrible, sickening" and "pungent" (Chandler, *TLL*, pp. 53, 104) smell of decomposition. In *The High Window*, upon discovering the body of Louis Vannier, Marlowe notes how, in "the air of the room a rather heavy perfume struggled with the smell of death, and lost" (Chandler, *THW*, 219). The smell of decomposition is unmistakable only to those who have spent time with or seen a dead body. Life on the front line brought with it the inescapable reality of death and enduring images of a landscape strewn with dead bodies. It is likely that these visions and their smells remained with Chandler for the rest of his life. Details such as these, however small and seemingly insignificant, reinforce the notion that Chandler transplanted his own experiences into the Marlowe novels.

The explicitly realistic descriptions of the dead and dying, which leave little to the imagination, would also have been drawn from Chandler's own experiences of the war. The descriptions of fatal injuries are exceptionally graphic, as shown in *Farewell, My Lovely* when Marlowe describes the grim sight of Lindsay Marriott's beaten body. He says,

He lay smeared to the ground, on his back, at the base of a bush... His face was a face I had never seen before. His hair was dark with blood...and some thick greyish ooze, like primeval slime... I held the light on his face. He had been beaten to a pulp. One of his hands was flung out in a frozen gesture, the fingers

curled... There was a trickle as black as dirty oil at the corner of his mouth. (Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, p.65)

The description of a female corpse in *The Lady in the Lake* is equally disturbing:

The thing rolled over once more and an arm flapped up barely above the skin of the water and the arm ended in a bloated hand that was the hand of a freak. Then the face came. A swollen pulpy grey white mass without features, without eyes, without mouth. A blotch of grey dough, a nightmare with human hair... (Chandler, *TLL*, p.48)

Chandler had a special ability to perfectly describe the features of a lifeless corpse, and in every novel Marlowe is drawn instinctively to the eyes of the lifeless body. In *The Big Sleep*, when he eventually re-discovers the body of Arthur Geiger he notes that, “His eyes were almost closed, but not entirely” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.102). Upon locating Chris Lavery after he is shot to death in *The Lady in the Lake*, Marlowe says, “His eyes had a curiously bright and expectant look, as if he smelled the morning coffee and would be coming right out” (Chandler, *TLL*, p.104). After Roger Wade’s supposed suicide in *The Long Goodbye* Marlowe says, “I bent over him, peering at the edge of the wide-open eye...” (Chandler, *TLG*, p.215). Also, in *The Little Sister* the detective says of Orrin Quest, “He had eyes an eighth of an inch thick deep, pale gray-blue, wide open. They looked at me but didn’t see me” (Chandler, *The Little Sister*, p.151). Chandler’s knowledge of how the dead look is suggestive of the effect the war had upon him. Marlowe’s description of the varying ‘appearances’ of death – eyes partially closed, the look of surprise upon a face, the unseeing stare – all indicate the traumatic imprint of witnessing death on a large scale.

Marlowe’s fascination with eyes may also have an alternate interpretation as his emphasis upon dead eyes can be logically contrasted with his observation regarding the eyes of the living people he meets, especially those of male characters. Although his fascination with the eyes of men has been construed as an indication of Marlowe’s supposed homosexuality, when the detective comments upon a character’s eyes in the novels it presents a striking and almost comforting comparison for the detective between the emptiness of death he has witnessed and the vivacity of life he sees in those around him. It suggests that while he accepts the finality of death, Marlowe appreciates the enthusiasm and zeal he sees in the eyes of others.

It is evident that Chandler makes these gruesomely real observations from his own experience, and his focus on the facial representation of death is suggestive of

having witnessed such an occurrence during combat. Because the eyes and face tend to show the initial signs of death most clearly, it explains why a former-soldier's gaze would be drawn to these first. Chandler's words are certainly suggestive of an 'infinite stare,' and connect to the notion of the vacant and expressionless features that a dead body develops. In *The Big Sleep* Marlowe notes how Owen Taylor's "face was bluish white and his eyes were a faint dull gleam under the lowered lids and his mouth had sand in it" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.50). The death of Muriel Chess/Mildred Haviland is subjected to similar scrutiny in *The Lady in the Lake*: "There were dark bruises on her throat. Her mouth was open and a swollen tongue filled it to overflowing. Her eyes bulged and the whites of them were not white" (Chandler, *TLL*, p.191). While these descriptions may appear overstated, and at times seem to dwell on the detail, they come from a mind that had been etched with images of death and carnage. In *Farewell, My Lovely*, for example, Marlowe says, "I thought of dead eyes looking at a moonless sky, with black blood at the corners of the mouths beneath them" (Chandler, *FML*, p.206). Although Marlowe says this in reference to the death of Lindsay Marriott, his words have a weight of knowledge behind them. Chandler's use of the plural (eyes, mouths) is suggestive of something far bigger than Marriott's murder; Marlowe's words could almost have come straight from a war novel. Although detective fiction, especially the hard-boiled variety, is known for its brutal descriptions, the vividness of Chandler's scenes attempts to convey the authenticity of life and death into a form of literature not always known for its realistic and lifelike depictions.

Chandler's work also provides explicit wartime contexts through subtle character dialogue. This comes across most strongly in Chandler's short stories, because they were the pre-cursors to the novels and had yet to undergo any form of 'cannibalisation.' In the short story 'The Lady in the Lake,' for example, which was published in 1939, Chandler introduces a veteran character with a notable war injury "copped...in France" (Chandler, *KR*, p. 333). Chandler contrasts this image of the wounded veteran with a Sheriff who believes that, "veterans give themselves too many privileges in my opinion. Some of 'em did three weeks in a camp and act like they was wounded nine times" (Chandler, *KR*, p. 348). While this remark from Chandler could be interpreted as an attempt to chastise those amongst the 'Lost Generation' who had unduly embellished their wartime experience, it is also suggestive of the view Chandler held of his own war experience. It hints at the frustrations of someone that had spent only three months in combat and had been left with the deep-seated feeling that he had been denied a sense of heroic privilege

that so many men had sought. Unlike Hemingway however, Chandler did not openly discuss or exaggerate his war experience later in his life, choosing instead to remain incredibly vague about it.

Another example of Chandler's use of a wartime context occurs in 'Pearls are a Nuisance' (1939). When discussing a missing pearl necklace the fiancée of amateur detective Walter Gage notes how the necklace was "made in Bohemia...and the way things are going over there now, [the owner] might never be able to get another set of really good imitations" (Chandler, *TSF*, p. 57). Furthermore, in 'No Crime in the Mountains' (1941) the entire plot revolves around a German-Japanese plan to produce and spread counterfeit currency in California to fund the work of the Nazis in Central and South America.

Another thread that runs through Chandler's work is that of estrangement, his detectives all "exhibit some degree of alienation... [and] all are committed to high ideals against great odds," (Speir, 1981, p.94) battling a world of madness and mayhem passing for normalcy. It is well known that Chandler used many of his short stories as the basis for his later novels, a practice he called 'cannibalisation,'⁴ and initially this process worked well, with *The Big Sleep* finished in only three months. *The Lady in the Lake*, however, took much longer and it was almost four years before it was completed mainly due to "disturbances in the world and within Chandler's own life; the war, for example, was a powerful distraction" (Speir, 1981, p.86). The motif of 'Appearance vs. Reality' (Speir, 1981, p.100) becomes an increasingly relevant aspect of Chandler's detectives because in the development of his detective Chandler created a character that not only appears as a hero, but also a character that is recognisable as the complete opposite. It is only in the Marlowe novels that all those elements so characteristic of Chandler's style achieve their maturity. This difference is mainly due to his use of "space to allow for dramatic and character development,... to get away from the requisite, lavish devotion to plot...[and create] the voice of Marlowe who, though he may appear in the stories as a prototype, is only realised completely in the longer works" (Speir, 1981, p.104). Unlike the short stories, Chandler's novels leave their impression upon the reader because they evoke sympathy for Marlowe's traumatic past (Speir, 1982, p.104). Edward Tick argues that by returning to war in one's imagination, it is possible to re-emerge with a new identity that is an attempt to alter the outcome of the original event (Tick, 2005, p.198). What makes Chandler's work so appealing is that it appeals on two different levels. On the one hand, it appeals to those wanting gruesome depictions of crimes and their

consequences in a genre that was known for its 'tough-guys' and violence. Yet, on the other hand, it appeals psychologically to those seeking a sense of order and justice. While Marlowe may appear as a masculine hero, he is a broken and disillusioned veteran struggling to gain a sense of stability and recognition.

In his short stories Chandler adopted a writing style and developed fictional characters with temperaments that he felt comfortable with. His character needed to be someone he could not only relate to but also depend on, and it is not unreasonable to assume that Chandler created a character not wholly dissimilar to himself. As a veteran, it would have been natural for Chandler to imprint his own frailties and insecurities onto his fictional character. In this way Philip Marlowe became burdened with his creator's psychological scarring, emerging as Chandler's embodiment of himself still fighting meaningful battles but assigned to a different location.

Marlowe's background and character justification have long been shrouded in mystery. In his novels Chandler does not divulge many details of his detective's past, although we are given some idea about the way Marlowe looks:

No visible scars. Hair dark brown, some grey. Eyes brown. Height six feet, one-half inch. Name, Philip Marlowe, Occupation, private detective... I have some nice inlays and one very high-class porcelain jacket crown. Eighty-seven dollars' worth of porcelain jacket crown... up my nose...A lot of scar tissue in there for you. Septum operation and was that guy a butcher!... I got it playing football... a slight miscalculation in an attempt to block a punt. I blocked the guy's foot instead – after he kicked the ball. (Chandler, *TLG*, p.46)

Interestingly Chandler gave Marlowe an injury he suffered from himself. While at Dulwich, Chandler's nose "was broken during...[a] rugby game, a fracture which in adulthood would give his face a tough look" (Hiney, 1997, p. 16). Chandler also gave Marlowe a broken nose, an injury sustained as a result of a football game, the American equivalent of the traditionally English game of rugby. A consequence of the nose-break, as Hiney suggests, was that it gave Chandler a 'tough' look, and it is logical that Marlowe too would have this appearance. In *Farewell, My Lovely*, for example, Marlowe draws specific attention to his "battle-scarred frown" (Chandler, *FML*, p.84), suggesting a face that is imperfect, yet trying to appear tough.

With regard to Marlowe's background the only glimpses that he provides are in two short sections from Chandler's novels. Firstly, in *The Big Sleep* Marlowe notes,

I'm thirty-three years old, went to college once and can still speak English if there's any demand for it. There isn't much in my trade. I worked for Mr Wilde, the District Attorney, as an investigator once... I'm unmarried because I don't like policemen's wives... I was fired. For insubordination. I test very high on insubordination. (Chandler, *TBS*, 15)

To this, he adds in *The Long Goodbye*,

I'm a licensed private investigator and have been for quite a while. I'm a lone wolf, unmarried, getting middle-aged, and not rich. I've been in jail more than once and I don't do divorce business. I like liquor and women and chess and a few other things. The cops don't like me too well, but I know a couple I get along with. I'm a native son of Santa Rosa, both parents dead, no brothers or sisters, and when I get knocked off in a dark alley sometime, if it happens, as it could to anyone in my business, and to plenty of people in any business or no business at all these days, no body will feel that the bottom has dropped out of his or her life. (Chandler, *TLG*, p.79)

As well as what Marlowe divulges in the novels, Chandler also revealed some information in a letter to an English correspondent D.J. Ibberson in April 1951. In it he discussed what he believed his character's background would be, although these details were never incorporated into any of the novels or mentioned in further correspondence. Chandler states that Marlowe, "has a couple of years of college, either at the University of Oregon at Eugene, or Oregon State University at Corvallis, Oregon" (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p227). While it is impossible to accurately note the subjects Marlowe may have studied at college, judging by the information Marlowe reveals about himself, it is certainly possible to speculate. Taking into account that American universities require a major and minor scheme of study, it is feasible that he studied subjects pertaining to either law or literature. From his description of himself we know he was an investigator for the District Attorney, a job that would have required Marlowe to have previous law enforcement experience. His friend Bernie Ohls, whom he mentions on numerous occasions, is the Chief Investigator for the District Attorney and would have been Marlowe's superior in the D.A.'s office. While working for the District Attorney Marlowe's primary duty would have been to provide prosecutorial support in the form of locating and processing prosecution witnesses and conducting additional pre-trial investigations.

When it comes to literature, Marlowe has detailed knowledge of a number of literary works. In *The Long Goodbye* for instance, Marlowe shows his literary

understanding regarding the difficulty of writing good literature when he says to Roger Wade, “[it] depends on who the writer is, maybe... It didn’t come easy to Flaubert, and his stuff is good.” To which Wade replies, “Okay... So you’ve read Flaubert, and that makes you an intellectual, a critic, a savant of the literary world” (Chandler, *TLG*, p.148). Marlowe also makes reference to Hemingway in *Farewell, My Lovely*. After detective Galbraith starts repeating Marlowe’s words, the detective begins calling Galbraith “Hemingway,” he says “Listen, Hemingway, don’t repeat everything I say” (Chandler, *FML*, p.140). Once Marlowe has provoked Galbraith enough to ask, “Who is this Hemingway person at all?” Marlowe replies, “A guy that keeps saying the same thing over and over until you begin to believe it must be good” (Chandler, *FML*, p.143). That Marlowe believes Hemingway’s work to be repetitious corresponds to Chandler’s own opinion of the writer later in his life. In letters to Blanch Knopf, the wife of his publisher Alfred Knopf, he referred to “Hemingway and his eternal sleeping bag” as “pretty damn tiresome” (MacShane, 1987, p.23). Despite having great admiration for the writer, one of the biggest problems with Hemingway’s work, Chandler argued, was that “Ninety per cent of it is the goddamnest self-imitation. He never really wrote but one story. All the rest is the same thing in different pants – or without pants. And his eternal preoccupation with what goes on between the sheets becomes rather nauseating in the end” (MacShane, 1987, p.72).

As well as Flaubert and Hemingway, there is also reference to T.S Eliot. In *The Long Goodbye* Marlowe is driven to meet the imposing Harlan Potter, father of the murdered Sylvia Lennox. He says,

I went on out and Amos had the Caddy there waiting. He drove me back to Hollywood. I offered him a buck but he wouldn’t take it. I offered to buy him the poems of T.S Eliot. He said he already had them. (Chandler, *TLG*, p.201)

Chandler also makes an extremely interesting and very revealing reference to William Shakespeare in *Farewell, My Lovely*. After being beaten and drugged, Marlowe makes his way to the house of Anne Riordan, one of the few women the detective trusts. Her reaction to the sight of Marlowe is obvious:

The door opened wide and Miss Anne Riordan stood there in a pale green slack suit looking at me. Her eyes went wide and scared. Her face under the glare of the porchlight was suddenly pale.
‘My God,’ she wailed. ‘You look like Hamlet’s father!’ (Chandler, *FML*, pg.160)

Chandler's use of King Hamlet's ghost speaks volumes about Anne's horrified reaction to Marlowe's appearance. However, Marlowe's comparison to a ghost not only gives us a visual description of the detective's pale and haggard visage, but is far more suggestive of a psychological description of how Marlowe is feeling. Marlowe's belief throughout the novels is that the society he lives in is thankless and corrupt, and has left him feeling invisible, he says "I was a blank man. I had no face" (Chandler, *TLS*, p. 177). As Meador observed, "Chandler knew his detective-crusader could not win, at least not permanently... but he keeps trying to make it happen..." (Meador, 1982, p.152). Marlowe sees himself almost as an apparition, a shadow of his former self who believes his sacrifices have been for nothing and has been left feeling like "a grain of sand on the desert of oblivion" (Chandler, *TLG*, p.116). Just the same as Hamlet, Meador observed that Marlowe, "occupies a world badly out of joint and has the nontransferrable duty to set it right" (Meador, 1982, p.151). Using Shakespeare's character in such a way reinforces the sense of literary realisation on Chandler's part. Moreover, by using such stark symbolism it reinforces the psychological torment Marlowe endures throughout the novels.

Marlowe is therefore not the typically hard-boiled detective we assume him to be. There is a deep sense of torment and distress below the surface of his character that cannot simply be attributed to the circumstances he is in or the people he encounters. His adherence to a strict code, as well as the possible origins of his name, implies Chandler's deep desire to present the detective as an icon of chivalry but also one who has been ravaged by combat and moulded around the characteristics of a veteran. His character indicates the troubling effects of warfare on his personality, and he is plagued by post-traumatic symptoms resulting from his war experience. Although he functions in society, he is a haunted man, plagued by past events that have left his world dislocated and confusing. His capacity for meaningful relationships is reduced only to those who are either themselves broken, or those who understand his psychological state and can appreciate that he is troubled. Regarding those outside this circle with a sense of disdain, veterans are the only characters with whom he feels truly comfortable. Marlowe is drawn to the chivalric aspect of his quests and in the face of constant rejection he attempts to realign himself and his cases with his capacity for soldiering-on. This would suggest that Marlowe's reputation as a chivalric knight may not have been Chandler's original intention when he created his troubled detective.

¹ Chandler, *The Long Goodbye*, p.187

² Macdonald, *The Moving Target*, p.28

³ The alienation of veterans is widely discussed by many psychologists, see Judith Lewis Herman's *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* pg. 61-62, 66-67, 70-71, Jonathan Shay's *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* pg. 164-179. For Vietnam specific discussions see Robert Jay Lifton's *Home From the War: Learning from Vietnam Veterans*, pg. 69-71, 132-133, and Herbert Hendin and Anne Pollinger Hass's *Wounds of War: The psychological Aftermath of Combat in Vietnam*, pg. 233-234.

⁴ For example, *The Big Sleep* was constructed from 'Killer in the Rain,' 'The Curtain,' and a small section of 'The Man Who Liked Dogs.' In *Farewell, My Lovely* Chandler re-used 'Try the Girl' and 'Mandarin's Jade,' while in *The Lady in the Lake* Chandler merged 'Bay City Blues' and the story 'The Lady in the Lake.' The remaining novels (*The High Window*, *The Little Sister*, and *The Long Goodbye*) were entirely original pieces of work (although the screenplay *Playback* was later recycled and became Chandler's seventh and final novel).

Chapter Five

NO GAME FOR KNIGHTS: PHILIP MARLOWE, WAR AND CHESS

“[Chess] is warfare in the most mysterious jungles of the human character.”¹

- Alfred Kreymborg

“Knights had no meaning in this game. It wasn’t a game for knights”²

- Philip Marlowe

While critics such as Jerry Speir have tried to place Philip Marlowe in a chivalric context and Chandler’s biographers believe the detective to be a modern-day knight, such readings prove increasingly inadequate. Although at first glance Marlowe does appear to be a chivalric character possessing the traits of a questing knight, these traits are incidental. Rather than being a knight himself, Marlowe is instead, as Judith Freeman touched upon, “associated with the *idea* of the knight” (Freeman, 2007, pg.141, emphasis added). It may be argued therefore that Chandler did not originally intend for his detective to be a chivalric knight, but rather the knight in a game of chess evaluating his progress and playing out his moves across the game-board of Los Angeles. Because of the turbulent society he lives in, Marlowe comes to rely on the game of chess as the only form of regaining a sense of order in his life. It is comforting for the detective because he is able to place himself within a meaningful and structured context. As this chapter will show, Marlowe possesses the actual qualities of a knightly chess piece while his character resonates only casually with the figure of the chivalric knight.

Without a positive biographical context for Marlowe, his character manifests itself through his favourite pastime, the game of chess, and offers significant insights into the detective’s troubled mindset and chivalric ambitions. It is a pastime that helps Marlowe

“work out problems” (Chandler, *THW*, p.115) by using strategy to figure out his next move. When he arrived in California in 1912 Chandler became firm friends with the family of Warren Lloyd and their acquaintances, the Pascals. As MacShane says “On Sundays, Warren Lloyd would play a ritualistic game of chess with this contemporary Julian Pascal, and the whole house would be silenced so as not to disturb them.” This group of friends and their activities “were to be very important in [Chandler’s] life” (MacShane, 1976, p.27, 24).

The best contemporary analysis of the connections between chess’s history and social development is David Shenk’s ‘The Immortal Game: A History of Chess’ (2006). Shenk’s key arguments is that chess can act as an alleviation from everyday stresses and strains, and that it is actually one of the best methods of achieving a sense of structure and organisation in almost every aspect of life. When human beings are faced with disorganisation and dislocation, they seek a method of managing what they are feeling, that is, they endeavour to find a coping mechanism. The ancient game of chess is one way that Shenk believes people are able to do this. “On the board [the player] could see the whole action,” he says, “On the board he could neatly make sense of significant past events and carefully plan his future. On the board he still might win” (Shenk, 2006, p.3). Given this insight, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Chandler chose chess as Marlowe’s ‘coping mechanism.’ Chess differs from many other forms of entertainment such as backgammon or card games because it does not rely on chance, there is no ‘luck of the draw’ and no dice, and winning rests solely on the unfolding of a strategy motivated by rational action. To those who first played the game it was a revelation, human beings were able to make conscious decisions and forge their own destinies, albeit on a board, without reliance upon chance. Chess then, “stood for the new empowerment, the idea of making one’s way in the world based on one’s own effort and ability.” The effects of chess on humans are well noted because, “it offered a unique insight into the human endeavor” (Shenk, 2006, p. 53, 3). In medieval England for example, chess was not only a popular game, but also a method of conveying abstract ideas and a mirror for individuals to examine their role in society. Chess also allowed Europeans to understand their identities at a time when new codes of social morality developed. “So ensconced [was chess] in the culture of medieval chivalry,” says Shenk, “that it was listed as one of the seven essential skills for every knight” (Shenk, 2006, p. 50).

The aggressive nature of chess is well understood, for as former world champion Bobby Fischer once said, “Chess is war over the board” (Shenk, 2006, p.5). When played

seriously, chess encourages a “forbidding atmosphere of unforgiving rules, insider jargon, and the general aggressiveness and unpleasantness that seem[s] to accompany even reasonably casual play” (Shenk, 2006, p.5). Former chess master Alfred Kreyborg claims that chess is not just confined to the chessboard but can spill over into life (Shenk, 2007, p.6). Even keen chess player Benjamin Franklin stated in 1786 that, “Life is a kind of Chess, in which we have often points to gain, and competitors or adversaries to contend with” (Shenk, 2006, p.6, 88). Chess then, when played to a certain standard can, in other words, influence our decisions when engaging with the realities of life. The close relationship between war and chess is one that goes back to the origins of the game in which the very nature of the pieces dictates that the game should have the appearance of armies in battle. Samuel Rosenthal, a former chess master, encouraged this comparison in late nineteenth-century Paris. He believed that,

Both soldiers and players, regardless of their talent, must know a certain theory and certain principles. Indeed, [the soldier’s] theory resembles ours. Isn’t it true that it teaches him to conduct his troops on a battlefield according to established rules, to reassemble at the opportune moment, to have them converge at a determined point, in the briefest span of time? Shouldn’t he try to make the others attack him there where he is the strongest, to charge fronts when the opponent attacks him at his vulnerable point, to manage his soldiers’ lives for the ultimate moment?...

He went on to say,

I could make an infinite number of comparisons, for the two are sisters: the path one follows, the method one uses to succeed in chess, are absolutely identical to those that the greatest commanders recommend. (Shenk, 2006, p.114-5)

By arguing that war and chess are so closely connected, Rosenthal not only echoes Franklin, but also many other observers over the years, including the twelfth-century Jewish scholar Abraham ibn Ezra, who wrote of chess,

...all slaughter each other
Wasting with great wrath each other
Mighty men of both the sovereigns Slaughtered fall
With yet no bloodshed.
(<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=437&letter=C>)

Shenk argues that, “Enabling people to see themselves on the board would turn out to be ...the great metaphorical contribution of chess over the centuries.” This use of symbolic metaphor is important because it can,

...help us navigate complexity by reducing it to simpler, more manageable concepts. Chess is a powerful reducing agent. It can reduce a whole battlefield or city or planet down to sixty-four squares. And yet, within that simplistic frame, chess retains its active quality; like a snow globe, it shrinks things down but retains its dynamic essence. (Shenk, 2006, p.55, 56)

In the twentieth century chess was such a common and widespread game that it became part of the study of metaphor itself. Consequently, “While chess is ostensibly about war; it has for the last 1,400 years been deployed as a metaphor to explore everything from romantic love to economics” (Shenk, 2006, p.15). As a proponent of the game it is quite possible that Chandler used chess as a metaphor for the world in which the detective finds himself. He plays a game of order in a world left without order, where the ‘rules’ of chess serve as a beacon of stability in a society too decadent and corrupt to abide by the laws that he struggles to uphold. “In the face of disorder,” Shenk says, “any human being desperately needs order – some way to manage, if not the material world, at least one’s *understanding* of the world” (Shenk, 2006, p.1-2). Chess, it would seem, is Marlowe’s catharsis in a world turned on its head by world war, moral degeneration, and economic collapse.

Although Chandler noted that he didn’t think Marlowe’s chess was of tournament standard (Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.159), the detective is obviously an enthusiastic player. In the novels he acknowledges the mid-nineteenth century Austrian chess master Wilhelm Steinitz and the Cuban world chess champion Jose Raul Capablanca, both of whom he considers worthy opponents. Marlowe’s recognition of Capablanca especially is important because he is relevant to an important time in Chandler’s life. Capablanca became the world chess champion at exactly the time Chandler was settling back into post-war life, a title he would hold until 1927, and during this period he would have been well known to any serious player of the game. Consequently Chandler’s references to these chess masters suggests that not only did he have a keen interest in the game - he would not have included their names if they had no purpose in the novels – but that more importantly, they represent real people transposed into his work. Since Chandler imprinted this aspect of reality into his work, it is logical to argue that he did likewise

with his detective's characteristics. Supposing as MacShane has noted, that "Marlowe evolves from Chandler's own character" (MacShane, 1976, p.69), then we can assume that because Marlowe played chess and was aware of chess champions, then so was his creator.

In Chandler's novels the world appears to turn 'inside out' as Marlowe adopts the rules of the game in his quest to 'beat' his opponent. It has been noted that,

The board may have only thirty-two pieces and sixty-four squares, but within that confined space the game has near-infinite depth and possibility... it can be engrossing in the extreme. Quite often... it's almost as if reality has been flipped inside out: the chess in motion seems to be the only matter of substance, while any hint of the outside world feels like an annoying irrelevance. (Shenk, 2006, p.2)

Considering for a moment that the detective is a chess piece and Los Angeles is the chessboard, Marlowe's unbending honesty and questing nature make him an ideal character in a real game of chess played out across the city. Marlowe's representation as a chessboard Knight would complement the reputation that critics have come to expect from the detective. Marlowe is the only character in the novels that, like the Knight, makes leaps of logic throughout the stories. The rules of chess also explain why Marlowe continues from case to case without ever appearing to 'win.' A stalemate in a game of chess means that the game is concluded without either a winner or a loser and the players have no alternative but to continue to the next game. This viewpoint explains Marlowe's continued perseverance, he is determined to 'win' his cases despite his constant 'stalemates' and is thus prompted to take on new cases. As Mardi Horowitz has noted, "Action is the prototypic terminator of stress states because action changes events. The knight who slays an attacking dragon terminates the threat. He [can] also discharge (or change) the state of his own rage and rage-action plans as activated by the...dragon's attack" (Horowitz, 1986, p.117). This discharge of emotions is short-lived for the detective however, the end of a case brings no respite and explains Marlowe's increasing disillusionment throughout the series of novels.

Although Marlowe may possess knightly tendencies, he often unwittingly becomes a pawn in someone else's scheme, as demonstrated by his unwitting involvement with Lindsay Marriott in *Farewell, My Lovely*. Viewing chess as a reflection of life, it is plausible to assume that chess is included in Chandler's novels to mirror Marlowe's attitude towards the world in which he lives. The rigidity and structure that the

game provides are cathartic for the detective and contrast sharply with his feelings towards a society that seems to operate without rules. The rigid nature of the rules of chess may therefore explain why Marlowe is more at ease with his board and pieces than with the real world and society. He is able to relax while contemplating his next move. When playing chess Marlowe is in control and able to plan his own destiny instead of having to rely on fate, as many of the characters in the novel do, and his lack of interest in games of chance during the novels is further evidence of the comfort this brings. The games of the chess masters that he uses for practice become his confidants, people who understand the world as Marlowe sees it. They are fellow crusaders who have sought to uphold the 'rules' for which they fight. As Marlowe says in *The Long Goodbye*,

I set out the chessmen and played a French defence against Steinitz. He beat me in forty- four moves, but I had him sweating a couple of times... I might have been sore enough to beat the hell out of Steinitz – except that he had been dead for fifty years and the chess game was out of a book. (Chandler, *TLG*, p.14-15)

Marlowe's mind works like a chess champion, continually re-appraising and amending his strategy, for example while attempting to fend off the advances of Carmen Sternwood in *The Big Sleep*. His self-opinion is obvious as he says, "I looked down at the chessboard. The move with the knight was wrong. I put it back where I had moved it from. Knights had no meaning in this game. It wasn't a game for knights" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.153). This scene provides a rare insight into Marlowe's state of mind. Even though he is looking at the chessboard and appears to be talking to the pieces, Marlowe is not actually referring to the game of chess itself. He is instead reassessing his most recent line of thought in the case. He feels that his current strategy is mistaken, and he needs to reconsider the move before committing to a better alternative that will eventually lead him to solving the case. It is when the tired detective discovers Carmen Sternwood in his bed that he realises he has been chasing the wrong piece on the board. Instead of pursuing Carmen after the disappearance of Rusty Regan he has allowed his investigation to focus on Eddie Mars, a gangster whose wife disappeared at the same time. By placing the knight back in its original position Marlowe can now see clearly how the game will eventually play out and the tactics his opponent, Carmen, will use. He understands the game Carmen is playing, and has played in the past with Rusty Regan, and also the repercussions of his refusal to play. The detective realises that Carmen is using her sexuality and sense of coy vulnerability as strategies against him, and because of this

knowledge, loads her gun not with bullets but with blanks at the end of the novel. His awareness of Carmen's strategy and the caution he employs turn out to be well founded, and eventually save his life.

Towards the end of *The Big Sleep* Marlowe appears to identify with the early twentieth century playwright Samuel Beckett, who proposed that in his ideal game of chess the pieces would "move around for a while in futility, [and] in the end are back in their starting positions" (Shenk, 2006, p.192). By the end of the novel Marlowe senses the futility of his quest and is overwhelmed with disillusionment and disgust which nullify any feeling of relief with his final 'success.'

This same sense of disgust surfaces again in *The Lady in the Lake*, after the arrival of Derace Kingsley at Marlowe's apartment. Delivering \$500 to Marlowe, the detective notes how, "Kingsley tossed the envelope across and it fell on the chess table. I looked inside. It was money all right... I let it lie on the small polished table with its inlaid squares of brown and pale gold" (Chandler, *TLL*, p.173-4). Considering the chessboard as a depiction of how Marlowe perceives society, this scene sums-up in a single action the corruptive influence of money that serves to negate the rules that would otherwise be straightforward and logical. As a representation of contemporary Los Angeles, leaving the money lying upon the chessboard shows the power, weight, and influence that money carries in such a depraved city. The casual 'tossing' of the envelope contrasts with the delicate detail by which Marlowe carefully describes the chess-table, and only serves to enhance the hypocrisy of Kingsley's request for Marlowe to find a way to clear his wife of murder, even though all the evidence points towards her guilt.

The chessboard is given further symbolic meaning in *The High Window*, when Merle Davies arrives at his apartment deeply distressed and claiming to have killed Louis Vannier. Calming her down, Marlowe seats her in his "easy-chair behind the chess table." By seating her here, Marlowe says "That put me just on the other side of the chess table from her" (Chandler, *THW*, p.202-3). By placing Merle across the board from him it symbolises that Marlowe must solve the case before he can 'save' Merle from her captor. In order to rescue the 'damsel in distress' he must use all his skills to work his way across the board and win her freedom. For Chandler, it appears that chess was the simplest form of conveying the most basic of ideas and motifs.

Although Marlowe puts everything into his investigations this effort exacts a severe physical and mental penalty. Yet he always comes home to the certainty of chess,

which has a stabilising effect on the detective. At the conclusion of *The High Window*, he says,

I went home and put my old house clothes on and set the chess-men out and mixed myself a drink and played over another Capablanca, It went fifty-nine moves. Beautiful, cold, remorseless chess, almost creepy in its silent implacability. (Chandler, *THW*, p.272)

To Marlowe being comfortable means putting on his 'house clothes' and setting up the chessboard. The 'silent implacability' is exactly the calming atmosphere Marlowe craves to shut out the lawlessness and hypocrisy, and soothe away the contempt he holds for society. He continues,

When it was done I listened at the open window for a while and smelled the night. Then I carried my glass out to the kitchen and rinsed it and filled it with ice water and stood at the sink sipping it and looking at my face in the mirror.

"You and Capablanca," I said. (Chandler, *THW*, p.272)

Marlowe strives to see beyond the chaos and ambiguity for the order and the rationality that only playing chess against a master, such as Capablanca, can provide. The mirror in this scene is a symbol of firstly, the two 'games' that Marlowe has been playing, the chess game being a reflection of, and diversion from the game he plays at society's behest. Secondly, the mirror represents the duality between the honest motivations of the detective and the corruption and depravity of society, symbolised by the white (good) and black (bad) colours of the chess pieces.

Marlowe's fascination with chess is noted in many of the novels, and the detective regularly inspects his pieces as a General might inspect his troops. In *The High Window* Marlowe says "The chessmen, red and white bone, were lined up ready to go and had that sharp, competent and complicated look they always have at the beginning of the game" (Chandler, *THW*, p.112). In *The Long Goodbye*, before playing a "championship tournament game between Gortchakoff and Meninkin," Marlowe inspects his pieces. He says, "I filled a pipe, paraded the chessmen, and inspected them for French shaves and loose buttons."³ Marlowe describes the game as "seventy-two moves to a draw, a prize specimen of the irresistible force meeting the immovable object... and as elaborate a waste of human intelligence as you could find anywhere outside an advertising agency." (Chandler, *TLG*, p.159) Speir has suggested that Marlowe's comment in this scene is one

of disdain that is meant to signal that while he still has the desire to play the game he no longer holds it in such high regard (Speir, 1981, p.139). However, this is a misinterpretation of Marlowe's rationalisation of what the game actually represents. By using chess as a representation of the detective's cynical view of society, Marlowe's contempt is reserved not for the game, but for society itself. Marlowe, in his most ambitious case to date, feels as though he has played 'seventy-two moves to a draw' and shows how weary the detective has become. He is playing the game to the best of his abilities but all he can achieve is a stalemate in a social order that thrives on deception. Life itself has become a literal contest of 'irresistible force meeting the immovable object'. The object of Marlowe's disdain is a way of life that renders everything meaningless and trivial, and to sum it up he says it is, 'as elaborate a waste of human intelligence as you could find anywhere outside an advertising agency'. This interpretation also explains why 'Mendy' Menendez insists on calling Marlowe "Tarzan on a big red scooter" (Chandler, *TLG*, p.64) in the same novel. As Speir explains, Tarzan is a character of the heroic mould, but to have "'Tarzan on a big red scooter' suggests the hero well out of his element, in a new age." Marlowe, like the heroic Tarzan, "is drawn to the grand, heroic act but the modern world has rendered such acts 'plain foolish'" (Speir, 1981, p.77). This thread is also raised in *The Little Sister* when Delores Gonzales says to Marlowe, "You are a ridiculous character, amigo. You really are. I did not know they made such people any more." To which Marlowe replies "Pre-war stock... We're getting scarcer every day" (Chandler, *TLS*, 160-1). Marlowe is, as Speir has argued, a hero out of his time. He no longer feels he belongs and is left feeling like a "page from yesterday's calendar crumpled at the bottom of the waste basket" (Chandler, *TLS*, p. 177).

Marlowe's fascination for the war-like game of chess, this "battle without armour, a war without blood" (Chandler, *TLG*, p.159) is suggestive of his own warrior background. As a veteran, chess would provide the military order and discipline absent in a society that has become so chaotic and where law and order had all but broken down. Unlike society, which often treats its members with disdain, chess is a game where every piece is valued and no piece is abandoned without a fight to protect it. As will be discussed later, by these rules a sacrifice is never offered unless the benefits are clear. Marlowe's conscious non-intervention in the death of Harry Jones during *The Big Sleep* is clear evidence that this rule has meaning for the detective.

According to Chandler, Marlowe studies his chess games from a "little paper-bound book of tournament games published in Leipzig" which came into the detective's

possession from an unknown source (Bodleian 57, 172-268: 219). It is interesting that he should have a copy of a book published in Germany because it is suggestive of a European connection, yet as far as we can tell the detective does not speak the language or has ever been to Europe. However, Chandler himself undertook “instruction in French, German, and Spanish” (MacShane, 1976, p.8) at Dulwich, and later at the age of seventeen spent a year in Paris and Munich. He indulged his interest in languages later in life, and often incorporated them into the dialogue of his stories. As Hiney says, “Unlike many of the middle-class Californians who saw Mexico as a kind of glorious hobby, Chandler spoke Spanish.” In *The Long Goodbye* Chandler includes a Chilean housekeeper who banters with Marlowe in Spanish, and “As late as 1956, [Chandler] had his Olivetti typewriter customized to incorporate Spanish accents, so that his Mexican gangsters could insult Marlowe in their native tongue” (Hiney, 1997, p.286).

It is natural to assume that whatever languages Chandler had mastered, Marlowe could also speak. It is an indicator that while developing Marlowe’s character Chandler gave the detective a reason for spending time in Europe and points towards parallels between author and protagonist. While it is certainly possible that Marlowe discovered the book in Los Angeles, it is equally possible that he brought it back as a souvenir from Europe. Although Marlowe does not mention leaving the United States, the chess book ties him quite specifically to Europe. Opportunities for Americans to go to Europe would have been limited and since Marlowe does not appear wealthy enough to have visited Europe on his own, it is not unreasonable to surmise that he left America to perform military service during the First World War. It is suggestible therefore, that if the book is from Europe it could only have come into Marlowe’s possession if he had been involved in the First World War.

Chandler noted that his detective, “prefers the continental method of designating the squares on a chess board” (Bodleian 57, 172-268: 219). This is almost certainly a reference to the ‘descriptive notation’ used to identify the squares in a game of chess. This method is a technique that had become firmly established in English, French and Spanish speaking countries during Chandler’s lifetime, where,

...the files of the board [the vertical columns] are named after the pieces which stand in them at the start of the game... But the ranks [the horizontal rows] are numbered by each player beginning to count from his own side of the board, with the result that each square has two different names, depending upon whether White or Black describes them. (Lasker, 1981, p.15)

For example, if a Knight is moved to Queen's Bishop three, the descriptive method requires that it be noted as Kt-QB3, and so on. The alternative algebraic notation is far simpler, but was not as widely used as the more traditional descriptive method. According to the algebraic method the vertical columns (files) are lettered a to h from left to right, and the horizontal rows (ranks) are numbered 1 to 8 beginning at the bottom left corner of each player's board. Recording movements in this method would, for example, denote Pawn to Queen's Bishop four as c7-c5.

Chandler's novels reveal that Marlowe uses the descriptive method of notation. As he says in *The High Window*, "I opened a little paper-bound book... picked out a dashing-looking Queen's Gambit, moved the white pawn to Queen's four" (Chandler, *THW*, 112). This comment indicates that Marlowe was familiar with the continental chess notation and at some point had acquired a German chess book. As well as this Marlowe was also the proud owner of another European acquisition, a German Luger. These small details hint at the suggestion that Marlowe could be the soldier Chandler describes in his short story 'Trench Raid,' who, like the later Marlowe, is resigned to endure his fate, whatever it may be. The anonymous soldier,

...began to concentrate on the shells. If you heard them they never hit you. With a meticulous care he set himself to picking out the ones that would come near enough to be reckoned on as a possible introduction to immortality. To these he listened with a sort of cold exhausted passion..." (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.29-30)

Although written in the third person, it is not implausible to assume that not only did Marlowe have his genesis in Chandler's short detective stories, but also in his much earlier war-related short story. As such, the Marlowe novels can be interpreted as Chandler's attempt at portraying a veteran who adapts by becoming a soldier in another field, and shows the reactions and difficulties he faces trying to re-integrate into society.

The chess games that Marlowe plays in the novels may also have a further significance. As well as being a retreat from the real world, Shenk has noted that chess can become an obsession that is capable of exacerbating underlying mental illness, and in extremely severe cases may even cause it. This happens because,

...chess taps into primal forces far beyond our immediate control. Clearly, something profound, thrilling, and even somewhat terrifying takes place on its

mental stage. And the game's close association with a particular variety of mental illness suggests that something potentially destructive may lurk beneath the surface for some players. (cited in Shenk, 2006, p.149)

Shenk is not alone in asserting this connection. Tim Redman from the University of Chicago questions, "After all, what is a chess tournament? [It] is, by definition, an activity in which you spend many hours each day, using your best intellectual and imaginative abilities to figure out how the other player is out to get you. [It is a] constant exercise of [the] 'paranoid faculty'" (cited in Shenk, 2006, p.149). Playing against oneself or from a book, as Marlowe does, is one of the key methods of exacerbating this connection. As the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig concluded in one of his short stories,

The fundamental attraction of chess lies, after all, in the fact its strategy develops... in two different brains, that in this mental battle Black, ignorant of White's immediate manoeuvres, seeks constantly to guess and thwart them, while White, for his part, strives to penetrate Black's secret purposes and to discern and parry them. If one person tries to be both Black and White you have the preposterous situation that one and the same brain at once know something and yet does not know it; that, functioning as White's partner, it can instantly obey a command to forget what, a moment earlier as Black's partner, it desired and plotted. (cited in Shenk, 2006, p.149-50)

This method of play can have a severe impact on the way the brain functions. So much so that as Zweig noted, "Such a cerebral duality really implies a complete cleavage of the conscious" (cited in Shenk, 2006, p.150) where the brain begins to develop two separate identities, and in very extreme cases can lead to "a self-induced schizophrenia" (cited in Shenk, 2006, p.150). Interestingly, this particular mental disorder connects to a comment Chandler jokingly made to Dale Warren in 1949, he said, "If I ever wrote a non-fiction book, it would probably turn out to be the autobiography of a split personality" (MacShane, 1987, p.176).

Yet Marlowe is clearly aware of the intellectual torment of chess, and the psychological effect it can have on those playing it. In *The Long Goodbye*, he says

I put the chessboard on the coffee table and set out a problem called The Sphinx... [It] is an eleven-mover and it justifies its name. Chess problems seldom run to more than four or five moves. Beyond that the difficulty of solving them rises in almost geometrical progression. An eleven-mover is sheer unadulterated torture.

Once in a long while when I feel mean enough I set it out and look for a new way to solve it. It's a nice quiet way to go crazy. You don't even scream, but you come awfully close. (Chandler, *TLG*, 243)

Although there are no grounds to suggest that Marlowe suffered from schizophrenia, he is certainly a man at war with himself. As a traumatised war veteran, playing too much chess may have aggravated some of Chandler's symptoms, and by default are reflected through Marlowe. Zweig identifies something that Chandler may have been subconsciously aware of, that the total absorption in war, whether on a board or in reality, can induce psychological illness. Chess, then, can become on the one hand a refuge but on the other an aggravating factor for mental deterioration.

The typical ending to a Marlowe novel sees the detective disillusioned, having suffered physiological as well as physical injury in his struggle against injustice. Yet still he does not concede. Although troubled, he is sustained by his dogged resolve in much the same way as Chandler described Hemingway:

...when he can no longer throw the high hard one, he throws his heart instead. He throws something. He doesn't just walk off the mound and weep (cited in Hiney, 1997, p.206).

Marlowe displays the same determination that embodies the perseverance and courage of a knight during battle on a chessboard. Benjamin Franklin also noted this temperament of single mindedness in 1786. He believed that chess taught three essential lessons to a player, "the habit of not being discouraged by present bad appearances in the state of our affairs, the habit of hoping for a favorable change, and that of persevering in search of resources" (cited in Shenk, 2006, p.282). Franklin believed that chess players were resilient types who did not give up and simply walk away in frustration, but instead, like Marlowe, they were unyielding in the face of adversity.

Marlowe's Military Knowledge and Psychological Awareness

Given the suggestion that Chandler imbued his own knowledge, biographical traits, and aspects of his personality onto Marlowe, it is also quite plausible to argue that Marlowe, like Chandler, had been to Europe and specifically to Paris. However, Marlowe already tells us that he has never been to the city through a conversation he has with

Linda Loring in *The Long Goodbye*. Receiving a telephone call from her, she declines his offer of a drink by revealing she is in France. She says,

“Buy me one in Paris. Paris is lovely in the fall.”

“I’d like to do that too. I hear it was even better in the spring. Never having been there I wouldn’t know.” (Chandler, *TLG*, p.290)

Despite not having been to Paris itself, this does not detract from the argument that Marlowe has been to France. There is room to suppose that Chandler overlaid his knowledge onto his detective because Marlowe is certainly familiar with specific Parisian landmarks. One of these is the distinguished French university, the Sorbonne. While himself living in Paris, Chandler resided “near the Musee Cluny and the intersection of the Boulevard St. Germain, not far from the Sorbonne, the Ile de la Cite, and Notre Dame” (MacShane, 1976, p.13). He would therefore have had first-hand knowledge of the university’s location. Chandler admitted in a letter written in April 1951 that Marlowe, “knows what the Sorbonne is, and he knows where it is” (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.159). However, because the detective has not been to Paris it might suggest that his understanding is based on his wartime knowledge of a scheme allowing soldiers to apply for courses at Parisian universities after the Armistice. Although Chandler was not one of the thousands who took advantage of this, amongst those who did was John Dos Passos, who became part of what was humorously known as the ‘Sorbonne Detachment.’ In his war novel *Three Soldiers*, the character John Andrews applies to a Parisian university following the Armistice. A response he gets from a fellow applicant reads, “Andy, I’ve got the dope at last. Courses begin in Paris February fifteenth. Apply at once to your C.O. to study something at University of Paris. Any amount of lies will go. Apply all pull possible via sergeants, lieutenants and their mistresses and laundresses. Yours, Henslow” (Dos Passos, 1921, p.205). Characters in two of Chandler’s novels, Dr Lagardie in *The Little Sister* and Henry Clarendon *Playback*, also mention being either associated with, or graduates of the university. That Clarendon’s character is considered to be a cameo appearance by Chandler suggests that the author imprinted aspects of his own biography into the novels.

Giving further credence to Marlowe’s wartime experience is the fact that he has a significant knowledge of guns and ammunition. Chandler displayed his own knowledge in a letter to Dale Warren in December 1948, where he said,

You can kill a man with any size gun, but you are more likely to hit him with a small one, unless of course it's a custom-built job like a Mauser x763 (approx .32 caliber) which has an effective range almost as great as a military rifle and must therefore have a terrific kick. I have a .38 Smith and Wesson Special and even that is pretty damn heavy for accurate shooting... A Luger is normally nine mm. and that corresponds to a .38. (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.99)

It is natural that Chandler would have utilised his knowledge in his works. Chandler says of Marlowe's weaponry, "His guns have ...been rather various. He started out with a German Luger automatic pistol" (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.157). This raises the question of how exactly Marlowe came to own a Germany made pistol, and may possibly indicate that he brought it home from the war as a trophy. As well as the Luger, "He seems to have had Colt automatics of various calibers, but not larger than a .38, and when last I heard he has a Smith & Wesson .38 special, probably with a four-inch barrel" (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.157). A Smith & Wesson .38 special is a gun that Chandler himself owned, and the one with which he attempted suicide in February 1955. He said,

This is a very powerful gun, although not the most powerful made, and has the advantage over an automatic of using a lead cartridge. It will not jam or discharge accidentally, even if dropped on a hard surface, and is probably just as effective a weapon at short range as a .45 caliber automatic. (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.157)

Marlowe also reveals he has a vast knowledge of the different types of gun and their corresponding bullets. In *The High Window* for example he knows Merle Davies did not kill Vannier because he realises "The gun's got a wrong cartridge in the breech. It can't be fired as it is" (Chandler, *THW*, p.213). Furthermore, in *Playback*, when Betty Mayfield brings a gun to his apartment Marlowe inquires, "Who's wearing the bullet?" Surprised, Mayfield asks how he knew there was a bullet was missing. Picking up the gun to check it he replies, "There are six in the magazine. This [type of] gun holds seven" (Chandler, *Playback*, 54).

As well as being comfortable around weapons Marlowe also appears to have little fear of them even when they are pointing in his direction. In every novel Marlowe is threatened by a gun, yet is rarely afraid when caught in this situation. In *The Big Sleep*, for example Marlowe's encounter with Joe Brody begins with him pointing a gun at the detective. Marlowe is unperturbed and knows that Joe is no real threat to him, and he

confidently says, "It was a black Police .38. I had no problem against it at the moment...His voice was the elaborately casual voice of the tough guy in pictures. Pictures have made them all like that" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.80). Marlowe says to Joe, almost arrogantly, "Tsk, tsk, ...Such a lot of guns around town and so few brains. You're the second guy I've met within hours who seems to think a gat in the hand means a world by the tail. Put it down and don't be silly, Joe" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.80). Even when confronted by the gangster Eddie Mars in *The Big Sleep*, Marlowe does not seem perturbed because he feels an empathy for him. When they first meet, Mars points a gun at him and commands him to open a door. Marlowe has other ideas however:

I didn't move. The muzzle of the Luger looked like the mouth of the Second Street tunnel, but I didn't move. ...

"Open it yourself, Eddie. Who the hell are you to give me orders?.." (Chandler, *TBS*, p.74)

By the time Marlowe is involved in the case of Elizabeth Mayfield in *Playback*, he has become almost contemptuous toward guns. Having watched her for a few hours, Marlowe ascertains that Betty is of little threat and can see that she is putting on an act. "She smoked awkwardly as if she wasn't used to it," he says, "and while she smoked her attitude seemed to change, to become more flashy and hard, as if she was deliberately vulgarizing herself for some purpose" (Chandler, *Pb*, p.14). Marlowe knows he has nothing to fear when she points a gun at him, and he casually responds, "Oh guns, ...Don't scare me with guns. I've lived with them all my life... Guns never settle anything... They are just a fast curtain to a bad second act" (Chandler, *Pb*, p.29).

Marlowe's confidence in these situations flows instinctively from his trust in his own ability to accurately judge people. It could be that he is subconsciously receptive to body language and other subliminal signs, and suggests that Marlowe has a unique gift when it comes to assessing his adversaries. As he says in *The Long Goodbye*, "I'm only an amateur psychologist, Mrs Wade. A man in my racket has to be a little of that" (Chandler, *TLG*, p. 90). Marlowe's belief in himself as an 'amateur psychologist,' is reinforced by the actions of Chandler's other detectives. For example, in the short story 'The Lady in the Lake' featuring detective Johnny Dalmas, Bill Haines (the character basis for Bill Chess in the novel of the same name) says, "You don't mind me soundin' off that way at you...?" To which Dalmas replies understandingly, "A guy sometimes has to talk his troubles to somebody" (Chandler, *KR*, p.335-6).

However, Marlowe is not completely unafraid of guns because he has seen the damage they can inflict. In *The Little Sister*, when threatened with what he believes is a loaded gun, he says,

The gun pointed at my chest. His fingers tightened around the trigger. I watched it tighten. I knew at precisely what moment that tightening would release the hammer. It didn't seem to make any difference. This was happening somewhere else in a cheesy programme picture. It wasn't happening to me. (Chandler, *TLS*, p.83)

Although he tries to conceal his fear, he knows that the drug-addicted gun-totting Alfred would have certainly shot him had the gun been loaded. Once the threat has passed, he says, "I let my heels down on the floor again... I tasted salt on my tongue... [I] walked through the door into the other office. It was hard work but I made it. I sweated all the way" (Chandler, *TLS*, p.84). Joseph B. Toad, Alfred's boss, can see that Marlowe has been disturbed by the encounter and proceeds to taunt him by saying, "I bet he scared you... You ain't so tough" (Chandler, *TLS*, p. 84). However, Toad's opinion of the detective appears to change after this encounter, and he says,

"I heard you were kind of hard-boiled," Toad said slowly, his eyes cool and watchful.

"You heard wrong. I'm a very sensitive guy. I go to pieces over nothing." (Chandler, *TLS*, p.86)

Although Marlowe seems to display undertones of sarcasm here, it is indicative of Marlowe making light of what could have been a serious situation. Having been threatened with a gun by Alfred and now feeling as though he can let his "heels down on the floor again," Marlowe shows a process of emotions that are honest and real. Toad surprisingly responds by saying,

"Yeah. I understand." He stared at me a long time without speaking. "Maybe we played this wrong." (Chandler, *TLS*, p.86)

It is possible that Toad recognises something genuine in Marlowe that endears him to the detective, and on this basis they start over again. In the same novel, after being consistently lied to by Orfamay Quest about a murder, and being placed in danger as a result, Marlowe becomes incensed:

I took a couple of deep breaths and looked down at my hands. I straightened out the fingers slowly. Then I stood up. I didn't say anything.

"Are you mad at me?" she asked timidly making a little circle on the desk with the point of a finger.

"I ought to slap your face off," I said. "And quit acting innocent. Or it mightn't be your face I'd slap."

Her breath caught with a jerk. "Why, how dare you!"

"...Shut up and get the hell out of here. Do you think I enjoyed being scared to death?"

"Goodness...I'm sure I didn't know you scared that easy. I thought you were tough."

"That's just an act," I growled "...I'm all mush inside." (Chandler, *TLS*, p.93)

Marlowe may describe his outburst as an act but this scene shows Marlowe's true state of mind. Although he plays the part of a hard-boiled detective, on the inside he is insecure and easily unsettled, and when placed in stressful situations Marlowe's apparently calm exterior fractures and the frightened veteran emerge.

These situations show that although Marlowe appears to accept the inevitability of death, it would be inaccurate to dismiss him as a simple fatalist because in situations where he is under duress his true feelings are exposed. In many of the novels his anxiety quickly surfaces when confronted by a frightening situation. While pursuing the gangster Laird Brunette in *Farewell, My Lovely* for example, Marlowe admits, "I told [Red Norgaard] a great deal more than I intended to" (Chandler, *FML*, p.218) because, as he says "I'm scared... I'm scared stiff" (Chandler, *FML*, 217). Marlowe confides in Red, "I'm afraid of death and despair... Of dark water and drowned men's faces and skulls with empty eyesockets. I'm afraid of dying, of being nothing, of not finding a man named Brunette" (Chandler, *FML*, p.218). While this remark causes Red to laugh, it is an indicator of Marlowe's true emotions. Although he admits to being extremely frightened, by adding Brunette's name to the end of his sentence he tries to suppress his feelings by once again making light of the situation. This episode shows how frightened Marlowe is at the prospect of what lays ahead of him, and the fact that he tries to make a joke makes the scene even more troubling. Yet Marlowe's admission to his fear of drowning is echoed in Chandler's own fear of the sea. In 1950 he said of the sea-view from his La Jolla home, "Too much water, too many drowned men" (MacShane, 1976, p732).

Although frightened on many occasions, Chandler's detectives have a reputation for being "a fancy shot with guns" (Chandler, *TSF*, p.114). In the short story 'The Man

Who Liked Dogs,' Carmady manages without much effort, to "hit the stock of the shotgun, knocking it clean out of the man's hands" (Chandler, *KR*, p.69). Meaningful references in the novels also attest to Marlowe's military background. For example, in *The Big Sleep* the racketeer Eddie Mars insists on repeatedly calling the detective 'soldier.' He says, "I wish old Sternwood would hire himself a soldier like you on a straight salary" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.131). Moreover, after solving the case, the Sternwood's butler discusses with Marlowe the reason for the General's attachment to his missing Irish paramilitary son-in-law Rusty Regan, it is, he says, because of his "soldier's eye...not unlike yours" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.207). Marlowe's general carriage around General Sternwood is worth noting as it is suggestive of a military-based relationship such as that of general and a subordinate. Clive James has suggested that in his scenes with the General, Marlowe plays the role of the "soldier-son," to Sternwood's "father-figure at death's door" (cited in Gross, 1977, p.123).

Marlowe's disdain for the rich is outweighed by his regard for Sternwood's rank. His description of what he is wearing at the start of *The Big Sleep* shows the effort he has made to make himself look presentable to the General. He says:

I was wearing my powder-blue suit, with dark blue shirt, tie and display handkerchief, black brogues, black wool socks with dark blue clocks on them. I was neat, clean, shaved and sober, and I didn't care who knew it. I was everything the well-dressed private detective ought to be. I was calling on four million dollars. (Chandler, *TBS*, p.9)

In none of the other novels does Marlowe provide such a detailed or respectful picture of his attire, especially considering that most of his clients tend to be rich. Although he respects Terry Lennox and Roger Wade, they are his rank equals and do not require such courteous actions. The General is different, he is Marlowe's superior and as such the detective shows his respect as if he were lining up for a military inspection. The General appreciates Marlowe efforts and begins to regard the detective with the same respect he held for Rusty Regan.

Not all of the Sternwood family holds such a high opinion of Marlowe, however. Vivian Sternwood, the General's daughter, believes Marlowe has a predatory instinct and considers him "a killer at heart...One of those dark deadly men who have no more feelings than a butcher has for slaughtered meat" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.145). Yet this remark is not representative or an accurate portrayal of the detective's temperament.

In *The Long Goodbye* Marlowe befriends the war veteran Roger Wade, and in a conversation Wade asks, “Ever kill a man, Marlowe?” to which the detective replies “Yes.” Wade continues, “Nasty feeling, isn’t it?” “Some people like it,” Marlowe says. On the verge of sleep Wade wonders drowsily, “How could they?” It is a question Marlowe cannot answer (Chandler, *TLG*, pg.168). His attitude towards guns and the destruction they cause is summed up in *The Big Sleep* when Marlowe says simply, “Not being bullet-proof is an idea I had had to get used to” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.74). Remarking at his own gun’s lack of use at the end novel while retrieving it from his car, he says, “There were two guns in it. One belonged to Eddie Mars’s boy Lanny and one belonged to me. I took Lanny’s. It would have had more practice than mine” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.177). The fact that Marlowe only kills once throughout the series of novels, to defend himself against the murderer Lash Canino, suggests his unwillingness to take a life, an attitude that is unquestionably consistent with someone who has witnessed too much death and bloodshed.

Marlowe’s belief in *The Little Sister* that his outward appearance is “just an act” also connects the detective to the wounded war veteran Terry Lennox in *The Long Goodbye*. Lennox’s last words to Marlowe touch a nerve with the detective as he realises that beneath it all they are actually very similar. Marlowe is angry with Lennox for running away from his problems to Mexico and faking his own death instead of confiding in his friend. After venting his frustrations and saying that Lennox, or Senor Maioranos as he is now known, is “as elegant as a fifty-dollar whore,” Lennox pleads with Marlowe to understand that it is all “just an act.” He says, “An act is all there is. There isn’t anything else. In here’ – he tapped his chest with the lighter – ‘there isn’t anything. I’ve had it, Marlowe. I had it long ago” (Chandler, *TLG*, p. 320). Damaged physically and psychologically by his war experience, Lennox has nothing more to give to a society that sent him into combat and then accused him of murder. Despite having a sense of self-respect, he admits that, “My kind of pride is different. It’s the pride of a man who has nothing else” (Chandler, *TLG*, p. 13). Although Marlowe doesn’t want to admit it, at the end of the novel he is bitter towards Lennox because he has raised emotions that the detective had tried to keep buried. The novel ends with Marlowe listening to Lennox’s footsteps fade down the corridor, he says “After a while [his footsteps] got faint, then they got silent. I kept on listening anyway. What for? Did I want him to stop suddenly and turn and come back and talk me out of the way I felt? Well, he didn’t” (Chandler, *TLG*, p.320). *The Long Goodbye* ends on a bitter and depressing note for the detective.

His confrontation with Lennox at the end of the novel brings to the fore Marlowe's own emotional and psychological short fall. He is finally forced to recognise that, like Lennox, he too is a damaged remnant of a bygone age.

While Marlowe's character appears to stem from knightly origins, the detective's character is considerably more complex. Because of the turbulent society he lives in, Marlowe has come to rely on the game of chess as the only form of regaining a sense of order in his life. It is comforting for the detective because he is finally able to locate himself within a meaningful and structured context. Although Marlowe feels dislocated and disillusioned, qualities that are constantly reinforced throughout the novels, his affinity for the war-like game of chess keeps him focussed and gives him a sense of order. The use of an intimate first-person style provides a far deeper insight into Marlowe's innermost thoughts, and reveals his private psychological struggles. For all of Marlowe's honourable intentions, he is frustrated by society's ignorance of his sacrifices. The conflicting aspects of Marlowe's character are clear, for while he wants to be a modern-day knight he cannot prevent the overwhelming sense of disillusionment and cynicism towards the world in which he lives. Chandler's own emotional trauma is mirrored in his detective, and although Marlowe displays definite veteran tendencies on the surface these do not provide the whole story. It is the detective's dislocated and traumatised mind that provides the key to unlocking his tormented character. Marlowe's private battle to come to terms with his demons and regain control of his emotions is vital for understanding the weary detective's motivations.

¹ Cited in Shenk, 2007, p.6

² Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, p.153

³ This actually resonates with a letter the writer Ian Fleming once wrote Chandler, which was addressed 'Dear Field Marshal Chandler' and signed 'Private Fleming.' (cited in Hiney, 230) It shows not only the close relationship between the two writers, but also Fleming's interpretation of Chandler's character, which is reflected in Marlowe in this scene.

Chapter Six

PHILIP MARLOWE AND POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

**“...Sever and rend the fine fabric
Of the wings of our frail souls...”**

- Richard Aldington, ‘In the Trenches’ (1917)

“There’s no tragedy, no real sorrow, just a flat emptiness.”¹

- Hank Bruton

As a result of the effect of Raymond Chandler’s own war experience, his protagonists were likewise encoded with distinct veteran traits and elements of the emotional distress associated with combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder. The behavioural characteristics of the war veteran Hank Bruton in the short story ‘A Couple of Writers’ and detective Philip Marlowe are alike because they both suffer from and have their origins in the trauma associated with military combat. Although their psychological injuries were subconsciously imprinted into their characterisation, in order to formulate such authentic depictions Chandler undoubtedly suffered from troubling post-traumatic symptoms himself. Only by suffering the effects of warfare would he have been able to imbue his characters with the intimate mannerisms of a traumatised veteran’s personality.

As previously noted Bruton and Marlowe’s most noticeable trait, and that of veterans in general, is their disillusionment towards society. In much the same way as Judith Freeman describes Marlowe as having, “the spirit of the man who wins and yet never really wins, because the forces he opposes never really go away” (Freeman, 2007, pg.71) so the same can equally apply to Bruton. However, the estrangement experienced by Chandler’s characters manifests itself not only in their attitudes towards others, but it is also evident in their attitude towards mortality and death. Bruton’s pre-occupation with death for instance, is very similar to Philip Marlowe’s disillusionment and gloom at the

end of *The Big Sleep*. In the final pages of the novel even nature has lost its vitality, and appears sinister and corrupt. As Marlowe says, “Outside the bright gardens had a haunted look, as though small wide eyes were watching me from behind the bushes, as though the sunshine itself had a mysterious something in its light” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.220). Peter Rabinowitz has noted that at the end of *The Big Sleep* Marlowe “contemplates the meaning of death and decides that this world is so ugly that death can only be seen as a liberation” (Rabinowitz, 1980, p.240). It is an outlook that is captured in much of Chandler’s early romantic pre-war poetry, and a perspective that often haunts the detective throughout the novels. Marlowe’s experiences have given him an attitude towards death that was similar to Chandler’s; he accepts its inevitability and accepts the knowledge that one-day he too will cease to exist. He even jokes with Mona Mars about funeral arrangements, stating that once he is dead he won’t care for pomp or mourners: “Just a plain pine box... Don’t bother with bronze or silver handles. And don’t scatter my ashes over the blue pacific. I like the worms better” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.184).

The detective’s almost nonchalant attitude towards death is most prominently displayed in *The Big Sleep* when he faces the dead body of Harry Jones, poisoned by cyanide, and now “beyond fear, beyond change” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.174). His attitude towards Jones’s death demonstrates the most chilling aspect of Marlowe’s character. While eavesdropping upon their conversation, he overhears the gangster Lash Canino threatening Jones, who once described Canino as “tough like some guys think they are tough... He’d bump a guy off between drinks” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.162). Upon discovering the two together, Marlowe realises that the “little man” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.169) will not emerge from this encounter unharmed once Canino has the information he requires. However, Marlowe is seeking the same information and remains silent as Canino poisons Jones with cyanide. Marlowe’s lack of intervention in Jones’s death is calculating and indifferent because it suits his own motivations, and he effectively allows Jones to be ‘sacrificed.’

Jones also realises that the situation he is in is extremely precarious, and knowing Canino’s character, must surely understand that he is in grave danger. However, rather than capitulate to the gangster’s threats Jones commits a tragically defiant act that, despite his good intentions, nonetheless results in his death. Acting in noble a manner reminiscent of Marlowe, Jones refuses to divulge information regarding his client, even under duress. He is willing to put his own life at risk to protect the whereabouts of Agnes Lozelle, a vital witness in the case of Rusty Regan’s disappearance. By giving Canino

false information he commits an act of heroism that saves his client, but proves fatal for himself. After Marlowe discovers Jones's body, the detective shows no remorse for his non-intervention, but instead exhibits the utmost respect for Jones's deception of Canino and the protection of his client. He says, "Well, you fooled him Harry... You lied to him and you drank your cyanide like a gentleman. You died like a poisoned rat, Harry, but you're no rat to me" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.173).

At the end of *The Big Sleep*, Marlowe's unemotional view of death deepens as he considers, "What did it matter where you lay once you were dead?" His conclusion is that whether it is,

In a dirty sump or in a marble tower on top of a high hill... You were dead, you were sleeping the big sleep, you were not bothered by things like that. Oil and water were the same as wind and air to you. You just slept the big sleep, not caring about the nastiness of how you died or where you fell. (Chandler, *TBS*, p.220)

It is no coincidence that Hank and Marlowe share a similar attitude towards death, however their view appears to differ from Chandler's personal beliefs regarding his own mortality. While Marlowe does not appear religious and consequently has a straightforward attitude towards death, Chandler's attitudes are suggestive of someone who was caught in a religious dilemma. Although he considered death to be a permanent termination of life and did not believe in any form of afterlife, Chandler certainly believed in God and the notion of salvation. Admitting that he had an "antipathy to dogmas," he showed the stark contrast in his personal faith when he wrote in 1957 that, "I am one of those who do not believe in personal immortality, since I see no need for it... God probably finds something to preserve, but what I don't know" (MacShane, 1987, p.420) Believing in God but not in Heaven or Hell, Chandler instead appears to have craved a sense of comfort from the notion of faith. Having little belief in Heaven or Hell is a consequence of war that many soldiers tend to suffer from. Once soldiers have experienced battle they can become extremely disillusioned by the idea of religion. Failing to comprehend what they have witnessed, their experiences "undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience." War violates "faith in a natural or divine order and casts the victim into a state of existential crisis" (Herman, 2001, p.51). Chandler believed that a person's earthly qualities and sense of spirit were the attributes God considered worth preserving, and reasoned that because of the way a person's

experiences shape his or her lives and attitudes, whether good or bad, they diluted a person's sense of purity. He said,

[God] might find even in me, a sensual, sardonic, cynical man, some essence worth preserving, but I don't think it is anything I could recognize. So much of us is external, environmental, caused by our experiences here on earth, so little of us is pure and undiluted (cited in MacShane, 1987, p.420) .

Chandler's words here are revealing. He appears to imply that the qualities God would salvage are attributes he once possessed, a small 'essence' from a distant past. However, because of 'environmental' experiences, those characteristics would now be unrecognisable to himself. He observes that 'external' influences and 'experiences here on earth' shape our lives and as such people lose all sense of innocence. Chandler's earthly experiences made him feel that he had forever lost a part of himself, leaving him feeling a sense of disconnection.

Only two years before his death Chandler was able to equate his acceptance of mortality with his war experience, which he believed had given him a more practical view of death. It is conceivable that Chandler's apparent indifference towards death can be construed as a symptom of survivor guilt, an emotional affliction that can haunt war veterans. Lifton has argued that this guilt can manifest itself as a "sense of having defeated death and been rendered vulnerable from it – of having crossed over and returned." However, he warns that "This feeling of invulnerability...[is] fragile, and mask[s] a more powerful sense of heightened vulnerability underneath" (Lifton, 2005, p.106). As we have seen, Chandler appears to have indeed been a fragile character in his later years, and his erratic emotions are certainly suggestive of the survivor guilt that began after the war.

From his earliest short story, Chandler's works incorporated a number of reoccurring tropes that are suggestive of a psychologically wounded veteran, and they quickly became a distinctive feature of his work. The solitary experience of pain is a theme that regularly recurs in his work, reinforcing the reoccurring 'pain' suffered by the author during the war. Appel and Bebbe have emphasized that in warfare "psychiatric casualties are as inevitable as gunshot and shrapnel wounds" (Appel and Bebbe, 1946, pg.1470). The First World War saw a new and awful type of warfare where "the probability of a soldier becoming a psychiatric casualty was greater than that of his being killed by enemy fire" (Grossman, 1996, p.55). Under these sorts of circumstances very

few soldiers escape completely unscathed and often continue to suffer either physically or psychologically for years afterwards. In view of this, Chandler's characters are viewed not as static personalities, but like their creator, as individuals traumatised by their wartime experiences. This is a natural consequence of the immense mental suffering inflicted upon serving troops. However, the fear of death is not the only, or even the major cause of psychiatric casualties during combat. As Grossman notes "the whole truth is far more complex and horrible." He says, a "resistance to overt aggressive confrontation, in addition to the fear of death and injury, is responsible for much of the trauma and stress on the battlefield." The overpowering sense of fear "combined with exhaustion, hate, horror, and the irreconcilable task of balancing these with the need to kill, eventually drives the soldier so deeply into a mire of guilt and horror that he tips over the brink into that region that we call insanity" (Grossman, 1996, p.54). Chandler was certainly aware that the experience of war could affect anyone no matter how confident they seemed, stating as though from experience, that "Anyone can be broken by suffering" (cited in Hiney and MacShane, 2000, p.234). Combat produces unpredictable human emotions and responses under pressure, and aspects of these certainly found their way into Chandler's works.

During wartime it is not only front-line soldiers who suffer the traumatic experience of combat. Being indirectly involved in the carnage is often enough to induce psychological injury. Peter Leese, for example, has said that,

Barrage and battle, the hard labour of fighting and surviving, meant a constant physical struggle against exhaustion; feelings of isolation, helplessness and extinction imposed a further psychological strain. None the less, stress and trauma were not only associated with the active phases of the war. Low-level combat shaped trauma just as powerfully (Leese, 2002, p.26).

This psychological anguish can cause symptoms that vary from person to person, and there are a "variety of emotional and physical symptoms associated with the diagnosis" of PTSD (Leese, 2002, p.17). The human mind is therefore,

...infinitely capable of bringing about any number of combinations of symptoms and then, to make matters worse, burying them deep in the soldiers psyche so that even the overt manifestations become symptoms of deeper symptoms of even deeper underlying causes (Grossman, 1996, p. 48).

Despite the difficulty specialists have in diagnosing PTSD there are three separate and distinct categories that the main symptoms fall into, these are intrusion, hyperarousal, and constriction. While each of these can be individually tormenting to the sufferer in their own right, depending on the severity of post-traumatic symptoms it is possible for victims to suffer elements of all three categories.

Intrusion, generally considered the most disturbing and intruding of the categorisations, occurs when a single traumatic moment creates a permanent imprint on the sufferer's mind, which Abram Kardiner described as a 'fixation on the trauma' (Kardiner and Spiegel, 1947, pg.1). Symptoms of intrusion occur when long after an event has passed a victim re-lives the original event as though it is happening in the present with all the emotional force of the original event. This symptom is exposed in Marlowe's own experience at the conclusion of *The Big Sleep* where he suffers what he calls "waves of false memory." When he experiences these waves, he feels that he does the same things "over and over again, go[ing] to the same places, meet[ing] the same people, say[ing] the same words to them, over and over again." Consistent with the symptoms of intrusion, Marlowe describes his 'false memory' as having the feeling of being "real, like something actually happening, and for the first time" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.199).

A person suffering symptoms of intrusion experiences an 'indelible image' (Herman, 2001, p.38), where one particular set of memories crystallises a traumatising experience. These visions may continually interrupt the sufferer's life, and "the intense focus on fragmentary sensation, an image without context, gives the traumatic memory a heightened reality." Trauma tends to be encapsulated by one repetitive recollection, and has a tendency to "become encoded in an abnormal form of memory." Herman states,

The traumatised person may experience intense emotion but without clear memory of the event... traumatic symptoms have a tendency to become disconnected from their source and to take on a life of their own... This kind of fragmentation, whereby trauma tears apart a complex system of self-protection that normally functions in an integrated fashion, is central to... post-traumatic stress disorder. (Herman, 2001, p.38, 37, 34)

There is much to suggest that Chandler suffered from intrusion, and that this indelible image, which although not well documented in his daily life, certainly filtered through into his work and into the behavioural traits of Philip Marlowe. Tom Hiney believes that,

Chandler could not help but absorb the details he had witnessed in wartime France; from the way a man's eyes look just after death to the viscosity of blood that seeps from a fatal head wound. These observations he would use in his later fiction. (Hiney, 1997, p.45)

However, it was not just the violent detail that Chandler absorbed. There are scenes in Chandler's novels that resemble the actual physical suffering resulting from war. For example, in a scene reminiscent of the wartime condition trench foot, Marlowe states in *Farewell, My Lovely*, "I took off my shoes and walked around in my socks feeling the floor with my toes. They would still get numb again once in a while" (Chandler, *FML*, p.234). Marlowe's comment here implies that his affliction has a specific cause, and more importantly his emphasis on the word "still" suggests that this is an ongoing condition caused by a past event. It is evident that this sentence is incorporated for a reason, because as Hemingway noted, "A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing" (Hemingway, 1932, p.169). As an admirer of Hemingway's work Chandler would have probably been aware of this, and appears to imply so in a letter to James Sandoe in 1947. He stated that when it came to writing, "Physical clue a. has meaning only when added to psychological clue b" (MacShane, 1987, pg.100).

Thousands of soldiers fighting in the First World War suffered from trench foot, an uncomfortable and painful condition caused by prolonged exposure to damp, cold conditions allied to poor environmental hygiene. When treated correctly however, complete recovery was normal, though it often left sufferers prone to further bouts during cold or wet conditions. It is no coincidence that in the scene preceding Marlowe's comment about the numbness of his feet he is walking around the Bay City waterfront and takes two boat-rides to Laird Brunette's gambling ship *Montecito*, moored off the coast. The numbness in Marlowe's feet, triggered by the cold and dampness of the Bay City harbour connects him back to Hank Bruton's symptoms in 'A Couple of Writers,' a man we explicitly know to be a war veteran. Since Marlowe and Bruton suffer similar conditions it might suggest that the condition was something Chandler suffered from and that once again it was transferred to his characters.

Returning to the notion of an indelible image, it can be argued that the regular violent assaults Marlowe suffers are proof of this concept. We regularly witness Marlowe receiving blows to the head and being rendered unconscious, but despite the claims of MacShane and Hiney there is no factual evidence to support the theory that Chandler

himself suffered such an occurrence during the war. Although Herman has stated that those who suffer a traumatic event “often feel impelled to re-create the moment of terror, either in literal or in disguised form” (Herman, 2001, p.39), it is evident that this is not the reason for Chandler’s inclusion of these scenes. Yet there are enough of these incidents to consider them important. For example, Chandler’s detective John Evans describes how, “My head came off and went half-way across the lake and did a boomerang turn and came back and slammed on top of my spine with a sickening jar” (Chandler, *KR*, p.375).

Instead, a more likely explanation for the repetitious use of such scenes suggests that Chandler intended to convey a far simpler image of a sensory response to his wartime experience. Bessel van der Kolk has argued that the senses are extremely fine-tuned to capturing traumatic events. He contends that when the central nervous system is under severe stress, memories of a traumatic event can become so overwhelming that they bypass all linguistic encoding, and instead the nervous system reverts to capturing the memory in sensory or symbolic form. While he argues that these forms of memory can be difficult to retrieve, “they can be reactivated by affective, auditory, or visual cues” (van der Kolk, 1988, p.282). For Chandler, his experiences on the front line may have been sufficiently traumatic to encode the disturbing events in the form of vivid sensations and images that were later projected into his stories. Noting the terrifying experience of being under attack, and bearing in mind its potential for sensory encoding, an American soldier from the First World War described bombardment as a,

...scary business...when the shelling begins, the rockets and flares all along the near horizon lighting up the weird scene... the everlasting crack and roar of our own artillery all around us and the whine of the innumerable shells passing overhead ... (cited in Freidel, 2003, p.131)

As such the imagery Chandler uses can be interpreted as a sensory reaction to the experience of an enemy barrage. The combinations of deafening gunfire, ground tremors, and fear would have undoubtedly imprinted themselves onto the minds of those who experienced it.

Events documented in the Seventh Battalion’s War Diaries support the argument that the sensory responses Chandler incorporated into his work reflects the ordeal endured by soldiers. In particular, scenes where Marlowe is knocked unconscious have very definite ‘Lost Generation’ attributes and are similar in description to the explosion

that injures Fredric Henry in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. Like Chandler's novels, which are also written in a first person narrative, we experience the exact event through the eyes of the protagonist. Henry notes,

...I heard a cough, then came the chuh-chuh-chuh-chuh – then there was a flash, as when a blast-furnace door is swung open, and a roar that started white and went red and on and on in a rushing wind. I tried to breathe but my breath would not come and I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and out and all the time bodily in the wind... then I floated back... (Hemingway, 1929, p.50)

Chandler's language is as equally descriptive. When Lash Canino knocks Marlowe unconscious in *The Big Sleep*, the detective says,

I had the stunned moment of shock when the lights danced and the visible world went out of focus but was still there... There was no sensation in my head. The bright glare got brighter. There was nothing but hard aching white light. Then there was darkness in which something red wiggled like a germ under a microscope. Then there was nothing red or wiggling, just darkness and emptiness and a rushing wind and a falling as of great trees (Chandler, *TBS*, p. 183).

In these scenes although Marlowe has been physically beaten, the imagery is that of a sensory response to an exploding shell.

These dramatic descriptions suggest Chandler projected a traumatising sensory experience onto his detective, and further evidence is implied by the writer's use of war-like imagery to describe Marlowe's blackouts. For example, in Chandler's short story 'Bay City Blues,' detective Johnny Dalmas says,

A naval gun went off in my ear and my head was a large pink firework exploding into the vault of the sky and scattering and falling slow and pale, and then dark, into the waves. Blackness ate me up (Chandler, *KR*, p.275).

Similar imagery occurs in *Playback*, where Marlowe says, "at that moment an army mule kicked me square on the back of my brain. I went zooming out over a dark sea and exploded in a sheet of flame" (Chandler, *Pb*, p.34). These descriptions have a specific military context. In *Farewell, My Lovely* the detective is beaten unconscious only to awake after "Twenty minutes' sleep. Just a nice doze... In twenty minutes you can sink a battleship, down three or four planes, hold a double execution" (Chandler, *FML*, p.59). Later, Marlowe is again rendered unconscious, held prisoner and drugged for three days.

He wakes to find “The room was full of smoke...The smoke hung straight up in the air, in thin lines, straight up and down... in the middle of the room, all across the room” (Chandler, *FML*, p.144-5). Although Marlowe is hallucinating, this scene is certainly reminiscent of a smoky battle scene. When turned inwards under the influence of drugs Marlowe’s trauma emerges as if he is reliving the original traumatising event, and he indicates his unease by saying, “the smoke bothered me.” The environment is so real to the detective that he eventually yells, “Fire!” (Chandler, *FML*, p.144).

However, Marlowe is not the only character Chandler imprinted with war experiences. The transference of the familiarity of combat onto other characters also occurs in other novels. In *The Long Goodbye*, for example, Mendy Menendez recounts the events that led to Terry Lennox’s “honourable war wound” (Chandler, *TLG*, p.13), explaining,

“We were three guys in a foxhole eating,” he said. “It was cold as hell, snow all around. We ate out of cans. Cold food. A little shelling, more mortar fire. We were blue with the cold,... A mortar shell plops right in the middle of us and for some reason it don’t go off... Terry grabs it and he’s out of the foxhole before Randy and me can even start to get unstuck... He throws himself face down and throws the thing away from him and it goes off in the air. Most of it goes over his head but a hunk gets the side of his face. Right then the krauts mount an attack and the next thing we know we ain’t there any more.”

Menendez stopped talking and gave me the bright steady glare of his dark eyes (Chandler, *TLG*, p.66).

Marlowe appreciates Menendez’s honesty and says, “Thanks for telling me.” He now feels he understands Lennox, and also the protectiveness shown by Menendez and Randy Starr towards their brother in arms. Menendez also seems to recognise something in Marlowe, and after an uneasy encounter between the two, he feels a sort of kinship for the detective, saying, “You’re okay.” Menendez continues Lennox’s story explaining that the experience dramatically changed Lennox’s life, and caused a physical and psychological deterioration once he arrived home (Chandler, *TLG*, p.66-7). Chandler’s sensitivity and compassion towards his own fellow-veterans made him amenable to the inclusion of veteran characters in his novels, and Marlowe’s sympathetic relationship with Lennox reflects this.

As a veteran Marlowe relives his experiences in a different type of war where the trenches of northern France have been transformed into the hard-boiled streets of Los Angeles. Edward Tick has noted that, “The healing cleansing of veterans can only occur

when we relive memories and their accompanying feelings so that they may be expressed and relieved... Years after combat is over, our souls may still wander in the horror of the war zone” (Tick, 2005, p.194). In the post-war period,

...writers of hard-boiled novels, especially Chandler, Cain and their Hollywood counterparts... constructed a sinister, malignant image of Los Angeles, exploding the myth of the city as a golden nirvana gracing the California coast... LA’s fragmentation has produced a city of strangers, where the claims of the community are acknowledged less strongly (Willett, 1996, p.20).

For Chandler, the dirty reality of war is given a new urban setting in which Los Angeles suffers “the big money, the sharp shooters, the percentage workers, the fast dollar boys, the hoodlums” (Chandler, *TLS*, p.181). It becomes a city associated with loss, displacement, and denial. Chandler’s novel *The Lady in the Lake* in particular records the degree of estrangement and the sense alienation that the Second World War brought to Chandler’s work, as reflected by the detective’s need to escape the ‘war-like’ city for the sanctuary of Little Fawn Lake. As he told his publisher in August 1939, “The effort to keep my mind off the war has reduced me to the mental age of seven,” and by the summer of 1943 he was feeling “mentally finished” (Hiney, 1997, pg.111, 134). Although Marlowe is physically beaten in the *Lady in the Lake*, the imagery is once again reminiscent of an exploding shell: “The scene exploded into fire and darkness... Fire and darkness and just before the darkness a sharp flash of nausea” (Chandler, *TLL*, p.289). It can be no coincidence that Chandler should use such powerful imagery at precisely the time that the carnage of the Second World War in Europe was reaching its height. During times of stress such terrible reminders can “evoke...[traumatic] memories, which often return with all the vividness and emotional force of the original event” (Herman, 2001, p.37).

Druggings also feature prominently in *Farewell, My Lovely* and *The Little Sister*, and are used to render the detective unconscious. The imagery in these scenes is less savage, and Marlowe merely ‘slips’ into unconsciousness instead of being forcibly despatched. In *The Little Sister*, after smoking a drugged cigarette offered by the corrupt Dr. Lagardie, Marlowe states,

I started to get up off the floor... [It] looped the loop. After a while it steadied a little.... A face swam towards me out of the darkness. I changed direction and started for the face. But it was too late in the afternoon. The sun was setting. It

was getting dark rapidly. There was no face. There was no wall, no desk. Then there was no floor. There was nothing at all... I wasn't even there (Chandler, *TLS*, p.147-8).

By the time *The Little Sister* was published in 1949 drugs had come to feature prominently in Chandler's life. He had been prescribed morphine on numerous occasions for painful skin rashes, and the numbing experience of the drug may have begun to influence his work.

Herman believes that symptoms of intrusion can be interpreted as "spontaneous attempts to integrate the traumatic event" (Herman, 2001, p.41) into a sufferer's personal life, and the trauma is only resolved when the sufferer develops a new understanding of the event. Yet intrusion also carries with it damaging consequences. Robert Jay Lifton points out that a common form of intrusion is the 'death immersion,' (Lifton, 2005, p.323) in which "The long term impact is extensive. Survivors typically suffer nightmares that may recapitulate traumatising incidents" (Tick, 2005, p.138). Marlowe experiences nightmares that are generally related to the case he is working on and feature vivid descriptions of death or dying. The disturbing nightmares he suffers are based on characters in the novels, and are often combined with graphic imagery. In *Farewell, My Lovely*, Marlowe is almost strangled to death and recalls,

Sometimes I wake up in the night. I feel [his hands] there and I smell the smell of him. I feel the breath fighting and losing and the greasy fingers digging in. Then I wake up and take a drink and turn the radio on (Chandler, *FML*, p.136).

Even after being drugged once again he regains consciousness and remarks, "I undressed and went to bed. I had nightmares and woke out of them sweating" (Chandler, *FML*, p.165). Such experiences are not uncommon for those suffering from PTSD where shocking events occur "both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep" (Herman, 2001, p.37). Although these events are based in the plot, it indicates that these traumatic occurrences are not forgotten easily and may awaken buried memories themselves. In the graphic nightmare that Marlowe suffers in *The Lady in the Lake* he again combines his experience of discovering a body at Little Fawn Lake with vivid imagery. He says,

...I was far down in the depths of icy green water with a corpse under my arm. The corpse had long blonde hair that kept floating around in front of my face. An

enormous fish with bulging eyes and a bloated body and scales shining with putrescence swam around leering like an elderly roué. Just as I was about to burst from lack of the air, the corpse came alive under my arm and got away from me and then I was fighting with the fish and the corpse was rolling over and over in the water, spinning its long hair (Chandler, *TLL*, p.90).

Although they are flashbacks to a specific plot-oriented event, the nightmares suggest that an aspect of Marlowe's investigation triggers an emotional response akin to his original traumatic episode. As Bessel Van der Kolk suggested earlier, visual or sensory triggers can reactivate traumatic memories that have been stored as images or sounds. This trigger awakens the traumatic memory with all the force of the original event, and can once again prove terrifying for the victim.

Trauma sufferers tend to avoid reliving a distressing event because it often increases emotional distress. This in itself is problematic however, because efforts to prevent reliving the trauma can actually aggravate post-traumatic symptoms, despite the self-protective intention of the sufferer. As such, reliving a traumatic event can in some cases prove to be cathartic for the victim and it can have a cleansing effect in which survivors "may find a way to integrate reliving experiences into their lives in a contained, even useful manner... [and] manage to re-create some aspect of his war experience in civilian life" (Herman, 2001, p.40). By reliving an injury through Philip Marlowe, Chandler may have been unconsciously attempting to recreate his battle in the city of Los Angeles, a 'safer' front line. The city therefore becomes a more controlled method of coming to terms with a traumatising occurrence without reliving the actual horror of the original event. For Chandler, Marlowe was the soldier in the city. Yet by revisiting a traumatic event, although adaptive, it may also entail high emotional intensity. As well as creating a sense of stability for himself through his work, Chandler also continued a compulsive pattern that, like other veteran writers, would be prominent in his work until the end of his life.

The second major set of PTSD symptoms is hyperarousal, the anxiety caused by a persistent expectation of danger. After a traumatic event, the entire system of self-preservation can go onto permanent alert, making it almost impossible for the sufferer to feel relaxed in social situations and in surroundings that would normally be considered 'safe.' It is "as if the danger might return at any moment." The perceived existence of a 'threat,'

...initially arouses the sympathetic nervous system, causing the person in danger to feel an adrenaline rush and go into a state of permanent alert. Threat also concentrates a person's attention on the immediate situation... [it] evokes intense feelings of fear and anger. These changes in arousal, attention, perception, and emotion are normal, adaptive reactions. They mobilise the threatened person for strenuous action, either in battle or in flight (Herman, 2001, p.35, 34).

This chronic psychological arousal often means "the traumatised person startles easily, reacts irritably to small provocations, and sleeps poorly" (Herman, 2001, p.35). It may also cause fatigue and bouts of irrational anxiety, symptoms that Chandler himself suffered from for most of his adult life. Herman notes that "People with post-traumatic stress disorder take longer to fall asleep, are more sensitive to noise, and awaken more frequently during the night than ordinary people" (Herman, 2001, p.36). Grossman concurs, saying that anxiety is common among PTSD sufferers and is characterised by "feelings of total weariness and tenseness that cannot be relieved by rest or sleep, which degenerate into an inability to concentrate" (Grossman, 1996, p.47). Chandler spoke of similar feelings in a letter to Jamie Hamilton while writing *The Little Sister*, he said, "I have a very, very tired mind...Lately I have been trying to simplify my life...But I am not happy. I need a rest badly..." (cited in MacShane, 1987, pg.124).

In combat situations soldiers often unconsciously activate a survival instinct that causes the "mobilisation of mind and body for danger, the vigilant sharpening of the senses, the tense readiness to kill an attacker" (Shay, 2002, p.39). In extreme cases this instinctive behaviour may trip over into hyperarousal, with symptoms that stimulate a permanent sense of danger when, "the whole apparatus for concerted, co-ordinated and purposeful activity is smashed" by the traumatic experience. When faced with such a traumatising event as war, "profound and lasting changes in psychological arousal, emotion, cognition, and memory" can occur (Herman, 2001, p.35, 34). The threat of danger may cause the nervous system to go onto high alert, and may continue unabated, even when the sufferer is removed from the threatening situation.

In warfare, a soldier must rely upon basic instinct and alertness to stay alive, and in Chandler's mind the same is true for the detective. In the short-story version of *The Lady in the Lake* (1939) detective Johnny Dalmas says,

I swung around hard, as if somebody were trying to sneak up on me with a blackjack, but nobody was. The silence held. The room was full of it, brimming over with it. A bird chirped outdoors in a tree, but that only made the silence thicker. You could have cut slices of it and buttered them (Chandler, *KR*, p.326).

Symptoms of hyperarousal are reflected prominently in the novels by Marlowe's instinctive reaction to danger and to the unknown. He often appears abnormally alert, and unnaturally aware of his surroundings, using highly descriptive imagery to heighten the tension and encourage the reader to identify with his apprehensive state of mind. In *The Big Sleep* Marlowe notes, "Something was wrong. Something on the air, a scent. The shades were down at the windows and the street light leaking in at the sides made a dim light in the room. I stood and listened" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.150). Marlowe's exaggerated alertness surfaces throughout Chandler's novels, and in *The High Window*, the detective is even unnerved by the sound of the telephone:

The ringing bell had a sinister sound, *for no reason of itself, but because of the ears to which it rang*. I stood there braced and tense, lips tightly drawn back in a half grin. Beyond the closed window the neon lights glowed. The dead air didn't move. Outside the corridor was still. The bell rang in the darkness, steady and strong (Chandler, *THW*, p.99. Emphasis added).

Later in the same novel, after discovering the body of Elisha Morningstar, Marlowe is unnerved by "Silence. Not even the sound of breathing. The hair moved on the back of my neck" (Chandler, *THW*, p.110). Marlowe experiences similar anxiety in *The Little Sister* where, confronting Dr. Lagardie, a disgraced doctor selling narcotics, a nervous Marlowe says, "I'm just talking... Waiting for something to happen. Something's going to happen in this house. It's leering at me from corners" (Chandler, *TLS*, p.139).

Hyperarousal can also extend to feelings of anxiety triggered by where a person lives or works. As Lifton has mentioned, social restlessness combined with varying levels of bitterness, distrust, and suspicion are all symptoms of PTSD (Lifton, 2005, p.35). In Chandler's novels, as well as in his own life, these symptoms are very pronounced. Just as Chandler would change location when he became restless, so Marlowe does exactly the same, moving house four times in seven novels. The detective begins *The Big Sleep* residing at the Hobart Arms, a place he describes "barren" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.114), but changes his residence in *Farewell, My Lovely* where, although not mentioning it by name, he makes it clear that it is not the same apartment house as the previous novel. Unlike the Hobart Arms, where the "door was put on lock at ten" (Chandler, *TBS*, 114), in his new apartment "They lock the lobby door at eleven" (Chandler, *FML*, p.165). By the time we reach *The High Window*, Marlowe achieves a degree of stability, giving his address as the

“Bristol Apartments, 1624 North Bristol Avenue, Hollywood” (Chandler, *THW*, p.107). It is not until *The Long Goodbye* that we discover he has once again moved. He says “I was living that year in a house on Yucca Avenue in the Laurel Canyon district. It was a small hillside house on a dead-end street with a long flight of redwood steps to the front door and a grove of eucalyptus trees across the way” (Chandler, *TLG*, p.7). Marlowe remains at this address throughout Chandler’s final novel *Playback*. It is noticeable from such details that there is far more of Chandler in Marlowe than has been previously acknowledged. Judith Freeman believes Chandler’s relocation around Los Angeles added a vital element to his work. It “reflects one of the [most important] things Chandler did for the mystery novel, which was to imbue it with extraordinary detail and create an atmosphere so thick and rich that the landscape really comes alive” (Freeman, 2007, p.32).

Hyperarousal is a relatively common symptom of PTSD prevalent amongst the forgotten community of combat veterans. Recounting his own experience of hyperarousal, the poet Robert Graves observed that in civilian life he continued to react as though he were still in the trenches of the First World War. He noted that,

I was still mentally and nervously organised for War. Shells used to come bursting on my bed at midnight... strangers in the daytime would assume the faces of friends who had been killed. When strong enough to climb the hill behind Harlech and visit my favourite country, I could not help seeing it as a prospective battlefield (Graves, 1957, p.257).

Many of the symptoms that psychiatrists observed in veterans after the First World War, such as “startle reactions, hyperalertness, vigilance for the return of danger, nightmares, and psychosomatic complaints - could be understood as resulting from chronic arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Herman, 2001, p.35). This passage from *The Long Goodbye* illustrates that Marlowe is no stranger to these disturbing symptoms. He explains:

Why do I go into such detail? Because the charged atmosphere made everything little stand out as a performance, a movement distinct and vastly important. It was one of those hypersensitive moments, when all your automatic movements, however long established, however habitual, became separate acts of will. You are like a man learning to walk after polio. You take nothing for granted (Chandler, *TLG*, p.25).

The final major category of PTSD symptoms is constriction, an alteration in a victim's consciousness and the numbing response to surrender where, "The helpless person escapes from [their] situation not by action in the real world but rather by altering [their] state of consciousness" (Herman, 2001, p.42). Situations of danger may provoke unexpected emotions accompanied by terror and rage, or conversely, detached calm. As Herman notes "it is as though these events have been disconnected from their ordinary meanings" (Herman, 2001, 43). Alterations in perception can combine with feelings of indifference, detachment, and passivity, and are viewed as a barrier against the 'pain' of trauma (Herman, 2001, p.43). While the "heightened perceptions occurring during traumatic events resemble the phenomena of hypnotic absorption, the numbing symptoms resemble the complementary phenomena of hypnotic dissociation" (Herman, 2001, p.43). Therefore, while intrusion and hyperarousal require the absorption of traumatic stimuli, constriction is the dissociation from those stimuli, which encourages a sustained emotional detachment and the fluctuation of emotions commonly associated with PTSD.

Although the biological reason for this altered hypnotic condition is unknown, Ernest Hilgard believes the brain "may be acting in a manner parallel to morphine" (Hilgard, 1977, p. 246). The constructive process helps to keep intrusive memories out of the normal range of consciousness, allowing only minor details of the original memory to emerge. Jonathan Shay argues that when the senses are "stuck in the on position and [this] persists into civilian life, the veteran may embark on a frenzied search for calm" (Shay, 2002, p.39). Intrusion and hyperarousal can actually lead to constriction, and consequently, veterans may attempt to achieve a similar calming state of consciousness with the aid of numbing agents such as alcohol or narcotics. When facing combat, soldiers' use of alcohol appears to be, "an attempt to obliterate their growing sense of helplessness and terror" (Herman, 2001, p.44). It is a dependency that typically continues when soldiers return home as the means of controlling their intrusive and hyperaroused symptoms such as insomnia, nightmares, irritability and rage. Once back in civilian life, a soldier cannot simply 'switch off,' and will continue to rely on these agents for relief. Shay believes that,

Both hyperarousal and numbing may persist into civilian life, paradoxically coexisting as constantly inflamed anger, but numbing of everything else. Or they may alternate with one another, giving the veteran a history of 'cycling' between over-excitement and numb withdrawal (Shay, 2002, p.40).

These symptoms continue to effect soldiers, and can often result in increased levels of violence and eventually prison sentences.² The combination of hyperarousal and constriction can therefore have devastating effects on both the individual and the social perception of veterans.

Although there is no evidence Chandler ever became violent, he did suffer from fluctuating emotions and bouts of alcoholism that are both recognisable symptoms of constriction. It is reasonable to assume that if Chandler suffered such symptoms they would have transferred into his work and into the distinctive behavioural idiosyncrasies of Philip Marlowe. Like Chandler, Marlowe's emotions were often erratic, swinging between a need for company and complete isolation. In *Farewell, My Lovely* he says to Anne Riordan "I don't want any help. I've got to think. I want to be by myself for a while" (Chandler, *FML*, p.69). While later, in *The Little Sister* he craves any form of human contact: "Let the telephone ring, please. Let there be somebody to call up and plug me into the human race again... Nobody has to like me. I just want to get off this frozen star" (Chandler, *TLS*, p.177).

Since veterans often have a need for numbing agents it is not unrealistic to see Marlowe's weakness for alcohol as an indication of his PTSD. Even after being knocked unconscious, Marlowe wakes craving alcohol. When caught unaware and smashed over the head with a bottle of gin, Marlowe, covered in the spirit, says, "I got my knees under me and stayed on all fours for a while, sniffing like a dog who can't finish his dinner, but hates to leave it" (Chandler, *TLL*, p.190). Although not an alcoholic, Marlowe shows all the signs of severe alcohol dependency. In stressful situations, he is not averse to drinking in his office, admitting "I'm a fellow that will take a snort myself, if I'm tired and nervous and overworked" (Chandler, *TLG*, p.52). In particularly tense situations he becomes almost desperate, saying "I needed a drink badly and the bars were closed." Later, with a glass in his hand, he says, "the drink made me feel a lot better" (Chandler, *FML*, pp.76, 82). Marlowe appears to know what he is doing to himself, and although he acknowledges, "I like to drink," (Chandler, *TLL*, p.38) he prefers to let his "self-respect ride its own race" (Chandler, *TBS*, 126).

Like most veterans Marlowe uses alcohol as a relaxant to numb his memory and senses. He admits he will regularly "bang myself to sleep with a bottle" (Chandler, *FML*, p.80), while drinking coffee the following morning to make himself feel more "human." (Chandler, *FML*, p.168) He believes that alcohol makes him feel "just right, and the first swallow is like a peak into a cleaner, sunnier, brighter world" (Chandler, *THW*, 117). In

one of the most noteworthy examples of this symptom of constriction in Chandler's work, Marlowe is unable to resist the temptation to drink after solving the case in *The High Window*:

I drove back to Hollywood, bought a pint of good liquor, checked in at the Plaza, and sat on the side of the bed staring at my feet and lapping the whisky out of the bottle.

Just like any common bedroom drunk.

When I had had enough of it to make my brain fuzzy enough to stop thinking, I undressed and got into bed, and after a while, but not soon enough, I went to sleep (Chandler, *THW*, p.160-1).

As mentioned previously, Chandler's use of military symbolism appears in the majority of the novels, and in some instances also combines with Marlowe's want for alcohol. For example, Marlowe's reference in *Farewell, My Lovely* to empty liquor bottles as "dead soldiers" (Chandler, *FML*, p.28). This connection however also appears with other characters. In *The Lady in the Lake* for example, Bill Chess is not only named after a war-like game but is also a disabled war veteran and heavily reliant upon alcohol. Marlowe instantly recognises the type, and says, "[Chess] was heavily built and not very tall and he limped as he walked, giving his right leg a little kick out with each step and swinging the foot in a shallow arc... In spite of his weathered appearance he looked like a drinker" (Chandler, *TLL*, p.34). Understanding how Chess's mind works, Marlowe encourages him to talk about his marital problems, asking, "Anything a drink would help?" (Chandler, *TLL*, p.36). Recognising just how intense Chess's alcohol addiction really is, Marlowe says, "He leaned to pick the bottle off the rock and stare at it. He seemed to fight with it in his mind. The whisky won the fight, as it always did" (Chandler, *TLL*, p.39). For Marlowe and Bill Chess, the temptation of alcohol is too much to resist.

In *The Long Goodbye* Marlowe encounters Roger Wade, a war veteran and author whose alcohol dependency is so damaging that he no longer has the will to write. Much like the detective, Wade uses alcohol as a means of escaping the present. Marlowe concludes, "what's the matter with Roger Wade is something that happened a long time ago... it has caught up with him now, and is hitting him harder than he can take" (Chandler, *TLG*, p.91). Wade also recognises Marlowe's pain and says, "Not everybody gets drunk. What are *you* running away from?" in response to which Marlowe avoids a direct answer (Chandler, *TLG*, p.148). Later it is presumed that Wade has committed suicide because "He's a haunted man. He has a massive guilt complex" (Chandler, *TLG*,

p.200), an emotion that is reminiscent of Chandler's own experience and behaviour. Using Marlowe as his spokesperson Chandler acknowledges that, "the only salvation for a writer is to write," even if "he has fallen out of love with the kind of stuff he writes" (Chandler, *TLG*, p.81, 90).

A further symptom of constriction is the veteran's disheartened response to what is perceived as a frivolous and superficial life he returns to after war. Even though Marlowe is quick to defend those he recognises as helpless, he is nevertheless usually disappointed by the outcome of his own well-intentioned heroics, and we often find him "disillusioned... and unable to assimilate the meaning of his case or of his own role in it... [He is] unable to comprehend how the world could have sunk – so unexpectedly – to such depths of dishonesty" (Speir, 1981, 109-10). Chandler's aversion towards the state of society was reflected in his taste in literature. In *The Long Goodbye*, Roger Wade writes a letter while drunk, which makes reference to F. Scott Fitzgerald. The letter, read by Marlowe says, "I do not care to be in love with myself and there is no longer any-one else for me to be in love with. Signed: Roger (F Scott Fitzgerald) Wade. P.S. This is why I never finished *The Last Tycoon*" (Chandler, *TLG*, p.92). Also, in a letter to Charles Morton in 1949 Chandler discussed how impressed he had been by Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*, which had been published in the same year as *The Big Sleep*. As Hiney has noted, "Chandler was fascinated by it." The entire book, Chandler argued, "is a suicide note. It is not tragic, not bitter, not even pessimistic. It simply washes its hands of life" (cited in Hiney, 1997, p.187). By including these two writers associated with 'Lost Generation' and modernism Chandler acknowledges their literary importance as well as declaring his affinity with the outlook that distinguished this group of writers.

Interestingly, these examples show how Chandler depicts Marlowe as someone who also 'washes his hands of life' in a similar manner. In *The High Window* Marlowe ponders his situation, and says, "I filled and lit my pipe and sat there smoking. Nobody came in, nobody called, nothing happened, nobody cared whether I died or went to El Paso" (Chandler, *THW*, p.201). Marlowe's feeling of detachment from others is part of the reason for his nonchalant attitude towards death. In spite of his good intentions and courageous endeavours, he considers himself to be worthless. He summarises his life as degraded and having little meaning, "as if I had spent my life knocking at doors in cheap hotels that nobody bothered to open" (Chandler, *TLS*, p.48). Marlowe is reconciled to the fact that his work will never be fully appreciated, and inconsequential in a culture that does not care for him. In his own words, he has become "a grain of sand on the desert of

oblivion” (Chandler, *TLG*, p.116). This tension even transfers to his physical appearance: “I had a strained look. I’d been living too fast... I looked as if I had made my mind up to drive off a cliff” (Chandler, *TLS*, p.135).

Marlowe’s indifference and disillusionment are suggestive symptoms of ‘survivor guilt.’ As Grossman noted,

The dead soldier takes his misery with him, but the man who killed him must forever live and die with him. The lesson becomes increasingly clear: killing is what war is all about, and killing in combat, by its very nature, causes deep wounds of pain and guilt (Grossman, 1996, p.93).

This is the sentiment that Marlowe expresses in *The Big Sleep*. In his disillusioned tirade at the end of the novel he includes the revealing line, “You just slept the big sleep, not caring about the nastiness of how you died or where you fell. Me, I was part of that nastiness now” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.220). Although seeming resigned to his fate, Marlowe alludes to the burden of pain and guilt he must endure, in contrast to the dead who take their suffering with them. It is his guilt and listlessness that leads Marlowe to believe that he has become “as empty of life as a scarecrow’s pockets” (Chandler, *TBS*, p.156).

Disillusionment and passivity become increasingly prominent in Chandler’s later work where Marlowe has been fully developed as the shattered veteran of war. Tom Hiney believes that in *The Lady in the Lake*, “Marlowe certainly does not feel like a hero any more” (Hiney, 1997, p.130). Looking in a mirror, Marlowe says, “I brushed my hair and looked at the grey in it. It was getting to be plenty of grey in it. The face under the hair had a sick look. I didn’t like the face at all” (Chandler, *TLL*, p.140). Marlowe repeatedly says that he feels “jaded and old” (Chandler, *TLS*, p.48), yet his disillusionment is mainly reserved for the corruption he sees around him. He says, “The white moonlight was cold and clear, like the justice we dream of but never find” (Chandler, *THW*, p.244), and now believes,

It’s a different world. You have to get used to a paler set of colours, a quieter lot of sounds. You have to allow for relapses. All the people you used to know well will get to be just a little strange. You won’t even like most of them, and they won’t like you too well (Chandler, *TLG*, p.12).

Like many other emotionally detached veterans, Marlowe feels his sacrifices in war have been inconsequential, and forgotten by a cynical world. Although recognition and

acceptance are essential in aiding the healing process, the veterans who look to their community for support and approval rarely find the appreciation they seek. Grossman notes that for society, “it is simply too painful... to address what it does when it sends its young men off to kill other young men in distant lands... And what is too painful to remember, we simply choose to forget” (Grossman, 1996, p.95). The veteran feels “isolated... by the images of the horror that he has witnessed ...[and] imagines that no civilian... can comprehend.” All too often civilians share the view of the veteran as a man apart from the rest of society. However, the “Restoration of the breach between the traumatised person and the community depends... upon public acknowledgement of the traumatic event” (Herman, 2001, p.66, 70).

The last chapter of *Playback* is a poignant reminder of Chandler’s own circumstances, concluding with Marlowe returning to a home similar to the lonely La Jolla apartment in which his creator was now living. He says,

I opened a couple of windows and mixed a drink in the kitchen. I sat down on the couch and stared at the wall. Wherever I went, whatever I did, this was what I would come back to. A blank wall in a meaningless room in a meaningless house... I put the drink down on the side table without touching it. Alcohol was no cure for this. Nothing was any cure for this but the hard inner heart that asked for nothing from no one (Chandler, *Pb*, p.156).

Yet however dismally Marlowe describes his living space, his home is his sanctuary. This is where he feels safe surrounded by his possessions that have special sentimental value. When Carmen Sternwood calls him a “filthy name” in *The Big Sleep*, he promptly throws her out. He says,

I didn’t mind what she called me, what anybody called me. But this was the room I had to live in. It was all I had in the way of a home. In it was everything that was mine, that had any association for me, any past, anything that took the place of a family. Not much; a few books, pictures, radio, chessmen, old letters, stuff like that. Nothing. Such as they were they had all my memories (Chandler, *TBS*, p.154).

Carmen’s language debases Marlowe’s sanctuary. The hissing noise she makes at Marlowe when asked to leave only serves to aggravate the sensation that Carmen has poisoned the retreat that he has carefully created and vents his anger by tearing the bed covers to pieces after she has left.

As part of the larger symptom of constriction Grossman observes that a traumatised person can suffer what he calls conversion hysteria, which can occur during combat or years later as PTSD (Grossman, 1996, p.46). This manifestation causes a trauma victim to suffer amnesia of the traumatic event caused by “a ‘constriction of the field of consciousness’ which keeps painful memories split off from ordinary awareness” (cited by Herman, 2001, p.45). This may explain why Chandler never attempted to provide a biography for Marlowe, and may be an indicator that Marlowe and possibly the author himself does not want to dwell on his past and has instead chosen to concentrate on the present. However, although Marlowe may have been allowed to forget certain aspects of his past, Chandler could not. As Merle Davies states in *The High Window*, “People are always telling you to forget unpleasant things. But you never do” (Chandler, *THW*, p.233). By denying Marlowe a past Chandler may have been granting the detective a freedom he himself did not have, a life free from emotional or familial ties. In *The Lady in the Lake*, after being knocked unconscious, Marlowe says “Someday it will all come back to you. And you won’t like it” (Chandler, *TLL*, p.191). By withholding Marlowe’s past, Chandler may be signalling his desire to forget his own war experiences by allowing Marlowe a clean slate from which to re-start his life afresh. As well as Marlowe, many of Chandler’s other characters also forget past events. In *The Big Sleep*, for example, Carmen Sternwood, without recollection, kills her brother-in-law Rusty Regan during an epileptic fit, and in *The Long Goodbye* Sylvia Lennox’s real murderer blames traumatised veteran Roger Wade, saying, “Roger didn’t know he had killed her. He had blacked out completely. He knew something was wrong and he tried to bring it to the surface, but he couldn’t. The shock had destroyed his memory of it” (Chandler, *TLG*, p.260).

As well as amnesia, Grossman argues that confusional states are another prominent symptom of PTSD where victims become dissociated from reality. The most noted response to a confusional state is Ganzer syndrome, where a sufferer tries “to ward off the horror with humour” (Grossman, 1996, p.45), and certainly Marlowe displays distinct aspects of this. The most consistent evidence of this is his use of sarcasm and wit. For example, when told by private eye Ross Goble in *Playback* that they could get along, Marlowe replies, “if you had any manners and were six inches taller and had a different face and another name and didn’t act like you thought you could lick your weight in frog spawn” (Chandler, *Pb*, p.94). MacShane argues this type of dialogue is “not just for the sake of the jokes and wisecracks. [It is] his chief weapon. Chandler has Marlowe choose his words in such a way as to throw his opponents off base...” (Macshane, 1976, p.113)

While this type of banter is common in Chandler's novels, the detective's behaviour becomes increasingly erratic and develops into far more agitated and unnerving outbursts when faced with more frightening scenarios, showing how chaotic and unstable the detective's emotional state becomes when placed under pressure. Rather than simply displaying humour, it appears that Marlowe touches upon madness in his nervous response to danger. He also has an aversion to killing which is unusual for detectives of the period. The only killing he commits is that of Lash Canino in *The Big Sleep*. Even here Marlowe allows his uneasy reaction to show, saying, "I began to laugh like a loon" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.194). Earlier in the novel, when accosted by one of Eddie Mars's gangsters he says, "I grinned at my own foolishness" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.114), and even after Carmen Sternwood tries to shoot Joe Brody he says, "I began to laugh. I laughed like an idiot, without control" (Chandler, *TBS*, p.88). After discovering Chris Lavery shot to death in *The Lady in the Lake*, Marlowe says, "I laughed. It was rather a ghoulish laugh" (Chandler, *TLL*, p.105). These episodes show how deranged and irrational Marlowe becomes when confronted by these types of emotionally stressful situations.

Yet in stressful situations Marlowe is most at ease in the company of men. With the enormous emotional and physical intensity that soldiers experience during combat it is normal that men should group together for reassurance and mutual support. Because "war affects our physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions" (Tick, 2005, p.222), this instinctive banding together may explain why the detective is drawn to certain men and also why some critics have used this to question Marlowe's sexuality. The bond created during warfare creates a spontaneous sense of brotherhood that is almost a "love relationship" (Grossman, 1996, p.90). For example, Vietnam veteran John Early explains that,

...the man next to you - you're depending on him for the most important thing you have, your life, and if he lets you down you're either maimed or killed. If you make a mistake the same thing happens to him, so the bond of trust has to be extremely close, and I'd say this bond is stronger than almost anything... It's a hell of a lot stronger than man and wife (cited in Grossman, 1996, p.90).

In *Farewell, My Lovely*, 'Moose' Malloy and 'Red' Norgaard are both characters that Marlowe is drawn to. He says of Red, "His voice was soft, dreamy, so delicate for a young man that it was startling. It made me think of another soft-voiced big man I had strangely liked," (Chandler, *FML*, pg. 213). Marlowe says this about Red but is in fact

referring to Malloy, showing his respect and feeling for both characters. Later in the novel he admits, "I told [Red] a great deal more than I intended to. It must have been his eyes" (Chandler, *FML*, p.218). The language here is unusually sensitive and some have argued that it is an indication of Marlowe's homosexuality. As Legman believed, in *The Long Goodbye* Marlowe does appear to 'moon' over Terry Lennox, and after receiving news of Lennox's supposed death he sentimentally pours him a cup of coffee and lights him a cigarette.

Regarding this hypothetical homosexuality Freeman noted that, "There was always the possibility that if Chandler, and by extension Marlowe, did harbour any homosexual inclinations they might have been so deeply repressed as to never have been acknowledged, leaking out instead, via the unconscious, in certain passages of prose" (Freeman, 2007, p.164). Yet this argument falters when considered in conjunction with the fact that Marlowe's actions towards certain male characters are unquestionably indicative of his loneliness and recognition for those who are part of the brotherhood naturally produced under combat conditions. Despite noting a case for Marlowe's homosexuality, Freeman concedes that the scene in which Marlowe displays his sentimentality over Lennox's death, "seemed somehow innocent. It felt like platonic love. The safe kind of emotional feeling that would not have become physical. It was the love of an achingly lonely man for one true buddy, a soul mate of the same sex" (Freeman, 2007, p.173). It is no coincidence that in *The Long Goodbye*, the only novel where Marlowe develops genuine male friendships, that the characters he befriends are both veterans. He appears to recognise himself in both Lennox and Roger Wade because, "his idealistic sensibilities draw him spontaneously and sympathetically" towards them (Speir, 1981, p.109). Marlowe understands their suffering because, like him, they are men with a specific shared experience. He is especially drawn to Lennox because of his "honourable [war] wound" which had left his face "frozen and whitish and seamed with thin, fine scars" (Chandler, *TLG*, p.13, 7). Those who knew Lennox in the army also acknowledge, "what happened to Terry... was enough to screw up any guy's brains... All [he] gets out of saving our lives is half a new face, white hair, and a bad case of nerves... he hits the bottle...kind of goes to pieces" (Chandler, *TLG*, p.67). In Marlowe's summation of Lennox at the end of the novel it is possible to see shades of the detective, he says,

For a long time I couldn't figure you at all. You had nice ways and nice qualities, but there was something wrong. You had standards and you lived up to them, but

they were personal. They had no relation to any kind of ethics or scruples. You were a nice guy because you had a nice nature. But you were just as happy with mugs or hoodlums as with honest men. Provided the hoodlums spoke fairly good English and had fairly acceptable table manners. You're a moral defeatist. I think maybe the war did it and again I think maybe you were born that way (Chandler, *TLG*, p.319).

Although Clive James believes that "Chandler in real life was more Lennox than Marlowe," (cited in Gross, p.123) there are details in each of Marlowe's three veteran characters, Lennox, Marlowe and Roger Wade that coincide with different facets of Chandler's own personality. This suggests that the characters are a fusion of everything that Chandler both wanted to be and was afraid he had become. Considering this view, Lennox, Wade, and Marlowe are therefore Chandler's alter egos. Natasha Spender explains,

All three characters were drinkers, like Raymond himself, two of them disintegrating and despairing... As with aspects of Raymond's own character, their dominance veered with his mood. Roger Wade his 'bad self,' Philip Marlowe his 'good self' and Terry Lennox his anxious one. These three, often in conflict, were in good times subordinated to a fourth, the genial, generous and benevolently paternal friend (cited by Hiney, 1997, p.248-9).

As Spender supposed, it seems likely that Chandler implanted various aspects of his own persona into each of his three 'honourable' characters in *The Long Goodbye*.

Chandler's inclusion of a cameo role in his last novel *Playback* would support Spender's belief that the writer included aspects of his own character into his novels. Chandler appeared either as he wished to be perceived, or perhaps as he perceived himself. The character of Henry Clarendon is a rich, lonely, old man living out his life in hotels, and like Chandler, he is over-intelligent and undernourished. As if to demonstrate Chandler's presence, he makes the point of refusing to shake hands with Marlowe because, "My hands are ugly and painful. I wear gloves for that reason" (Chandler, *Pb*, p.114), alluding to a skin complaint that Chandler suffered in later life. He also allows himself a voice to make social comments, specifically, the lack of intelligence possessed by the military establishment, which again establishes a military link. Clarendon says, "Military Intelligence is an expression which contains an interior fallacy" (Chandler, *Pb*, 107). Spender's argument that Chandler created Philip Marlowe, Terry Lennox and Roger Wade as equal representative aspects of his own character is supported by the

inclusion of Clarendon, showing the writer's capacity for including himself, or aspects of himself, in the action.

Because Terry Lennox and Roger Wade are portrayed as troubled alcohol-dependent war veterans, it is reasonable to view Philip Marlowe in much the same manner. These veterans are therefore three equal aspects of a war-traumatised trinity that is representative of Chandler's own character. Spender believed that in creating the damaged characters of Marlowe, Lennox, and Wade, the author actually created three versions of himself. When Chandler moved to La Jolla, she believes that he turned his attention away from the streets and into his own mind. By considering these three characters as equal counterparts Chandler's detective is legitimately associated with two established veteran characters. Since Chandler incorporated aspects of himself into his work, and as a veteran himself, he was able to create honest and emotionally realistic depictions of veteran characters. Moreover, by allowing Marlowe to be so closely connected to, and sympathise with Lennox and Wade, it suggests that Chandler created Marlowe as a veteran also.

Chandler's novels embody Ross Macdonald's sentiment that, "a novelist lives through his characters" (Macdonald, 1949, p.28). What is conspicuous in Chandler's work is the extent to which his characters are troubled by the symptoms of his own personal trauma. Each of Chandler's thirty-one short stories and seven novels, extolling chivalric values and valiant chivalric codes, include individuals that despite their fearlessness and courage exhibit undeniable symptoms of traumatic psychological injury. In Philip Marlowe, Chandler created a fictional character that became a vehicle for his emotions and that he could relate to. By writing, Chandler incorporated his own psychological symptoms into an enigmatic character that has captivated the minds of readers and critics for decades. Yet it is not the image of the heroic masculine detective that has kept readers enthralled. What has fascinated audiences, as Mark Billingham has noted, is that "the Marlowe beneath... remains so compelling: the lonely, 'shop-soiled Galahad' who plays chess and reads poetry; who keeps the biggest bruises hidden; who, in a world where no one is quite what they seem, is perhaps the greatest faker of all" (cited in Chandler, *THW*, p.v). Chandler's detective emerged with physical characteristics and psychological symptoms so reminiscent of the psychological injuries sustained in combat that we are compelled to conclude that he suffered the long-lasting effects of his war experience. Like his creator, Marlowe was a traumatised veteran of war, suffering

severe post-traumatic symptoms, and who went through life endeavouring to conceal his debilitating injury behind a chivalric façade.

¹ 'A Couple of Writers' cited in Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.108

² In a contemporary context in the United Kingdom for example, Harry Fletcher of the National Association of Probation Officers has noted that in recent convictions involving former British soldiers who served in either the Gulf or Afghanistan, "In virtually every incidence... [they] became involved in excess alcohol or drug-taking, and [were] subsequently convicted of an offence of violence" (Doward, 2008, p.11). This has undoubtedly added to the subconscious belief that those returning from combat are in some way corrupted by their experiences. Andrew Neilson of the Howard League for Penal Reform has said that situations where soldiers return and are unable to function properly in society are common. "An inability to cope with the pressures of civilian life, particularly for those who joined the services immediately after leaving school," says Neilson, "can certainly lead to offending and see someone effectively swapping one institution for another" (Doward, 2008, p.11).

Conclusion

THE LITERARY LEGACY OF RAYMOND CHANDLER'S VETERAN

**“His name will certainly go down among the dozens or so
mystery writers who were also innovators and stylists;
who, in working the common vein of crime fiction,
mined the gold of literature.”**

- From the obituary of Raymond Chandler,
The Times, London March 26, 1959

**“I always introduce my work by explaining that
I am a bastard child of Raymond Chandler...”¹**

- James Crumley

Several writers have attempted to emulate Raymond Chandler's work and style. One author in particular has succeeded in re-creating Philip Marlowe's disillusionment and cynicism for a contemporary audience. In the writings of James Crumley, Chandler's war veteran detective is relocated from the inter-war urban environment to the post-Vietnam mid-west. As Crumley observed, “We cover some of the same ground, his dark streets in LA, my twisted highways in the mountain west” (*Contemporary Authors*, 2000, p.67). Crumley identified with Chandler's troubled characterisation of Marlowe and incorporated similarly traumatised characters into his own series of novels, admitting, “without [Chandler's] books, my books would be completely different” (*Contemporary Authors*, 2000, p.67). Because of his experience during the war in Southeast Asia and the incorporation of the era's trauma into his work, Crumley is representative of the contemporary generation of detective fiction. Whereas 1920s and 1930s America had no appetite for novels concerning disenchanted veterans, Crumley used the genre in the 1970s to formulate a crime ‘literature’ that forcefully incorporated a war-traumatised protagonist into the disillusionment of the era. While Marlowe's psychological symptoms

are subconscious, Crumley's contemporary detectives openly display post-combat trauma. Both writers however, locate their war at the centre of the detective fiction they produced.

In their efforts to further the genre and create a crime 'literature', contemporary crime writers were influenced by Chandler's self-consciousness within the genre, his aspiration to understand the confines of the form, and his desire to push the boundaries (Haut, 1995, p.72). Like the First World War, the War in Vietnam had a profound effect upon detective fiction, and the novels that emerged were "so authentic as to reinterpret the national narrative" (Haut, 1999, p.2). By taking inspiration from Chandler's novels, as well as taking plot lines directly from them, Crumley's work exhibits one of the most explicit examples of war's traumatic influence upon the crime genre. Crumley developed a brutal representation of the traumatising effects of warfare, and in so doing was instrumental in elevating the crime genre to a new level of authenticity which allowed for the open expression of the anger and trauma of a generation. Arguing that contemporary hard-boiled writers are, without a doubt the "descendants of...hardboiled pulp writers," Woody Haut notes,

Emerging from the maelstrom of the 1960s, neon noirists would be deeply affected by the Vietnam War and the political atmosphere surrounding it. Dividing the nation, the war instilled an atmosphere of paranoia, a condition exacerbated by government secrecy, inflexible policies, and the effect of drugs on the political consciousness of numerous dissidents (Haut, 1999, pg.4).

He continues by saying that, "America's involvement in Vietnam made its past crimes appear insignificant" (Haut, 1999, pg.13). As a result of extended media coverage and continuous exposure, even non-combatants became increasingly disturbed as they were confronted by the horror of the conflict. Robert Jay Lifton notes that, "Americans who [had] not seen Vietnam, [felt] something of a national descent into existential evil, a sense that the killing and dying done in their name [could not] be placed within a meaningful system of symbols, [could not] be convincingly formulated" (Lifton, 2005, p. 67).

Herbert Hendin and Anne Hass have asserted that American involvement in Vietnam was "the crucible we needed to at long last explore the corrosive effects of war on the combat soldier" (Hendin and Haas, 1984, pg.6). In the post-Vietnam period many authors, including Crumley, Walter Mosley, and James Ellroy were able to create

imperfect and paranoid characters traumatised by the era's ambiguous war and corrupt politics. As Panek notes, those are writers that brought, "together the hard-boiled hero and the complexity and confusion unique to the last quarter of the twentieth century in the United States," and who, "participated in the renaissance of hard-boiled fiction" (Panek, 2000, p.5). Like the 'Lost Generation', the literature of the post-Vietnam era similarly depicted a generation that had been 'lost' to war.

The traumatised characterisation of the detective became far more perceptible after the Vietnam War. Detectives in this era were "no longer wise-cracking know-it-alls" but as Haut observes, "psychologically scarred inhabitants of a morally ambiguous world in which people are capable of perpetrating any and every outrage" (Haut, 1999, p.4-5). Unlike the detective fiction of Chandler's era, the crime genre since Vietnam has sought to establish a far closer link with the past and confront personal traumas head-on. Although unacknowledged sacrifice and veteran disillusionment were subliminal themes that Chandler incorporated into his personification of Marlowe, it was not until the aftermath of the war in Southeast Asia that such characterisation was made openly symbolic of the discontent and psychological trauma.

Recognising the traumatic consequences of warfare, contemporary writers no longer felt compelled to keep trauma hidden and managed to successfully articulate their anger and resentment. By communicating their pain and suffering in their work and focussing on their traumatic psychological injury, personal expression played a significant role in the development of the genre. A protagonist's psychological trauma became an important feature of post-Vietnam crime fiction, and detectives became more openly flawed and damaged, just as soldiers returning from war are physically and psychologically tormented by their experiences. Writers were eager to make their protagonists flawed individuals because it more accurately portrayed the emotional complexity at the heart of contemporary society. By articulating traumatic suffering through their works writers reached a new level of authenticity in the same way that Chandler had done less than half a century earlier. Confronting the traumatising effects of combat, post-Vietnam crime writers used war-veteran protagonists to further develop the detective novel. The war in Southeast Asia forced the American public to recognise that a section of society scarred by war had been largely ignored during twentieth century. More significantly however, it also enabled a re-evaluation of twentieth century veteran literature.

Although the themes of physical violence and brutality have always existed as an essential facet of crime fiction, the early pioneers of the genre created a style of writing in which acts of violence came to symbolise the ugliness and unpredictability of society. Julian Symons believes that contemporary writers have not so much changed the direction of the crime genre as seen a need to take the brutal reconstruction of physical violence and depravity first expounded by Hammett and Chandler to a hitherto unknown level. Chandler laid bare in his novels a world that was depraved and ‘dog-eat-dog’ by stripping back society’s layers to expose its rotten and corrupt core. The key difference in the work of contemporary writers is the explicit and savage articulation of violence that has significantly altered the tone and texture of the genre in the wake of the Vietnam War. As such they have spawned a school of writing that seems to,

...dwell lovingly on the physical details of violence, the blood on the bed and the head battered to bits, the torture done for fun, the women tied-up and gang raped. Their work aspires to a kind of toughness that... make Hammett’s toughest scenes look soft as three-minute eggs. (Symons, 1992, pg.313)

However, Symons’s remark demonstrate the exact reason why Chandler’s work has never been considered as ‘literature.’ While contemporary crime writers have indeed sought to further develop the emotional and physical depth of the genre, Symons’s overdramatic and exaggerated claims are far from the truth. Rather than dwelling “lovingly,” almost pornographically as Symons would have readers believe, on the brutality of violence, torture, or rape, contemporary writers attempted instead to dislodge the idea that society was automatically synonymous with decency. While many stories were indeed violent, the focus was shifted onto protagonists who were imperfect and attempting to cope with individual traumatising experiences that had cultivated in them an unashamed pragmatism and that had fashioned their individual sense of reason.

One of the most explicit examples of contemporary war’s traumatic influence on the crime genre exists in Crumley’s work. Crumley acknowledged that, despite not having any original intention of writing crime fiction, Chandler’s novels, where characterisation and style are of major importance, greatly influenced his decision to alter literary direction. He acknowledged that after reading Chandler’s fiction, his own work became heavily influenced and consequently developed into contemporary interpretations of Chandler’s novels. Thus, Crumley managed, in the last three decades, to “clear the field for future noir fiction” (Haut, 1999, pg.62) by expanding Chandler’s hard-boiled

style while at the same time dissolving the boundaries that separate the genre from others. By doing this he has made the genre a far more realistic representation of society. Although his work incorporates an increased level of violence which is representative of the post-Vietnam society, Crumley's novels are essentially contemporary variations on the themes first established in Chandler's Marlowe stories. In their respective generations Chandler and Crumley broke down the generic boundaries of detective fiction to develop a form of writing that is not "lovingly" violent or lewd as Symons described, but instead holds an important position in American literary history.

Like Chandler's Marlowe, Crumley's detectives, Milo Milodragovich and C.W. Sughrue, suffer "the alienation that results from the fundamental incompatibility between the private eye's moral ideal and the unruly reality of the world [they] live in" (Bertens and D'haen, 2001, pg. 2). This traumatising realisation is evident in the works of other Vietnam veteran writers including Robert Stone, Newton Thornberg, and George V. Higgins whose protagonists, alienated by the effects of war, drugs, drink and oppositional politics, do their best to survive in a world that has altered beyond their recognition:

With the line separating perpetrator and investigator having become blurred, they are inevitably drawn into a noir existence. With a live-and-let-live attitude and scant regard for the law, these anti-heroes retreat into a primeval existentialism in which survival and quelling one's demons are what matter, while the heroic quest becomes a matter of getting through the day. (Haut, 1999, pg.44)

Yet, unlike Stone, Thornberg, and Higgins, Crumley created a different form of literature. "By taking into account the state of the culture," Haut notes that Crumley "makes one of the most significant revisions of private eye fiction since Chandler's cynical parodies of Hammett and the Black Mask school of writing" (Haut, 1999, pg.62). Through his brutally honest crime stories Crumley influenced future crime writers and furthered the genre more than any other writer since Chandler himself. By adding elements of witnessed reality to their fictional works, "Contemporary crime writers...[sought] to replicate life at street level" (Haut, 1999, p.2), and have consequently made the genre more accessible, and also a more accurate representation of life's frustrations and stresses.

Critics have observed that many of Crumley's stories bear a distinct similarity to those of Chandler's. By imprinting his work with certain plot lines and scenes from the Philip Marlowe novels Crumley justified his actions by saying, "You build on the people

who did the work before you” (www.hardluckstories.com/spring2006/Crumley-interview.htm). Yet it is worth highlighting that Crumley did much more than this. He identified something in Philip Marlowe that no one had recognised before and as a result extended Chandler’s vision. His response to Chandler’s work suggests that a subconscious trigger or subtle indicators in Marlowe’s characterisation enabled him to establish the veteran status of his detectives early on and build upon Chandler’s work. Crumley made the crime story resonate to a contemporary generation by making the veteran characterisation of his detective far more explicit. As Peter Messent observed what is apparent in Crumley’s novels is “the degree to which he is sticking close to the Chandler model at the same time as veering away from it” (Messent, 1997, p.156). The reason for this Crumley argued, was that, “because of the events surrounding the Vietnam War, my detectives are not as comfortable with traditional morality as Philip Marlowe seems to be” (www.library.txstate.edu/swwc/archives/writers/crumley.html). The war plays a defining role in the lives of Crumley’s detectives Milo Milodragovich and C.W. Sughrue, and both suffer the catastrophic effect of witnessing and participating in traumatic acts during their time in combat, which continue to haunt them explicitly throughout the series of novels.

Crumley’s admiration of Chandler’s style and work unquestionably indicates that he was more of a ‘Chandler man’ than a ‘Hammett man’ when it came to plotting his novels. He remarked that,

...it seems to me I belong more to the Chandler side of things; what I do is different from what Hammett meant to do... for me, the mystery novel, the detective novel, is just something to hang the words on. I don’t much care about the mystery itself, I don’t like puzzle mysteries, don’t write them, and in that way I’m more like Chandler, owe more to Chandler. (Messent, 1997, pg.152)

On the surface Crumley appears to do Chandler an injustice by claiming that the author did not produce elaborate mysteries like the creator of the ‘Continental Op’. Despite admitting “I do my plotting in my head as I go along...and I usually do it wrong and have to do it again” (MacShane, 1976, p.67), Chandler undoubtedly managed to compose complex mysteries, as is demonstrated by the intricate plot of *The Big Sleep*. But Crumley’s assertion that he doesn’t care for plotting has further significance because it picks up on Joseph T. Shaw’s belief that mystery and detective stories should not necessarily concentrate on plot but aim to represent genuine characters operating in a

realistic world. To do this, character, events, and circumstances need to be authentic in order to convey the level of realism required, while the use of fate or chance would dilute efforts to create an authentic literature. Although Chandler does rely on coincidence on certain occasions, the circumstances of these occurrences can be legitimately justified, adding to the sense of realism. While Marlowe observes on one occasion that “Fate stage-managed the whole thing” (Chandler, *TBS*, 177), Chandler’s plots realistically illustrate how the majority of the action in the novels is entirely out of Marlowe’s control. Although the notions of ‘fate’ and ‘coincidence’ can be interpreted as plot device cheats, they are also realistically reflective of events occurring at that moment in the plot. It shows that events can be guided by occurrences beyond the detective’s control, and also the effect that these circumstances have on Marlowe’s cases. These events are not acts of ‘fate’ as such, but occurrences that can be legitimately rationalised.

Although Crumley makes an obvious distinction between Chandler and Hammett, Chandler himself felt indebted to his predecessor for severing the ties to the traditional mystery story and making the hard-boiled style far more believable. No longer was crime fiction an unimportant genre, and instead it became a legitimate and significant form of literature. Chandler famously declared that Hammett “took murder out of the Venetian vase and dropped it into the alley” (Chandler, 1988, p.14), and believed that Hammett’s writing was comparable to that of more famous writers such as Ernest Hemingway. Complimenting the author, Chandler wrote:

Hammett was an ace performer, but there is nothing in his work that is not implicit in the earlier novels and short stories of Hemingway...for all I know, Hemingway, might have learned something from Hammett... A rather revolutionary debunking of both the language and the material of fiction had been going on for some time. (Chandler, 1988, p.14)

Chandler also believed that the development of a realistic and believable character, and the importance of placing him in authentic surroundings were essential pre-conditions that allowed the intricacies of the plot to unfold. Chandler once noted that in most crime stories, as the plot thickens, “the people become mere names,” and for this reason argued the “idea of being committed in advance to a certain pattern appals me” (MacShane, 1976, p.67, 68). He said,

With me a plot, if you could call it that, is an organic thing. It grows and often overgrows. I am continually finding myself with scenes that I won’t discard and

that don't want to fit in. So that my plot problem invariably ends up as a desperate attempt to justify a lot of material that, for me at least, has come alive and insists on staying alive. It's probably a silly way to write, but I seem to know no other way. (MacShane, 1976, p.68)

Chandler's aversion to pre-planning his plot-lines, and reluctance to tie up loose ends is typified by his blunt response to a question concerning the film adaptation of *The Big Sleep* in 1946. When the screenwriters asked, 'Who killed [the chauffeur] Owen Taylor?' Chandler's response was simply: "I don't know" (cited in Speir, 1981, p.29). His reply was not intended to be flippant but goes to the very heart of what Chandler was trying to achieve. The use of the first-person narrative means that knowing who actually killed the chauffeur becomes irrelevant because we are meant to only see and understand what Marlowe does. Jerry Speir notes that Chandler's reaction to the question of Owen Taylor's death also "underscores his deep-seated aversion to strictly rational explanations for human actions" (Speir, 1981, p.29). Within this framework Marlowe *must* remain ignorant of certain events because being an 'all seeing, all knowing' private eye would cause a first-person narrative to lose its sense of realism.

Just as Chandler gave his plots and narrative style a sense of realism, he also took great care to create believable protagonists and to provide his detective with extensive emotional and psychological depth. He argued that the mystery novel in its 'traditional' form was "a dream world which may be entered and left at will, and it leaves no scars" (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.71). To combat the shallowness of this light-hearted tendency, Chandler's objective, "was to bridge the gap between detective fiction and ordinary fiction by imbuing his characters with attitudes and feelings that do in fact leave scars" (MacShane, 1976, p.71). As well as attempting to direct his stories away from the violence of the era's pulp stories, Chandler attempted to manoeuvre his audience into a position that allowed him to become "a bit more humane" (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.71) with his characters and style of writing.

Although contemporary crime fiction is increasingly located in the 'gritty' inner cities and aims to "replicate life at street level" (Haut, 1999, pg.2), it is not a theme that is new to the crime genre. In fact the representation of a realistic urban environment is a theme that has existed in the genre since Hammett and Chandler began writing. However, the traumatising effects of the Vietnam War and its effects on American culture expand the genre into a 'neon noir', which suggests a vivid and intense evolution of the original concept of the noir style. Despite this re-interpretation, many post-Vietnam critics note

that the style still retains the original principles of the noir form. Haut argues that, by “substituting the language of survival for the phoney street wisdom of past investigative fiction, [Vietnam War chroniclers] set a precedent for future noirists” (Haut, 1999, pg.52).

However, what Haut does not consider is the precedent that was set by the original hard-boiled noirists. In fact, although Haut believes that a ‘war noir’ was created out of the turmoil of Vietnam, it is a theme that can be traced back to Chandler and his Philip Marlowe novels. The combination of war themes and the noir style made Chandler’s work so subtly different from his contemporaries that critics have failed to recognise its significance within the genre. Commentators in the field, such as Haut, have argued that ‘war noir’ is a form exclusively associated with post-Vietnam writers because it starkly represents the trauma of the era. Yet Chandler’s work depicts the same themes from an earlier generation. What made Chandler’s work so appealing and relevant to the writers of the Vietnam era were exactly the themes and motifs that they themselves would take to heart in their own works. ‘War noir’ is a style that originates much earlier than previously determined and emanates from the work of Raymond Chandler.

John Cawelti argued over three decades ago that, “The hard-boiled detective has a few scratches, but no deep wounds spoil his function as a fantasy hero. He is a man of who has been able to say the hell with it, yet retain the world’s most important benefits – self-esteem, popularity and respect” (Cawelti, 1976, p.161). Yet in a contemporary environment plagued by warfare, the modern popularity of the crime genre and the increasing fragmentation of society have ensured renewed interest and recognition for detectives who, like Philip Marlowe, “cannot simply brush off his or her ‘few scratches’ and unproblematically retain his or her ‘self-esteem, popularity and respect’” (Pepper, 2000, p.168). In an increasingly chaotic and uncertain contemporary America the growing popularity of uncompromising ‘Chandleresque’ novelists, as well as the furthering of the hard-boiled noir style by filmmakers such as Quentin Tarantino, has expanded Chandler’s literary following. This contemporary revival of interest, “has pushed attention back to the American roots of hard-boiled fiction” (Hiney, 1997, pg.282), and onto Raymond Chandler in particular.

The longevity of Chandler’s detective reveals a great deal about both his style as a writer and Philip Marlowe’s appeal as a character. Woody Haut believes that Marlowe became “a template for private eyes from the pulp era to the present” (Haut, 1995, p.71), and Frank MacShane has noted that Marlowe’s “wisecracks create [a] quasi-cynical,

quasi-romantic atmosphere” which makes him completely unique. “Most detective-story narrators are colourless,” says MacShane, but “Marlowe was something quite different” (MacShane, 1976, p. 69). Yet Marlowe is more than merely a character, he is a fully formed, fully realised, coherent being who embodies the pain and distress of a tormented war veteran. He wanders the streets of Los Angeles trying to right wrongs and bring justice to a blighted city while also struggling to locate himself in a society that does not see him. Marlowe’s characterisation embodies the qualities noted in *Death in the Afternoon*, where Hemingway declares, “When writing a novel a writer should create people; people not characters” (Hemingway, 1932, p.168). Similarly Joseph T. Shaw believed that in the detective story “action is meaningless unless it involves [a] recognizable human character in three-dimensional form.” Shaw argued that authentic detective fiction needed to emphasize one thing in particular: “character and the problems inherent in human behaviour” (cited in MacShane, 1976, p.47). Marlowe is not simply a one-dimensional character, he is encoded with a specific psychology which, when considered alongside an intimate first person narrative, reveals him to be much more than simply a generic character. Marlowe is a complex, troubled and multi-dimensional individual, and is representative of a psychologically coherent ‘self.’

By re-evaluating the significance of Chandler’s combat experience in a psychological framework it is clear that the First World War had a profound effect upon his emotional stability, and consequently, upon all aspects of his life and work. This shift of focus significantly alters the way in which both Chandler and his work can be viewed because it not only uncovers the depth of trauma suffered by Chandler, but also shows how the effects of his experiences are reflected in the characters and works he created. Chandler’s emotional state was increasingly erratic and introverted, and he believed that writers “drain their hearts and souls to write at all and therefore become introspective” (Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.10). The symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder that he suffered intruded into almost every aspect of his life prompting numerous suicide attempts and other not-so-veiled cries for help. Yet in a society that at the time did not recognise or understand the devastating effects that war could wreak upon a person’s mind, Chandler’s salvation came in the form of writing. Philip Marlowe, in effect, acted as Chandler’s sounding-board and someone he could take strength from. The detective became a catharsis to alleviate Chandler’s stress and someone he could pour all his thoughts, emotions and traumas into. Through his protagonist he transferred his trauma onto the page in an attempt to relieve his physical and psychological post-traumatic

symptoms. Consequently, Marlowe came to personify the image of an anti-hero, and Chandler's trauma became his detective's trauma.

Although his stated aim in writing the Marlowe novels was to shift the public mindset regarding the traditional style of the crime story, what Chandler constructed in its place was a far grittier and more realistic representation of American society that incorporated honest emotions and people. As he said in December 1950, his private eye was "an exaggeration of the possible" (Gardiner and Walker, 1971, p.60). Chandler's novels were also accurate portrayals of the hypocritical nature of society and the depravity at its heart, as well as truthfully illustrating the invisibility of veterans in a society that refused to acknowledge their sacrifice. D.C. Russell noted that Chandler, "writes of a world and order of society in which there is little beauty or serenity" (Russell, 1945, p.123). Yet Marlowe refuses to give up. In an article titled 'A Cato of the Cruelties' published in May-June 1947 for the *Partisan Review*, R.W. Flint argued that "Philip Marlowe is as much of [an] existentialist... as modern America has stomach for." The reason Flint gave for this was that,

The marks of [Marlowe's] integrity are a searing doubt as to the motives of his countrymen... and a profound awareness of fate. But the red badge that sets him apart is an almost Biblical faith in the value of decision. He is forever rolling the stone uphill...a blind inevitable moral energy plowing through the wildest ambiguities always into the heart of insecurity and danger (Bodleian 58:52).

Moreover, Flint's argument can be further substantiated when considering the basic experience of existentialism, which as David E. Cooper noted, begins with a sense of disorientation and confusion in the face of an apparently meaningless or absurd world (Cooper, 1999, p.8). In Marlowe's case, Flint believed that an argument could be made for the detective's existentialism because in Chandler's novels, "suspense grows...out of human rather than a literary situation," the detective "is no longer the wizard, the mental giant, the latter-day Paracelsus; he is not even the intellectual master of the situation." Therefore, in comparison to many of his contemporaries and "because he has no aces up his sleeve," Marlowe "lives by the light of his sentimental but genuine humanity" (Bodleian 58:52-3).

The fiftieth anniversary of Chandler's death and the seventieth anniversary of the publication of *The Big Sleep* in 2009 offers a vantage point from which to reassess Chandler's life and work. From such a position, this thesis has sought to reconfigure the

critical approach to Chandler's work by re-evaluating one of the key influences and experiences in his life. A primary aspect of this research has been to explore Chandler's war experience in precise detail, and in doing so uncover elements crucial to understanding not only Chandler's troubled character, but also that of his war veteran protagonist Philip Marlowe. Chandler's experience during the First World War is a key aspect of his biography that has lacked much critical exploration, and raises important questions regarding the accuracy and research of earlier biographies. Previous written accounts of Chandler's life and work have overlooked or misrepresented the importance and influence of his war experience in not only the creation and characterisation of his detective, but also his literary standing. Chandler's war experience and its psychological consequences firmly connect him to the disillusionment and estrangement of the 'Lost Generation'. The theme of disenchantment shared by Hemingway and Chandler in their work has played a significant role in this research and it is a connection that can be found in numerous literary articles and reviews from the mid-twentieth century. However, this thesis has sought to bring those connections together and perhaps controversially to make the case for Chandler's inclusion in the 'Lost Generation'. On a simple level, if as Cowley argued, the 'Lost Generation' represents the First World War generation then Chandler's place in America's literary 'Lost Generation' is a given. But the case for Chandler's inclusion is much stronger than that. The themes that he returned to in his work, the disillusionment, the vision of society, and the psychological trauma, make Chandler's inclusion amongst the 'Lost Generation' inarguable.

Because of his social conscience and stylistic realism Chandler's intentions of creating a brutal yet honest form of crime story came alive. In a letter to William Campbell Gault, Chandler said, "I believe there is a peculiar kind of satisfaction in taking a type of literature which the pundits regard as below the salt and making of it something which the fairminded among them are forced to treat with a little respect" (UCLA, 638, 9, 13: 3). It was a gamble that paid off. By 1945 Russell had noted that "Chandler writes...with an artistry of craftsmanship and a realism that can rank him with many a famous novelist" (Russell, 1945, p.123). With his unique combination of style, wit, honesty, and real identifiable emotions, Philip Marlowe became a character to emulate.

Yet it is Chandler's incorporation of personal traumas that make his novels and Philip Marlowe in particular, so profound and endearing. To understand the detective's distinctive behaviour Chandler's work needs to be viewed in a specific traumatic context. Marlowe was created as a flawed individual tormented by his war experiences and

suffering the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder. Yet this was also Chandler's own personal trauma. Believing that a writer's style should be a "projection of personality," Chandler argued that literature should stem from "emotion and perception; it is the ability to transfer these to paper which makes...a writer" (Gardiner, 1971, p.76). Like the authors of the 'Lost Generation' who wrote of their physical or psychological experiences of war and its consequences, Chandler represented a sense of disillusionment with post-war American society. As Russell noted, Chandler "removed his work from the realm of merely conventional entertainment to the point where it becomes a serious study of a certain kind of American society" (Russell, 1945, p.124). By presenting Marlowe in this imperfect form Chandler provided for himself an emotional and psychological release. Writing became a self-liberating mechanism that gave him a sense of solace and catharsis, not only connecting him to the disillusionment of the 'Lost Generation', but also serving as a model that many future writers would emulate, especially in the traumatic aftermath of the Vietnam War.

The plight of the war veteran detective in hard-boiled fiction is a thread of literary history that can be legitimately traced back to Chandler's crime novels and in particular, his characterisation of protagonist Philip Marlowe. Through this lens a more realistic reason for the detective's motivations can be discerned that is considerably more complex than the chivalric character traits that critics have traditionally understood. Although many believe him to be "the exemplar of tough masculinity" (Horsely, 2005, p.68), Marlowe's character goes beyond the traditional chivalric context and should instead be interpreted as a realistic representation of a troubled war veteran in society. Marlowe cannot escape the experience of war and its damaging consequences, and his conception reflects the underlying emotional trauma that not only plagued his creator, but which has also troubled society as a whole since the First World War. In his detective novels Chandler displayed the narrow attitudes of Americans towards those that fought and sacrificed themselves for their country. Men who went to war and witnessed unimaginable horrors, the death of friends, and atrocious living conditions, returned to American society only to be disregarded and abandoned. Chandler displays the recognition and acknowledgement that veterans seek in their attempt to reconcile their sacrifices with the self-centredness of the environment they have returned to, and thus transferred to his detective the distinctive behavioural patterns of a psychologically wounded war veteran that mirrored his own insecurities and frailties. Marlowe has therefore become a clear representation of the stresses and frustrations of war's aftermath.

With an influence that spanned the entire breadth of his work and goes to the very heart of his existence, Chandler created his detective in his own image, as a war veteran traumatised by the ever-present and unyielding symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Set against this backdrop, the contention that Philip Marlowe is a traumatised war veteran reconfigures the entire field of academic investigation surrounding Chandler and his detective, and as such neither Chandler nor Marlowe can be viewed in the same light again.

¹ *Contemporary Authors*, 2000, p.67

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