



# **The Detective in American Fiction, Film, and Television: (Contributions to the Study of Popular Culture)**

*Jerome H. Delamater, Ruth Prigozy*

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The detective, as a preeminent figure in all forms of American popular culture, has become the subject of a variety of theoretical exploration. By investigating that figure, these essays demonstrate how the genre embodies all the contradictions of American society and the ways in which literature and the media attempt to handle those contradictions. Issues of class, gender, and race; the interaction of film and literature; and generic evolution are fundamental to any understanding of the American detective in all of his or her forms.

Beginning with essays about Raymond Chandler's treatment of women, Part I concentrates on writers of the genre whose detectives embody aspects of American culture in the 20th century. Through examination of the work of Elmore Leonard, Chester Himes, Sue Grafton, and others, these essays look at the influence of film on literature, how ethnicity affects the genre's conventions, and gender issues. Part II looks closely at specific detectives in the media and demonstrates how the film detective has gone from one who upholds the moral order to one who contributes to the continuation of evil. A study of television detectives confirms the necessity of formula *and* variation to sustain a detective over many seasons.

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