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Captivating the Reader in Michael Connelly's and Sue Grafton's Crime Novels

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Captivating the Reader in Michael Connelly's and Sue Grafton's Crime Novels

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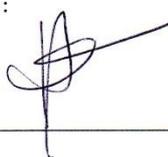
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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	6
1.1. The Hard-boiled Genre and its Evolution at the End of the 20 th Century	9
1.2. A Crime Novel Typology	10
1.3. What is the Reader's Motivation?	12
2. Captivating the Reader: Traditional Features.....	22
2.1. Narrating Persona	22
2.2. Novel Structure	23
2.3. Realism	24
2.3.1 Place Setting: Here	24
2.3.2 Time Setting: Now	26
2.3.3 The Hero and his Name: Who	27
2.3.4. Use of Descriptions	32
2.4. Use of Literary Devices	46
2.4.1 Curiosity and Suspense through Anaphora and Repetition.....	46
2.4.2 Use of Metaphor	52
2.5 Intertextuality.....	57
2.5.1 Reference to Classics and Hard-boiled Canon.....	57
3. Captivating the Reader: Post-Modern Features	65
3.1 Sue Grafton's Play with the Paratext.....	65
3.2 Hybridisation	66
3.2.1 Painting.....	66
3.2.2 Music	69
3.3 Humour, Parody, and Caricature	70
3.3.1 Comic Characters	70
4. Conclusion.....	85
Bibliography	91
Main Corpus	91
Secondary Corpus	91
Webography.....	93
ANNEX	95
Annex: Figures.....	95
Annex: Charts	96
Annex: Tables.....	100

1. Introduction

For me, as for many others, the reading of detective stories is an addiction like tobacco or alcohol. The symptoms of this are: firstly, the intensity of the craving—if I have any work to do, I must be careful not to get hold of a detective story for, once I begin one, I cannot work or sleep till I have finished it. Secondly, its specificity—the story must conform to certain formulas [...]. And, thirdly, its immediacy. I forget the story as soon as I have finished it, and have no wish to read it again. If, as sometimes happens, I start reading one and find after a few pages that I have read it before, I cannot go on. (W.H. Auden, *The Guilty Vicarage*)

W.H. Auden's quote, taken from an article written for *Harper's Magazine* in 1948, is twofold and shows Auden's appreciation for the genre at the time.

On one hand Auden expresses his doubts on the literary quality of the crime fiction genre. Despite its roots in the canon of American literature (see E.A. Poe), this genre was widely considered a second-rate form of literature – an “infra-littérature,” to cite Michel Picard (*La Lecture Comme Jeu*, 237) – that catered to the basic popular desire for cheap escapism. The development of the genre, and especially of the more typically American sub-genre of the ‘hard-boiled’, and the sheer fact that sales numbers witness to its ever increasing popularity, have led the literary intelligentsia to reappraise it. In recent years, the ‘hard-boiled’ has shifted from a disregarded genre that emerged during the Depression out of the mulch of popular pulp fiction to become, eventually, a mainstream fixture of the modern literary canon. Today it is the genre that occupies most shelf-room in bookshops and that sells the most alongside ‘literary’ phenomena like *Harry Potter* or the infamous *Fifty Shades of Gray*. In the same period there has been a sweeping change in the potential readership as after WWII, thanks to the veteran educational program—the G.I. Bill—education has no more been concentrated on a small intellectual and moneyed elite coming from a similar

background, what the Marxists call bourgeoisie, and a wider and more diversified population has had access to higher education. This trend, in different forms, has reproduced itself in all the advanced countries and defined a mass society where both quality and numbers count. To this we have to add another significant tendency as, progressively, the readership has become more and more feminine. This can be seen in a recent Statista survey (Statista Website) for 2018 that points out that, although, on average, the number of men and women who read at least one book per year is about the same—72% for men and 75% for women, however 55% of female reader declare the category of Mystery, Thriller and Crime books to be their favourite genre, while it is only 37% for male readers.

Scholarly interest in this genre has grown and gained momentum in the early 1970s when we can find a respected figure like Todorov writing on the typology of Detective Fiction in *La Poétique de la Prose*. World-wide recognition has also come from many serious authors turning to the genre and experimenting with it, like, to list some of them: Martin Amis, Paul Auster, Jorge Louis Borges, Truman Capote, Umberto Eco, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Ian McEwan, Haruki Murakami, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Leonardo Sciascia (Post Modern Mystery website).

On the other hand, Auden's opinion about the genre is positive as he testifies to its extreme attracting power, to its capacity to entrance the reader, and to its page-turner's quality, up to the point of addiction—a hyperbole.

What we are aiming at, in this work, is trying to understand by which means the authors can entice the reader to read their novels and what effects they produce. We will see that they are linked to the rational and cognitive domain of Umberto Eco's Model Reader and his 'reader's encyclopaedia'. But Eco's theory is not fit to answer all the questions, and we will also see that, if we want to take into account the emotions stirred by the reading activity, Raphaël Baroni will help with his notion of 'narrative tension' related to curiosity, suspense, and surprise, and if we want to dig further into the reader's own psychology, and its connection with the unconscious, we will need the help of Michel Picard.

Our corpus will focus on Michael Connelly and Sue Grafton, two renowned and commercially successful American crime fiction writers. Sue Grafton's *Alphabet* series is composed of 25 novels—From "*A*" is for *Alibi* to the last "*Y*" is for *Yesterday*, published just before her death in December 2017. The series features recurring character Kinsey Millhone, a woman private eye. Grafton's novels, available in 28 countries, have been

translated in 26 languages, and have sold in the millions (Sue Grafton's website)—the exact number doesn't seem to have been disclosed. To this date, Michael Connelly is the author of a series of 24 novels, featuring recurring character LAPD Officer Harry Bosch, and three other series—featuring: Renée Ballard, Jack McEvoy, and Mickey Haller. By 2018, his novels were translated in 40 languages and had sold more than 70 million copies around the world (Michael Connelly's website). We have to point out that although Connelly's sales are huge he is not yet part of the 'elite' bestselling authors like for instance Dean Koontz, 450 million (Dean Koontz's website), or Stephen King, 350 million (See Karen Heller).

Sue Grafton was born in 1940 and is 16 years older than Michael Connelly. However her mystery debut was late in her life (Her first crime novel "*A" is for Alibi*, was published in 1982), while Connelly's first novel, *The Black Echo*, was published in 1992. So there's an editorial span of only 10 years between the two authors.

Michael Connelly and Sue Grafton pay lip-service to the typically American hard-boiled genre. Nevertheless we might ponder which features of this genre they are most interested in. We will see that Connelly and Grafton look at the crime novel and specifically the hard-boiled as a regionally centred genre with its large popular readership. They also focus on the low-life and socially sensitive subjects like underage prostitution and drug addiction, their main heroes—Harry Bosch and Kinsey Millhone—being post-modern versions of the stereotypical hard-boiled investigator.

1.1. The Hard-boiled Genre and its Evolution at the End of the 20th Century

What is the hard-boiled genre? What is specific to it? The hard-boiled crime novel is a genre which developed to cater to the new readership of the upcoming new widely popular Pulp Fiction magazines market after 1920. This new genre was initiated by Dashiell Hammett, and refined by both Raymond Chandler and James M. Cain. According to Chandler, the development of the hard-boiled genre can also be interpreted as the American reaction to the traditional and aristocratic British mystery of the “Golden Age” with a focus on a more popular readership. After WWII, the mass-marketed paperback was introduced in the US and contemporarily a second wave of important hard-boiled writers emerged, including Mickey Spillane and Ross MacDonal.

After a short decline in the late 50s and 60s the hard-boiled genre experienced, at the end of the 1970s, a revival to which both Michael Connelly and Sue Grafton contributed significantly. This new hard-boiled uses “a reinvigorated, powerful prose style to take on a more complex and violent world with murkier moral and ethical boundaries” (5clair website), to which we have to add the novelty of ‘kickass’ women private investigators— like Sara Paretsky’s L.I. Warshawski, Marcia Muller’s Sharon McCone, and, of course, Sue Grafton’s Kinsey Millhone.

Concurrently, the period between the 1970-1980s saw the rapid development of the VCR (Video recorder) and of the cable-TV in the US—from about 8% of the households in 1970 up to about 60% in 1990 (Pat Aufderheide and the Calcable website). This was also to change the way people used their TV set—The term ‘zapping’ was coined at the time (Google Books Ingram Viewer). At the same time there was a concentration in the advertising market with the development of huge worldwide agencies. These facts had a strong impact on the video media industry. The viewer evolved from a captive spectator to an individual having to be gratified with better quality fiction. A testimony to this situation is the number of ‘global’ iconic TV series which were created for this purpose. If we limit our-self to the crime fiction genre we can name: Charlie’s Angels, Chips, Columbo, Hill Street Blues, Kojak, Magnum PI, and Starsky & Hutch. Crime fiction writers were often involved in both developments, the book and the video industries.

It is in this environment that Sue Grafton—having graduated from the University of Louisville with a bachelor's degree in English Literature, worked for many years as a script writer in Hollywood before beginning her career as a crime novelist. We will see that this

working background would later impact her writing. Strangely enough, it is precisely because of this experience that Grafton never wanted her Kinsey Millhone character to be adapted to the screen.

In a different way from Grafton, Michael Connelly, having graduated from the University of Florida in 1980, began a career in journalism. He progressed from small newspapers in Florida up to the *Los Angeles Times*, as crime reporter (Michael Connelly's website). But the Film & Video Industry was not far away and we read in his website that he was prompted to read hard-boiled fiction, which later led him to decide to be a writer, by Robert Altman's 1973 'noir' film adaptation of Raymond Chandler's novel *The Long Goodbye*. Connelly was later, in 2000, to write for the television and his first experience as an author was *Level 9*, a Sci-Fi television series in 13 episodes. Two years later his novel *Blood Work*, of the Terry McCaleb series, was adapted in the eponymous film produced by and featuring Clint Eastwood. Connelly has also been the co-producer of the *Harry Bosch* (2014) TV series whose 30 episodes of the first 3 seasons have been released while 10 episodes of the fourth series are planned for 2018.

1.2. A Crime Novel Typology

The term hard-boiled does not only define a literary genre but also corresponds to a crime fiction typology which was proposed by Tzvetan Todorov in the first part of his Essay *Poétique de la Prose*. Todorov identifies three types of crime novels.

The first he names 'roman à énigme' which can be translated as mystery or whodunit. In the whodunit we have two stories, the first concerns a mystery linked to a murder that takes place before the second one, that is, the narration of the inquiry that will lead to solve the mystery. In the mystery a rule of the genre postulates that the detective is invulnerable and the reader is interested in what has happened before the narration, so he looks backwards in time.

The second type he calls the 'roman noir' that we can translate as hard-boiled. Contrary to the mystery, in this type of fiction, there is no crime happening before the narration, and the action story happens along with the narration. The detective is no longer invulnerable and the reader looks forward and is interested in what he is going to experience. What

motivates the reader of this genre is no more the resolution of the mystery, motivated by curiosity, but the other source of interest, suspense. Curiosity works backwards, from the result to the cause. For instance, starting with a dead body and some clues as a result, the cause (The murderer and his motive) has to be discovered. Suspense works forward, from the cause to the result, the reader is prompted by the tension caused by it. For instance, the reader gets initial information (Gangsters preparing a heist) and he is then interested by what is going to happen: dead bodies, crimes, fistfights. Suspense was not possible in the mystery because the main characters (The detective and his friend, the narrator) were, as a rule, immune and nothing unseemly could happen to them. This last definition of hard-boiled is strictly theoretical and in the real world of the hard-boiled novels, we find in addition, a series of specific thematic features that link the genre to the underworld. Todorov quotes Michel Duhamel, editor for the *Série Noire* Collection, who introduced the American hard-boiled in France in the 1940s and described the specific themes of the genre as follows: “In it, violence can be found under all its forms and especially the most hateful; [...] in it, immorality is as much at home as good intentions. In it, one can find beastly love, disorderly passions, and merciless hatred” (Gallimard Collection *Série Noire* website, my translation). The second story narrated in the novel is central to the book, while the first story, the one that in the mystery happens before the narration, doesn't necessarily have to be suppressed, as we can see among the founders of the genre, Hammet and Chandler, who kept it. What is important to notice, here, is that its role is now secondary and no more central.

The third and last type of genre proposed by Todorov is the ‘roman à suspense,’ that can be translated as thriller. The thriller mixes features from both mystery and hard-boiled. The mystery is kept as well as the two stories, the past one, and the present one, but the second story isn't just about the search for the truth and, as in the hard-boiled, it is central to the book. Historically the thriller appeared twice: a first time during the transition phase between mystery and the hard-boiled, and a second time in parallel to the hard-boiled development. The first phase we could name, ‘story of the vulnerable detective,’ and it corresponds to the novels of Hammet and Chandler. What makes it specific is the fact that the hero loses his immunity, and gets beaten, wounded, and could even lose his life, in other words, he becomes part of the other characters' underworld instead of being, like the reader, an independent observer. These novels are usually considered as hard-boiled because of their thematic setting, nevertheless they should be considered as thrillers.

We can now conclude by stating that the four novels we are concerned with are thrillers. Connelly's *The Black Echo* has two main plots, one connected to an initial mystery concerning the murder of William Meadows, while the central plot emerges along the narration, and concerns a series of bank heists. Similarly, at the beginning of *The Narrows*, Harry Bosch is asked to investigate the death of his ex-colleague Terry McCaleb, while the main plot concerns the return and final demise of Backus, the infamous serial killer. Grafton's "*B*" is for *Burglar* also has two plots: the first one is linked to the disappearance of Elaine Boldt, a rich widow, while the second and central one concerns an enquiry about a mysterious house arson in Boldt's neighbourhood. In Grafton's novel, "*G*" is for *gumshoe*, we also have two plots: the initial one is related to the disappearance of Agnes Gray, an old lady, while the main one is the contract put on Kinsey by Tyrone Patty, a murderer Kinsey has previously helped to apprehend.

1.3. What is the Reader's Motivation?

Readers can enjoy crime fiction often to the point of addiction, but what is it that motivates them?

It is commonly accepted that the human brain is organised so as to identify and create patterns. People get much pleasure at finding and defining these patterns and this phenomenon helps motivate many different playing activities. Our brain builds cultural patterns through repetition and repetition is also typical of games and all ludic activities. Can we link literature to these activities?

Michel Picard has tried, in his essay *La Lecture Comme Jeu*, to show that reading can be included in the wider ensemble of playing games. He first criticises the traditional approach to literature and the one Umberto Eco presented in his famous essay *Lector in Fabula*. Eco brought about his theory on the primary and active role of the reader in appropriating, decoding, and thus appreciating the literary text. For Picard, this point is essential, yet he criticises Umberto Eco's notion of 'ideal reader' created by the text, that Eco called the Model Reader as opposed to an empirical reader with all his idiosyncrasies. The Model Reader is able to cooperate in the text's actualisation in a manner coherent with the author's intentions, and its role is central in the economy of the text in creating meaning, as by using

his 'reader encyclopaedia,' he fills up the gaps that the author has left on purpose. This ideal reader is surely the best reader, but how can he have fun?

Umberto Eco highlights the active part the reader takes in reading, but he doesn't give any indication to explain how reading can bring pleasure, and what is that motivates the reader to read and to go on reading.

The answer to this question can be found in the theory developed by Michel Picard, a French contemporary scholar that we are going to analyse in some detail. Picard explains the pleasure the reader derives from reading, by including it in the wider world of ludic activities.

For Picard reading is a serious game based on the notion of illusion, whose meaning he links strictly to the term 'fiction'—the literary illusion. Picard writes that in the case of the young child "playing is trying to put on a part, to pretend, or to create a travesty," (90, my translation.) yet playing isn't limited to children.

Picard, then, introduces the notion of 'identification'—"a kind of ephemeral and benign spell," (91, my translation.) that can help explain why illusion is so powerful. The term identification is also used in Psychology. Psychologists list a number of different types of identifications (With the aggressor, to the love object, primary, narcissistic, etc.) and for them, the role of identification in the 'Ego formation' is paramount (91). To understand the ambiguity of illusion and the power of fiction, we have to consider that it is very narrowly linked to the original privileged mother-child relationship, which is essential as "[t]here is no possibility whatever for an infant to proceed from the pleasure-principle to the reality principle or towards or beyond primary identification, unless there is a good enough mother," whose ultimate job is to disillusion the child (101). In the Arts 'identification' works similarly to Psychology, and is a part of more complex processes that combine to produce illusion. However, it should be noted that the reader does not identify only to a character, but to the character in a specific situation (93).

We have seen above that illusion is deeply anchored into infancy but it, nevertheless, lasts into adulthood: "[n]o human being manages to free himself from the tension created by the relationship between internal and external reality; [...and] this tension can be relieved by the existence of an intermediate area of experience [...] a direct continuation of the play area of the small child 'lost' in his game" (101). This area of experiencing is the place of

sublimation, “the intermediate state between the baby’s inability and growing ability to recognize and accept reality” (102), which “throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living and to creative scientific work” (101-102).

For Sigmund Freud, “the unconscious of one human being can react upon that of another without passing through the conscious” (95). Picard similarly postulates the notion of ‘unconscious of the text’ (96, my translation.), that, by reading a text, the reader’s unconscious can react upon the unconscious of the text.

“Playing is pretending. Identification is fundamental in all the ludic activities—in the sense of the partial or secondary identification as opposed to the primary, the child-mother identification. In this shift in meaning is to be found the object-relation, the ludic relation. Playing supposes a divestment from the actual situation, so that when the game is played at, the situation is, in a sense, absent” (112, my translation). Playing is a symbolic activity that includes the subject into a place different from reality, an adaptation of reality. “The game is the place of a double division, and thus it hints at the duality in different contexts, progressing from the child-mother dyad of the primitive imaginary scene, the child and its double, the child and the toy, and the child and the father. It is the ludic repetition of these double sequences that leads to the unity of the Ego” (112, my translation).

In a game, the player is divided into the player, who plays—‘*sujet jouant*,’ and the subject, that is played—‘*sujet joué*’; correspondingly we should have a ‘Liseur’ (reader) and a ‘Lu’ (read). The ‘*sujet joué*,’ the ‘Lu,’ represents the abandonment, the more or less sublimated drives, the identifications, the re-cognition, and the pleasure principle. It allows the reader to re-experience the period when he was the maternal object of investment, and the illusions it nurtured, hence the passive mode. On the other hand, the ‘*sujet jouant*,’ the ‘Liseur,’ is “grounded into reality, yet it is emptied of part of itself and reduced to a deafened presence: body, time, and space are rendered at the same time concrete and porous, thus playing a game takes roots in a confuse liminal experience, a near-physical experience” (112-113, my translation).

The game is a psychological process mediated by a real object called toy (143), and the only difference between day-dreaming and playing is the presence of this prop (151). So, if we want to liken the reader to the player it is essential that he should play, hence be active (151), and use a toy. A book always retains some similarity to the pre-toy (*pré-jouet*) of

Gutton, which is the first transitional object between the mother and the young child, the “first not-me possession” of Winnicott (143).

Compared to other types of texts, a literary text shows a high level of complexity and resistance, it is thus a highly sophisticated game (153), and reading an exceptionally elaborate activity. The reading game covers almost all the types of games and has features starting from the most primitive and ambiguous games, up to the most cultured and complex ones (190).

A game has its rules that become significantly important at the beginning of the latent period, as the child fantasies have to comply with them (163), because playing at a game is to accept its rules (167).

The reader proceeds from his philosophical and literary education, from his general knowledge, and from his intellectual faculties. He must ‘understand’ what he reads (205). Thus this dimension has to be integrated into the reading game. Being able to understand and to interpret requires psychological processes very different from those we have considered up to now, whose language can be linked to the pre-conscious, and are separated from the language of reason. Yet, at any moment, the two systems can become joined (205). But how do these two languages join up in reading?

The notion of intelligence comes into play but it doesn’t break up the game, because intellectual activity also corresponds to a type of sublimation. “Arts and Sciences are related to the playing activities, although they are different forms of instinctive investments. We must also note that reading is an exceptional and privileged case, because it has an anal over-determination [i.e. caused by many unconscious facets] which sums up and condenses all that is at stake in a strongly motivated intellectual activity” (211, my translation).

We have analysed the playing processes that are controlled mainly by the child-mother relationship, and the fact that we consider a text as a form of transitional object. We have to consider another process of active division, created and guided by the paternal identifications: this entity takes into consideration the rules of the game, estimates the right distance between the ‘Liseur’ and the ‘Lu’ into the illusion, as well as that of the Ego-past, or of the Ego-present. From the standpoint of the binding (*liaison*), and of the reality principle perspective, it learns from reality-testing and assesses the quality of the overall activity, and, like with humour, manages to keep the player’s consciousness alert (211). This

activity is similar to the activities of psychical defence, and it responds, more generally, “to the urge people experience to derive pleasure from their cogitative processes,” (212, my translation.) and it offers in the sublimation, and specifically in the anal sublimation, a new wider way of expression. We have to keep in mind that, for the specialists of games, pleasure is a feature of the ludic activity (212).

We have another process, linked to the ‘Liseur’ and the ‘Lu,’ embedded in the child’s playing activities that remains close to the un-binding (*dé-liaison*), the uncanny (*Unheimlich*), and the vertigo (*les vertiges*). It is under the perspective of this double division that Winnicott’s words about the function of the game into channelling the frightening aspects of playing, are to be understood (211-212, my translation.).

The fact that literary texts have been created and received as games can thus be explained by their roots in both literary history and childhood. This implies that a reflexive, an interpretative, and a critical activity be added to the two other ludic entities already described.

Picard introduces the ‘Lectant,’ the reading one, a new entity, that relates with the ‘Liseur’ and the ‘Lu,’ and thus for Picard the reader is three-fold (triple). We can summarise this fact by saying that: the ‘Liseur’ keeps, in a diminished way, the link with the physiological life and the liminal perception of the external world and its reality; the ‘Lu’ abandons itself to the emotions aroused in the ‘Id’ up to the limits of fantasy; and the ‘Lectant,’ resembling the ideal of the Ego and the super-Ego, puts into play the pleasure of the secondarity, of attention, of reflexion, of the implementation of knowledge. This mechanism of triple relationship applied to the game definition, we have seen above, can thus perfectly explain the fact that the reading activity can be a game of exceptional quality (214). (See Figure 3, below)

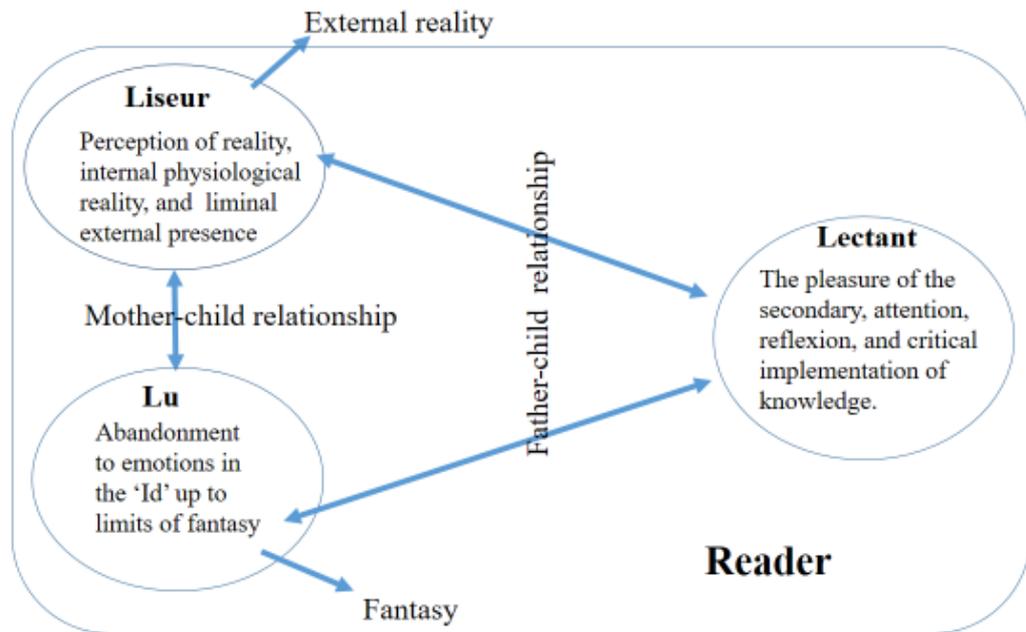


Figure 1: Michel Picard's Lu, Liseur, Lectant Triangle

To conclude on this point we have to insist on the fact that the adventure that is 'lived' through reading puts into play "both the regressive 'Lu,' that fantasises on the other side of the mirror, and nearly hallucinates in the arms of its Mother literature, and the 'Liseur,' that has the notion of its position in the society, and thus cannot be tricked. The stronger the tension between them, the more this experience is fruitful, and mostly if the relation between this tension and the 'Lectant' is itself submitted to a maximum effort thanks to the cognitive information he has in all domains of knowledge" (263, my translation).

Let's now go back, where we first started, to the cognitive and consciously emotive sphere. How can we describe the tension within this sphere? And how does it work?

Raphaël Baroni proposes a theoretical approach to this problem in his essay *La Tension Narrative, Suspense, Curiosité et Surprise*. Following the scholarly tradition Baroni links this tension with the notions of suspense, curiosity and surprise. (In Baroni's essay the words suspense, curiosity, and surprise are written in italics we will not follow this type-style). Surprise is secondary as is punctual and only related to the end of the narration—the last twist. We will follow, here, his line of thought, and concentrate on suspense and curiosity which cooperate to create the narrative tension—'la tension narrative'—which he defines as:

[T]he product of a reluctance—discontinuity, delay, diversion, etc.—that produces eagerness in the reader who is waiting for information not yet available, and this eagerness leads to an increased cognitive participation in the form of interrogations and anticipations. (99, my translation)

With suspense, the narrative tension is related to the future development of the story—‘fabula’, while in the case of curiosity the tension is linked to the coherence of the narrative situation that is described.

In a dramatic text, like a crime novel, usually the narrative tension gradually increases up to a climax before rapidly decreasing at the end of the text. So it has a chronological and telic quality.

For Baroni a plot is split into three phases he calls: ‘nœud’, ‘retard’ and ‘dénouement.’

The first phase, the ‘nœud’, which we will call problem, synthetizes the following questions: “What is going to happen? What happens? And, what happened?” (See Lépine, my translation.)

The ‘retard’ phase, which we will call delay, stands on two legs: the first is Curiosity, or uncertainty, and synthetizes these type of questions: “What’s going on? What does he want? Who is he? What’s he doing? What’s happened? Who has done it? How did we get to this point?” (See Lépine, my translation.) While, the second leg is Suspense, or anticipation, and the type of questions are: “What’s going to happen? Who is going to win? Is he going to do it? How is he going to do it? Can he make it?” (See Lépine, my translation.)

The third phase, the ‘dénouement’, which we will call resolution, answers to the questions: “Are all uncertainties solved? Were the hypotheses true or false? Was the end surprising?” (see Lépine, my translation)

Depending on the type of plot in a novel the narrative tension can be divided into dramatic tension and heuristic tension. Dramatic tension is derived from a chronologic exposition of events concerning the uncertain solution of an unstable situation, and uses suspense, while heuristic tension is linked to a mystery, a secret, as the reader is kept ignorant of detail necessary for understanding the action, which produces curiosity. This is described in the table below which is a simplified version of Baroni’s (86).

The story (fabula)	Beginning	Direct description of the events	End	
	Events are presented in chronological order with clarity and completeness.			
The plot of the story (fabula)	Problem (Nœud)	Delay for Resolution (Retard)	Resolution (Dénouement)	Result (Situation finale)
	Dramatic Tension	Creation of an expectative about the uncertain solution of an unstable situation → Suspense	Reduction of the tension	
The plot of the narration (subject)	Beginning	Mystery/ Secret	Regressive Resolution	End
	Heuristic Tension	The reader is kept ignorant of details he would need to understand the action → Curiosity	In the text we have a retrospective exposition of the past events.	

Here Baroni uses Tomachevski's definition of 'fabula'—story— as, "the collection of events linked the one to the other that are communicated along the text," and of 'sujet' –the narration—as it is "composed by the same events, and [...] respects their apparition time in the text. [...] The 'sujet' represents the finished work of art how it was intended by the artist, while the 'fabula' is mainly an abstraction and a reconstruction."(75, my translation).

Umberto Eco has stressed the importance of the reader's pro-activity in decoding a text and filling up the holes left by the author thanks to his encyclopaedia but he couldn't help explain how the book affected the reader psychologically. To this point Michel Picard seems to bring an acceptable solution by pointing out that the reading activity can be considered as part of a much wider set of ludic activities whose development is closely related to the psychological development of the person and thus has profound implications with the

subconscious. Raphaël Baroni shows how, at the conscious level, the narrative tension caused by the use of curiosity and suspense plays with the intellectual and emotional faculties of the reader and prompts him to go on reading.

By using the theories of Baroni, Eco, and Picard, we can propose to show the reading activity as a blue Literary Reading Triangle, related to the intermediate area of experience, represented in Figure 4 below, where each vertex allows to identify one of the three main mental roles; of which the most directly accessible are the two linked to cognition (The reader's encyclopaedia, the Model Reader), and to emotions (The narrative tension), while the third vertex is related to the psychological unconscious of Picard's 'Lu.'

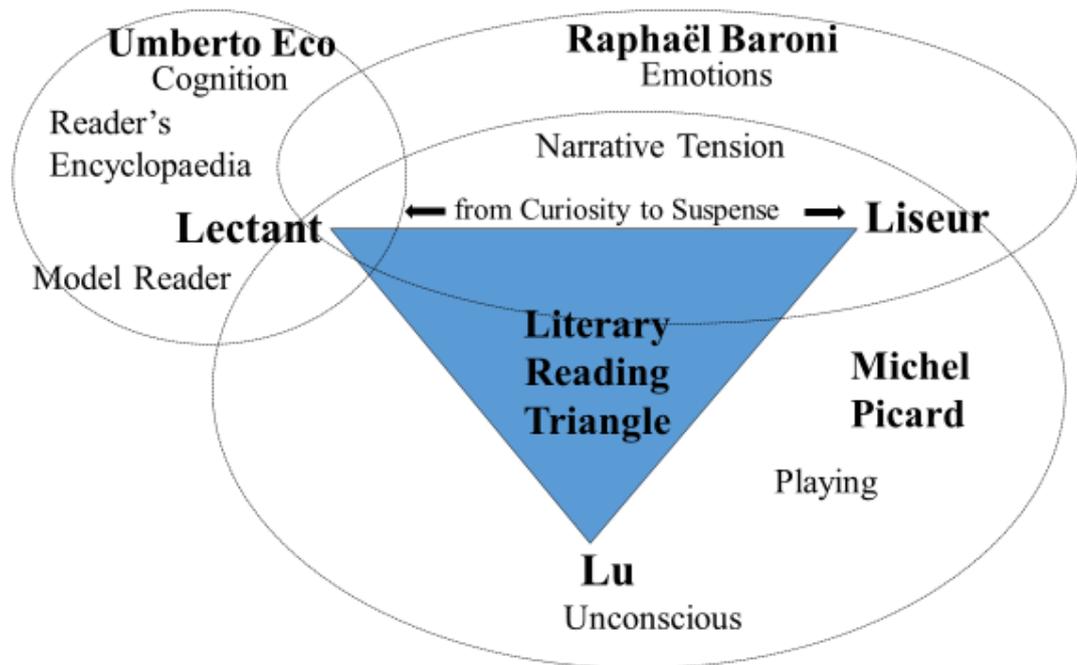


Figure 2: Eco's, Baroni's, Picard's Literary Reading Triangle

When Umberto Eco seems to express his thought in one dimension only, that of cognition and intelligence that take shape in the Model Reader and his encyclopaedia, Baroni is two-dimensional as, in addition, he introduces the second dimension of emotions. On the other hand we could say that Picard's theory is three-dimensional as he adds to the previous two

dimensions the psychological one. In other words Eco plays on the Cognitive-Lectant vertex, Baroni along the upper edge between the Lectant and the Liseur, and Picard on the whole playground, the surface of the triangle.

Having laid our theoretical basis, we can now progress on the four crime novels, two by Michael Connelly and two by Sue Grafton that constitute the corpus. For Michael Connelly we will focus on the Harry Bosch series and for Sue Grafton on her Kinsey Millhone series. For each author we have chosen a significant book at the beginning of their series, written when the writer was still honing his skills, and a second book written when the author had become a recognised and full-fledged professional author, this way we can have a vision of the comparative evolution of their writing. These four novels are: Connelly's *The Black Echo*, and *The Narrows*, respectively the first and seventh novel in the series, and Grafton's "*B*" is for *Burglar*, and "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*, respectively the second and the fourteenth in the series.

What are the means used by the authors to captivate the reader?

2. Captivating the Reader: Traditional Features

We have seen that the reader is prompted by the intellectual pleasure of Eco and by Baroni's narrative tension. Let us now see how these work traditionally on the points that cover the narrating persona, the structure of the novel, the uses of realism, and the way literary devices are used to enhance curiosity and to build up suspense.

2.1. Narrating Persona

In the crime novel, and specifically in the thriller, the narrator is very often a first-person narrator, so that the reader has access to the novel through this subjective point of view, and thus the author can better master what is made available to the reader's knowledge, which is the case of both Grafton's "*B*" is for *Burglar* and "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*. Connelly's novels are structurally more complex; we can say that *The Black Echo* is mainly in the third person and that *The Narrows* is mainly in the first person. Third-person narration is useful when the author wants to present different points of view. In *The Black Echo* most chapters are narrated through the hero—Harry Bosch—nevertheless a small number of chapters are narrated through other characters' point of view—Deputy Chief Irvin Irving, Detective Lewis, and Lieutenant Harvey Pound. In this novel we have some instances of the use of the omniscient third-person point of view. Similarly in *The Narrows* most chapters are narrated by the hero, Harry Bosch, but, here, in the first person, there is also a number of chapters narrated through Rachel Walling and Robert Backus in the third person. An exception are three chapters, or chapter parts, where the narration is in the third person and we have two focalizers: Harry Bosch, and Rachel Walling. We will detail later the signification of this use of two focalizers in the narration in the part concerning Curiosity and Suspense.

So Both Grafton's novels are in the first person and Connelly's two novels are more complex and alternate, mostly, the third person narration of his first novel with the mostly first person of *The Narrows*. Let's now consider another interesting point concerning the novel structure and its importance for the hard-boiled novel.

2.2. Novel Structure

Fast pace in the action is one of the main features of the hard-boiled genre. In order to increase this impression of swiftness, crime novels are often composed of short chapters. For instance, in “*B*” is for *Burglar*, a small novel in itself—only 229 pages—chapters are quite short, less than seven pages on average (See Table 1 in Annex). In “*G*” is for *Gumshoe* we have an average of 12 pages per chapter (See Table 3 in Annex), while Connelly’s *The Black Echo* seems to be an exception as each Chapter/Part corresponds to one day in a series of nine, so the average length is of about fifty pages, if we exclude the three-page Epilogue; another difference is the fact that each part/chapter has a title. This title is composed of the date of the day without the year. We go from “Part I, Sunday May 20” to “Part IX, Sunday, May 20, Memorial Day Observed,” but in the title of this last part the date is very likely wrong and should be ‘Monday, May 28’ as the events narrated happen on Monday, May 28, and this is also confirmed by the fact that Memorial Day falls on the last Monday of the month of May, and in 1992 this was May 28. (See table below)

<i>The Black Echo</i> : Time-frame		
Part	Part title	Date in the narration
Part I	Sunday, May 20	May 20, 1992
Part II	Monday, May 21	May 21, 1992
Part III	Tuesday, May 22	May 22, 1992
Part IV	Wednesday, May 23	May 23, 1992
Part V	Thursday, May 24	May 24, 1992
Part VI	Friday, May 25	May 25, 1992
Part VII	Saturday, May 26	May 26, 1992
Part VIII	Sunday, May 27	May 27, 1992
Part IX	Sunday, May 20 Memorial Day observed	May 28, 1992
Epilogue		The morning after Memorial Day

Now, if we consider the sections within the chapters of *The Black Echo*, we will notice that these are quite short—less than seven pages on average (See Charts 1 and 2 in Annex). It appears that the use of longer Chapters/Parts is not the best to secure the feeling of

suspense for which shorter chapters would probably be more adapted. In Connelly's other novel, *The Narrows*, Connelly divides the book into two big Parts preceded by a Prologue, and forty-five small chapters of about nine pages on average. Part I contains chapters 1 to 10, and Part II chapters 11 to 45 (See Chart 3 in Annex).

After these two points defining the novel from the external point of view of its articulation, and the internal point of view of the narrator, let us dig into the more literary features.

2.3. Realism

We have seen above that hard-boiled crime fiction's original readership was that of the widely popular Pulp Magazines. These low brow magazines needed accessible and believable material for the common popular reader, and what is more accessible than realistic fiction? The hard-boiled crime novel sub-genre born at the time was to be grounded in realist fiction. As James M. Cain puts it in the preface to his crime novel of 1943, *Double Indemnity*:

I make no conscious effort to be tough, or hard-boiled, or grim, or any of the things I am usually called. I merely try to write as the character would write, and I never forget that the average man, from the fields, the streets, the bars, the offices, and even the gutters of his country, has acquired a vividness of speech that goes beyond anything I could invent, and that if I stick to this heritage, this logos of the American countryside, I shall attain a maximum of effectiveness with very little effort.

Realism is defined in Cambridge Dictionary's website as "presenting life as it really is," and it is a common feature of the four books we are concerned with. Realism is nevertheless an illusion, an invention of the author. How is the realist perception obtained?

2.3.1 Place Setting: Here

One way to achieve realism is obtained through the choice of the novels' backdrop and thus by grounding it to geographic spatial reality. Both Connelly's and Grafton's novels are

set in coastal California where the authors lived when writing their novels, and thus they both depict their own ‘here’ at the time.

In Connelly’s novels the setting is the town of Los Angeles while in Grafton’s it is the town of Santa Barbara. In Connelly’s novels most place-names—restaurants, bars, streets—, and car journeys, directions, and timing, correspond to reality, as can be seen in following three examples taken from *The Black Echo*.

In the first, Harry Bosch and Eleanor Wish are driving: “They took the Pacific Coast Highway around the bay. The smog had been blown inland and it was clear enough to see Catalina Island out past the whitecaps. They stopped at Alice’s Restaurant for lunch” (214).

During the 80s and 90s, on the Malibu Pier, there was a restaurant named ‘Alice’s Restaurant’—pictured in the Figure 3, on the right. In an article of the Malibu Times website this iconic restaurant, named after the song “Alice’s Restaurant,” by Arlo Guthrie, is described as “favoured by celebrities and surfers”, and we learn that it was closed in 1995 over a dispute about unpaid rent with the state department of parks and recreation (Malibu Times’ website).



Figure 3: Alice’s Restaurant on Malibu Pier in 1984. (Malibu Times website)

The second example is also from *The Black Echo*: “In Santa Monica Boulevard corridor [...] They parked at the curb by the Oki Dog” (220). Oki Dog, the iconic diner in West Hollywood is still to be found on Google Map today (See Map on Figure 5 in Annex).



Figure 4: Oki Dog in West Hollywood. (punktturns30 website)

The next example, here below, is Harry Bosch’s car ride from Hollywood Reservoir to Meadow’s, the first victim, neighbourhood:

Bosch drove down out of the hills and took the Barham Boulevard ramp onto the northbound Hollywood Freeway. After coming up through Cahuenga Pass he went west on the Ventura Freeway and then north again on the San Diego Freeway. It took about twenty minutes to go the ten miles. It was Sunday and traffic was light. He exited on Roscoe and went a couple of blocks into Meadow's neighborhood on Langdon. (31)

By using Google Maps we can have confirmation of the car ride directions and timing as can be seen on the map in Figure 6 in Annex.

In the case of Sue Grafton, things are a little different, because the setting is the fictional town of Santa Teresa, a name for Santa Barbara she borrowed from Ross MacDonald's Lew Archer novels. So that with Grafton the correspondence to streets and landmarks is less direct than in Connelly, especially for the non-Barbareno reader, yet in many cases, nevertheless, they can be identified and they portray real places, as is confirmed in "*G*" is for Grafton, *The World of Kinsey Millhone*: "Santa Teresa streets and landmarks are laid exactly like those of Santa Barbara, with the names changed by Grafton for everything except the main avenue, State Street, and Highway 101" (138). But, this is not true for all places, for instance there is no real life equivalent of Rosy's Tavern, "a cross between a neighbourhood bar and an old-fashioned beanery" ("*G*" is for Gumshoe, 17), portrayed in all the *Alphabet* series, that is located fictionally on Albanil Street—Mason Street in real Santa Barbara—close to Kinsey's fictional apartment.

We have seen that one of the first realistic features both writers use in the novels is the geographic backdrop, but once the place is set the next question is usually when? When does the fiction take place?

2.3.2 Time Setting: Now

Hard-boiled narrative is often intended for easy and immediate consumption. This is why in many cases the time setting is contemporary or close to the reader's at the time of publication as we can see in the four books we are interested in.

With the exception of *The Narrows*, all the other three thrillers are set in a specific and clearly identifiable time frame. The first of the two Grafton novels in our corpus "*B*" is for *Burglar*, published in 1985, begins on a Monday in June 1982, and lasts twelve days. The second novel, "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*, published in 1990, begins on May 5, 1983, Kinsey Millhone's 33rd birthday, and lasts six days. The epilogue is set after August, 1983.

Sue Grafton, when contemplating writing her *Alphabet* series, decided “to have Kinsey age one year for every two and a half books,” (*Kinsey and Me*, 3), and admittedly the other choice would have been having her age one year for every book so that, in the long run, Kinsey would have become a middle aged PI. However, while the first crime fiction novel of her series “*A*” is for *Alibi* was set in 1982, and published in 1982, the time setting of all the following novels has gone shifting back progressively in time, thus enclosing Kinsey Millhone’s adventures, step by step, in a 1980s time-bubble. Her penultimate novel “*X*”, published in 2017, is set in 1989. This also means that Kinsey, 32 years old in “*A*” is for *Alibi*, will never be 40 and has to ignore all ‘modern’ features like cell phones, DNA, computers, and Internet. This causes a twist to the reader’s perceived reality and gives to the books a kind of quaint vintage touch.

Connelly’s novels are contemporary and this means that Harry Bosch, the hero, ages along with their publication time. In the first novel, *The Black Echo* (1992), Harry is forty and in *The Narrows*, the 14th novel by Connelly, he has just retired from the LAPD and works as a private detective. *The Black Echo* was published in 1992 and the narration lasts nine days beginning with Sunday, May 20, 1992, while *The Narrows*, published in 2004, doesn’t show direct indications of the time setting; nevertheless on Page 97, Harry Bosch listens to *World Without Tears* a CD by country singer Lucinda Williams, which was released in April 2003, and later, on Page 116, we learn that the last victim, Rogers Eberle, disappeared on November 1, 2003. So it is clear that the book is set in the early months of 2004.

We can conclude that in all four novels, real time and action are very close, if not contemporary to the publication time, although in Grafton this is going to be less and less true; and in order not to disorient the reader, realism is achieved by sticking to one’s own time. After Where? And When?, usually the next question is Who? Who are the hard-boiled heroes of Sue Grafton and Michael Connelly?

2.3.3 The Hero and his Name: Who

In the hard-boiled novel genre the hero corresponds to a specific canon.

In the quote here below, taken from the introduction to the collection *The Simple Art of Murder* (1950), Raymond Chandler has described his “take” of the hard-boiled hero:

But down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of story must be such a man. He is the hero; he is everything. He 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 honor—by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it, and certainly without saying it. He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world. [...] if he is a man of honor in one thing, he is that in all things. (Chandler)

Chandler's archetypal hard-boiled hero was an 'ordinary' tough male professional, aged between 30 and 45, showing moral conduct and integrity. A loner, who worked and whose job was investigation, a job and not an intellectual game. This archetype is nevertheless going to evolve and to adapt as times are going to change. Sue Grafton describes the hard-boiled hero for the period after WWII, in *An Eye for an I* (Kinsey and Me, 200), when "the country was caught up in boom times," as the product of the times, the expression of their optimism, vitality and recklessness. She writes that the new hardboiled hero "smoked too much, drank too much, screwed and punched his way through molls and mobsters" (201). During all the fifties he is a "celebration of confrontation" (201), who proves that "the courage of the individual [can] still make the difference" (201).

Although, in the 70s and 80s, the assertion of the individual capacity to make a difference was still present, later the environment changed and the USA began to be perceived as "out of control." The hard-boiled private "exemplifies containment, order, and hope" (203). At the end of the century the P.I. switched from the representation of people's vices to become the image of people's virtues. The hero was now the embodiment of moderation rather than of excesses. In the hard-boiled fiction "there is less alcohol, fewer cigarettes, fewer weapons, greater emphasis on fitness, humour, subtlety, maturity, and emotional restraint" (203). As a reflection on the evolution of American society more diversity is also introduced and the private eyes are now also female, gay, black, native, or Asian.

It is because of her desire for realism that Sue Grafton chose to write "about a female protagonist [...] because I'm female and I figured it was my one area of expertise" ("*G*" is for Grafton, 249).

She picked Kinsey, the first name of her heroine, in the birth notices section of *The Hollywood Reporter*. Kinsey, originally a surname, is a unisex name and sounds vaguely southern ("*G*" is for Grafton, 249). She is less sure about how she chose Millhone as a surname. Millhone is a real, but uncommon, American surname—nowadays there are about

between 65 and 122 Millhones in the US, depending on the source (Namespedia and Forbears website), and this surname could be of Irish origin as it sounds like an adaptation of Malone, Maloney, or Mullen.

Kinsey Millhone conforms closely enough to the hard-boiled private detective paradigm. She declares being of “strictly blue-collar lineage” (“*G*” is for *Gumshoe*, 252). Having lost her parents in a car accident at the age of five, she was raised by her aunt Virginia. In the prologue of “*B*” is for *Burglar*, Kinsey describes herself: “I’m female, age thirty-two, single, self-employed.”(1) She didn’t go to college (“*G*” is for *Gumshoe*, 161), and rather she went to the police academy (150), and later joined the Santa Teresa Police Department for two years, but she is was quickly disillusioned: “I was frustrated because back then police women were viewed with a mix of curiosity and scorn” (“*B*” is for *Burglar*, 1). Having quit the police, she trained as a private investigator and opened her own office. She is candid about her opportunities: “People don’t hire me for ‘smart.’ They hire me because I’m too dumb to know when to quit. Also, I’m a woman, so they think I’ll work cheap” (“*G*” is for *Gumshoe*, 203). Uncharacteristically, for a hard-boiled sleuth, Kinsey has a much healthier living style than she should, although she has a taste for junk food (especially McDonald’s), she runs frequently, doesn’t smoke and while not a tea-totaler she usually doesn’t drink.

She is independent, persistent, and resourceful, has a talent for lying (178), and won’t back off breaking and entering when needed. Like the traditional Private-Eye she will also ‘get laid’ (“*G*” is for *Gumshoe*, 224), and she will physically confront the murderer at the end of the novel, like at the very end of “*B*” is for *Burglar* and “*G*” is for *Gumshoe*.

Guns and Kinsey

It is maybe as a compensation for the fact that she is woman or the fact that her lifestyle is too healthy that Kinsey Millhone has a very good knowledge of weapons, in “*G*” is for *Grafton* it is made reference to a paper by Daniel Fuller (*Is That Cordite, or Just a Red Herring: Firearms Facts and Follies in Detection*) where the author states that Kinsey Millhone is one of the few fictional detectives who really knows about guns. She doesn’t make “stupid” errors as many other crime authors do, for instance, she doesn’t give incorrect names to the calibre of ammunitions, and she doesn’t refer to the ‘kick’ of small weapons, nor to the smell of cordite after a gunshot—cordite was disused in the manufacture of gunpowder in 1905.

Kinsey is 'no chicken' with guns as can be seen, for instance, in "*B*" is for *Burglar* where she has to check Elaine Boldt's apartment after a break-in. Kinsey fetches her semi-automatic from the glove compartment of her car as she "[...] had a vision of some deranged female flying out of the darkness at [her] like a bat."

'I thought it was against the law to carry a concealed weapon like that.' She [Tilly] said uneasily.

'That's why I have a permit,' I said.

'But I've always heard handguns were so dangerous.'

'Of course, they are dangerous! That's the point.' (43)

In the same novel she goes with Jonah Robb, a police friend, to the shooting range, and interestingly, this section starts with a long and somewhat corny description of Kinsey driving her beloved small VW beetle. "Clouds [hang] above [...] like puffs of white smoke. [...] The road twisted between sage and lilac. [...] The sun up was hot and the volatile oils, exuded by the underbrush, scented the still air with camphor. [...]" (148-149). They stop, and Kinsey gets out of her car, "taking guns and ammo" (149).

The description sets the mood for Kinsey nostalgic recollection of how she was taught to shoot by her aunt. "She'd taught me to knit and crochet when I was six, and when I was eight, she'd brought me up here and taught me to target-shoot, bracing my arms on a wooden ironing board that she kept in the trunk of her car" (149).

The gun she uses, a "no-brand semiautomatic," is an heirloom passed down to her from "the very proper maiden aunt who raised me after my parents died" (149). Thus for Kinsey, and probably likewise for many Americans, the use of guns has a kind sentimental quality linked to childhood. That's likely why, in "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*, Kinsey takes it personally when Dietz criticises her new Davis .32 gun:

He came back with the Davis, [...]

He nodded at the Davis. 'I want you to dump that'

'What for? '

'It's a pocket pistol. Useless under the circumstances.' [...]

I stared at him. He didn't seem that impressed with the look I was giving him.

He said, "Where is the closest gun shop?" (178-179)

In the same chapter, Kinsey will also go shooting to the firing range with Robert Dietz. But here the scene is less contemplative and more practical. The introduction is much shorter. Dietz drives, and he drives fast: “Dietz drove up the pass in his little red Porsche like a man pursued (185). [...]” He makes her try out the .45, “but it was too much gun for me coming from the .32. He relented on that point and let me continue with the Davis” (187).

Of course, Kinsey Millhone is a woman but she does much to oppose to the traditional feminine clichés and we can say that although she deviates on some points from the blueprint she still sticks closely enough to the hardboiled private eye canon. Let us now consider Michel Connelly’s hero: Harry Bosch.

Hieronymus Bosch

Harry Bosch, whose real name is Hieronymus Bosch, is Michael Connelly’s hero. This is a reference to the famous fifteenth-century Dutch painter, and it is usually the source of astonishment and surprise whenever other people, usually ignorant of the artistic reference, find out, as it is shown in the following dialogue with his partner Jerry Edgar in *The Black Echo*:

‘Jesus, that’s your first name?’ Edgar Said. ‘Harry for short. How’d did you moma come with that one?’

‘She had a thing about fifteenth-century painters. It goes with the last name. ... Rhymes with anonymous.’ (97)

Similarly, in *The Narrows* when Harry Bosch drives to the FBI checkpoint at the crime site in the desert.

‘Uh, I just got a call from the checkpoint. They are holding a man that just drove up. He’s a private detective from L.A. His name is Hurhomibus Bosch, he—’

‘You mean Hieronymus Bosch?’ Rachel asked. ‘Like the painter?’

‘Yeah. That’s it. I don’t know about any painter but that is how my guy said it [...].’ (174)

Harry Bosch “had been orphaned at 11, when his mother [a prostitute] was found strangled in an alley off Hollywood Boulevard” (*The Black Echo*, 362). He then lived in institutions and in foster families, before volunteering at 17 to Vietnam where he fought as a ‘tunnel-rat’ in the infantry. After serving two ‘tours of duty.’ He then came back home to Los Angeles, and enrolled in the Police department. So Harry Bosch is ex-military Like Ross

McDonald's Lew Archer, Lee Child's Jack Reacher, and Mickey Spillane's Michael Hammer. Contrary to his literary forbears who were keen on Whiskey and Brandy he drinks large amounts of coffee, his main alcoholic staple is beer, though, sometimes, he hits the bottle too. In *The Black Echo* he smokes incessantly while in *The Narrows* he has given up. He is insomniac and, having slept in them, his garments are often unkempt and wrinkled. Contrary to the hard-boiled stereotype, in both novels, Harry Bosch does not only 'get laid' but has a romantic relationship with the feminine main character—the 'femme fatale'—Eleanor Wish and Rachel Walling. The main character trait of Harry Bosch is his lack of social and behavioural skills and a propensity to confrontation with the authority—Irvine Irving, Lt Pound, or the FBI—that comes from a strong sense of justice.

Because of its origin in popular literature the hard-boiled has to remain realistic, simple, and answer the basic questions: Where? When? and Who? And the hero has to correspond adequately to the genre blueprint. As in realism the use of description is essential and we are now going to tackle this point.

2.3.4. Use of Descriptions

Detailed descriptions are a staple of realist fiction, yet S.S. Van Dine in the article, "Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories", he wrote in the September 1928 edition of *The American Magazine*, warns the writer:

A detective novel should contain no long descriptive passages, no literary dallying with side-issues, no subtly worked-out character analyses, no "atmospheric" preoccupations. Such matters have no vital place in a record of crime and deduction. They hold up the action, and introduce issues irrelevant to the main purpose, which is to state a problem, analyze it, and bring it to a successful conclusion. To be sure, there must be a sufficient descriptiveness and character delineation to give the novel verisimilitude; but when an author of a detective story has reached that literary point where he has created a gripping sense of reality and enlisted the reader's interest and sympathy in the characters and the problem, he has gone as far in the purely "literary" technique as is legitimate and compatible with the needs of a criminal-problem document. [...]. (Rule 16)

Thankfully for us, Sue Grafton doesn't follow all of Van Dine's rules, and she is at her best in her delicate and chiselled descriptions of characters, buildings, nature, land and cityscapes. She can write striking and concise vivid pictorial 'post-cards,' though occasionally mawkish, as, for instance, the description here below:

The temperature was in the mid-sixties [about 18°C]. Pale remnants of sunlight shone through the clouds, tinting the neighbourhood with lemon-coloured light. The shrubbery had taken on a chartreuse glow and the grass seemed dry and artificial from the lack of moisture. It hadn't rained for weeks and the month of June had been a monotonous succession of foggy mornings, hazy afternoons, and chilly nights. ("*B*" is for *Burglar*, 51)

Or the sensual description with its poetically flowing rhythm, here below:

This dawn was spectacular, early morning clouds streaking the sky in dark grey tufts, the sun tinting the underbelly an intense rose shade. The tide was out and the beach seemed to stretch towards the horizon in a silvery mirror of reflected sky. Santa Teresa was lush and green and the air felt soft, saturated with the smell of eucalyptus leaves and newly cut grass. ("*G*" is for *Gumshoe*, 3)

The gloomy and underwordly description of the Miami Airport at night, is also quite evocative:

It was still dark when the plane touched down in Miami at 4:45 A.M. The airport was sparsely populated at that hour, the lighting as subdued as a funeral home's. In the baggage claim area, stacks of abandoned suitcases were piled together in shadowy glass-fronted cabinets. All the airport shops were closed. Travelers slept here and there on unyielding plastic seats, resting their heads on bulging canvas totes. The intercom paged a passenger to the white courtesy phone, but the name was garbled and I didn't think anyone would respond. I had only managed to sleep for about an hour on the plane and I felt rumped and out of sorts. ("*B*" is for *Burglar*, 21)

As she has done in this last case, Grafton often uses descriptions as transition parts to change or to introduce the mood of the narration. The example above is the incipit of Chapter 3. In the previous chapter Kinsey's activity has been hectic and the reader has been enticed to go on reading the next chapter, thus his expectations might have risen too high, and the description has a soothing effect on the reader and prepares him psychologically, with its dark tones, to meet Pat Usher the negative heroine of the book.

In "*G*" is for *Gumshoe* we have a vivid and wisecracking but nevertheless moving portrayal of the old lady Agnes Gray:

I heard Agnes before I ever laid eyes on her. [...] At the far end of the room, like the origin of the Nile, I could see the source of the uproar. It wasn't a television set at all. Without even asking, I knew this was Agnes. She was stark naked, dancing a dirty boogie in the bed while she accompanied herself by banging on a bedpan with a spoon. She was tall and thin, bald everywhere except her bony head, which was enveloped in an aureole of wispy white fuzz. Malnutrition had distended her belly, leaving her long limbs skeletal. The lower portion of her face had collapsed on itself, jaw drawn up close to her nose in the absence of intervening teeth. She had no visible lips and the truncated shape of her

skull gave her the look of some long-legged, gangly bird with a gaping beak. She was squawking like an ostrich, her bright, black eyes snapping from point to point [...]. (58-60)

From the very beginning, the description is comical with this noisy old lady bawling her head off while dancing a “dirty boogie” and banging a spoon on a bedpan. But quickly we are drawn to feel the human distress as she is described “stark naked tall and thin”, and we learn that “malnutrition had distended her belly,” and that she has no teeth left on her gums. Progressively we are also made aware that senility has taken her over and that in this moment she is more in a birdlike animality than in humanity.

Often Grafton’s descriptions are brief, about 6 to 8 rather simple sentences. She uses short main clauses or coordinated clauses, but within a paragraph there seems to be a progression in complexity. A good example of this is the description of the first time Kinsey sees Mike, the nephew of Leonard and Marty Grice.

There were no cars passing. A boy with a Mohawk haircut was leaning up against a parked car directly below. The sides of his head were shaved to a preexecution grey and the strip of hair that remains stood up like dry brush in the centre divider of a highway. It was dyed a shade of pink that I had not seen since hot pants went out of style. He looked to be sixteen or seventeen, wearing a pair of bright red parachute pants tucked down into combat boots, and an orange tank top with a slogan on the front that I couldn’t read from where I stood. I watched him roll a small joint. (*“B” is for Burglar*, 16)

In this paragraph are six sentences we analyse in the table here below:

1	One main clause	There was ...	5 words
2	One main clause	A boy with ...	15 words
3	Three clauses; two AND coordinated clauses + relative clause	The sides of ...	30 words
4	Three clauses = Main clause + Relative with since subordinate clause	It was dyed	19 words
5	Five clauses = Main clause + elided - Ing clause + ...	He looked...	39 words
6	Two clauses = Main + subordinate	I watched him ...	7 words

We see the complexity growing with each sentence before ending on a last simple sentence. At the same time she moves from factual topics towards a more subjective or

personal point of view characterised by the use of the personal pronoun ‘I’ subject for Kinsey, the narrator.

While Sue Grafton is very keen at using descriptions in her novels and she is quite good at it, Michael Connelly is much more parsimonious with them. In *The Black Echo* we can read this well-known one:

The setting sun burned the sky pink and orange in the same bright hues as surfers’ bathing suits. It was beautiful deception, Bosch thought, as he drove north on the Hollywood freeway to home. Sunset did that here. Made you forget it was the smog that made the colours so brilliant, that behind every pretty picture there could be an ugly story.

The sun hung like a ball of copper in the driver’s-side window. (*The Black Echo*, 66)

Here Connelly introduces Harry Bosch’s pessimistic, sceptic, and ironical point of view. The first sentence describes the beautiful colours of the Californian sunset in an ironically undignified manner by comparing it to a pair of swimming trunks. This ironic approach is at once confirmed by the following sentence pointing at the deception of nature that has become tainted by men’s activities, and that the colours are so beautiful because of the smog. Pollution is symbolised in the novel by Malathion¹, an insecticide, which is present from the beginning when Harry has parked his car at Hollywood Reservoir and notices that “[t]here was a slight chemical odor on the warm breeze and after a while he pegged it. Malathion.” And later, at the beginning of part II, page 76, Harry hears a helicopter in the distance and he “thought then that he could smell the slight scent of Malathion, sharp and bitter, on the red wind.”

Harry warns the reader who might have been led astray by Nature’s colourful portrayal in the first sentence not to follow his own Romantic impression, and that contrary to what the Romantic poets thought about Nature, Truth and Beauty, in modern times natural beauty is no more soothingly truthful but can be ominously deceptive.

¹ Malathion is an insecticide in the chemical family known as organophosphates. Products containing Malathion are used outdoors to control a wide variety of insects in agricultural settings and around people’s Malathion homes. Malathion has also been used in public health mosquito control and fruit fly eradication programs. (National Pesticide Information Centre website)

We can find the same critique expressed in *White Noise* by Don DeLillo, where the protagonist is speaking of the fact that his teenage son Heinrich's hairline has begun to recede:

Have I raised him, unwittingly, in the vicinity of a chemical dump site, in the path of air currents that carry industrial wastes capable of producing scalp degeneration, glorious sunsets? (People say the sunsets around here were not nearly so stunning thirty or forty years ago). Man's guilt in history and in the tides of his own blood has been complicated by technology, the daily seeping falsehearted death. (22)

Which is reiterated in Heinrich's opinion: "[Heinrich] believed there was something ominous in the modern sunsets" (61).

This "beautiful deception" can also be linked to John Ruskin's 'pathetic fallacy', by which we mean "the use by a writer or poet of words that give human feelings or qualities to objects, nature, or animals. [...]" as can be found in the Cambridge Dictionary site. John Ruskin poked fun at the Romantic authors and their use of nature to partake in the moods of the plot. Still, Connelly can also use pathetic fallacy to his advantage, as can be noted in the last chapters of the *The Narrows* where, as a nod to Dean Koontz's fantastic thrillers, Nature is part of the plot. Rachel comes to Los Angeles to help Harry catch Backus and her plane lands late "because of the rain and wind, [...] it was the kind of rain that paralyzed the city" (362), and "There was an end-of-world gloom about it all. Living in L.A. sometimes felt like riding shotgun with the devil to the Apocalypse" (362), so that the uninterrupted heavy rain builds up in floods of 'Biblical' quality, that lead to the villain's demise by drowning, Nature thus taking part in the eternal cosmic struggle between Good and Evil. Nature wins and it's no surprise that the next chapter in the novel begins with the sentence: "THE SKIES CLEARED, [...]" and "[t]he sea calmed, too." as Nature's wrath calms down.

The use of descriptions is important in creating a realistic setting and in the hard-boiled novel this has to be done in a measured way. Connelly's doesn't use them much and is sometimes awkward with them, while Sue Grafton makes full use of all the possibilities that are offered to her sometimes up to the most trivial effects. We are now going to focus on a point that allows us to derive information about the societal vision of the writer and how this can deviate from reality. These are the Proper Nouns that will allow us to have a snapshot of the social backdrop of the novel, and the Commercial Nouns that are used to convey iconic images of the US, and, we will see likely a little more, and lastly, the Acronyms these novels

are often peppered with, and used to convey the impression of professionalism and competence of the hero.

Proper Nouns: Names and Surnames of other Characters

The use of realistic names—first names and surnames—for the characters is important. Additionally, it also allows the reader to have the representation of the ethnic composition of the character set. This representation is fictional and does not have to correspond to the local realities of L.A. and Santa Barbara when the books were written, yet discrepancies can be interesting.

In Grafton's "*B*" is for *Burglar*, only two out of more than twenty-six characters are Hispanic, that is about 7%, while at the beginning of 1980s in Santa Barbara City Hispanics represented about 22% of the population. In her "*G*" is for *Gumshoe* there are no named Hispanic characters, while in 1990 the Hispanics population amounted to about 31% (See Charts 4 and 5, and Tables 4 and 5 in Annex).

The ethnic background in Grafton's two books is rather stereotypical. This is also emphasised by the character's names Grafton has chosen. In "*B*" is for *Burglar* the great majority of characters have northern and central European surnames. Only a few surnames come from southern Europe. There are just two Hispanic names: the first, Coachella, is toponymical, and the other Lupe is as a matter of fact a first-name, short for Guadalupe. Apart from Lupe who is mixed race, we may wonder at the absence of black characters.

In the case of Michel Connelly's novels, we consider Chart 6 in Annex that gives Los Angeles City population composition in 1980, 1990, and 2000 as is made available in the SOCDS Census Data/Output for Los Angeles City. We can appreciate that in Connelly's novels too, the sociological background is quite stereotypical.

In *The Black Echo* there is a majority of characters who have northern Europe surnames (73%), mainly British-German. Contrary to Grafton, South European and specifically Spanish origin surnames are more present as well as Asian (Japan and Vietnam) though both underrepresented. If we compare to the real population composition we see that Hispanics, amount to more than 34% of the population (See Charts 6 and 7, and Tables 6 and 7 in Annex).

In both Connelly's novels only one named black character is present and it is Jerry Edgar, Harry Bosch's police partner. He is described by Harry Bosch: "Edgar was impeccably tailored in a brown suit with a thin chalk line. His hair close cropped and his skin was almost as smooth and as black as an eggplant's" (*The Black Echo*, 21).

We are going now to focus on Sue Grafton's attitude towards minorities, foreigners and other social groups.

Grafton's Attitude towards ethnic minorities, foreigners, and other social groups

Although, as has been detailed above, the ethnic distribution in both Connelly and Grafton is rather similarly distorted, their attitude is rather different.

In the case of the ethnic minorities we will consider the descriptions of Lupe, mixed blood black-Chicano and travel agent character, in "*B*" is for *Burglar*, and that of Jermaine, Irene Gersh's black servant in "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*.

Lupe is described here below by using a series of animal similes—cat, lemur, a burrowing creature—as follows:

[She] looked like an interesting mix of Chicano and black, slim as a cat. She was in her twenties, with tawny skin and dark frizzy hair with a faint golden cast, cut close to the shape of her head. She wore small rectangular glasses [...]. Her eyes were a flat gold, like a lemur's, and it gave her face an exotic quality. Puffy mouth, small straight nose. She had fingernails that were long and curved and looked as tough as horn. Maybe she had been some kind of burrowing creature in another life. (151)

At the beginning of "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*, Kinsey goes to see Irene Gersh at her place and is met by Jermaine, the black house-maid: "An obese black woman, in a canary-yellow uniform with white collar and cuffs" (8). Obesity in itself is already a stigma, but if in addition the obese black person is dressed in canary yellow that just adds to the ridicule.

In the case of the foreigners, we are going to consider the unnamed group of Mexican labourers in Chapter 5, and the unnamed Mexican waitress in Chapter 9 both in "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*.

Kinsey has just found out that one of her tires is flat and has stopped to change it, she comes across a group of Mexican male labourers:

Meanwhile, the flatbed had turned out onto the highway and had come to a stop a hundred yards behind me. A dozen male farmworkers hopped off the back of the truck and rearranged themselves. They seemed amused at my predicament and called out suggestions in an alien tongue. I can't really translate, but I got the gist. [...] They seemed like a good-natured bunch, too weary from the short hoe to do me any harm. I rolled my eyes and waved at them dismissively. This netted me a wolf whistle from a guy grabbing his crotch. (66)

Here the Latino macho male stereotype is at its best, complete with wolf whistles and crotch-grabbing rutting male. She will comment on the event later in comic tone: "If the flatbed [...] hadn't pulled up behind me, the guy in the pickup might have circled back and plugged me. God. Saved by a truckload of Mexican making obscene digital remarks" (73).

In chapter 9, Kinsey and Dietz stop to have lunch in a Mexican greasy spoon in the small city of Indio, CA; here below the description of the waitress:

Someone peered out of the kitchen at us with uncertainty. [...] She was short and heavyset, a middle-aged Mexican in a white wraparound apron decorated with stains. Shyly, she tried out her language skills. My Spanish is limited [...] but I could swear she was offering squirrel soup. Dietz kept squinting and shaking his head. Finally, the two of them rattled at each other in Spanish for a while. He didn't seem fluent, but he managed to make himself understood. (113)

And once they have finished ordering "She [the waitress] shuffled away in huaraches [Mexican Sandals] that she wore with white socks" (114).

Once again we have the description of an ungainly and grubby character, who can't speak proper English.

The next group we are going to focus on is that of the lower classes as social groups:

The following quote of "*G*" is for *Gumshoe* is an outspoken indication on Kinsey's stereotyping. She is going to meet Rochelle, Mark Messinger's ex-wife, and she comments:

I don't know what I expected. I confess I'm given to stereotyping as the next guy. My notion of ladies who work in massage parlours leans towards the tacky, the blowsy, and (face it) the low class. A tattoo wouldn't have surprised me [...] a hefty rear end, decked out in blue jeans and spike heels, tatty dark hair pulled up in a rubber band. (289)

The low class should be tacky and fat, on the contrary Rochelle is “very slim, [...] her face a perfect oval, [...] has a carelessly mussed mop [of] flyaway blond hair [and] a flawless complexion, smells of [...] a delicate blend of jasmine. In her presence [Kinsey] felt dainty and feminine as a side of beef” (290-291). Rochelle’s beauty is idealised, it could be the classical beauty in a Botticelli painting but the description lands into the gritty reality in the last sentence with Kinsey’s self-deprecating humour.

The last group we will consider are the young people as a group of which we have a description in “*B*” is for *Burglar*:

[...] High-school students were spilling out onto the streets; girls in jeans, short white socks and high heels, guys in chinos and flannel shirts. The wholesome California sorts outnumbered the punkers about three to one, but most of them looked like they had been dressed out of ragbags. Some kids were wearing outrageous design jumpsuits and some wore whole outfits in camouflage fabric as though prepared for an air attack. About half the girls sported three or four earrings per ear. In hairstyles, they seemed to fancy the wet look, or ponytails sticking up out of the sides of their heads like waterspouts. (52)

This is a snapshot of teenagers coming out of their school. It gives an idea of the sociology of the young generation in down-town Santa Teresa—Santa Barbara. Grafton’s point of view remains conservative as she divides them into two groups: the “wholesome California sort” having a stereotypical dress-code, as the boys wear “chinos” and plaid shirts and the girls “jeans and high-heels.” And the “punkers,” although outnumbered by the wholesome by “about three to one,” nevertheless, look like “having been dressed out of ragbags.” The description is not neutral but tainted with value judgement.

We are bound to say, with the hindsight of today’s sensibility, and although her tone is usually humoristic, that Kinsey Millhone’s attitude towards minorities and foreigners—Hispanics, blacks and Mexican, is somewhat questionable, and she seems to be quite conservative in her critical views of the young adolescent people. This effect might not be unwanted by Grafton, as she writes in *Kinsey and Me*: “Through Kinsey, I tell the truth, sometimes bitter, sometimes amusing. Through her, I look at the world with a “mean” eye, exploring the dark side of human nature—my own in particular” (209).

Michael Connelly is a generation younger than Grafton and in his novels we do not have the same attitude. Where with Grafton it is ‘they’ and ‘us’, with Connelly it is more ‘we’. He works with people from other ethnic groups and the relationship seems more balanced,

like for instance his relation with his black Police partner Jerry Edgar and his cordial complicity with Dr Jesus Salazar the Coroner, in *The Black Echo*.

In the next part we are going to be concerned with commercial proper names of companies, products and brands and how they can be used to mimic reality.

Companies, Products, and Brand Names

Products names and brand names are everywhere in our consumerist world. It's no surprise that they can be important devices for characterising and plot development. Iconic names are significant in the sense that they are a shortcut to convey the typical image of the U.S. In Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 in Annex, we can find the list of the commercial names used in the four books under scrutiny.

At the time of the publication of "*B*" is for *Burglar*, her fourth published novel, and the second of the *Alphabet* series, Sue Grafton, though not a newcomer, was not an established author. We can see, in Table 9 in Annex, that in this novel she used only six different Food and Beverage brand names including: Coke and Fresca by the Coca-Cola Company, Whitman Samplers, and Post Toasties cereals, but no tobacco and alcohol commercial names. In the novel we have about 25 different commercial names used, and the iconic Coke or Coca-Cola are used four times only.

In her seventh novel of the series, "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*, she is a full-fledged best-selling writer and the presence of commercial names has also evolved as she uses more than 45 different commercial names. The Coke brand name appears seven times and Pepsi twice. The first time the term Coke is used it is preceded on the same page—Page 25— by its official commercial name: Coca-Cola. Kinsey goes to McDonald's three times— in Chapter 1, Chapter 21, and in the last Chapter, 27—and in the first two chapters she eats a Quarter Pounder with Cheese, and in the last chapter she orders a Big Mac. Professor M. Vester a historian at West Virginia University points out that the iconic south Californian fast-food restaurant is In-N-Out Burger. Why chose McDonald's? In-N-Out is also a very different kind of business: family owned, paying living wages and decent benefits, etc. Kinsey Millhone doesn't smoke, nevertheless Winston and Virginia Slims cigarettes brands appear together with a gold Dunhill and Zippo lighters. Kinsey drinks occasionally and with moderation, however all these beer Brands are named: "Amstel, Heineken, Beck's dark, Beck's light, Dos Equis, Bohemia, and Corona" (152), in addition to Jack Daniels the

Tennessee Whiskey. She also eats M&Ms while the killer chews Juicy Fruit Gums that we are also going to find in Connelly's *The Narrows* (See Table 10 in Annex).

In the case of Connelly things seem to be rather different, in his first novel *The Black Echo*, we have altogether about 30 commercial names used. Harry Bosch is a chain smoker (Camels, Kools, and Salem cigarettes) and drinks lots of beer (Henry's Hard Soda beer and "a lager from England called Old-Nick" (128), and of course the odd Coke. The term Coke is used only twice (See Table 11 in Annex). In *The Narrows*, his 14th novel we have similarly about 30 different commercial names used, and interestingly Harry Bosch doesn't smoke any more, and so we have no tobacco brands names, but he still drinks beer, and the one brand is named when Rachel Walling comments: "Sierra Nevada beer, it tasted good" (227). He drives a Mercedes-Benz SUV, and the brand Mercedes is to be found 19 times starting with chapter 14, which is quite a lot. Michael Connelly has a daughter of the same age as Bosch's Maddie, and we have traces of family outings—Burger King, Dairy Queen, Hot Dog on a Stick, McDonald's, Starbucks—, and shopping—Saks Fifth Avenue, Barnes & Nobles, Cinnabon bakeries, and the more adult oriented racy lingerie brand: Victoria's Secret (See Table 11 in Annex.).

A rational way to compare Grafton's and Connelly's use of commercial names in their novels can be achieved by calculating the ratio between the number of different commercial names used in a book and its number of pages, thus getting the average number of pages without a new commercial name. Although this does not take into account the fact that commercial names can be repeatedly used, it gives a good perception of their presence in a book. So before stumbling on a new commercial name in Grafton's second novel, "*B*" is for *Burglar*, we have to read about 9 pages, while in "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*, we will find a commercial name quicker as we have to read only about 7 pages. Comparatively in Connelly we have to read 15 pages in *The Black Echo* and 14 Pages in *The Narrows* before stumbling on a new commercial name.

In the case of Grafton the number of commercial names in "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*, and their positioning and repetitions can lead to the suspicion that we might have cases of product placement.

It might seem that this suspicion should not be extended to Connelly, but we have not analysed yet the case of Mercedes, which is the only brand that seems to stick out from the lot in *The Narrows*. The first time the brand is put forth it is in a kind of sales point argument:

I drive a Mercedes-Benz sport utility vehicle, the kind some people think helps keep terrorist in business. I don't get involved in such debates but I do know that the people who go on talk shows to argue such things usually pull up in stretch limos. (135)

The next time Harry's car is referred to, is six chapter later, in Chapter 20, here the car is seen through the point of view of Rachel Walling who watches it from an FBI helicopter, the scene is narrated very much like in a TV advertisement:

She looked out her window and down at the black asphalt ribbon that cut through the desert. [...] At the same time she saw a black Mercedes-Benz SUV heading in the same direction. It was dirty from off-roading in the desert. She knew it was it was Bosch. [...] Then she noticed the drawing on the roof of the Mercedes. [...] [A] happy face in the white dust on the roof. (198-199)

Here we have again the full commercial name, Mercedes-Benz SUV, and Mercedes commercial name is also repeated. We could suggest that only some recognizable advertising music is missing. In the table below are presented the automotive commercial brands present in the novel.

Chapter	13	14	15	...	20	...	22	...	24	25	26	...	30	31	32	33	34	...	40	41	42	...	45
Mercedes-Benz SUV		1			1																		
Mercedes					2						2		3	1	1	2			2	1	3		
Cadillac	1																						
Cherokee	1		2																				
Crown Vic or Victoria							1		2	1	1		2										
Grand Am							1			1													
Ford SUV																			1				

In the table above the first fact we notice is that in the novel no automotive brand appears before Chapter 13. A pattern of repetition is noticeable. It begins with the repetition of the complete model name: the first time in chapter 14—as Mercedes-Benz sport utility vehicle; and six chapters later, in chapter 20—as Mercedes-Benz SUV; In the same chapter 20 and in chapter 26, 'the Mercedes' is also repeated twice, seven times more globally in the 4 chapters from 30 to 33, and six times more in the three-chapter-group—40, 41, and 42—so

that the Mercedes commercial brand name is repeated 19 times altogether. All other commercial brands can be disregarded, with, maybe, the exception of the Crown Victoria—by Ford—which is was mainly used at the time in North America by patrol/pursuit vehicles, government cars and Taxis.

We can thus conclude that for both writers there is a suspicion of product placement.

Product placement was a peculiarity of the Hollywood films and television shows, and until very recently pretty much unheard of literature.

In 2001, honoured English novelist Fay Weldon was paid £18,000 by Bulgari (The Italian Jewellery firm) to mention the brand at least 12 times in her novel *The Bulgari Affair* which was intended to be given as a gift to 750 of their favoured clients. Fay Weldon managed to mention the brand 34 times, and the book was then published by Harper Collins. Ms Weldon told *The New York Times*: “When the approach came through I thought, oh no, dear me, I am a literary author. You can’t do this kind of thing; my name will be mud forever. But after a while I thought, I don’t care. Let it be mud. They [will] never give me the *Booker* prize anyway” (See Moss).

Another case is that of William Boyd, also a well-known author, whose decision to take a commission from Land Rover to write a 76 pages short story, *The Vanishing Game* (2014) in exchange for a reported six-figure fee was much criticised (See Hackley). He told the Guardian that despite the pay-out he had “total liberty to invent but it would be nice if Land Rover was mentioned” (See Flood), and in “the 17,000-word story the character, Alec Dunbar, drives a Land Rover Defender” (See West).

The maker of the artificial sweetener Sweet’N Low invested over one million dollars to have his product included in the romantic comedy *Find Me I’m Yours* (2014) by Hilary Carlip. At one point, the Heroine Mags, who loves Sweet’N Low, is asked by a colleague if it is bad for her. No, says Mags. “They fed lab rats 2,500 packets of Sweet’N Low a day [...] And still the FDA or EPA, or whatever agency, couldn’t connect the dots from any kind of cancer in humans to my party in a packet” (See Flood).

To sum up about this point we can say that with Sue Grafton from her second novel “*B*” is for *Burglar*, to her seventh, “*G*” is for *Gumshoe*, commercial names are twice as

numerous, and tobacco and alcohol brands, that were completely absent in “*B*” is for *Burglar*, have become largely featured. Moreover, if we consider the fact that her previous professional experience was in the video industry, where the placement of advertisement within fiction is widely accepted, we could think that product placement is a reality.

On the other hand, we can see that the number of commercial names used in both Connelly’s novels, *The Black Echo*, and *The Narrows*, is quite similar, with the difference that in passing from his first to the second we find that no more tobacco, and most of the alcohol industry references have disappeared which is positive, yet the Mercedes brand name positioning and the pattern of repetition can lead to suspect the presence of product placement which seems to have become a reality nowadays in literature.

Commercial names are a touchy subject, they can be used to give an impression of reality to the reader, but sometimes, it seems things are the other way around, and that it is a consumeristic grim reality that tries to reach the reader.

We have seen that a lot can be gathered from the use of proper names we are now going to tackle proper names abbreviations, the acronyms.

Use of Acronyms

Acronyms are most usually linked to professional and administrative lingo of organisations. They are often a specificity of the hard-boiled novels because they allow to show the professionalism of the characters. The bigger the organisation, the more acronyms are used. Hence in a police investigation acronyms will be more used than in a private detective investigation. In Grafton’s “*B*” is for *Burglar* only seven different acronyms are used, and in “*G*” is for *Gumshoe* only sixteen; similarly in Connelly’s *The Narrows*, where Harry Bosch, the hero, has retired from the LAPD and acts as a private eye, we have twenty-two different acronyms, while in *The Black Echo*, where Harry is still part of the Los Angeles Police force, more than fifty different acronyms are used.

In many cases this doesn’t puzzle the reader because he’s already acquainted with many acronyms—i.e. FBI, TV, SUV, and WASP— However, sometimes these are less accessible, and in this case the narrator usually explains the meaning of the acronym, like, for instance, in *The Black Echo*: “The CRASH computer had a program called GRIT, an acronym within an acronym, this one for Gang-Related Information Tracking” (122).

Nonetheless, in the first part of *The Black Echo* out of 17 ‘difficult’ acronyms only 4 are plainly explained. One possible reason for the author to have made this choice could be that it allows him to challenge the readers’ interest by pushing them to find out by themselves the meanings and by doing so augment their ‘reader’s encyclopaedia’. It has to be pointed out that the incipit of the same part is also enigmatic. It begins *in media res*, and in the third person:

The boy couldn’t see in the dark, but he didn’t need to. Experience and long practice told him it was good. Nice and even. Smooth strokes, moving his arm while gently rolling his wrist. Keep the marble moving. No runs. Beautiful.

He heard the hiss of the escaping air and could sense the roll of the marble. [...] (1).

Sharkey, the boy, is a young delinquent tagging at night with an aerosol can, and it takes some time for the reader to understand what’s going on.

Having completed these subparts concerning realism as used in hard-boiled novels, we can now look at the use of rhetorical literary devices.

2.4. Use of Literary Devices

We have seen the importance of the cognitive side among the traditional points that are: narrating persona, the structure of the novel, realism and descriptions, and the use of proper names. Let us consider now the more emotional side of Baroni’s Narrative Tension and the way literary devices are used to enhance curiosity and to build up suspense.

2.4.1 Curiosity and Suspense through Anaphora and Repetition

Raphaël Baroni has shown how literary devices are linked to the creation of Narrative Tension through Curiosity and Suspense.

We have already seen that Sue Grafton’s “*B*” *is for Burglar* is composed of very short chapters in order to increase the narration pace. Interestingly, in this novel and possibly having been influenced by her television script writing experience, Grafton makes nearly systematic use of the device of having most chapters begin *in media res*, as it was often done in nineteenth-century serialised novels, and of having in the last paragraph of the chapter a

sentence hinting at what is going to happen next, thus arising suspense, and intended to entice the reader’s curiosity to go on reading. (See Table 2 in Annex.)

Another example of the use of suspense is to be found at the end of the novel in Chapter 26. Kinsey, the heroine, is alone, without police back-up, and she has gone to the house of the Grice family to retrieve the crime weapon. Suddenly she hears steps at the door and the sound of the key in the lock.

With the exception of the first four paragraphs series, where the first term in the first sentence is alternately an unanimated object subject, and personal pronoun subject, the following paragraphs begin with a sentence that has as first term a personal pronoun subject and corresponding verb in active mode as can be seen in the table below:

“B” is for Burglar chapter 26			
	Paragraph’s First Sentence	Subject	Mode
1 st group of four paragraphs	The key rattled in the lock...	The key	active
	I eased to my left ...	I	active
	The Basement door was ajar ...	The Basement	passive
	Down, I went ...	I	active
2 nd group of three paragraphs	I did a quick search...	I	active
	“Silence overhead. They ...	They	
	“Frantically, I scanned ...to hide	I	
3 rd group of four paragraphs	Digression	I	active
4 th group of three paragraphs	I heard the ...scratch	I	active
	And then, I heard...	I	
	She must have crossed	She	

Paradoxically in the incipit (222), which is composed of four paragraphs, we have an alternation of personal pronouns and unanimated objects subjects. The first paragraph subject is ‘the key,’ that attracts the attention of the reader who immediately understands that the villains are nearly in the house. The rest of the paragraph adds information and

increases the suspense by delaying the next step. The second paragraph begins with the sentence “I eased to my left [...],” where the subject is ‘I’ for Kinsey, the heroine, who at once moves in search of somewhere to hide. The third paragraph begins with the sentence, “The basement door was ajar...,” with the subject ‘the door’ which catches the attention of the reader on where Kinsey can hide. The fourth and last paragraph—“Down I went [...],”—follows logically as Kinsey goes down in the basement.

The next sequence is composed of three transitional paragraphs that begin with personal pronoun subjects. The attention moves from Kinsey in the first phrase—subject ‘I’—to the villains—subject ‘they’—in the second, and finally towards Kinsey in the third and last paragraph—subject ‘I’. In the first paragraph Kinsey hides the murder weapon in the furnace. The second paragraph begins with the phrase “Silence above. They [...],” (223), and the narration focusses on Leonard and Marty: “They had to be in the hall...,” and “[n]ow they were listening for me as I listened for them.” The last paragraph begins with the phrase: “Frantically, I [...]”. In it, Kinsey looks for somewhere to hide in the basement.

The third series is composed another four paragraphs—Subject ‘I’—where Kinsey tries unsuccessfully to escape from the basement by the chute door.

In the last series of three paragraphs, things are going to accelerate for Kinsey, as Marty has entered the basement and stands at the top of the staircase and the reader will reach the acme of suspense. The first begins with: “I heard the scratch of a shoe on the basement stair [...],” (224), and it is followed by: “And then I heard the panting [...],” Marty doesn’t find Kinsey at first. But “[t]he flashlight beam made a slow turn in [her] direction. [...] She was going to pick me up any second [...],” (225). In the paragraphs the pattern has changed as the verb ‘hear’ is in the active mode but the subject is not active when hearing.

The last paragraph begins with the sentence: “She must have crossed the room like a shot.” The suspense is over. The fight will last to the end of the chapter.

We can find a similar pattern in Michael Connelly’s *The Narrows* (403). At the end of the previous chapter Backus has escaped by diving “head first into the window” (399), Rachel is pursuing him on foot while Harry has taken his Mercedes SUV to shut his further escape.

The chapter begins *in media res* with the words “Rachel ejected the magazine [of the gun]” (402), the subject ‘Rachel’ being the first term in the sentence. Connelly does not focus on the paragraph like Sue Grafton has done in the example just above, but on the section itself. In the first section we have thus a series of sentences beginning with the personal pronoun subject ‘she’, the subject repetition helps to progressively increase the suspense. The subject ‘she’ goes always back to Rachel, so it is analeptic, but each sentence brings some new essential information to the completion of the action, so adding to the anxiety of the reader and helping to build up suspense. We thus have a series of tightly knitted, theme-rheme action sentences.

She stepped onto the sill and jumped [...]
She quickly moved along [...]
She put Backus’ gun in her holster and climbed up over [the river fence] [...]
She dropped onto the gravel [...]
She looked over the side [... to the river]
She saw Backus running [...]. (402)

We learn that she can’t catch Backus, and the focus of the narration shifts to Harry Bosch in the next section that is narrated in the first person.

The Mercedes skidded [...]. I jumped out [...].
I saw Rachel [...], but not Backus
I stepped back [...], but still didn’t see him
I ran down [...]
I knew Backus had to be hidden [...]
Quickly, I climbed over the gate [...]
I ducked and moved v
‘Backus,’ I called out [...]. (403)

At the end of this short section, and in the next even shorter one, the focus of narration shifts to Backus, in the third person.

Backus huddled [...]
He tried to [...] concentrate [...]
He had survived before [...]
He heard [...]
He pressed back against the concrete [...]
He would be patient and make his move when [...]. (404)

In the next section we hear the voice of Harry in the first person as he fights hand-to-hand with Backus and “Together we went over the edge end into the black water” (405). So that, now, not only Backus is still at large, but Harry’s life is also at stake.

A good example of introduction and use of suspense all along the novel can be found in Grafton’s “*G*” is for *Gumshoe* where Mark Messinger, who is a parodic character and hit-man hired to kill Kinsey Millhone, is introduced. It is interesting to notice that Messinger materializes progressively in the book, usually in company of his five year old son—that he has abducted. The first time Kinsey comes across the two of them is when she pulls “into a rest stop” (37), on her way to the Slabs at the beginning of the novel. The description is quite innocent:

A kid, maybe five, was playing with an assortment of Matchbox trucks. [...] While his father napped on a bench. Pop had a copy of Sports Illustrated open across his face, his big arms bared in a T-shirt with the sleeves torn out (37).

The Model Reader should at once be aware that this description that comes out of the blue, is going to have consequences in the rest of the narration.

The sentence, that follows, adds to the father-and-son idyll: “The air was mild and warm, the sky an endless wash of blue.” The only hint of something uncomely might be the ripped sleeves to the man’s T-shirt.

Later on, while Kinsey drives her car on the highway, Messinger’s carries out his first attempt on her life: “A red pickup was barrelling down on me [...] I heard the faint pop of a rock being crushed under my wheel [...] one of my back tires was flat” (65). Kinsey won’t realise that she has been shot at until she has the tire repaired.

This way the reader, who should already suspect that the puncture wasn’t that inoffensive, has his doubts confirmed.

The next time Kinsey comes across Massinger she has some kind of forewarning: “Once out on the walkway, I stopped [...], struck by the eerie sensation of being watched. [...] The parking lot was poorly illuminated [...] I listened [...] I peered into the dark [...] Faintly I picked up the musical tinkling of a little kid giggling somewhere [...] A man appeared from the far end of the parking lot, walking towards me with a kid perched on his shoulders”(76). The man is Messinger carrying his son Eric, yet, this time, nothing untoward happens.

Here again the ominous presence of Mark Messenger is subdued by the presence of the innocent child. But, nevertheless, the suspense ratchets a notch up.

The second murder attempt is almost successful. Messenger rams his red Dodge pickup into Kinsey's car until her wrecked VW ends in an irrigation ditch. He gets out of his car, and brandishing a tire iron, he moves menacingly towards Kinsey. He's nevertheless deterred because Kinsey pulls out her gun, nevertheless she ends up in a hospital bed. It is after this attempt that Kinsey calls Robert Dietz for help. This time we have the confirmation that the killer is real and determined, for the reader one part of the tension is relieved and he starts asking himself when Messenger is going to act again.

Kinsey and Dietz drive back to Santa Teresa, and Kinsey learns from Irene Gersh that somebody has been asking about her, she understands it was Messenger trying to locate her.

The third time Mark Messenger attempts on Kinsey's life he is in a UPS uniform pretending to be a delivery man. In a kind of Jack-in-the-box apparition, he carries his attempt. Kinsey and the reader now know that what motivates him is not the money but the quarry, and that makes him even more dangerous, as he was hired for the quite small fee of \$1500.

Later on in the novel, Kinsey attends with Dietz to the retirement party of her friend Jewel at the Edgewater's Hotel, but during the party, unexpectedly, Kinsey comes across Eric, Messenger's five-year-old child. This untimely encounter causes Kinsey and Dietz rushed departure from the party. We will later learn that Messenger is staying with his son in the very same hotel.

Here again the child is an ominous presence because of his father, nevertheless his presence seems to guarantee Kinsey's safety.

In the rest of the novel things change for Kinsey as Robert Dietz and Messenger's ex-wife, Rochelle, who has legal custody of Eric, rescue him from his father, and Messenger, from this point on, will be more interested in retrieving his son than in killing Kinsey.

The last example we are going to consider is linked to the use of the narrating persona in Connelly's *The Narrows*. We have already seen above that this novel is mostly narrated in the first person by Harry Bosch the Hero. There are nevertheless a number of chapters that

are narrated through Rachel Walling, an FBI agent, and Robert Backus, the serial Killer points of view.

There are three cases—Chapter 24, Chapter 33, Section 4; and Chapter 42, Section 13—in which the focalization in the narration is through the point of view of Rachel Walling and Harry Bosch.

In the first case Harry is the focalizer for most of the chapter, and then it is Rachel Walling for the last two paragraphs. This chapter is significant because, in it, the relationship between Harry and Rachel starts. In it, Rachel goes to see Bosch in his hotel room, and although, at first, he is angry with her, things end sentimentally well as it is confirmed by the fact that Harry's hotel room is 22 which apparently in numerology is the number of lovers' compatibility.

We find again the same two focalizers, in chapter 33 section 4. In this section Harry and Rachel have discovered Backus' trailer and they enter it, they have scanned most of it, and Rachel is going to open a last door, when Harry has the intuition that the door has been rigged with explosives. This suspense moment is expressed by a switch of focalizer in the narration from Rachel to Harry, and the last sentence of the section says: "Bosch turned and watched her approach the door. 'Rachel [...]'” (319).

In the third case, at the end of the novel, the main narrator is Rachel, but we have the small inclusion of a paragraph narrated in the third person through the point of view of Harry. This chapter is emotionally significant as Harry who had fallen in the raging Narrows and risked drowning in it, is "raised" by a Fire Department helicopter, and the short switch of focalizer allows the reader to understand that Harry is now safe.

2.4.2 Use of Metaphor

The metaphors we are going to analyse come from Connelly's *The Black Echo* and they have in common a three-pronged structure approach.

The Triangle

Connelly presents three iconic paintings in *The Black Echo: Nighthawks* by Edward Hopper; *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, by Hieronymus Bosch, and *The Scream*, by Edward Munch. The three paintings, which will be described in more detail in the part

concerning hybridisation below, mirror a triangular relationship among the characters of the book.

They all concern the relationship between the two main characters, Eleanor and Harry and a third character. In the first, Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, Eleanor is the woman represented, and though she is portrayed standing close to a man—most likely her dead brother Michael—her isolation is perceptible, “[t]he darkness, the stark loneliness,” (456). The leftmost character turning his back to the viewer represents Harry: “I’m that man, Harry Bosch would think...” also a loner (456). In the second painting, a triptych, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, we are interested in a detail of the left panel, *Paradise*, representing Christ/God presenting Eve to Adam, in a kind of ceremony. Christ stands in the middle, so that he is central to the representation, while on his right sits Adam and on his left is Eve portrayed kneeling. As in the *Nighthawks*, we have a feeling of isolation, there’s no visual communication between the characters portrayed. Adam looks upwards at Christ, who looks in front of him at the viewer, while Eve, demure, looks downwards. This painting seems to represent the ambiguous amorous relationship of Harry and Eleanor, and the central role in the story of Michael, Eleanor’s brother. Eleanor’s self-imposed duty is to seek revenge for her brother, and when she meets Harry her involvement has taken too much momentum for her to back up, she won’t be able to change the course of events and thus wrecks all possible love relationship with Harry. This missed opportunity is confirmed by the fact that later in the series they are going to marry, but in *The Narrows* they are divorced.

The third painting is Edward Munch’s *The Scream*, and it seems to focus on the characters’ own perception. Three characters are portrayed, the main character in the foreground and two ghostly silhouettes in the back that seem to recede in the distance. Harry uses the painting to portray the horror he has felt as a young tunnel-rat contemplating going down in the tunnels to clean them from the VCs (72). So the central character that stands screaming and holding his head represents Harry Bosch the Vietnam soldier, of course his vision could be extended to the other soldiers who met horror in the war and more precisely to William Meadows and Michel Scarletti.

The Scream can also be linked to Part I where Bosch describes the letter ‘S’ of the unfinished graffiti tag ‘Sha’ sprayed by Sharkey on the iron pipe in which William Meadows body is found at Hollywood Dam. “Three letters [reference to the number three again] had been painted in one fluid motion. The top of the S was jagged and then contoured, giving

the impression of a mouth. A gaping maw” (29). The gaping maw hints to the horror of the pipe-tunnel dark entrance. The fact that Meadows’ body is found in an iron pipe is both symbolical and ironic, not only because iron and ironic sound similar. The pipe is a symbol of the tunnels in which Meadows has lost himself, parallel between him and Eleanor’s brother.

The Adamic Myth

Nighthawks points to another metaphor. In the picture the first character on the left turns his back to the viewer, so that, the same viewer cannot see his face: “Bosch identified with it, with that first man. I’m the loner he thought” (224).

This ‘first man’ can be read through another metaphor linked to the Biblical myth, where Bosch would represent Adam: the first man, the loner, and, Eleanor, Eve.



Figure 7: H. Bosch, Garden of the Earthly Delights, left panel The Paradise detail. (Wikipedia website)

The scene from *Genesis* represented on the left panel of *the Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch, is that of the creation of Eve. As we have seen above, three characters are portrayed, on the left sits Adam/Harry, in the middle stands God/Christ dressed in a pink gown. He stands close to Eve/Eleanor, whom, the Biblical myth narrates, he has just created.

A parallel can be drawn between Biblical Eve and Eleanor and the mythical representation of the notion of Good and Evil is re-used. As the Eve of the Biblical myth

caused the fall of humanity, Eleanor has organised the burglary and enticed Rourke into carrying it out. She says “I guess you could say I seduced him” (448). She also uses and seduces Harry to achieve her objectives. The last twist at the end of the novel is the fact that Bosch understands “how she [Eleanor] had betrayed him in love and business” (430).

We have hints at the Eleanor/Eve personification. “He could smell her hair as she went by. An apple scent, he thought” (196). The apple scent of Eleanor’s hair is of course linked to the “fruit of the knowledge of good and evil” of the Bible (Genesis 2:9 King James Version) and the symbolic of the apple. Further on in the book (237), Eleanor and Harry are woken up in the middle of the night by the telephone and they are both naked: “Eleanor noticed her nakedness and walked over to a lounge chair to get her robe.” Which echoes the *Genesis* verse below, in King James Bible Version:

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” (Genesis 3: 7, KJV)

The reason why only Eleanor “notices her nakedness,” while Harry who is also stark naked isn’t embarrassed is that Harry is still naïve concerning Eleanor.

The French Braid

In Part VI, after having spent the night together, Harry brings Eleanor a glass of orange juice while she is in front of the bathroom mirror:

She was naked and braiding her hair, which she had divided into three thick hanks. He was entranced by her and watched as she expertly manoeuvred her hair into a French braid. (305)

The hair is the symbol of womanly seduction and culturally many things, related with sex and refinement, are linked to the adjective French. So the image of Eleanor braiding her hair is personally intimate and at the same time highly erotic.

Here we have again the ternary reference to the triangle, the triangle that represented in the paintings Harry, Eleanor and Michael, is now composed of “the three thick hanks [:]” these now are Harry Bosch, John Rourke, and William Meadows. Eleanor is very much in control of what is happening as she “expertly manoeuvres” them all along. This part shows that Eleanor is ready to use all the stereotypical wiles and tricks to achieve what she wants.

Mise-en-abîme and Mirror Games

In Chapter 7 of *The Narrows*, Backus is ‘tailing’ Rachel Walling: “She [Rachel Walling...] was reading a book [...] *The Poet*. She was reading about him [Backus]” (51). This is a case of ‘mise-en-abîme’. *The Poet*, in *The Narrows*, is a book about a serial murderer—Backus, by a journalist called Jack McEvoy—who is another of Connelly’s fictional heroes. *The Poet* is also a novel by Connelly himself featuring Jack McEvoy published in 1996, whose sequel is *The Narrows*.

One device used by Connelly to allow the reader a kind of double external view of Harry Bosch is through what we could call a game of mirrors.

In the first chapter of *The Black Echo* as Harry Bosch makes himself ready to leave for the murder scene on Mulholland Dam, “He went to the bathroom [...] He dragged a comb through his hair and stared at his red-rimmed, forty-year-old eyes for a moment. Then studied the gray hairs [...] Even his moustache was going gray” (8). And later, when investigating William Meadows’ apartment, “He stopped into the hallway bathroom and opened the medicine cabinet [...] When he closed the cabinet, he looked at himself and saw the weariness in his eyes” (35).

At the beginning of his second day having shaved: “afterward studying his face in the mirror and remembering how unkind time had been to Billy Meadows. Bosch’s hair was turning to gray but it was full and curly. Other than the circles under his eyes, his face was unlined and handsome [...]” (77). Here we have two voices that of Harry pondering on Meadows, but we have also an intervention of the omniscient narrator.

A last interesting example concerns Sharkey, the young delinquent Eleanor and Harry interrogate in Part III. “She closed her notebook and put it into her purse. Then she finally looked up at him [Bosch]. There was a knocking from inside the interview room. Sharkey was looking at himself in the mirrored window of the door. But they both ignored him and Wish just drilled Bosch with her eyes” (184).

2.5 Intertextuality

Intertextuality is the presence within a text of another text, and this can take the form of a quote, an allusion or outright plagiarism. Intertextuality is linked to the literary culture of the reader and is an example of what Eco's reader's encyclopaedia is composed of.

2.5.1 Reference to Classics and Hard-boiled Canon

This is a game the reader can play in all four novels. There will be references to the 'classics' and to the hard-boiled genre canon and other genres.

Reference to Classics

In Grafton's "*B*" is for *Burglar*, reference is made twice to the Gothic novel genre. The first is through E.A. Poe. Marty Grice, the villain, uses a pseudonym in the novel: Pat Usher. We think at once of E.A. Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, a novella about twins: Roderick and Madeline. Apart from the name itself, similarities can be found in the two plots: like Madeline, Poe's tragic character, Marty is thought dead at the beginning of Grafton's novel, and this is going to be revealed untrue.

A second, more subtle reference to the Gothic genre comes from Martha Grice's character. Her first-name, Martha, sounds like *Jane Eyre*'s character Bertha (Mason) the demented woman who burns down Thornfield Hall, and similarly to Bertha, Marty burns down her house. The great classic, *Jane Eyre*, is not in itself a Gothic novel but Charlotte Brontë nods to the genre in creating the Bertha Mason character. The literary reference is important for Sue Grafton as she puts it into the open by having a character, Darcy Pascoe, a friend of Kinsey, explain it to Kinsey so that if the reader doesn't know about literature he is made aware of the reference.

In the novel, as Kinsey is telling Darcy Pascoe of the death of Agnes Gray, we have the following dialogue:

'I need to know what you were talking about when I mentioned that Agnes died. You said it was weird. What was weird?'

'Oh, I wasn't referring to her death,' Darcy said. 'That's the name of a book.'

'A *book*?'

'*Agnes Grey*. It's a novel by Anne Brontë, written in eighteen forty-seven. I know because it was the subject of my senior thesis at UNLV [University of Nevada, Las Vegas].' (261)

We can appreciate that Sue Grafton takes care of her readership and is delicate enough to add that Darcy has been to College and has a higher education so that the ‘ignorant’ reader doesn’t feel diminished by his lack of knowledge, while the reader who has a little more literary education, will also have noticed that Darcy is a character of *Pride and Prejudice*, another great classic.

Let’s now go back to Marty Grice who, in the novel, is often portrayed like the Gothic ‘mad woman’ character of the eponymous genre. In “*B*” is for *Burglar*, Tillie Ochser describes the thief— we will later learn is Marty—who has broken in her apartment at night:

“I was so scared, [...] I thought she was going to kill me. She was like a maniac, a totally crazy person, panting and hissing and crashing around.” (40)

Later on, Kinsey comments on the damage made in Tillie’s apartment: “This was what insanity looked like when it was on the loose” (42), and in two other places in the last chapter: “then I heard the panting and I knew who it was” (224); and “[she] drove down at me again, her eyes bright, her mouth pulled back in something that would pass for a smile among lunatics,” when fighting hand-to-hand with Marty (226).

In chapter 20, Kinsey discusses, the departure of Pat Usher with Ronald Makowski, the janitor. “That woman is demented and you know what pissed her off? I told her she could not hang her towels over the balcony rail. You should have seen her reaction. She was in such a rage her eyes rolled back in her head and she started to pant. She scared the hell out of me. She’s *sick*” (178).

We have seen above that in “*G*” is for *Gumshoe*, reference is made to the novel *Agnes Grey* by Anne Brontë. Agnes Grey is the name of Irene Gersh’s mother, a rambunctious old lady character, Kinsey is asked to find at the beginning of the novel. Contrary from “*B*” is for *Burglar*, what interests Grafton in this case is not the plot but the composition of the Brontë family in itself, and the parallel that is made with the Bronfen family. Bronfen sounds like Brontë and the Bronfen siblings’ first names are Anne, Charlotte, Emily, and Patrick. In the Brontë family the brother’s name was Branwell and Patrick was the father, yet Patrick Brontë survived all his off-springs so that in the context the choice of his name for the name of the brother is not illogical.

Connelly too, makes reference to literary classics. In *The Black Echo*, commenting on Billy Meadows' body, Jerry Edgar, Harry Bosch's partner, says: "Looks like Rip Van-Fucking-Winkle" (22).

Rip Van Winkle is a short-story by Washington Irving set in a period across the American Revolutionary War. A male Sleeping Beauty, Rip Van Winkle wakes up after a twenty years slumber and finds that the world has much changed. His wife is dead. His daughter and son are adults. His daughter takes care of him, and though he feels loved he is nevertheless unable to adjust to this new life. There is a direct parallel between Irving's short-story's plot and Connelly's novel. Bosch is a Dutch name and Rip's story can be linked to Harry's who, twenty years after his participation to the Viet-Nam war, an involvement he didn't want to confront, is now going to have to tackle his own traumatic experience.

The Narrows is a sequel of *The Poet* also a book by Connelly, whose hero is a journalist, Jack McEvoy. The Villain is Backus a serial killer, also called "the poet" because he associates his victim's deaths with E.A. Poe poems. In Chapter 41 of *The Narrows*, Rachel Walling overhears Backus trying to dictate to Ed Thomas the poem *The Raven* by E.A. Poe:

Backus: 'Exactly as I say it. Once upon a midnight dreary...'

She knew what it was. She recognized the words of Edgar Allan Poe. And she knew it was Backus, though the voice was different. He was using the poetry again, re-creating the crime taken from him so long ago. (395)

Edgar Allan Poe is traditionally considered as "the Father" of the detective novel. In three short-stories, the first of which was published in 1841, he created the pattern of the "amateur detective, his friend narrator, and the locked-room mystery" (World-best-detective-crime-and-murder-mystery-books website). Poe is both part of the canon and a crime fiction writer and thus he is a good introduction to the next point about the crime fiction genre.

Crime Fiction Canon

Sue Grafton, by proposing connections with the crime fiction and hard-boiled authors she was influenced by, declares openly her filiation. All her *Alphabet* series novels are set in fictional Santa Teresa, a name given to Santa Barbara by Ross MacDonal, the hard-boiled mystery writer, much admired by Sue Grafton.

Santa Teresa Police officer Lt. Con Dolan is a recurring character of the series. His names is an homage to Arthur Conan Doyle.

In the two novels of Grafton we are concerned with, logically, these references to crime fiction are mostly to be found in “*B*” is for *Burglar*, most likely because at the time she was at the beginning of her career and needed the crime fiction readers to be aware of her literary models.

In Chapter 13 Julia Ochser, an old lady character, has been helping Kinsey in the enquiry, and she jokingly proposes her a partnership at the same time as she pokes fun at Mickey Spillane’s brutally violent recurring hero, Mike Hammer’s foul language:

[Julia: ...] I don’t suppose you’d consider a partnership after we wrap this one up.

[Kinsey:] I’ve had worse offers in my day.

[Julia:] I’m going to start Mickey Spillane just to get in shape. I don’t know a lot of rude words you know. (111)

The Snyders are neighbours to the Grices. Their surname can be linked to the Snyder case put into fiction by James M. Cain in 1943, in a well-known book called *Double Indemnity*. The story is based on a real murder perpetrated by a married woman and her lover. Ruth Snyder persuaded her boyfriend to kill her husband after having him take out a big insurance policy with a double indemnity clause (Wikipedia). The insurance scam is one of the lines of investigation of Kinsey’s.

In chapter 7, Mike the young ‘punker’ sporting a pink Mohawk asks Kinsey: “You talking to me?” (54) This is an obvious reference to Martin Scorsese’s 1976 ‘neo-noir’ film called *Taxi Driver* and the identical line of Travis/De Niro, the main character. In the film De Niro wears his hair in a Mohawk, too. The film won the Palme d’Or at the 1976 Cannes Festival and was as a great public success. It kick-started the revival of the noir movie genre and influenced crime fiction as a whole.

In Connelly’s novels we have many more references to crime fiction than in Grafton’s. *The Black Echo* is Connelly’s first published book and in it these references can be interpreted as a statement by Connelly’s, a newcomer, that he has taken inspiration from the writers and novels he mentions and that he is going to follow the rules of the genre.

Raymond Chandler is one the three writers who created the hard-boiled genre and in Part I, The hot Santa Ana wind is called the red wind. Raymond Chandler in the incipit to his short story “Red Wind” of 1938 writes:

There was a desert wind blowing that night. It was one of those hot dry Santa Anas that come down through the mountain passes and curl your hair and make your nerves jump and your skin itch. (76)

In Part IV, Bosch has a look at Eleanor's books in her barrister bookshelf. This allows Connelly to present three crime novelists and a book he has found inspirational and significant. On the two top shelves he finds books by crime fiction writers Crumley and Willerford and "He opened the glass door and pulled out a book called *The Locked Door*. He'd heard of the book but had never seen it to buy" (222).

Although Wikipedia's limits are well known, however for simplicity and conciseness it has been used on the points below.

The first crime novelist is James Arthur Crumley (1939–2008), an American writer, and the author of violent hardboiled crime novels and short stories, who has been described as "one of modern crime writing's best practitioners." His best known book is *The Last Good Kiss*. He has inspired Connelly as well as a whole generation of crime fiction writers.

The second crime novelist is Charles Ray Willeford III (1919–1988) also an American writer recognized for his hard-boiled Hoke Moseley series. *Miami Blues* (1984), the first of the series, is deemed "one of its era's most influential works of crime fiction."

There doesn't seem to be a book named *The Locked Door* that would fit into the context, nevertheless there is another book with a quite similar title that seems to correspond: *The Locked Room* published in English in 1973. On the Salomonsson Agency website we can find the original Swedish thriller *Det Slutna Rummet* by Swedish pair Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö published in 1972, for the American translation of which Connelly was later to write an introduction. This is the eighth novel of a series of ten, featuring a fictional Swedish police detective Martin Beck. *The Locked Room* and Connelly's *The Black Echo* have many similarities. Like Bosch's "the society that surrounds Beck is turning into a full-blown dystopia" (53, See Stougaard-Nielsen). In the novel two plots are running simultaneously, one concerns a murder enquiry and the other bank robberies. In *The Locked Room* two policemen, Larsson and Kollberg, reluctantly work in a special task force to solve a spree of bank robberies (Wikipedia, *The Locked Room*), thus mirroring Rourke and Wish, the two CIA officers of Connelly's novel. Martin Beck is recuperating from a previous novel's gunshot wound, and he is given a simple case to solve, the typical 'locked room' mystery. In *The Black Echo* Harry Bosch has been demoted from the prestigious Los Angeles

Homicide Division to the much less glamorous Hollywood Division as a consequence of a previous enquiry, and he is in charge of the Meadows' murder inquiry. In both novels the hero strives against unmotivated, amateurish and unprofessional police forces which would rather have treated the murders as suicides.

In the case of Connelly's other novel we are concerned with, *The Narrows*, references are mostly directed to more recent crime fiction writers, and we could say that now that he has become a successful writer he wants to show the affinities he has with the writers of his generation.

In Chapter 8, while perusing a picture of the McCabes family "walking in front of the Barnes & Noble bookstore" (65), Harry Bosch sees "behind the window—a full-size stand-up photo of a man in a kilt that was surrounded by stacks of books and a sign that said IAN RANKIN HERE TONIGHT!" Ian Rankin is the Scottish 'Tartan noir' author whose series backdrop is Edinburgh, and whose hero, Inspector Rebus, is also a loner, that drinks lots of Scotch whisky and is a fan of 1960s music.

In Chapter 15, Harry checks the inside of Terry McCabe's Cherokee Jeep and finds two books-on-a-tape: *Looking for Chet Baker* (2002) by Billy Moody, and *The Tin Collectors* (2001) by Steven J. Cannell. *Looking for Chet Baker* is a book of the Evan Horne series, and is about the mysterious death of Chet Baker, the Jazzman, fallen off to his death from a hotel window in Amsterdam in 1988. Harry's love for Jazz music is well-known. *The Tin Collectors* is the first novel of the Shane Scully's series by Steven J. Cannell, a novelist and a television producer. In *The Tin Collectors*, the hero, Shane Scully is investigated by Internal Affairs who want Scully's badge as an 'ultimate prize' for killing a man in self-defence thus mirroring Harry Bosch and the Dollmaker killing enquiry and, surprisingly, it is not a direct reference to *The Narrows*, but to Connelly's first novel *The Black Echo*, plot (Fictiondb website).

In Chapter 37 and in Chapter 40, Connelly pays his respects to Dean Koontz, a best-selling author a little older than him, by about ten years, weighting today about 6 times Connelly in global book sales—about 450 million books sold world-wide (Dean Koontz's website) compared to Connelly's 74 million. Connelly names three of Koontz' books: *Strange Highways*, *Sole Survivor*, and *The Face*. *Strange Highways* is a collection of 12

short stories published in 1995. *Sole Survivor* is a supernatural crime fiction published in 1997, and *The Face* a thriller published in 2003.

In Chapter 40, Ed Thomas, ex-policeman and library owner, complains of having surprised a kid “trying to shove a copy of *Nick’s Trip* down his pants. Early Pelicanos is tough to find” (373). George Pelicanos’ novel *Nick’s Trip*, the second book of a series set in Washington D.C., was published in 1993, is set in Washington D.C. The hero is Nick Stefanos, a bartender, who investigates a disappearance and a murder. Data about Pelicanos’ global sales are not easily available nevertheless we can say that we could say Pelicanos is to Washington D.C. what Connelly is to L.A.

Billy Moody and Stephen J. Cannel were born in 1941, and Dean Koontz in 1945, so we could say that Connelly makes a selection of significant authors of the previous literary generation—which might have also included Sue Grafton who was born in 1940, but doesn’t.

He then presents two other authors of his generation’s literary landscape, Georges Pelicanos who was born in 1957, Ian Rankin in 1960, himself being of 1956. This to show most likely authors with whom he shares affinities. He states that what Pelicanos is for Washington D.C., and Rankin is for Edinburgh, he is for Los Angeles.

In addition to the references to the crime novel we have just tackled above we have cases of reference to other genres. For instance the reference to the Western genre, in Connelly’s *The Narrows*, where B. Lockridge is speaking about Otto Woodall, another character says: “He’s retired. Thinks he’s Zane Grey and wants to go sport fishing” (30). Zane Grey, who lived across the 19th and 20th century, was an extremely popular adventure writer associated with the Western Genre. In addition to the commercial success of his printed works, these were widely adapted as films and television productions. His bestseller and best-known book is *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912) an extremely successful Western novel that created a genre. Having made it, Grey could give himself over to the delights of fishing, his main hobby (Wikipedia website).

The last example is also taken from *The Narrows*. In it Rachel Walling compares the desert landscape to Ireland as “[She] had heard of the coastline of Ireland described as a terrible beauty. She thought that the desert with its barren lunar landscape was in its own way beautiful, too.” (78) Terrible Beauty is, of course, part of the recurring line “A terrible beauty is born,” in *Easter 1916* a poem by William B. Yeats. Nevertheless, but here the

direct reference is to *Terrible Beauty* (1999), by congressman Peter T. King, a novel set in Northern Ireland, during The Troubles, in the 1980s.

As a conclusion we can say that, in the uses of intertextuality once again Sue Grafton and Michael Connelly are complementary. Grafton, after having made a point in her second novel "*B*" *is for Burglar* about her filiation, uses intertextuality for the similarities she wants to point out in her texts. Similarly Connelly had to establish his credentials in his first novel, which he makes more extensively than Grafton. He seems nevertheless more competitive and much more concerned with his position in the literary profession landscape than Grafton.

3 Captivating the Reader: Post-Modern Features

Up to now, we have tackled the traditional means used by authors in defining their Model Reader. We are now going to focus on the more post-modern characteristics. Here below we will consider the Paratext, Hybridisation, and the use of humour, caricature, and parody.

3.1 Sue Grafton's Play with the Paratext

From the very beginning, Grafton intended to write a series of criminal novels and was inspired by her father, C.W. Grafton, who was a municipal bond attorney by profession, and had got published three well received crime novels. Two of these were titled *The Rat Began to Gnaw the Rope*, and *The Rope begun to Hang the Butcher* after the lines of an English chain folk-tale lines: *Old Woman and Her Pig*.

Grafton was looking for something close to what her father had done, and she had an inspirational moment when she came across Edward Goray's *The Gashlycrumb Tinies*, published in 1963, and abecedarian book in which Goray tells the story of 26 children and their untimely deaths. She writes about *The Gashlycrumb Tinies*: "[It] is funny irreverent and bloody, and [...] organized alphabetically: 'A is for Amy who fell down the stairs. B is for Basil assaulted by Bears'" ("*G*" is for Grafton, 294).

So, optimistically, what was later to be named the *Alphabet* series was intended as a 26 volume series, and at the very beginning she made a list of words associated to murder words that she could use.

A: Alibi

B: Bum or burglar

C: Corpse

D: Dietz, or danger, or dagger, or deadbeat, [...]

E: Ever

F: Fugitive, or Fahrenheit, or felony, or forgery, [...]

G: Gumshoe, or gun, or gambler, [...]. ("*G*" is for Grafton, 294)

Understandably, she plays recurrently with the first letter of her titles, for instance in the names of her characters and this elicits a sense of fun, "the sense that the plot itself is a game played between the author and the reader" (295).

As the first piece in the puzzle, the victim's surname will always correspond with the letter of the book, so in "*B*" is for *Burglar*, the victim is Elaine Boldt, and in "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*, the victim is Agnes Grey.

"*B*" is for *Burglar* has 26 chapters, one for each alphabet letter. Although not in all of them, this chapter structure can be found in other novels of the series (See for instance: "*O*" is for *Outlaw* and "*Q*" is for *Quarry*).

We have also a nod to the letter 'B' in "*B*" is for *Burglar*, at page 24, Kinsey stands at Elaine Boldt's apartment door: "I waited, staring down at the welcome mat. The letter B was defined in dark bristles, surrounded by bristles in a lighter shade."

In the same novel, at Page 129, Kinsey asks Mike, the punker, if he had seen a grocery bag inside the Grice's house at the time of the crime "it was one of those brown paper bags from Alpha Beta."

A series is composed of several books and this fact allows to develop along narration elements beyond each book, and so in a sense to expand the narrative horizon of each single novel. By her decision of writing a series Grafton has opened herself the alphabet playing field, which is one of her peculiarities, and she can thus give clues for the reader to understand before he has started reading.

3.2 Hybridisation

In addition to the intertextual references in Connelly's novels it is also made reference to other art fields: painting, and music.

3.2.1 Painting

We have seen above that three mainstream masterpieces are described in *The Black Echo*.

Edward Munch, *The Scream*.

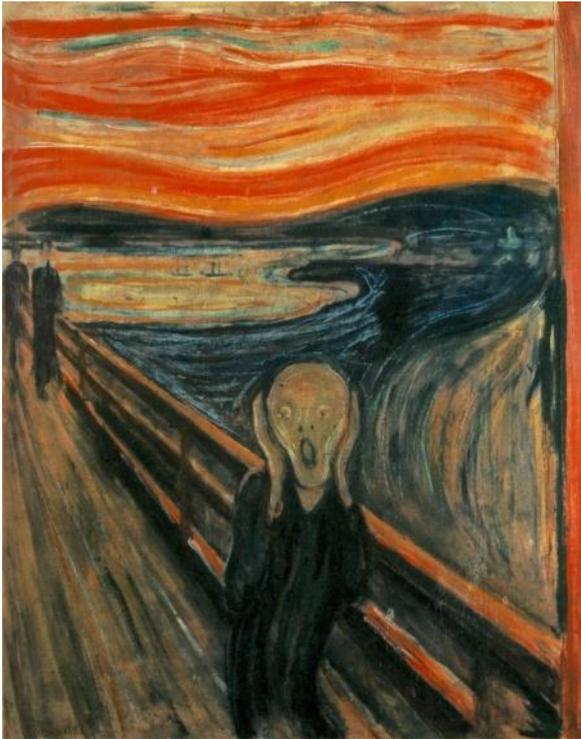


Figure 8: Edward Munch's *The Scream*. (Ibiblio website)

Munch's painting shows three characters, on the foreground is represented a distorted person dressed in black, his or her eyes bulging, the mouth is open to scream, and the head is being held between the palms of the hands. In the left background, two black ghostly figures at distance seem to recede.

“The tunnel was blurred, forbidden darkness, like the ghastly mouth in Edvard [sic] Munch's painting *The Scream*.” (72)

For the Vietnam infantry tunnel-rat, who has to go down to secure it, the opening of the tunnel is something horrid, something that we will see is linked to Harry's traumatic experience in the war and to his archaic subconscious terrors.

Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*



Figure 9: *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch. (Wikipedia website)

The character of Harry Bosch is named after the famous Hieronymus Bosch, the 15th century Dutch painter, whose masterpiece is the triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights* today in the Prado Museum in Madrid. *Paradise* is represented on the left panel, *Humanity before the Flood* on the central panel, and a nightmarish description of *Hell* on the right panel.

A three parts print of the painting is hanging in Harry's hallway. We are given more details in Part III, when Harry notices that Eleanor is looking at it and asks him if he is related to the painter.

'When I saw that was your full name I wondered if—'

'No relation, he said. My mother, she just liked his stuff. I guess 'cause of the last name. She sent the print to me once. Said ... that it reminded her of Los Angeles. All the crazy people.' (196)

There are many different theories about the meaning of the painting which nevertheless remains enigmatic. For Harry Bosch's pessimistic point of view, *Hell* symbolises the nightmarish dystopic reality of Los Angeles.

Edward Hopper's Nighthawks



Figure 10: *Nighthawks* by Edward Hopper. (Artic website)

A print of Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks* hangs "above the couch" in Eleanor's apartment. The print is framed in black and depicts in garish colours a diner at night lit by bright neon lamps, which were a novelty in 1942. In it are three customers and the barman who is dressed in white on the right behind the counter. The first and leftmost customer is represented from behind and faces a man and a woman sitting side by side at the bar counter. There is a strong impression of isolation and loneliness. Harry Bosch does not know yet that the picture is the symbol of Eleanor's dark and hidden secret but has an intuition: "the print, with its stark dark hues and shadows, did not fit in the apartment" (222).

3.2.2 Music

On page 67 of *The Black Echo* we learn that once Harry Bosch has paid his mortgage of \$1400 per month, "the only thing he spent money on were food, booze, and Jazz." Jazz Music is thus one of the basic elements of life for Bosch, and along the narration of *The Black Echo* five tracks are cited and they help to create the atmosphere intended for scenes: *Soul Eyes* by John Coltrane, in Part I; Saxophone CDs by Sonny Rollins, Frank Morgan, and Branford Marsalis, in Part III; *Falling in Love with Jazz* by Sonny Rollins, in Part IV; *502 Blues* by Wayne Shorter in Part V; and *Purple Haze* by Jimmy Hendrix in Part VI.

3.3 Humour, Parody, and Caricature

Funny and comic effects are very important to render novels attractive to the reader, and Sue Grafton is the one that makes greater use of humour in her novels. She manages a graduation of comic characters and situations from those who cause the reader just to smile up to those frankly funny. Grafton writes openly about her use of humour:

A touch of humour is a nice addition to the mix, lightening the mood and allowing the reader momentary relief from the tensions implicit in the process. (*Kinsey and Me*, Prologue, xii).

On the other hand, in Connelly's novels, and especially in *The Black Echo*, the atmosphere is much heavier, his characters are darker, and we could say that while Kinsey Millhone is a nice, lovable, sociable person. Harry Bosch is a solitary, contrary, confrontational character. However although less than Grafton, Connelly too, in his novels, makes use of humour.

The terms definitions in this section are coming from the Oxford Dictionary website. The term humour is defined as "The quality of being amusing or comic," and humour is a wider category that includes: caricature, parody, and irony.

Caricature is "the description, or imitation of a person in which certain striking characteristics are exaggerated in order to create a comic or grotesque effect." And we could say that the parody, in literature, is a caricature of the style of a particular writer, artist, or genre. The last term is irony: "The expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite." So we can say that at the base of humour plays the difference between what happens and what was expected. This is obtained in caricature and parody by exaggeration, and in irony by contrast.

3.3.1 Comic Characters

Grafton's heroine, Kinsey Millhone, is a kind of tomboy-ish 'anti-feminine' stereotype and self-deprecating character. She is not much interested in her looks, as can be seen, for instance, in "*G* is for Gumshoe", when she says that "If I were asked to rate my looks on a scale of one to ten, I wouldn't. [...] I seldom wear makeup, so whatever I look first thing in the morning [...] remains consistent as the day wears on" (2). For Kinsey practical comes before beautiful as we can see in "*B* is for Burglar", where we have the following dialogue between Julia Ochsner and Kinsey Millhone about her hair-cut:

‘[...] What do you call that haircut?’

I glanced at myself in the rearview mirror. ‘I guess I don’t call it anything. I do that myself with nail scissors every six weeks. [...] Why, do you think it looks bad?’

‘I don’t know yet. It probably suits [...].’ (31)

Her haircut is a recurring target of comments in the novels as can also be seen in “*G*” is for *Gumshoe*: “My usual practice is to crop my own mop every six weeks or so with a pair of nail scissors. This [...] because I’m too cheap to pay twenty-eight bucks in a beauty salon” (2).

Kinsey does not usually wear dresses and the following example taken from Chapter 19 is a good comment about her attitude. In it Kinsey receives through the post the articles that were left in her car when she crashed it into an irrigation channel. She picks her black “all-purpose dress” (227), which appears to be in ‘better conditions’ than she thought. It was “moderately encrusted with mold, though it did smell of swamp gas, a scent that hovered somewhere between spoiled egg and toilet bowls.” This dialogue follows:

Dietz caught one whiff and turned to me... ‘What is that? Good God...’

‘This is my best dress’ I said. ‘I just need to throw it in the wash and it’ll be fine.’(227)

This is the very same dress she describes earlier in the novel, on page 51-52, “[...] I unzipped the duffel and removed my all-purpose dress. [...] This faithful garment is the only dress I own, but it goes anyplace. It’s black, collarless, with long sleeves and a zipper down the back, made of some slithery, miracle fabric that takes unlimited abuse.”

The dress is a garment that symbolises the feminine cliché, especially in the case of the iconic LBD (little black dress) party dress which is linked to seduction, yet interestingly Grafton uses the same to debunk this stereotype.

Her attitude towards food is also the target for comic, self-deprecating comments as can be seen in “*B*” is for *Burglar*, when she goes into an unnamed, but identifiable, fast-food restaurant: “I could have hollered my order into a clown’s mouth and eaten in the car as I drove, but I wanted to show I had class. I wolfed down a cheeseburger, fries and a Coke for a dollar sixty-nine and was back to the streets again in seven minutes flat” (72). Similarly in “*G*” is for *Gumshoe*, when together with Robert Dietz they have stopped at an Indian restaurant, and Kinsey comments: “I wolfed the food, slowing only long enough to suck

down another cold beer. Everything was excellent, the sort of flavours that make you whimper” (116).

As the anti-feminine stereotype she represents, Kinsey Millhone recoils to apply traditional womanly and motherly values.

For instance in “*G*” is for *Gumshoe* at one point Kinsey persuades Neil, a man, to propose to her friend, Vera, which he does, but this not what Vera was expecting. We have the following dialogue between Kinsey and Vera:

‘What I’m I going to doooo?’ she wailed into my right ear.
‘You might think about getting married,’ I suggested helpfully.
‘I caaaaan’t.’
‘Of course you can, Vera. People do it every day.’
‘I’m too old [...] and he says he wants kids.’
I could feel a laugh bubble up, but I resisted the urge to make a flip remark. I said mothering things, ‘There, there’ and ‘It’s all right.’ Remarkably, it seemed to work. (259)

Here again the comic that comes across is the exaggeration of the caricature. But the attitude towards child bearing and the ‘motherly things,’ which are contrary to her inner feelings, and that Kinsey forces herself to say, also carries its part of humour.

When Irene Gersh asks her to bring back her mother to Santa Teresa, Kinsey comments. “What really bugged me was the suspicion that nobody would have even *suggested* a boy detective to do likewise. [...] why does everybody assume women are so nurturing? My maternal instincts were extinguished with my Betsy Wetsy doll” (78-79).

Kinsey’s attitude to children and to what is related to them, can also be found for instance in “*B*” is for *Burglar*, when Kinsey meets Charmaine Makowski, the condominium’s janitor’s wife, in Boca Raton, FL. The tone is humoristic. Having been exercising, she is described as “still winded, her cheek tinted pink by the effort. She was in her early forties, wearing a bright yellow sweat suit, her belly protruding in pregnancy. She looked like a ripe Florida grapefruit” (22-23). Charmaine uses dark humour to describe the situation: “I thought it was a tumour ‘till it stated to kick.” And later in the book, we learn that she “had given birth to a nine-pound nine-ounce boy the night before and wanted everyone to know that she never expected to sit down again” (132). We do not find here the same sympathy she shows for the old characters we will see below.

Many of us have been stuck in a train or in an aeroplane for a few hours with children running riot and their useless parents. On page 181, Kinsey is flying back from Florida to California and this part exemplifies the situation:

It was one of those lurching flights with sudden inexplicable drops in altitude [...] Some woman behind me had two kids of the whining and screeching sort and she spent most of the flight having long ineffectual chats with them about their behaviour. 'Kyle honey, 'member mommy told you she didn't want you to bite Brett because it hurts Brett [...]' I thought a quick chop in the ear would go a long way towards parent effectiveness training.

Apart from Kinsey Millhone, a comic character herself, we have many other comic characters and among them Kinsey seems to have special humour, sympathy and compassion for the old ones, maybe because old age is in itself already tragic. We have numerous examples of this in both novels as, for instance, the description of an old lady, Julia Ochsner, in "*B*" is for *Burglar*:

The woman whom I helped into the front seat of the car had hobbled out of the laundry room with a cane. She was small with a dowager's hump the size of a backpack and off-white hair that stood out around her head like dandelion fuzz. Her face was soft and withered as an apple doll and arthritis had twisted her hands into grotesque shapes. [...] She was wearing a housedress that seemed to hang on her bony frame and her ankles were wrapped in Ace bandages. (31)

Here the description is mostly caricatural. The old lady "hobbles out of the laundry room," and has "a dowagers' hump the size of a backpack." Grafton also uses a simile when she compares the halo of the old woman hair to "a dandelion fuzz around her head." The last sentence interrupts the flow of exaggerations with two realistic details: her housedress "hangs on her bony frame", and her ankles are "wrapped in Ace bandages," that give a more serious and considerate tonality to the description.

Later on, in the same novel, Mrs Snyder, a very old lady, is also portrayed:

Mrs Snyder appeared, moving a walker in front of her. She was small and frail and her jaw worked incessantly, [...]. 'Would you like to sit here?' I asked her.

She surveyed the wall with rheumy eyes, trying to discover the source of the sound. Her head was small, like a little pumpkin off the vine too long, looking shrunken from some interior suffering. Her eyes were narrow inverted V's and one tooth protruded from her lower gum like a candle wick. She seemed confused. [...] I watched her uncomfortably. She continued to stand there, looking puzzled

and dismayed, like a baby who has learned to pull himself up on the sides of a crib, but hasn't figured how to sit down again. (61)

Mrs Snyder appears to be in much worse state than Julia Ocshner. The description is more realistic and the comic is obtained by diminishing her humanity and comparing her to objects by using simile constructions. So her small head was "like a small pumpkin [...], looking shrunken [, and] one tooth protruded from her lower gum like a candle wick." We feel nevertheless Grafton's sympathy as she, at once, reduces the impact of the first simile by adding that the pumpkin "looks shrunken from some interior suffering." Kinsey expresses her feeling of unease at the old lady presence: "I watched her uncomfortably." As often with Grafton the last line sets the global tone of the section expressing all the apparent helplessness of the situation and showing Kinsey's psychological sensitivity, by comparing Mrs Snyders to a "baby who has learned to pull himself up [...] but hasn't figured how to sit up again."

In the same chapter, May Snyder's husband is rather irritated by her and her uselessness: "She can't hear good [...] Got tintypes [tinnitus] of the ear and all she can see is living shapes" (63). [...] "She hasn't a faculty left. [...] She gets on my nerves [...] I'd just soon live with a side meat" (64). But very surprisingly in the last lines of the last chapter in the book Kinsey states: "I [...] started yelling for help. It was May Snyder who finally heard me and called the cops" (228), and thus the old lady is vindicated as she was much more alert than it seemed.

Here Kinsey shows insight and psychological subtlety when she comments on the old couple: "[Mr Snyder's] hovering had a tender quality about it in spite of what he said. In any event she didn't seem aware of his aggravation or his minor tyrannies" (64).

The next example of old character, we are going to consider, is that of Ernie taken from "*G is for Gumshoe*":

The man in the doorway was [...] a frail old fellow with an air of shuffling indecision. He was thin and bent, his shoulder narrows, his fingers twisted with arthritis. He wore a much-used plaid flannel shirt, thin at the elbows, and a pair of pants that came halfway up his chest. [...] His voice was a pastel blend of raspiness and tremor. (299)

In this example Grafton creates a sense of comic by progressively adding up realistic strokes that end up creating a grotesque character. In a familiar way, the old man is called an “old fellow” and he doesn’t seem to be very alert as he has an “air of shuffling indecision.” His garments are both stereotypical (the worn out “plaid flannel shirt”) and embarrassing “pants coming halfway up his chest.” The last sentence nevertheless points to the vulnerability of the character.

Later on, in the next chapter, when the hired killer, Mark Messinger, a silenced gun in his hand, kicked the front door open and shot Patrick Bronfen dead, he then “turned and pointed the gun at [Ernie] [...] The old fellow had pivoted and was shuffling in panic. I could hear his howls echo down the hall, as frail and helpless as a child’s” (312). Here again, in Grafton, the comic strokes mix with reference to the endearing feebleness and brittleness of old people.

Harry Pitts is another old and recurring comic character. He also doubles as a kind of substitute father to Kinsey, as her “debonair eighty-one-year-old landlord” (81). He can be found in “*B* is for Burglar” where Kinsey describes him as an oxymoronic “octogenarian ‘hunk.’” He is very protective of Kinsey as can be seen in “*G* is for gumshoe:

When I opened the front door, the alarm system went off. [...] Henry’s back door banged open and he came running out with a meat cleaver in the hand. All he has on was a pair of turquoise briefs [...]. (155)

All the comic of this short scene lays in Harry’s exaggerated reaction and the contrast between his intended aggressiveness, and the ineffectiveness and ridicule of his near nakedness.

Kinsey’s maternal substitute is Rosy also a comic recurring character. She is a tavern owner and is described in “*B* is for Burglar:

Rosy herself is probably sixty-five, Hungarian, short, and top-heavy, a creature of muumuus and hennaed hair growing low on her forehead. She wears lipstick in a burnt-orange shade that usually exceeds the actual shape of her mouth [...] She uses a brown eyebrow pencil lavishly, making her eyes look stern and reproachful. (90)

Rosy’s description is all in the exaggeration of the caricature. And as usual the last sentence gives away a personal character trait of Rosy’s, the fact, that she looks “stern and

reproachful”. Which corresponds with Rosy acting as Kinsey’s surrogate mother. Right like a real mother, Rosy can hold a grudge and scold: “‘You didn’t come in for a week so I figured you was mad at me,’ she said. ‘I bet you been eating junk, right? [...] Here’s what you are gonna get ’” (90). A bully, Rosy as usual decides what Kinsey is going to eat: “She marched away then, her back straight, her hair the color of tangerine peels. Her rudeness sometimes has an eccentric charm to it, but it’s just as often simply irritating, something you have to endure if you want to eat Rosie’s meals” (91).

Among her other recurring comic characters we have, for instance, one of her friends Vera Lipton.

[Her] office is located in the centre of a warren of cubicles separating adjusters. [...] Vera’s niche is identifiable by the pall of smoke hovering above the shoulder-high partitions. She’s the only one in the company that smokes and she does so with vigour. [...] She’s also addicted to Coca-Cola and she usually has a row of empty bottles marching around her desk. [...] She’s thirty-six, and single, and she collects men with ease, though none of them seems to suit her.” (*“B” is for Burglar*, 67)

Vera’s portrayal is also in the caricatural tone. Her office space can be identified by the “pall of smoke hovering over it” as she is the only one who smokes, “and does so with vigour.”

When Vera meets time Robert Dietz, the gumshoe for the first, and Kinsey comments: “It was amusing to watch them size each other up. Unknown to Vera, Dietz was viewing her as a potential assassin while I suspect she was evaluating his qualifications for a roll in the hay” (*“G” is for Gumshoe*, 141).

We have seen, up to this point, many of Grafton’s caricatural characters. However in *“G” is for Gumshoe*, Grafton introduces two parodic characters—Robert Dietz and Mark Messinger, the hired killer.

Robert Dietz, the gumshoe, is a tough guy and a strange mix of macho man and naïve ‘James Bond’ boy—as opposed to the stereotypical Bond Girl.

Dietz’s sexual appeal is apparent from the very first description when Kinsey awakes in her hospital bed after her car accident and sees: “a man, leaning against the wall, arms folded to his chest. [...] Late forties. Five ten, maybe 170, in jeans, cow-boy boots, and a tweed

sport coat [...] watching me with expressionless gray eyes. 'I'm Dietz.' Husky voice in the middle range" (107). Later Kinsey contrasts him with the ascetic qualities of Henry Pitts, her landlord, and she describes him as "compact, muscular, [...] a pit bull of a man with thick chest and brazen manners, his face marked by life [...] restless and energetic, the air around him charged with a curious tension" (123).

Dietz drives a "bright red Porsche" (109), with "determination [...] a real A-type personality." (139) He is in charge and usually pays the restaurant bill, and he doesn't want to charge Kinsey for helping her: "I'm doing this for fun." He is very confident in his capacities, as we can see in the following scene where Dietz wants to smoke a cigarette and asks kindly to Kinsey if this is going to inconvenience her: "Probably," is Kinsey's answer. His reaction is surprising, as he opens the car window and throws away his Zippo lighter and his packet of Winston cigarettes.

I stared at him, laughing uncomfortably. "What are you *doing*?"

"I quit smoking."

"Just like that?"

He said, "I can do anything." (111)

Later, during the car journey back to Santa Teresa, they discuss the case and Dietz says that his job is to look after Kinsey.

[Kinsey:] And what's my responsibility in all this?

[Dietz:] We'll talk about that in the morning. Most of what I want is 'obedience without whining.' Very few women master it. (120)

Dietz, a real professional, takes his job very seriously: "[He] had gone out first to check the car and scan the street. He returned, motioning me forward. He walked slightly in front of me, his stride brisk, his eyes alert as we traversed the fifty paces to his Porsche" (138). Later, he comes to the passenger side and opens Kinsey's door, his "gaze sweeping the parking lot. He took [Kinsey's] elbow, walking [her] rapidly across." Kinsey comments on the ridicule of the situation: "I wanted to laugh. I felt like having a parent march you up to your room" (139).

He is a controlling personality and Kinsey is sometimes put off: "I wasn't famous for letting guys tell me what to do and I was hoping I wouldn't get used to" (139).

In chapter 19, when Kinsey and Dietz have come back home from the hospital where Agnes Gray has died, suddenly: “Sexuality stirred the air like the blades of a fan. Exhaustion fell away. [...] I could feel the lick of it along my legs, seeping through my clothes: something ancient, something dark, humankind’s antidote to death” (224-225). High time for James Bond boy to show his manly skills and for Kinsey to ‘get laid’, and the narration, in a corny and suggestive manner, goes on to the obvious climax.

For Kinsey, Robert Dietz’s only drawback is that he likes country western music, a music style Kinsey is not very much into as she lets us know: “He spotted the radio on the kitchen counter and turned it on, tuning in a country-western song with a lot of major chords and rocking horse rhythm that would probably drive me mad” (132). Later on in the book “At six o’clock, [...] Dietz was moving downstairs. He had the radio on and I caught strains of a Tammy Wynette tune poignant enough to rip your heart out” (226).

Here too the stereotypes are inverted as the more romantic of the two should rather have been Kinsey.

The second parodic character in the novel is Mark Messinger who has been hired to kill Kinsey Millhone. In the novel he has the role of the James-Bond’s nemesis, but he is much more a psychopath than a cold professional hit-man and he is more interested the chase than in the kill.

He is the anti-Dietz. He is described by Dietz as “a cut-rate killer. Fifteen hundred bucks” (126). But Mark Messinger is not really interested in money. He has made it rich from crime, enjoys luxurious hotels, and drives a “yellow Rolls Royce: walnut dashboard, leather upholstery” (313). As we saw previously, he materializes progressively in the book, usually in company of his five year old son that he has abducted. From the first instance of apparition in company of his young child at the beginning to the devilish last attempt on Kinsey’s life, Messinger will keep appearing and disappearing all along the novel up to the last scene. His second murder attempt on Kinsey is almost successful, as her car is wrecked and she is hospital and so she will feel compelled to call Robert Dietz for help.

The third time Mark Messenger attempts on Kinsey’s life he is in a UPS uniform. The situation is tragically comical as, like a snake charmer he seems to have a kind of magnetic power on Kinsey, to her he appears like a kind of sexy fallen angel:

He was a big man, muscular, clean-shaven, with blond curly hair, stark blue eyes in a tan face, full mouth curving into dimpled cheeks. I thought I must know him because he seemed glad to see me, his eyes soft, the look on his face both sensual and warm. He moved nearer, bending toward me, almost as if he meant to kiss me. [...] I felt myself drawing back perplexed. Behind me, wood snapped like a tree being cracked by lightning. I could see his face suffuse with heat, like a lover at the moment of his climax. (167)

The man had said in a “husky voice: [...] ‘You are mine, babe.’—his tone possessive, secretive” (168-169). We now know that what motivates him is not the money but the quarry, and we will learn, later in the novel, by Messinger himself: “The money doesn’t mean that much. When you do what you love, you’d do it for free, I’m I right?” (316) Thus ironically the villain, Mark Messinger, seem to share, in a twisted way, a common ethical approach to work as the two heroes, Kinsey Millhone, and Robert Dietz.

Contrasting with Grafton’s characters, Michael Connelly’s ones are often parodic.

What Connelly usually parodies is the animated cartoon genre. In *The Black Echo*, the first of these characters is Irvin Irving the Internal Affairs Deputy Chief, who is assisted by his two ‘goons’ Pierce Lewis and Don Clarke, and later, at the end of the novel, Martin B. Avery III, the owner of the Beverly hills Safe & Lock. By having introduced these characters as if they were cartoons Connelly helps the reader to put a distance between them and reality so that they are in a sense non-real. This way, when at the end of the novel, during the final bank heist, most of them are killed the situation is much de-dramatized.

Deputy Chief Irvin Irving is described here below:

[He] sat at his desk, bruxing his teeth and working the muscles of his jaws into two hard rubber balls. [...] this clenching and gnashing of teeth was his habit when disturbed or in solitary, contemplative moods. As a result, the musculature of his jaw had become the most pronounced feature of his face. When looked at head-on, Irving’s jawline was actually wider than his ears. [...] He looked like a flying jaw, as though his powerful musculature could crush marbles. [...] It was an image that helped overcome [...] his silly name. [...] And could only aid him along his long-planned ascendancy to the chief’s office on the sixth floor. (90)

Pierce Lewis and Don Clarke are two detectives working on the case for Irvin Irving, and they are Harry Bosch’s archenemies. Their apish figure is presented by Bosch: “Each man

was built wide and low to the ground for better handling. Each had a slightly forward tilt to his body, as if he were wading to sea, crashing through the breakers with his face” (94). Previously, Harry Bosch had already been investigated by the same Lewis and Clarke which led to his coming to the Hollywood Division, and he comments about this with his police partner Jerry Edgar: “Well, Jed, it looks like we might be off on a Lewis and Clarke expedition here. I haven’t seen the great explorers on the move since they sent me on a no-expense-paid vacation to Mexico.” Here, Bosch compares them to the much more famous Lewis and Clarke expedition that was ordered by President Thomas Jefferson and was intended to explore the territories acquired from France, with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and to open a route to the Pacific Ocean.

The two I.A. agents will be the target of Harry’s revenge in a funny but cruel scene in Part V (265). Harry has found out that his phone has been ‘bugged’ and finds the corresponding tape-recorder hidden under his water meter. At once, he suspects the two I.A. agents. He surprises them in their car as they are watching his house and ties them around a palm tree with their own cuffs, “They worked their way up into standing positions, the palm tree between them. They looked like two grown men caught playing ring-around-the-rosy” (266). He then throws the key in the policemen’s car and “yanks [Clarke’s] pants and boxer shorts to his ankles” (271), before leaving them to their own devices.

Another cartoonish character is Martin B. Avery III—the father of Martin B. Avery IV—the owner of Beverly Hills Safe & Locks in which the last heist takes place.

Here Connelly pokes fun to the tradition of rich Americans to present themselves as dynasties by giving to the son the same forename as the father and adding a numeral, this effect is enhanced by the fact that the name is itself made ludicrous by its proximity with that of Frederick Bean ‘Tex’ Avery, the famous cartoonist who was born in Texas—hence ‘Tex’. We can also notice that the middle name initial B. has been kept.

At the end of the novel Lewis and Clarke decide to intervene at the very worst moment. Harry and Eleanor are warned by an FBI agent, Hanlon, through the radio:

‘White males, [...] in suits, worn and wrinkled, [...] white shirts [...] I’d say these guys were cops.’

‘Heckle and Jeckle?’ Eleanor said.

‘Lewis and Clarke. It’s gotta be them.’

‘What are they doing here?’ (379-380)

Heckle and Jeckle, a pair of yellow-billed magpies, are animated cartoon characters created by Paul Terry, and contemporary to Tex Avery’s (Wikipedia).



Figure 11: Paul Terry’s Heckle and Jeckle (Wikipedia)

In the last part the parody borrows from the early silent movies as from his binoculars Harry contemplates at a remove the whole scene:

[It] was like in a movie to Bosch. An old movie on a TV set with the sound turned down. The slowly opening vault door, with its widening band of blackness inside, gave the picture an ethereal, almost underwater quality, a slow-motion inevitability. (381)

“Almost immediately [...], Lewis jerked backwards” dead, while Clarke tried “to jump away from the line of fire.” It was useless and “His body slammed into Avery and both men fell to the marble floor” (381).

We have seen above that the tragic in the situation is rather subdued by the fact that the characters were considered by the reader more like cartoons than human characters.

In *The Narrows* we have another example of a parodic situation and characters.

Harry Bosch and Rachel Walling drive from Las Vegas to Clear Nevada: “We kept going and we were rewarded by another [...] sign [...] reading simply BROTHELS” (279). They visit a brothel called Tawny’s High Five where Harry interviews a prostitute, Tammy, in her room when suddenly the door opens up and: “[t]here were two men. They were big [...] and their black T-shirts were completely carved up with jailhouse ink” (279).—They are bikers in charge of the brothel security—“‘What’s up, Doc?’(Phrase website) said the bigger one ” (292).

The tone remains bouncy, and funny all along as Harry gets roughed up and the thug ejects him through the back door onto the rocky ground outside, before asking him again: “I said, what’s up, Doc? You got business here?” (293).

It is interesting to point out that here too, a reference is made to animated cartoons, because ‘Eh, What’s up Doc?’—together with ‘That’s All Folks!’—is one of Bugs Bunny’s –Tex Avery’s best-known character— lines, he utters “while nonchalantly chewing on a carrot” (Phrases website).

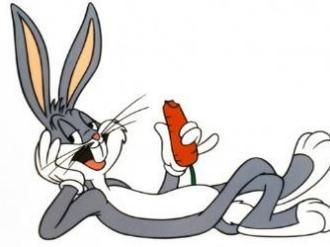


Figure 12: Bugs Bunny (Neatorama website)

Rachel intervenes by shooting twice in the air and thus makes the difference saving Harry from the fists of the “steroid boys” (294). The chapter ends with the same tone, as the bikers are dismissed by Rachel with an ironic: “Good, make sure you put on your helmets, gentlemen.” For which, she receives the following ‘polite’ reply:

Without looking back the bigger man raised a brawny arm and shot us a bird [offers his middle finger] as he walked. The smaller big man saw this and did the same.

Sue Grafton and Michael Connelly do not shirk from using single effect sketches as for instance with the *qui-pro-quo* in “*G*” is for *Gumshoe* when Agnes Gray has run away from the nursing home, and Kinsey, Dietz and the Gershes have searched her a whole day. They end up at the hospital’s ER where Agnes has been taken. Agnes is dead but her daughter, Mrs Gersh, doesn’t know yet:

‘Mrs Gersh? I’m doctor Stackhouse.’ He and Irene shook hands and then he leaned against the desk.
‘I’m afraid we lost her.’
‘Oh for God’s sake,’ Irene snapped. ‘Can’t anybody keep track of her?’
Uh-oh, I thought, Irene wasn’t getting it [...]. (218)

We have an example of medical humour in *The Black Echo* when Harry Bosch is present at William Meadow’s autopsy performed by Dr Jesus Salazar. Harry is thoughtful and doesn’t seem to pay attention until Salazar says: “‘The external genitalia and vagina are unremarkable.’ Bosch turned around. Salazar [...] said, ‘Coroner’s humour. Just wanted to see if you were listening, Harry’” (61).

In *The Black Echo* we have an example of the use of black humour in a scene set during the Vietnam War. Bosch and Meadows are sent into a tunnel but, after a while, only Bosch comes out. The C-4 charges explode and everybody thinks Meadows is dead. Two days later

another company goes to the same village and, to check the tunnels, they send rats who find Meadows “sitting like a Buddha in one of the passageways. [...] Talking gibberish. Not making sense, [...] but okay” (195). Meadows doesn’t want to come out of the tunnel, so they have to drag him out. “Once in daylight they saw he was wearing a necklace of [33] human ears. Strung with his tags” (195). When, later, somebody asks Bosch why Meadows had let one of the VC “keep an ear” (196). The punch-line is Bosch’s chilling answer that “Meadows let them all keep an ear” (196).

Here the joke plays on the misunderstanding and the degree of horror, by thinking of the two ears per killed enemy the number of human beings killed is minimum. But the punch-line insists on the fact that Meadows has really gone the long way to the most unreasonable extreme.

In “*G*” is for *Gumshoe* Grafton places two short sides-stories anecdotes which bring in a societal point of view. The first pokes fun at Reagan’s Neoliberal America finance people and takes place at the beginning of Chapter 7. It tells of Kinsey trying to sleep but overhearing a couple in the room next to hers. Drunk, they have parked their “late-model Cadillac,” (86) in the Motel’s parking lot at 1:00 A.M., and “the bedframe begun to thump relentlessly against the adjoining wall like a kid drumming his heels” (86-87). To make it short, at 4:45 A.M., Kinsey “gives up hope of going back to sleep” (87), takes a shower and as dresses as “[the woman] was beginning to yodel and he [the man] was yipping like a fox.” (87) Later, to her surprise, Kinsey sees the lovers emerging from their room. “They were both in their fifties, a hundred pound overweight [...] discussing interest rates and short-term Treasury securities” (91). The sketch ends on a punch-line: “The slogan painted on the Cadillac’s rear window read: JUST MERGED” (91).

The second sketch is also about a couple, a young couple, who doesn’t seem to start well in life, and it is ironic and sourly funny. It takes place at the end of Chapter 23. Kinsey and Dietz are at the recorder division of county clerk’s office and they see ‘one’ couple who are getting a marriage licence:

The husband to-be was one of those skinny guys with a narrow butt and tattoos all up and down his arms. The bride was twice his size and so pregnant she was already in her Lamaze. She clung to the counter, her face damp with perspiration, panting heavily while the clerk completed all the papers in haste. (272)

The clerk offers to get a wheel-chair but the woman “at the pinnacle of a contraction, shook her head mutely” (273). And the boy ignoring her plight says impatiently: “Judge Hopper’s waiting for us upstairs” (273). The clerk offers to ask the judge to come downstairs, but “the bride crept haltingly toward the door” (273). “The groom didn’t seem that distressed,” and he follows her “matching his pace to hers” (273). Here, too, we have a punch-line: “‘You’re not breathing right,’ he said crossly” (273).

Similarly to Grafton, Connelly also makes use of anecdotes which allow him to bring into the novel a societal point of view. For instance in *The Narrows*, Harry remembers when, at the time he was still living with his mother, they went on a vacation in the south, and they stopped at a gas station which had a WHITE water fountain and a COLORED water fountain:

And I just sort of went up to the one marked COLORED because I wanted to see what color the water was. Before I got to it my mom yanked me up and sort of explained things to me. (337)

We can ask ourselves about the usefulness of these anecdotes which do not add anything to the plot. Yet by this means, in a comic tone, the author can bring about to the attention of the reader serious societal subjects which add to the context of the novel.

Most crime novel readers seek diversion and entertainment and humour is a strong element to get to this result. For Sue Grafton the choice of writing hard-boiled novels is already a diversion as she writes in “An Eye for an I” (*Kinsey and Me*, 202): “[...] in a desire to liberate myself from the debilitating process of writing for television. I turned to the hard-boiled private eye novel for deliverance.” Her use of humour seems to be twofold, for the reader, of course, but also for her own pleasure. With Connelly things are more complex as we have less direct information about his writing process. His hero and his novels have a dark and pessimistic side which is not favourable to the comic, nevertheless if we take into account that he uses comic effects much less than Grafton and that the laughter he provokes is often desperate and mirthless, he also has his fair share of humour.

4 Conclusion

Cognitive and emotional features are the most easy to access as they are part of our consciousness and up to now we have mainly worked on the these two points of the corpus' novels, yet we have seen that Michel Picard brings psychology, and specifically the Freudian unconscious, into the literary game, and for him a good book is one where the three dimensions (cognitive, emotive, and subconscious) collaborate harmoniously. What of the psychological features in Connelly's and Grafton's novels?

In this conclusion we are going to try to develop this third point and take a first step towards the unconscious.

Contrary to Connelly, Sue Grafton has deemed important to give the public information about her own education and, having some notions of psychology, of the traumas of her childhood. Grafton was raised in an intellectual but dysfunctional family and lost her parents early and tragically. She describes them as "two alcoholics." (Kinsey and Me, 207)

Every morning my father downed two jiggers of whiskey and went to office. My mother similarly fortified, went to sleep on the couch. From the age of five onwards I was left to raise myself. [...] I lived in an atmosphere of apparent permissiveness. [...] there were few, if any limits placed on me. (207-8)

Grafton insists on the autobiographical quality of Kinsey Millhone, her heroine.

Kinsey is the person I would have been had I not married young and had children. [...] she is a stripped down version of my "self"—my shadow, my projection— [...] It's no accident that Kinsey's parents were killed when she was five. My father went in the army when I was three. He came back when I was five. And that's when the safety of my childhood begun to unravel. (209)

Kinsey is her alter-ego: "[O]ur sensibilities are the same. [...] I think of us as one soul in two bodies and she got the good one (5).

"La fille du père l'emporte [...] sur la fille de la mère," writes Picard (41) speaking of Colette but Grafton too seems to have focalised on the father model more then on the mother model. Her father C.W. Grafton was a municipal bond attorney and published three mystery novels, and "because of him," Grafton writes, "I developed a real passion for the genre" (4).

Michael Connelly is rather secretive and does not make much room for personal information. The one significant information made available is how he was encouraged by his father:

When I went home at 20 to tell my parents I don't want to be an engineer, I want to try and write books, I was braced for, 'That's not gonna happen.' But I didn't get that response, and maybe it was because of my dad's experience of having an artistic dream and having to put it aside. (See Lester)

So it appears that the 'father model' is important for both Grafton and Connelly.

Let us now put aside the authors and concentrate on the reader. Like Grafton who identified herself with the hard-boiled heroes of her early readings: "I was Mike Hammer. I was Sam Spade, Shell Scott, Philip Marlowe, and Lew Arc her (*Kinsey and Me, An Eye for an I*, 202), the reader will most likely identify with the heroes: Kinsey Millhone, and Harry Bosch.

Kinsey Millhone is an orphan, and in every novel she refers to the death of her parents. In "*B*" is for *Burglar* we learn that she was brought up by her aunt after her parent died (149), and similarly in "*G*" is for *Gumshoe*: "I was raised by my mother's sister. My folks were killed in a car accident and I went to live with her when I was five" (120). Kinsey has thus lived all her youth with her single aunt Virginia, who raised her estranged from the rest of her family, a family she will rediscover later in the series. She has two substitute parents, Rosy, the substitute mother, a Hungarian grumpy lady who owns a small restaurant and is thus linked to the nurturing role, and Harry Pitts, the substitute father. Harry is Kinsey's landlord and, like a grown up adolescent, she inhabits his one-car-converted garage. Harry has the stereotypical protective paternal role, as it is confirmed by the fact that we are made aware of Kinsey's sublimated Elektra complex² relationship, "We simply eye one another across that half century with a lively and considerable sexual interest that neither of us would dream of acting out" ("*B*" is for *Burglar*, 82).

Michael Connelly's hero, Harry Bosch, is an orphan, too. But, it will be no surprise that with Bosch things are much bleaker and traumatic than for Kinsey. His mother was a prostitute, who was murdered when he was 11. Instead of living with his family like Kinsey

² The unconscious tendency of a daughter to be attached to her father and hostile toward her mother. (Collins Dictionary website)

he is raised in foster homes and institutions, which in a sense he never leaves, as, after having been in the army, he joins the LAPD, and while in *The Narrows* he has retired and works as a private investigator, at the end of the novel he decides to “rejoin the cops” (363). It seems that with Bosch the parental role is taken by the institutions. However, we can point out that having no real family is also the mark of being free of obligations.

Kinsey lives in “converted single-car garage apartment.” (“*G* is for Gumshoe, 2) Chapter 1 begins on the 5th of May, Kinsey’s birthday (3), and Harry Pitts presents her, “in a gift-wrapped jeweler’s box,” the keys of the refurbished apartment, that had been “blown sky-high in an explosion” (2), in the previous novel. Kinsey is apprehensive of what Harry has done with it. Finally “the door, with its port-hole shaped window, swung open. [...] What I saw left me inarticulate. The entire apartment had the feeling of a ship’s interior” (4). The outside having been quickly dismissed: “two stories of cream-colored stucco with rounded corners,” Kinsey gives a detailed description of the new configuration of her tiny apartment. It is composed of a main ground floor room of “roughly 15 feet on a side,” and has a new vertical dimension, as in it, “now there was a sleeping loft above, accessible by way of a tiny spiral stair” (5), and “in the ceiling above the bed, there was a round shaft extending through the roof, capped with a clear Plexiglass skylight” (5).

This adult, or maybe we should say ‘adolescent’ house is reminiscent of the dens children build for themselves as Kinsey remembers that when she was a child she “created a little world for [herself] in a cardboard box, filled with blankets and pillows, lighted with a table lamp with a 60 watt bulb” (“*G* is for Grafton, 11).

Harry Bosch’s house, described at length in *The Black Echo*, is also special. Bosch lives in “A wood framed, one bedroom cantilever not much bigger than a Beverly Hills garage. It hung over the edge of the hill and was supported by three steel pylons at its midpoint” (66).

Here too the utilitarian, ‘just enough’ side is stressed. However the house commands a great view as from it “Bosch could look northeast across Burbank and Glendale. He could see the purple-hued mountains past Pasadena and Altadena” (66). The situation of the house can be likened to a kind



of mediaeval tower castle where like a knight at arms, “looking out on The Valley never failed to give Bosch a sense of power he could not explain to himself” (67).

Figure 13: An example of cantilevered house (Subtle Scandinavia website)

Suffering from insomnia, he often spends the night in what he calls “his watch chair” (67). Harry Bosch, a character always at war, keeps guard at night. He too, like Don Quixote, is different from the other characters, and in a sense lives in another reality.

Kinsey Millhone’s small apartment is an enclosed den in which she feels protected, while Harry Bosch’s house is a kind of mediaeval tower from which he can see from far away. The relation of each hero with his own living space seems to be stereotypical as for Kinsey it is the cosy interior that mirrors the feminine attitude to her home nest, while for Harry the male visual component and aggressiveness is added to his home which has something of the aerie.

The house, the home, is significant as we can see in Michel Picard’s essay *La Lecture Comme Jeu*, where he writes about Colette’s autobiographical work *La Maison de Claudine*, and he links her house description to the original ‘home archetype’ from which the hero of the novel exits, or tries to exit; the original home corresponds to the main archetype of confinement, and represents the shell out of which the reader confusedly intends to break out (33). For Carl Gustav Jung the house, the hearth, and the grave are linked with the notion of “threshold on the road to self” (See Buck).

After having considered the importance of the recurring element of the house/apartment in Connelly’s and Grafton’s novels, let us consider another significant element in Connelly’s *The Black Eco*: the tunnel and its dark mouth theme is always present.

The tunnel is a polysemic notion. It can be taken literally as, for instance, the big iron pipe that Sharkey was tagging when he found William Meadows’ body at the beginning of the novel, or for the Vietcong’s tunnels in which Meadows and Bosch, both tunnel-rats, fought, or for the galleries the robbers have dug to access the bank vault and into which Harry will jump trying to catch the them, in a kind of final descent into hell. They can also be taken metaphorically as they represents the dystopic Los-Angeles world or the underworld into which criminal characters Meadows, Sharkey and Rourke, the corrupt FBI agent, lose themselves. Their entrance is appalling, as represented by the gaping maw of the

Sharkey's tag letter 'S' which has no teeth although Harry Bosch can "sense them"(29), and the horror they produced compared to *the Scream*, the picture by E. Munch. Harry Bosch in many flashbacks and nightmares along the novel remembers of the times he went down into the tunnels. Thus for Harry the tunnel and its opening is also linked to something horrid, something that can be linked to Harry's archaic subconscious terrors.

Earth and underground are connected to the feminine symbolism, Picard speaks of the "[m]ère terrible chtonienne mortifère." (38) We have seen above that Harry's mother was a prostitute and was murdered so she is in a sense linked to death.

In Part I, Harry tells of a time in Vietnam he was sent to find a 'virgin' soldier that had gone in a tunnel expedition for the first time—a kind of rite of passage, but had not come back. Bosch goes down together with Meadows but they have to split and he finds himself alone in a tunnel which is "as warm as a steaming bath. The tunnel smelled damp and faintly like a latrine" (74).

A little later, Harry smells the putrefying body of the dead soldier before seeing it, he is sitting covered in blood and has been emasculated, his testes lying in the open palm one of the dead man's hands. "The pants were torn open and Crofton looked as though he had been mauled by a wild animal" (75).

The description is closely linked to that of the female genitalia and the realisation of the archaic fear of castration, of the 'vagina dentata,' and of having one's penis 'devoured'. This is confirmed by the fact that in the tunnel Harry is going to experience claustrophobia, panic, and a form of regression:

He cupped his hands over his mouth and tried to slow his gasping for air. It didn't work. He was losing it. He was panicking. [...] The walls of the tunnel were closing tighter on him. [...] Bosch kicked at the clay walls of the tunnel and curled into a fetal position. The sweat in his eyes was replaced by tears. At first they came silently, but soon his sobs racked his entire body [...]. (75)

We can appreciate the fact that the tunnel image is used differently by Connelly from its simplest literal meaning up to the most complex metaphors and deeper down to the psychological interpretations linked to the unconscious.

After this short development on two psychological point linked to the subconscious of our two heroes, Kinsey and Harry, let us conclude properly.

For Picard the literary quality of a novel is defined when in the ludic act of reading, the reader encounters: subversion within the limits of conformity, rich and polysemic meaning, and simulation (modélisation) of a fictional experience (266).

How can we qualify the four novels of the corpus?

Because of its complexity and polysemicity the book that seems to best fit the above definition is Connelly's *The Black Echo*. In it we can find many criminal plots: the inquiry on the death of William Meadows, the inquiry on the first bank heist, the enquiry on the second bank heist, the enquiry on Harry Bosch by the Internal Affairs, and Sharkey's story—linked to underage prostitution. We have the stories of William Meadows, and Michael Scarletti in Vietnam, and the wider one of Harry Bosch. We have the love story between Harry and Eleanor and its final twist. And last but not least, all along the narration we have the story of the building of the Vietnam's Veterans Memorial replica in Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery and its inauguration on Memorial Day at the end of the novel which helps to bring memorial work and closure to Harry Bosch, and eventually to the reader who identifies with him.

Comparatively the three other books are thinner, less complex. For instance reading *The Narrows* after the *Black Echo* is a little disappointing as it is more a "run of the mill" crime novel.

Although her literary skills are not that of Michael Connelly, surprisingly pleasure can be attained in reading Grafton's two novels. Between them there is a progression as the author seems to perfect her skills, and Grafton manages to create, an endearing heroine with good craftsmanship and humour.

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ANNEX

Annex: Figures

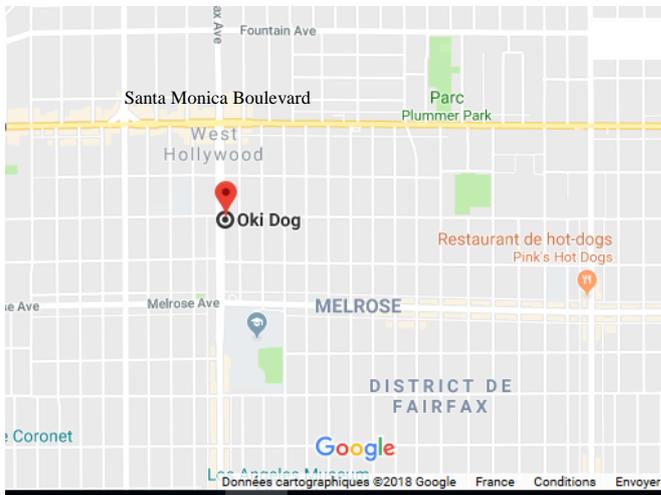


Figure 5: OKI DOG in Santa Monica Google Maps 26 04 2018

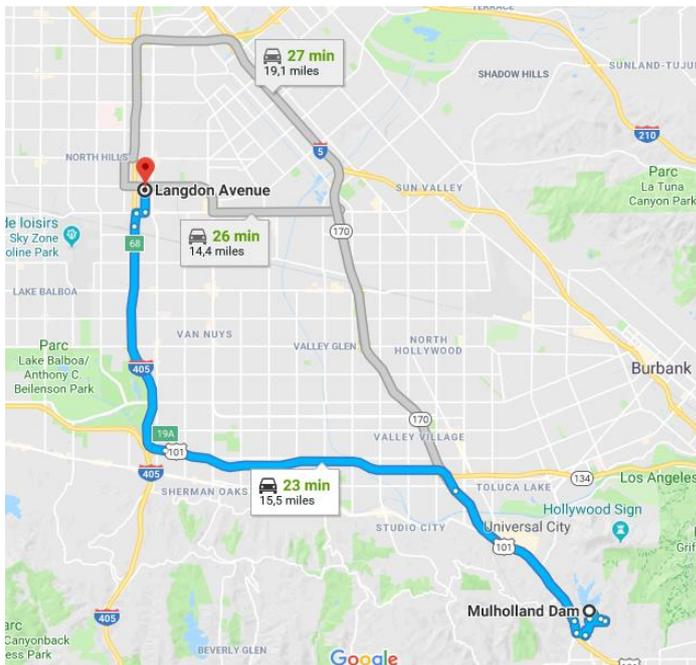


Figure 6: Google Map Drive from Mulholland Dam to Langdon Avenue

Google Maps' map from Mulholland Dam, Los Angeles, CA 90068 to Langdon Ave, San Fernando, CA 91345 15 04 2018

1. The 101 is the Hollywood Freeway
2. The 405 is the San Diego Freeway
3. Exit 68 is Roscoe Boulevard Exit

Annex: Charts

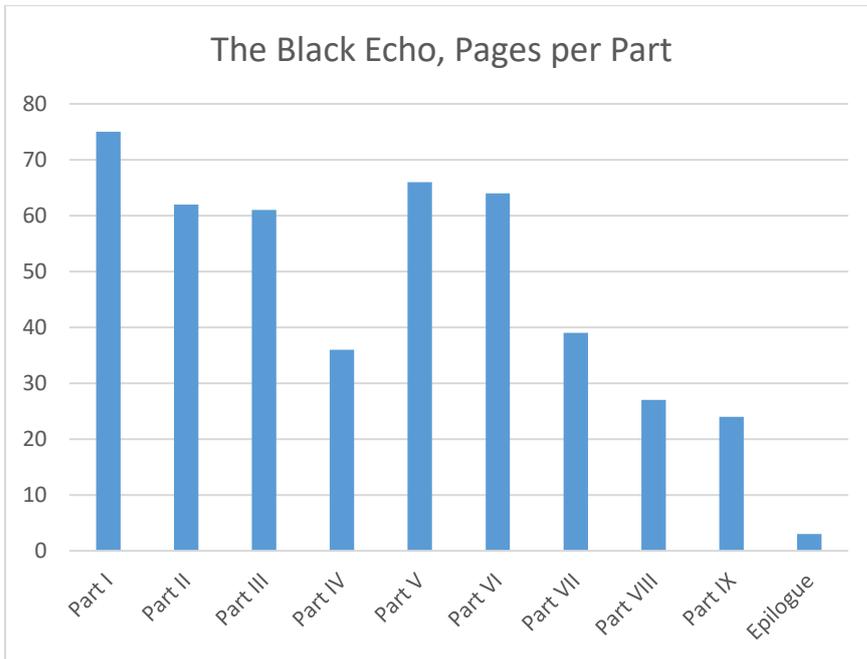


Chart 1: *The Black Echo* Pages per Chapter/Part

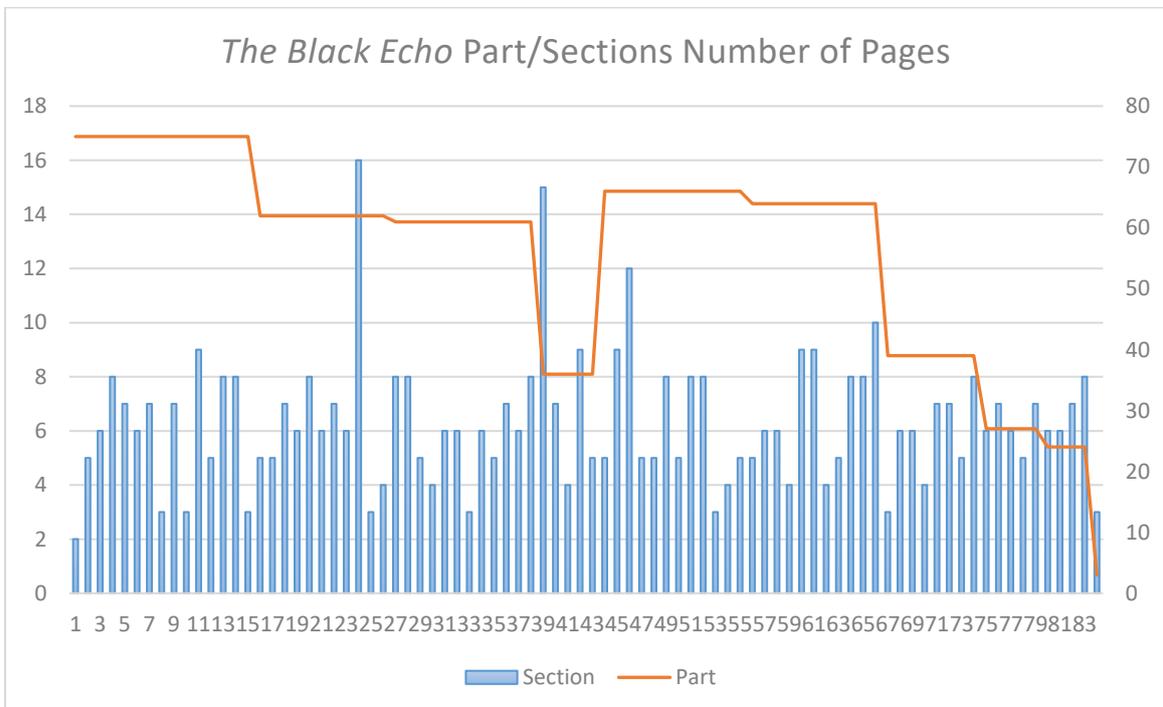


Chart 2: *The Black Echo* Parts/Sections Number of Pages

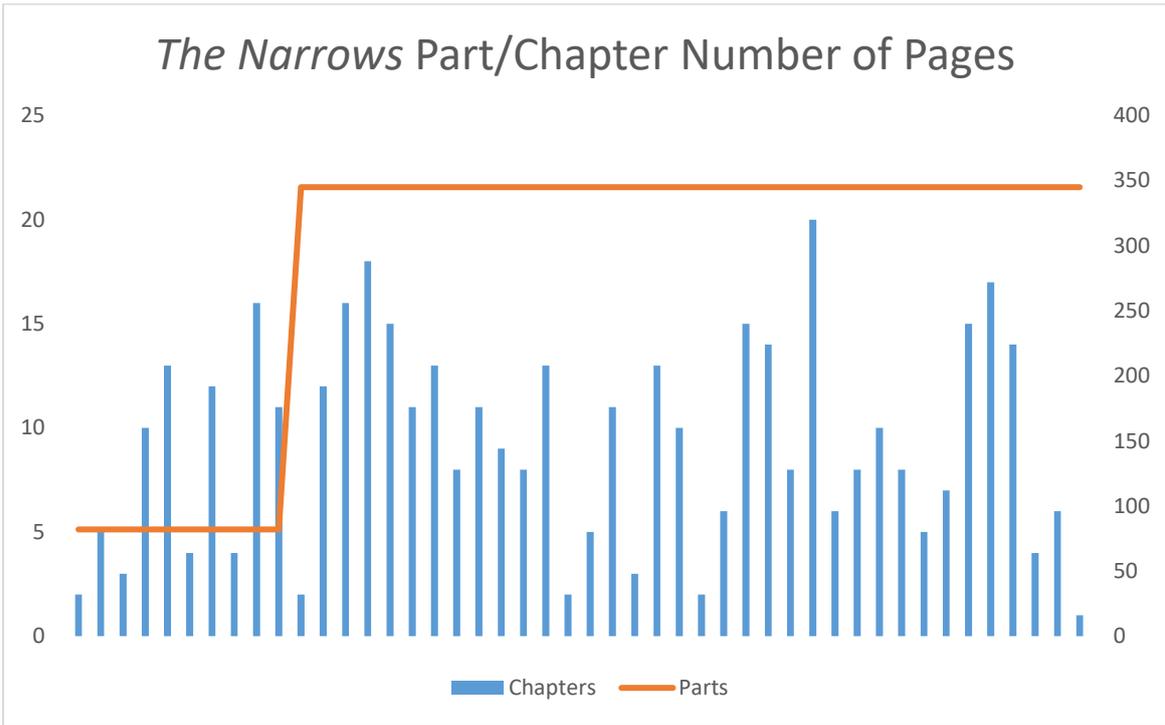


Chart 3: *The Narrows* Parts/ Chapters Number of Pages

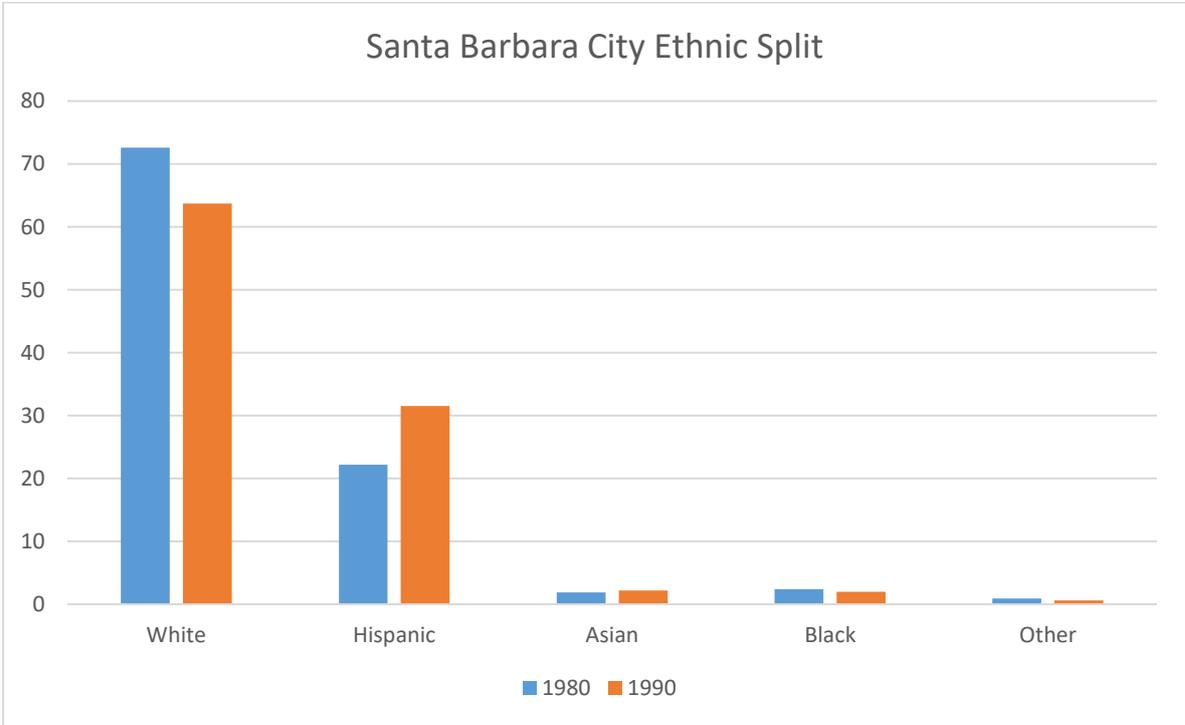


Chart 4: Santa Barbara City Ethnic Composition in 1980 and 1990.

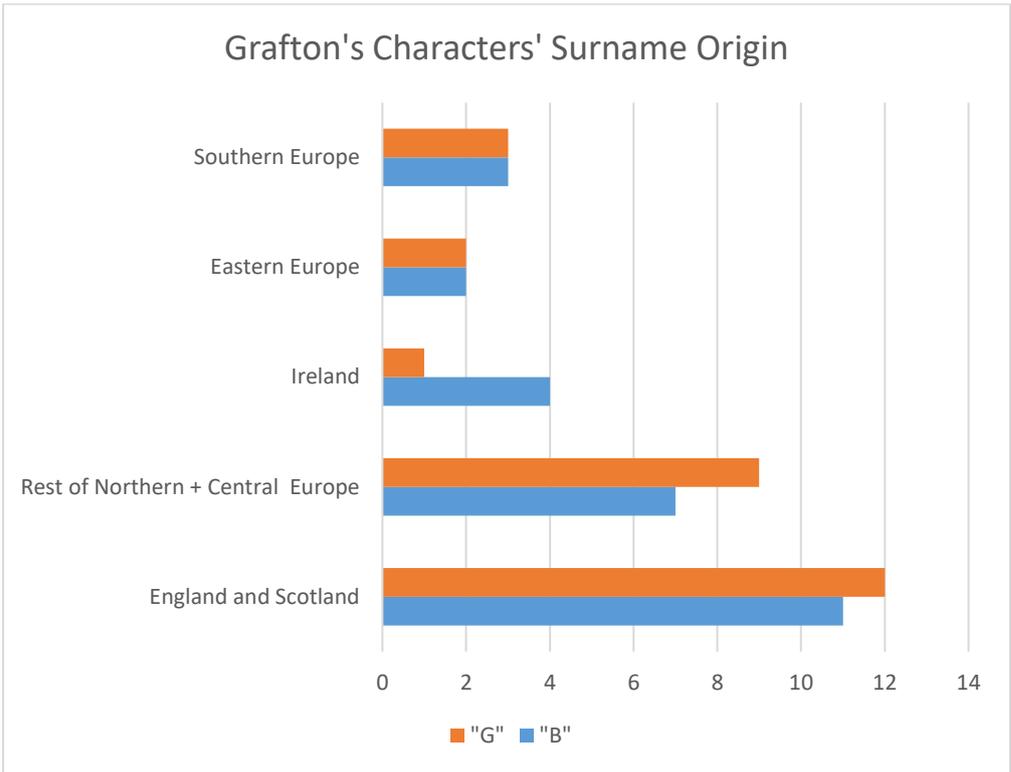


Chart 5: Grafton's Charatcter's Surnames Origins

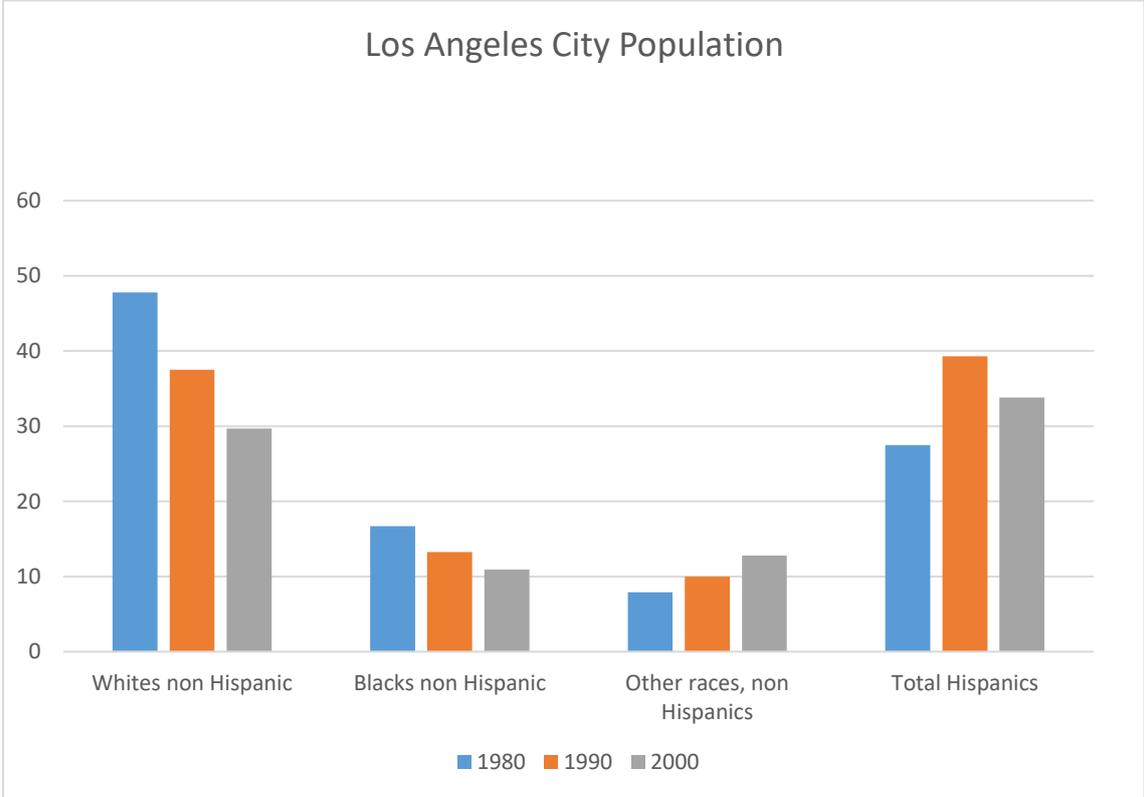


Figure 6: Los Angeles City Population— SOCDS Census Data: Output for Los Angeles city, CA

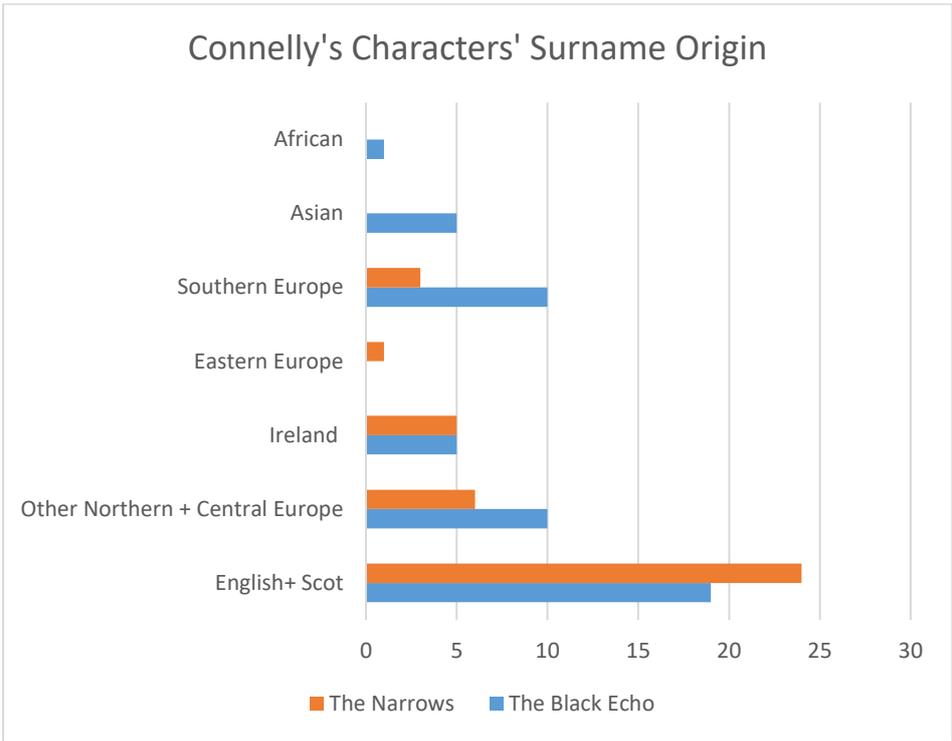


Chart 7: Connelly's Charaters' Surname Origin

Annex: Tables

Table 1: “B” is for Burglar, Time-frame		
Day	Book chapter	DOW
1	1	Monday
	2	
2	3	Tuesday
	4	
3	4	Wednesday
4	5	Thursday
	6	
	7	
	8	
	9	
	10	
	11	
5	12	Friday
	13	
	14	
	15	
6	15	Saturday
	16	
	17	
7	Missing day	
8	17	Monday
	18	
9	19	
	20	
	21	
10	21	Tuesday
	22	
	23	
	24	
	25	
	26	
11	Missing day	
12	Epilogue	Thursday

Table 2: “B” is for Burglar, Incipit and raising reader expectations			
Chapter	Day	Incipit	Sentences at the end of the part
1	1	IMR	...but my curiosity was aroused and I was eager to get on with it.
2	1	IMR	I hoped I could catch Elaine’s friend...before she flew the coop...
3	2	IMR	
4	2 and 3	IMR	
5	4	IMR	
6	4	IMR	
7	4	IMR	
8	4	IMR	
9	4	IMR	
10	4		
11	4		..In the kitchen cabinet..., she’d had some cans of cat food. What cat?
12	5	IMR	Before me yawned the basement... I knew I’d have to check it out...
13	5	IMR	(she gets the police file) I was going to see the aftermath of the crime...I could hardly wait.
14	5		Let’s go somewhere to talk
15	5	IMR	Something was off, but I couldn’t figure out what it was.
16	6 and 7	IMR	He was opening up a whole new possibility and I had a lot of questions to ask.
17	8	IMR	Beverly Dantziger stood on the threshold and she looked pissed off.
18	8	IMR	“Maybe I’ll get on a plane,” I said. By ten o’clock... I was back in the air again.
19	9	IMR	(At Jacques’s the furrer) I pushed the door open and went in.
20	9	IMR	I was left to search the apartment by myself...
21	9	IMR	
22	10	IMR	Wim Hoover... was sprawled in the entryway with a bullet hole...Tillie...went down to call the police.
23	10	IMR	Yoo-hoo... If nobody responded in the next ten seconds, I was going to cheat.
24	10	IMR	As Long as Leonard was there ... Lily was safe. I didn’t think Marty would be at all inclined to live Lily Howe alive when they went off....
25	10	IMR	...which is why I didn’t hear L. and M. until they had reached the back steps.
26	10	IMR	

Table 3: “G” is for Gumshoe time-frame	
Chapter	Date
1	May, 5 morning
2	May, 5 afternoon +evening
3	May, 6 morning
4	May, 6 afternoon
5	May, 6 afternoon +evening
6	May, 6 evening
7	May, 7 night +morning
8	May, 7 night
9	May, 8 morning
10	May, 8
11	May, 9 morning
12	May, 9
13	May, 9
14	May, 9, and 9 to 10, night
15	May, 10 morning
16	May,10 afternoon
17	May,10 evening
18	May, 10 evening
19	May,11 night
20	May,11
21	May, 11th
22	May, 11th
23	May, 11th
24	May, 11th
25	May, 11th
26	May, 11th
27	May, 11th
Epilogue	After August, 29

Table 4: "B" is for Burglar, Charaters-set.				
England and Scotland	Rest of Northern + Central Europe	Ireland	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe
Benedict Grice Hobbs Howe Lipton May Pickett Pitts Redfern Robb Usher	Ahlberg Dantziger Boldt Hoover Ochsner Snyder Spillman	Dolan Rowan Sharkey Millhone	Makowski Montycka	Acquistapace Coachella Lupe

Table 5, "G" is for Gumshoe, Charater-set				
England and Scotland	Other Northern + Central Europe	Ireland	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe
Abbott Gray Jackson James Jarvison Lipton Pascoe Pitts Robb Stackhouse Windsor Wynette	Dietz I. Gersh C. Gersh Haynes R. Messinger M. Messinger E. Messinger Renquist Voorhies	Millhone	Galishoff Pockrass Palchak	Cavalletto LaRue Patty

Table 6: The Black Echo, Character-set						
English+ Scot	Other Northern + Central Europe	Ireland	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Asian	African
Avery III Avery IV Clarke Crofton Crowley Edgar Folsom Franklin Gearson Grant Haley Irving Jarvis Johnstone King Nuckles Pounds Scales Slater Slaughter	Bremmer Felker Heller Kester Ernst Niese V. Niese Perderson Bosch Houck	Donovan Rurke hanrahan McKenna Hanlon		Salazar Delgado Orozco Villabona Chavez E SCarletti M Scarletti Grosso Bernard Maury	Ngo Van binh Larry Sakai Bok Ngyen Tran Onaga	Obinna

Table 7: <i>The Narrows</i>, Character-set.						
English+ Scot	Other Northern + Central Europe	Ireland	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Asian	African
Billings Bing Bundy Cates Echerd Edgar Fenton Finder Gilbert Gunning Havershaw Hinton Irving Lockridge Mcintire Newcomb Pond Richards Rider Russel Shandy Walling Willow Woodall	Alpert Backus Bosch Hansen Ritz	Coxe Doran G. McCaleb T. McCaleb McEvoy	Zigo	Marcia Turrentine Dei	Gupta	

Table 8: Commercial Brands in "B" is for Burglar		
	Food and Beverage + Tobacco	Other Brands
Prologue		
Chapter 1		
Chapter 2	Nine-lives Beef/Delmonte	Polaroid
Chapter 3		Oldsmobile Cutlass/GM
Chapter 4	Fresca and Coke/Coca-Cola company;	
Chapter 5		VW
Chapter 6		Smith, Kline and French farmaceuticals
Chapter 7		
Chapter 8	Coca-Cola; Coke; Whitman's Samplers;	Clairo(Sparkling sherry to flame); Playtex nurser;
Chapter 9	Coke;	
Chapter 10		
Chapter 11	Hamburger Helper, Nine lives beef	Laundromat; Colt Python; Colt Trooper MKIII;
Chapter 12		
Chapter 13		L.L.. Bean; Sears; VW;
Chapter 14		Rexall
Chapter 15		Kleenex; Vicks VapoRub
Chapter 16	Post Toasties cereals	
Chapter 17		American Express; H&K.45; TWA;
Chapter 18		
Chapter 19		Penny-car Rental, Visa-Mastercard; TWA;
Chapter 20		
Chapter 21		TWA
Chapter 22		
Chapter 23		1972 Buick/GM
Chapter 24		
Chapter 25		
Chapter 26		
Epilogue		

Table 9: Commercial Brands in "G" if for Gumshoe		
	Food and Beverage + Tobacco	Other Brands
Chapter 1	Mc Donald's Quarter Pounder with Cheese	Plexiglass
Chapter 2	Coca-Cola/Coke	
Chapter 3	Diet-Pepsi	Ziploc bag; VW; Matchboxes;
Chapter 4	Pepsi vending machine	Buick/GM; Winnabago; Woolworth's;
Chapter 5		Buick/GL; PBS; VW;
Chapter 6		Dodge/Chrisler; PMC cartridges; Petsy Wetsy doll;
Chapter 7	Coke	VW; Cadillac/GM; Dodge/Chrisler
Chapter 8		Band-Aid
Chapter 9	Coke, Winstons	Zippo
Chapter 10	Jack Daniel's	
Chapter 11	Virgina slims	VW
Chapter 12	Burger King, M&Ms, Imported beers: Amstel, heinecken, Beck's dark, Beck's light, Dos Equis, Bohemia, Corona;	Calvin klein
Chapter 13	Juicy Fruit gum	Aqua Velva
Chapter 14		
Chapter 15	Virgina slims	
Chapter 16		Rolex Watch; Gold Dunhill;
Chapter 17		
Chapter 18	Jack Daniel's	
Chapter 19		
Chapter 20		
Chapter 21	(McDonald's) Quarter Pounder with Cheese	
Chapter 22		American Express; Kleenex
Chapter 23		Brylcream
Chapter 24		
Chapter 25		
Chapter 26		
Chapter 27	(McDonald's) Big Mac	
Epilogue		

Table 10: "G" is for Gumshoe Comercial Names

Table 10: Commercial Brands in <i>The Black Echo</i>		
	Food & Beverage + Tobacco	Other Brands
Part I	Coke; Camel; Henry's hard Soda Flavouer beer	Leica; Smith&Wesson; XTP bullets; Malathion; Jeep; Krylon; Polaroid; Reeboks
Part II	Old-Nick beer, Henry's Hard Soda, Salem cigarettes	Band-Aid; Jaguar XJ6; Rugar, Mastercard; Visa; Reebocks; 7-Eleven
Part III	Coke	Jeep, Honda All-Terrain Vehicle; 7-Eleven
Part IV	Kool	Jeep; BMW; Rolex Presidential; 7-Eleven
Part V		Polaroid; Honda ATV; Nikon; Plymouth/Crysler; Nagra;
Part VI		Mercedes Benz; Nagra;
Part VII		Igloo cooler
Part VIII		Veg-O-Matic, Sav-On drugstore
Part IX		Jeep
Epilogue		

Table 11: The Narrows Commercial Names

Table 11: Commercial Brands in <i>The Narrows</i>		
	Food & Beverage + Tobacco	Other Brands
Prologue		
part I		
Chapter 1		
Chapter 2		
Chapter 3		Drugs : Cellcepts ; prograf ;
Chapter 4		
Chapter 5	Burger King; Dairy Queen;	
Chapter 6		Visa-MasterCard; Zodiac;
Chapter 7		MGM
Chapter 8		Nordstrom; Saks Fifth Avenue; Barnes & Nobles; Cinnabon; Hot Dog on a Stick;
Chapter 9		Zodiac
Chapter 10		
Part II		
Chapter 11		
Chapter 12		Zodiac,
Chapter 13		Cadillac ; Jeep Cherokee
Chapter 14		Mercedes-Benz Sport Utility Vehicle ; Visa ;
Chapter 15	McDonald's; Gatorade; Juicy Fruit gum;	Cherokee
Chapter 16	Juicy Fruit gum	
Chapter 17		
Chapter 18		
Chapter 19		
Chapter 20	Juicy Fruit	Mercedes-Benz SUV
Chapter 21	Burger King; Dairy Queen;	
Chapter 22		1997 Ford Mustang; Crown Victoria/Ford; Grand Am/GM
Chapter 23		
Chapter 24	Sierra Nevada beer	
Chapter 25	Coke Machine	Crown Vic/Ford; Grand am/GM;
Chapter 26		Mercedes; Crown Vic/Ford; LTD/Ford;
Chapter 27		
Chapter 28		
Chapter 29		
Chapter 30	Starbucks	Crown vic/Ford; Harley; Mercedes;
Chapter 31		Victoria's Secret
Chapter 32		Mercedes
Chapter 33		Mercedes
Chapter 34		
Chapter 35		
Chapter 36		
Chapter 37	McDonald's	
Chapter 38		Glock 27
Chapter 39		
Chapter 40		Ford Explorer ; Mercedes ;
Chapter 41		Ford Explorer; Mercedes ; Glock; Sig
Chapter 42		Mercedes
Chapter 43		
Chapter 44		
Chapter 45		

Mots clés

Crime Novel, Hard-boiled, Sue Grafton, Michael Connelly, Raphaël Baroni, Michel Picard, *The Black Echo*, Product Placement.

Résumé

Tout lecteur passionné de fiction nourrit une liste de romans de prédilection qu'il considère comme de bons romans. Pourquoi un roman est-il considéré comme bon et un autre ne l'est-il pas ? Entrent en jeu des notions cognitives conscientes et psychologiques inconscientes. Sur le versant du conscient c'est sur les développements théoriques d'Umberto Eco que nous nous appuyons, en particulier sur sa notion de *lecteur modèle* et d'*encyclopédie du lecteur*, et sur Raphaël Baroni pour la notion de *tension narrative* qui inclut le suspense, la curiosité et la surprise. Pour les implications psychologiques de l'inconscient, c'est Michel Picard qui fonde notre analyse avec son idée de lecture comme jeu.

L'analyse de quatre romans noirs des auteurs américains Sue Grafton et Michael Connelly — deux puisés dans leurs débuts ("*B*" *is for Burglar* et *The Black Echo*) et deux appartenant à leur période de succès ("*G*" *is for Gumshoe* et *The Narrows*) — nous permet de mettre en évidence l'évolution dans leur écriture ainsi que les moyens utilisés par les auteurs pour captiver le lecteur. Ces moyens englobent l'utilisation du réalisme, la répétition et l'anaphore afin de susciter curiosité et suspense, et le recours aux emprunts de l'intertextualité pour terminer sur des moyens considérés comme post-modernes : les jeux avec le paratexte, l'hybridation et l'utilisation de l'humour.

Keywords

Roman noir, Hard-boiled, Sue Grafton, Michael Connelly, Raphaël Baroni, Michel Picard, *The Black Echo*, Placement de produit.

Abstract

Every reader with a passion for literary fiction compiles a list of preferred novels he considers as good novels. Why is a novel deemed good while another is not? Conscious cognitive notions and unconscious psychological notions are put into play. On the conscious side, we put into use the theoretical developments of Umberto Eco concerning the notions of 'model reader' and of 'reader's encyclopaedia', in addition to those of Raphael Baroni concerning the 'narrative tension' which include suspense, curiosity and surprise. On the psychological side affecting the unconscious, Michel Picard helps establish our analysis thanks to his idea of reading as a form of playing activity.

By analysing four hard-boiled novels by American writers Sue Grafton and Michael Connelly —two from their early works ("*B*" *is for Burglar* and *The Black Echo*) and two from their period of success ("*G*" *is for Gumshoe* et *The Narrows*) — we try to identify the evolution of their writing style and the means they apply to captivate the reader. These means embrace the use of realism, that of repetition and anaphora to entail curiosity and suspense, and the use of borrowings in intertextuality as well as more post-modern features like playing with the paratext, hybridization and use of humour.