



# Raymond Chandler: The Detections of Totality

*Fredric Jameson*

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# Raymond Chandler: The Detections of Totality

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## **Raymond Chandler: The Detections of Totality** Fredric Jameson **The master of literary theory takes on the master of the detective novel**

Raymond Chandler, a dazzling stylist and portrayer of American life, holds a unique place in literary history, straddling both pulp fiction and modernism. With *The Big Sleep*, published in 1939, he left an indelible imprint on the detective novel. Fredric Jameson offers an interpretation of Chandler's work that reconstructs both the context in which it was written and the social world or totality it projects. Chandler's invariable setting, Los Angeles, appears both as a microcosm of the United States and a prefiguration of its future: a megalopolis uniquely distributed by an unpromising nature into a variety of distinct neighborhoods and private worlds. But this essentially urban and spatial work seems also to be drawn towards a vacuum, an absence that is nothing other than death. With Chandler, the thriller genre becomes metaphysical.

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